

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

POLICY GUIDE 2014.14

SWIMMING POOLS AND WATER HAZARDS IN FOSTER FAMILY HOMES

DATE: July 18, 2014

TO: Rules and Procedures Bookholders, DCFS and Private Agency Licensing Staff

FROM: Bobbie Gregg, Acting Director *Bobbie Gregg*

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to inform Department and Purchase of Services (POS) licensing staff of new requirements, which are consistent with the Consumer Product Safety Commission safety guidelines, regarding swimming pools and other bodies of water located on the licensed premises of a foster home.

II. PRIMARY USERS

The primary users of this policy guide are Department and POS foster home licensing staff.

III. BACKGROUND

This Policy Guide summarizes the Department's new water safety standards for foster homes. Licensing staff shall immediately ensure licensed foster homes receive the new standards and work with foster homes to come into compliance with them. These new safety policies for Foster Family Homes are being added to Rules and Procedures 402, which are currently under revision and will be available to staff in the near future.

IV. SUMMARY OF NEW POOL AND WATER SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

In-ground Pools

All in-ground pools located on the foster home's premises shall be fenced, or have a power safety cover that meets standards in the American Society for Testing & Materials that the Consumer Product Safety Commission has adopted.



Above-ground Pools

All above-ground pools shall have non-climbable side walls that are at least 4 feet high or shall be enclosed with fence that is at least 36 inches away from the pool's side wall. This requirement pertains to the entire circumference or perimeter of the pool. When the pool is not in use, steps used to access the pool shall be removed or shall be enclosed by a fence.

Hot Tubs

All hot tubs shall be fenced, or have a securely fitted and locked cover.

Portable Pools

All portable pools shall be fenced, or be emptied and sanitized daily.

Fences and Barriers to Entry

All fences enclosing pools shall have gates that open out and away from the pool, have a locking device and are designed to be self-closing and self-latching. Gates with a release mechanism located less than 54 inches from the bottom of the gate shall be located at least 3 inches below the top of the gate on the side facing the pool. A gate shall not have an opening greater than ½ inch within 18 inches of the latch release mechanism.

All fences shall be at least 5 feet in height, measured from the side of the barrier which faces away from the swimming pool. Vertical barriers for the fence shall be no more than 4 inches wide. Horizontal barriers shall be placed on the swimming pool side of the fence and be no more than 4 inches apart. A fence shall not have any decorative cut-outs, indentations or protrusions that are more than 1 ¾ inches and could be used as holds to climb the fence. The fence shall not have more than 4 inches between the ground and the bottom of the barrier.

When a house wall serves as part of a pool barrier, any door or window that provides access to a swimming pool shall be equipped with an alarm that sounds for 30 seconds or more within 7 seconds after the door is opened. The alarm shall be distinct from other sounds in the house and able to be heard by all household members, regardless of their location on the licensed premises of the foster home. The alarm shall have a de-activate feature that is at least 54 inches above the threshold of the door covered by the alarm. The alarm shall have an automatic reset feature. All alarms must meet the requirements of UL2017 – General Purpose Signaling Devices and Systems.

Note: Foster homes that have a license or a permit on January 1, 2009 and have had a fence with a minimum height of 3 ½ foot shall be considered in compliance.

Foster Parent Safety Training, Supervision of Children and Documentation

Licensees in foster family homes with pools, hot tubs, ponds, outdoor fountains, decorative water ponds, fishponds or other pools of water must have current CPR/First Aid certification.

A foster child of any age shall not use a swimming pool, portable pool, spa, hot tub or other pools of water located on the premises of the foster home without line of sight supervision by a foster parent or other adult authorized by the foster parent.

Licensees shall be responsible to keep toxic chemicals related to pool maintenance locked up and inaccessible to foster children.

When a swimming pool is in use, a licensee shall keep a weekly log to record water quality test results and otherwise maintain the pool in a safe and sanitary condition.

V. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this Policy Guide may be directed to the Office of Child and Family Policy at 217-524-1983 or via Outlook at OCFP – Mailbox. Non Outlook users may e-mail questions to cfpolicy@idcfs.state.il.us.

VI. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide immediately following Rules 402, Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes.

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