

Building a pool or spa is very rewarding if you follow the right steps, use the right people and ask the right questions.

If there is one thing SPASA Members know a lot about it's building pools and spas. It's a complex process with a number of steps to move through. There are also certain legal requirements that must be met and it's critical that your intended builder meets them all. SPASA members stand ready to help at every step, but it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with each one before you start.

STEP 1: OBTAIN A SPASA CONTRACT

The SPASA Pool & Spa Construction Contract is based on years of experience across the membership. Only SPASA Pool Builder members who currently hold registration and insurance eligibility can use SPASA Contracts. It's a detailed contract, but easily understood by the lay person, and it clearly explains any exclusions.

STEP 2: MAKE SURE YOU ARE FULLY INSURED

State law requires that domestic Building Insurance must be issued for all domestic building work over \$12,000 in total value (this includes pools and spas). SPASA recommends that you DO NOT commence any work until your builder has provided this insurance and you have the certificate in your possession, or ask to see the building permit and the Builders registration card. The purpose of this insurance is to ensure that you end up with a completed pool and / or spa, holding a 6 year structural warranty. Without it, you are totally unprotected and exposed. And if you

sell your home you will be required by law to provide this transferable insurance to the purchaser.

STEP 3: ENSURE YOUR BUILDER IS REGISTERED AND LICENSED

To provide protection for every person having building works done, the Victorian government has legislated that builders undertaking work with a value over \$5,000 must be registered with the Building Practitioners Board. So, before signing a contract please check if your builder is a Registered Building Practitioner, ask to see their registration card or phone 1300 360 320 or go to: www.buildingcommission.com.au

STEP 4: ASK IF A TOWN PLANNING PERMIT IS REQUIRED

It is possible that town-planning overlays may apply to the location of your proposed pool or spa. If so, a town-planning permit for a swimming pool / spa at that address may be required before a building permit can be issued. Check with your local council before commencing any work. SPASA has successfully negotiated a general exemption for pools and spas where the following overlays apply: Design Development Overlays and Neighbourhood Character Overlays.

STEP 5: ASK IF A BUILDING PERMIT HAS BEEN ISSUED

Prior to the commencement of work, a building permit from a registered building surveyor must be issued to the owner with the registered builder's details. The purpose of this building permit is to ensure that your pool meets all the applicable requirements of your municipality, as well as structural and safety requirements.

In order to obtain this building permit your builder will need:

- Copy of the Certificate of Title.
- Copy of the block plan showing all existing buildings.
- A letter of authority for the builder to apply for a building permit on your behalf.
- A signed agreement to comply with the requirements to provide a safety barrier / pool fence.

In addition to this, the building surveyor will require:

- A copy of town planning permit (if applicable)
- A copy of the insurance certificate (from your pool builder)

Important Note: A certificate of final inspection will be issued to the owner with a copy to the builder when the final pool inspection has been carried out and approved.

STEP 6: SAFETY BARRIERS

Pool fencing / safety barriers are required by legislation for any pool or spa with water in excess of 300mm in depth and must be in place prior to filling the pool or spa with water. The key elements of the relevant Australian Standard, A.S. 1926-2007 are designed to deny access by unsupervised young children, especially those under 5 years of age, to the swimming pool area.

There is an expanded discussion of the fencing regulations on Fact Sheet 4 (page10) "Safety Barriers", but it is worth noting here that fences and gates must have an effective minimum perpendicular height of 1.2 metres. Existing standard paling fences can be used provided they meet certain conditions.

Gates must open outward only and return to the closed position, engaging the latch automatically.

Although walls of buildings can be used as swimming pool safety barriers, child resistant doors from the building are no longer permitted for new pools. Windows within external walls of dwellings are permitted to open to the pool enclosure but must be constructed in accordance with the standard. Please refer to A.S 1926.1 for the specific requirements of the safety barrier and window requirements.

STEP 7: WATER

The first thing to do when thinking of investing in a pool or spa is to read up on our Water Neutral Pool program (see page 43). The pleasure derived from your pool need not impinge on water catchments. In fact, a Water Neutral Pool can provide you with a means of producing thousands of litres of surplus water for use around the home.

Pool and spa owners must consult with their local water authority to establish if prevailing water restrictions apply to their pool or spa. You may need approval to fill the pool or spa from the tap. This can generally be done by completing a Swimming Pool Water Conservation Plan and Exemption Application, available from your local water retailer.

SPASA has worked with the water authorities to create a system of 'water credits' to ensure that pool owners act as responsible water consumers. Under this scheme new pool owners need to demonstrate that they will save as much water in a year as it takes to fill their pool.

STEP 8: COMPLETION

Once the pool construction is complete according to the terms of your contract, your warranty period begins. At that point, your builder must issue you with a completion certificate. However that is not necessarily the end of the relationship. The pool is under domestic builder's insurance for 6 years during which time you are able to check with your builder if you have any major concerns.

