

Video transcript:

Regulating Private Pool and Spa Safety

Audit question

We examined if councils effectively implement private pool and spa safety barrier regulations.

What we examined

We audited 5 councils. We assessed how councils:

- make sure owners register and certify pools and spas on time
- maintain pool and spa registers, and
- develop processes and document procedures.

We also surveyed all 79 Victorian councils about their progress in implementing the regulations.

Our conclusion

Councils can't be sure if all pools and spas in their communities have barriers that reduce the chances of young children drowning.

Background information

Between January 2000 and May 2019, 27 young children drowned in a home pool or spa in Victoria.

In 20 of these cases, the barrier didn't meet safety standards.

Safety barrier regulations required owners to register their pools and spas with their council by 1 November 2020.

Councils must record information about these pools and spas in a register.

Owners must also make sure their barriers meet safety standards. They must get an inspector to certify their barriers every 4 years and give the compliance certificate to their council.

Issue 1: Outstanding compliance certificates

The audited councils don't know if all barriers meet safety standards.

This is because only 45 per cent of owners have lodged compliance certificates that were due by 1 June 2022.

Across Victoria, owners have lodged 56% per cent.

Issue 2: Gaps in pool registers

The audited councils' pool and spa registers aren't always complete or accurate. This means they can't track if all barriers meet safety standards.

This is because 16 per cent of pools and spas in their communities aren't registered.

Across Victoria, councils estimate that 13 per cent of pools and spas aren't registered.

Issue 3: Procedures have gaps or are missing

Audited councils' procedures to make sure owners register and certify their pools and spas have gaps. In some cases they haven't documented them.

This means staff don't always have clear guidelines to follow. For example, when and how they should follow up an owner who hasn't lodged a compliance certificate.

What we recommended

We made 4 recommendations for councils to improve their internal reporting, registration systems and procedures.

This will help them make sure owners register and certify their pools and spas.

More information

For more information, or to read our full report, go to <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au>

To see the complete video, go to <https://youtu.be/UWgWD3Tcf6o>