

## **Permits Required for Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs and Spas**

No one expects a tragedy to strike them, however, each year nearly 300 children under the age of 5, drown in residential swimming pools nationwide according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Unfortunately this tragedy occurs typically in a family-owned pool. In addition, an estimated 5,600 children younger than 15 years old were treated each year in hospital emergency rooms for non-fatal drownings in pools or spas. The easiest safeguard to prevent an accidental drowning or injury, is to be certain the pool complies with state and local building code regulations.

Before considering the purchase of a swimming pool, all homeowners, landlords or tenants, need to be aware that a permit is required whenever a swimming pool is installed and it is capable of holding a depth of more than 24 inches of water. This regulation also includes the storable or quick-set pools purchased at local department stores. If a rigid sidewall pool, (not including inflated or storable pools), is less than 48 inches in height, a minimum 48 inch high barrier or fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate is required to be installed around the pool. Alarms on household doors may also be required if they directly enter an enclosed pool area. In addition to a safe enclosure, electrical connections must be installed to meet the electric code, and must be inspected by an approved electrical inspector. Any existing pool is also required to comply with the enclosure safety regulations. In addition to these electrical and barrier requirements, all pools must be equipped with a pool alarm that is capable of detecting whenever a child enters the water by sounding an audible alarm. Hot tubs and spas must also meet certain code requirements. Pool owners are also encouraged to check with their insurance company for any additional safety requirements.

To ensure swimming pool safety during the upcoming pool season, pool owners are urged to contact their local municipal building department before purchasing or installing any swimming pool, hot tub or spa. As trained professionals they are able to answer questions and guide the applicant through the permit process.