

Design Criteria for Non-Conforming Swimming Pools and Spas

The Denver Department of Environmental Health, Public Health Inspections Division is responsible for enforcing the Denver Swimming Pool Regulations. These regulations establish certain pool and deck design criteria that are intended to promote the safety of bathers and enable life-saving operations. In recent years, there has been an increase in submission of pool plans that do not strictly conform to the design criteria in the regulations. Any new or extensively remodeled pool or spa not complying with the most current rules and regulations may be considered for conditional approval if the following criteria is met. These criteria are meant to be used as guidance for non-conforming pool designs and do not guarantee the design will be approved. For questions, please contact phicomments@denvergov.org.

- No more than 20% of each body of water shall have a raised curb. A minimum of 4' of unobstructed deck space must be present from the water's edge around at least 80% of each body of water.
- When a raised curb is provided, the deck shall not be more than 18" below the top of the curb.
- There shall be no infinity edges that do not incorporate a "catch" or "safety ledge" on the exterior side of the pool that would prevent someone that did decide to climb on or over the edge from falling more than 18." The materials and design of the safety edge must be approved by the department.
- No pool shall be designed or constructed such that it incorporates a sharp 90-degree corner. All appurtenances like walls, fountains, stairs, attached to or near the pool where water can present a slip hazard must be designed so that sharp 90-degree corners are not present.
- The use of decorative features shall not interfere with deck drainage or impede emergency access or present any safety concerns.
- There shall be no areas of the pool/spa that contain obstructions without a protective barrier. All obstructions that prevent 4' of unobstructed deck space must be protected by a barrier or must be designed to discourage patron access such as designing water features so that they cannot be climbed, sat, or walked on by incorporating rounded surfaces or other approved design features. When an obstruction exists in multiple areas around the pool, the minimum distance between obstructions shall be four feet. For example, multiple fountains around the perimeter of a pool must be 4' apart or more.
- Internal pool walls or walls that divide pools into one or more sections that are not intended to be walked on may be less than 4' wide, if the 4' deck space requirement is otherwise met. Such dividing walls should be capped with a finish that discourages patrons from standing or walking on these surfaces.