



Guidance Notes: Fences and safety barriers

Fences and safety barriers are intended to safeguard young children from potential or identified hazards such as busy roadways and car parks, or to create a safe play area. In some cases fencing is mandatory, for example around pools and waterways (see note below).

This document is a guide to good practice standards for fencing. It is important to note that fencing is not to be relied on as the only strategy to prevent injury or fatality, or as an alternative to adequate adult supervision.

General features:

- Fence height is at least 1200 millimetres, measured from the ground
- Gate latch release height is at least 1500 millimetres above the ground and 1400 millimetres above the highest lower rail on the fence, or appropriately shielded
- Distance between panels or bars is no greater than 100 millimetres
- Distance between the bottom of the fence and the ground is no greater than 100 millimetres
- Gate is self-closing and self-latching from all open positions, and does not open towards the hazard
- Top surface of the fence is not hazardous, sharp or pointed
- Fencing materials are manufactured to Australian Standards
- A non-climbing zone is maintained around the fence.

Maintenance:

Maintenance is essential to reduce the potential for injuries and fatalities. Church councils are responsible for ensuring that barriers are maintained and damaged fencing or barriers are fixed immediately.

Points to consider:

- Will the gates close by themselves from any open position?
- Is there any feature that would make the fence climbable? For example: garden beds, objects near the fence, climbable rails.
- Is the practice of propping or tying the gate open actively discouraged when children are present? (If the only occupants of the site are adult, there may be no need to keep the gate closed, unless the fencing is around a pool or body of water)
- Is the fence in a general state of good repair? For example, panels are undamaged and securely attached.

Easy fixes:

- Replace, tighten or adjust the hinges on your gates
- Trim back any vegetation or branches that a child could use to climb over the fence
- Remove climbable objects within 900 millimetres of the fence
- Replace damaged, demolished or removed portions of a fence
- Ensure people know and understand that the fence is there for the protection of the congregation.



Note:

Certain work may require a building development approval from either the local government or a private building certifier before the work can begin. If fencing is for the purpose of creating a barrier around a waterway or pool, refer to the [Queensland Government](#)¹ website for mandatory standards and [guidelines](#)².

¹ www.hpw.qld.gov.au/construction/BuildingPlumbing/PoolSafety/PoolFencesSafetyBarriers/Pages/default.aspx

² www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/GuidelinesForPoolOwnersAndPropertyAgents.pdf

Document Review History

Version Number	Date	Reason	Aurthor/reviewer	Approved
1.0	02.04.2015	Created to support Safe Ministry with Children policy, Overseeing safe ministry with children and Selecting leaders and helpers processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Church Administrator Senior Risk Consultant 	Manager, Risk & Insurance
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