

Decommissioning Swimming Pools

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Councils need to be satisfied that swimming pools are not capable of holding 300mm of water before removing them from their register. Council should consider what method of decommissioning of the swimming pool they would expect an owner to demonstrate, such as the following:

Removal of above-ground swimming pool

Complete dismantling of a swimming pool if above-ground. Otherwise at least the removal of the swimming pool liner, access ladder and filtration system, and ensuring the remaining components cannot hold water to a depth of more than 300mm.

Total removal of an in-ground swimming pool

A demolition permit is required if the exemptions in Schedule 3 of the Regulations do not apply. Consideration needs to be given to the setback from the boundary and whether the demolition will have an adverse effect on the adjoining property. The excavation will need to be filled with appropriate soil for the site and compacted in layers with a maximum depth of 300mm (or as determined by an engineer taking site conditions into account).

In-ground pools

In-ground swimming pools can either be left in-situ and buried or made incapable of holding water to a depth of more than 300mm. The process can include the following steps:

1. Cut at least two holes at least 500mm x 500mm in the deep end of the swimming pool (or as determined by an engineer taking site conditions into account).
2. Remove debris from cut outs.
3. Remove filtration system and access ladders.
4. Fill the swimming pool excavation with appropriate fill material (compacted in layers), with a maximum depth of 300mm (or as determined by an engineer taking site conditions into account). Consideration can also be given to cutting down the side walls.

Decommissioning in-ground or permanent swimming pools that remain in-situ can be problematic if any future construction and development work occurs on the site. Councils can consider if a record of decommissioned swimming pools will be required.

Council should ensure that owners of permanent swimming pools that have been decommissioned and remain on site, understand that although the swimming pool is taken off the register and is considered decommissioned, an application for a building permit will be needed to recommission the swimming pool and install the required safety barrier and filtration system.

Victorian Building Authority, 2020, Swimming Pool Requirements,
https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/134357/Building-Council-Practitioner-Guide-Pool-Spa.pdf.