

Best Practice Note:

Decommissioning and/or Removal of Swimming Pools or Spas

Neither the Building Act 2011 nor the Building Regulations 2012 define or reference the decommissioning or removal of swimming pools and or spas. Both these statutory documents however, define a swimming pool as that defined in BCA Volume 1 Part A1.

The BCA defines a swimming pool as: any excavation or structure containing water and principally used, or that is designed, manufactured or adopted to be principally used for swimming, wading, or the like, including a bath or wading pool, or spa. And;

AS1926.1-2012 defines a swimming pool as: any structure containing water to a depth greater than 300mm and used primarily for swimming, wading, paddling or the like, including a bathing or wading pool, or spa pool.

In an ideal world when the swimming pool or spa is no longer wanted they would be 100% removed from site either by deflating, dismantling, excavating and lifting out, or complete demolition. Any demolition material to be removed from site and taken to an approved disposal site. The excavation filled with soil endemic to the site and compacted in a maximum 300mm layers.

The reality is that many below ground pools get buried thus potentially creating future development problems.

So what constitutes decommissioning?

By definition decommissioning would be removing aspects that make the structure a swimming pool, such as complete removal, remove its ability to contain more than 300mm of water, remove the access, and remove any filtration system. The main consideration is the inability to hold water.

The following are examples of the main types of swimming pools and how best to decommission or remove:

Above Ground Pools

- Inflatable: deflate and remove
- Solid sided: Remove liner, ladder, and any filtration system. Ideally complete dismantling and removal.

Above Ground Pools Installed Below Ground

- a) Minimum requirements, retaining walls and steel frame still in place:
 - Remove liner, ladder, and any filtration system. Ideally complete dismantling and removal.

- b) Minimum requirements bury the retaining walls:
- Remove all of the above-ground pool structure and filtration system.
 - Break down the retaining walls to a minimum of 600mm below natural ground level.
 - Remove the demolished material to an approved disposal site.
 - The excavation filled with soil endemic to the site and compacted in a maximum 300mm layers.
- c) Total removal
- As per b) above but the total demolition of the pool structure including the walls and any footings.
 - Filling the excavation with clean fill endemic to the site and compacted in a maximum 300mm layers

Below Ground Concrete or Fibreglass Pools

Minimum requirements:

- Cut a minimum of 2 x 500mm x 500mm squares in the base of the pool (deep end), and remove all the fibreglass or concrete from the pool. Disconnect the filtration system and any access ladders.

Burying the Pool

- Cut a minimum of 2 x 500mm x 500mm squares in the base of the pool (deep end), and remove all the fibreglass or concrete from the pool. Disconnect the filtration system and any access ladders.
- Cut down the walls of the pool at least 600mm from the top.
- Remove the demolished material to an approved disposal site.
- The excavation filled with soil endemic to the site and compacted in layers.

Complete Removal of the Pool

- If the pool is in excess of 40m² in area an Application for a Demolition Permit is required.
- Excavate and lift out fibreglass pools whenever possible.
- Demolish and remove the demolished material from the excavation to an approved disposal site.
- The excavation filled with soil endemic to the site and compacted in layers.

Notes:

1. In some localities, impervious soil types, or high ground and perched water tables may make holding pools problematic and advice from a suitably qualified structural or hydraulic engineer may need to be sought as to whether this is a viable option.
2. Pools located less than the depth away from boundaries may require a BA20 and BA20A forms to be signed by the adjoining property owner prior to the below ground pool being removed from site.

Local Government Post Decommissioning or Removal of the Pool or Spa - Administration Considerations



Decommissioned pool and the shell still remains and not filled with soil:

- Have the Local Government Authority's staff inspect the decommissioned pool to determine if the method of decommissioning is to the Local authority's satisfaction.
- Do you keep this pool on your pool registry? Or
- Do you create a separate registry of decommissioned pools?
- Do you show on your building approval for the pool that it is now decommissioned?
- Advise Rates that the pool is now decommissioned and stop any future levy invoicing for inspections. Or
- Advise the property owner that because the pool is still on the property it will be subjected to the 4 year inspection to monitor its status. Or
- Write to the owners that the pool is now considered decommissioned but if they ever repair and or renovate the shell and reinstate the filtration system that an Application for a Building Permit will be required and the fencing standard will be the applicable standard of the day.

Burying the Pool Shell:

- Have the Local Authority staff inspect the decommissioned pool to determine if the method of decommissioning is to the Local authority's satisfaction.
- Have the Local Authority staff inspect the decommissioned pool prior to filling with soil to determine if the method of holing is to the Local authority's satisfaction, and then reinspect once filled with soil.
- Do you keep this pool on your pool registry? Or
- Do you create a separate registry of decommissioned and buried pools?
- Do you show on your building approval for the pool that it is now decommissioned by burying?
- Advise Rates that the pool is now decommissioned and stop any future levy invoicing for inspections.
- Write to the owners that the pool is now considered decommissioned but if they ever dig out, repair and or renovate the shell and reinstate the filtration system that an Application for a Building Permit will be required and the fencing standard will be the applicable standard of the day.

Total Removal:

- If the pool is less than the depth of the pool away from boundaries then neighbour comment or a BA20 may be required, and a shoring plan provided.
- If in excess of 40m² issue a Demolition Permit.
- Have the Local Authority staff inspect the decommissioned pool to determine if the method of decommissioning is to the Local authority's satisfaction.
- Remove the pool from your pool registry?
- Show on your building approval for the pool that it is now demolished.
- Advise Rates that the pool is now decommissioned and stop any future levy invoicing for inspections.