

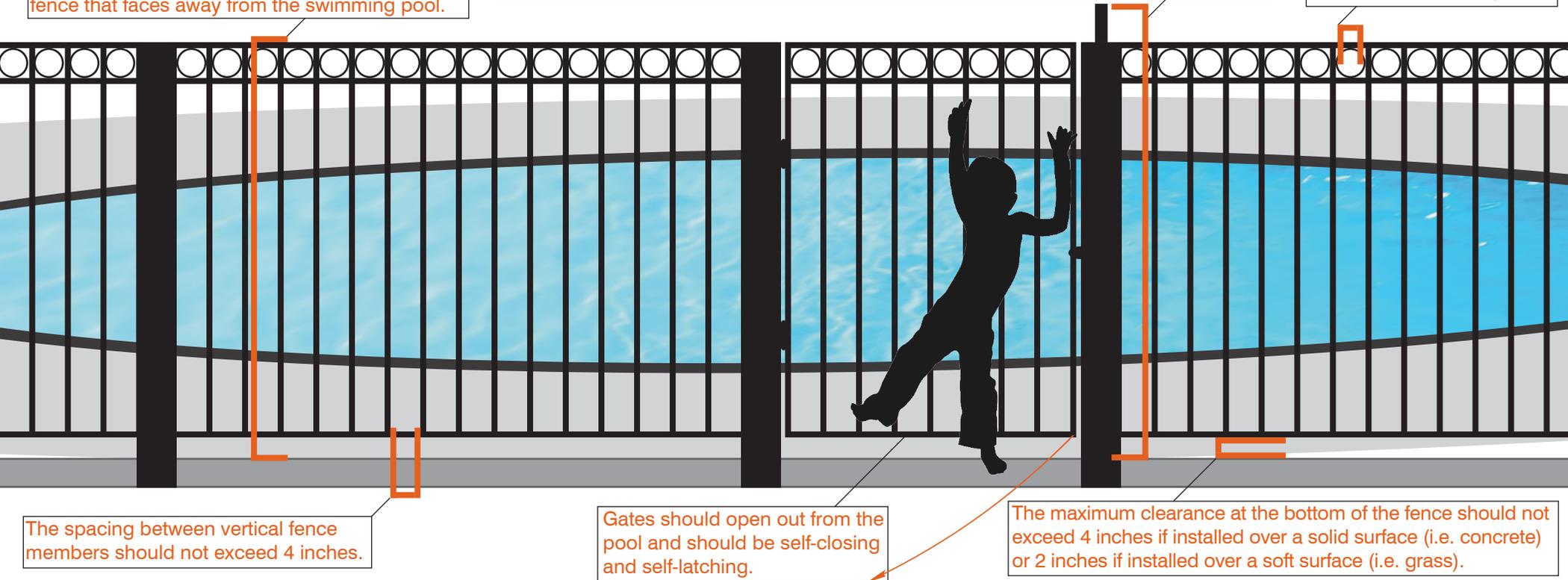
Form vs. Function: SWIMMING POOL FENCES

The illustration below represents a common fence used to surround residential pools. The fictional fence in this scenario meets some of the basic industry recommendations, while falling short of others. The experts at Robson Forensic commonly investigate drownings and pool related injuries involving a range of issues, including fences/guarding, suction entrapment, warnings, diving injuries, chemical exposures, water borne illnesses, and many others. If you seek an expert in the design or operation of a residential swimming pool or commercial aquatic facility, please contact Aquatics Expert, Maria Bella, AFOIT, CPOI, LGI, to discuss your case and how we can help.

The top of a pool fence must be at least 48 inches above grade, measured on the side of the fence that faces away from the swimming pool.

When the release mechanism of the self-latching device is less than 54 inches above grade, the release mechanism for the gate should be at least 3 inches below the top of the gate and installed on the side facing the pool. Also, the gate and fence should have no opening greater than ½ inch within 18 inches of the latch release mechanism.

If there are any decorative cutouts in the fence, the space within the cutouts should not exceed 1¼ inch.



The spacing between vertical fence members should not exceed 4 inches.

Gates should open out from the pool and should be self-closing and self-latching.

The maximum clearance at the bottom of the fence should not exceed 4 inches if installed over a solid surface (i.e. concrete) or 2 inches if installed over a soft surface (i.e. grass).

Other standards not portrayed in this illustration include: **1)** For a Chain Link Fence, the mesh size should not exceed 1¼ inches square, **2)** Maximum opening in latticework should not exceed 1¾ inch **3)** Power safety covers can be installed on pools to serve as safety barriers. Power safety covers should conform to the specifications in ASTM F 1346-91.

FEATURED EXPERT: Maria Bella, AFOIT, CPOI, LGI - Bella has been actively involved in the aquatics industry for over 30 years. She has managed numerous swimming facilities as well as other sporting venues. She is a frequent lecturer at industry conferences, a Lifeguard Instructor, and 1 of only 4 Aquatic Facility Operator Instructor Trainers in the world. Bella has been conducting forensic investigations for over 5 years and has been qualified in federal and state courts.

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