

Pool Cover Guidelines for Public Pools

A variety of covers are available for pools. There are very specific requirements for the installation, design and maintenance of a cover on a public pool. If you are interested in installing a cover, please contact EMD for information at (916) 874-6010.

Floating Pool Covers

Floating pool covers are often referred to as “Solar Covers” “Bubble Covers” or “Blankets”. These covers float on top of the water and can be hazardous and are not recommended. Floating covers can appear as a solid surface to children or animals that may walk on top of them and become trapped in the collapsed cover. There have also been drowning incidents where bathers swim under a partially removed cover, become disoriented, and cannot come up for air under the cover.



If you decide to proceed with the installation of this type of cover, the following requirements must be followed at all times:

1. The pool must be segregated from all dwelling units by an approved fence or enclosure. Floating pool covers are not permitted at courtyard pools or in other situations where there is no fence or enclosure between the living units and the pool.
2. The pool must be under the supervision of management personnel or other responsible person(s) who has sole access to the pool area when it is not open for use. The pool area must be locked to prevent any usage of the pool when the cover is in place. The pool may not be reopened for use until the pool cover has been removed from the pool and properly stored by the responsible party.
3. When the pool is opened, the pool cover must be completely removed, rolled up, and stored at least four feet away from the pool. In the case of spa pools, the cover must be physically removed from the immediate premises to prevent bathers from re-covering the spa pool.
4. The pool cover must meet current American Society for Testing and Materials labeling requirements (ASTM 1346-91(2010)).



Safety Covers

Pool and spa safety covers are safer than floating pool covers. Safety covers for pools may be manual or motorized. When a safety cover is properly in place over the pool or spa, it provides a higher level of safety for children less than 5 years of age by inhibiting their access to the water.



1. The pool cover must meet current American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) requirements for safety covers.
2. The cover must be installed and used according to manufacturer's instructions.
3. Provisions must be made for the stair handrail and deep end ladder so that they are retractable when the cover is in place.

See the following requirements that are specific to each type Safety Cover.

The following applies to specific types of safety covers:

Stretch Covers

- a) Tie down anchors must be designed so that they are fully recessed into the deck and not a tripping hazard.
- b) The pool must be under the supervision of management personnel or other responsible person(s) who has sole access to the pool area when it is not open for use. The responsible party must remove and store the pool cover before opening the pool for use.

On Deck Unit with on Deck Track

- a) All retracting mechanisms and their associated housing, must be located a minimum of 4 feet back from the pool edge.
- b) Tracks located on the deck surface must be designed to be trip-resistant and not exceed a height of 5/8 inch. The track must be of contrasting color to the deck surface. The track must be installed far enough away from the coping so as not to interfere with the handhold of the coping. Screws used to secure the track to the deck must be countersunk.
- c) The activating switch must be installed so that the operator has a clear view of the entire pool surface.
- d) The activating switch must be a "dead man" type switch where the cover will stop once the key is released.
- e) The mechanism must be designed so that the cover will return to the open position if it encounters an obstruction while closing.
- f) Provisions must be made to insure that only responsible parties have keys to operate the pool cover mechanism. Children shall not be allowed to operate the pool cover mechanism.

Sub-surface unit with under coping track

- a) The cover must completely retract into the housing unit.
- b) When the cover is retracted, the housing cover must be completely flush with the pool deck and form a handhold which extends 1 to 2 inches over the edge of the pool and not exceed 2½ inches in thickness.
- c) The track located under the coping must be designed and installed so that the total thickness of the coping does not exceed 2½ inches.
- d) The sub-surface housing compartment must drain to an approved disposal system through an air gap. It must not be directly connected to any sewer or deck drain system.
- e) The activating switch must be installed so that the operator has a clear view of the entire pool surface.
- f) The activating switch must be a "dead man" type switch where the cover will stop once the key is released.
- g) The mechanism must be designed so that the cover will return to the open position if it encounters an obstruction while closing.
- h) Provisions must be made to insure that only responsible parties have keys to operate the pool cover mechanism. Children should not be allowed to operate the pool cover mechanism.



Canopy Type

- a) Columns and all supporting mechanisms for the canopy must be located at least 4 feet back from the pool edge when the cover is retracted.
- b) The activating switch must be installed so that the operator has a clear view of the entire pool surface.
- c) The activating switch must be a "dead man" type switch where the cover will stop once the key is released.
- d) The mechanism must be designed so that the cover will return to the open position if it encounters an obstruction while closing.
- e) Provisions must be made to insure that only responsible parties have keys to operate the pool cover mechanism. Children should not be allowed to operate the pool cover mechanism.