

OPEN & SHUT CASES

Design criteria for child-resistant doors to the home pool zone

For home pool safety, provision for fitting childproof devices to doors to the home poolzone has been available since 1987. Why was it overlooked for so long, and are today's solutions all fit for purpose?

The Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 – aimed at preventing unsupervised access to home pools by small children – came into being about the same time as an increasing trend towards 'open-wall lifestyle architecture', where indoor and outdoor home entertainment areas began to merge and pool areas became an integral part of home design.

Fencing, the key word in the Act's title, was interpreted by most authorities as the only safety compliance solution to the problems of so many very different pool-zone environments. Already the least aesthetically desirable option, it was also more recently recognised that it offered no more safety guarantees than more attractive alternatives.

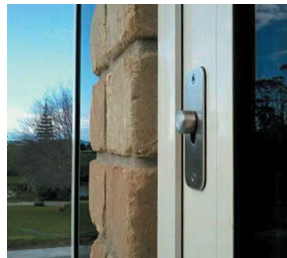
A fresh look at alternatives: the door solution

Fencing may have a place in some home pool environments, but where doors already formed part of a poolside barrier, there was provision to equip them with child-resistant devices – and opportunities for efficient solutions that were easier on the eye.

Prior to 2005, despite consumer demand, dedicated safety devices to perform the required self-closing and self-latching function for poolside doors were generally unavailable. As a benchmark for its child-resistant, safety-compliant design, Swish adopted the stringent standards required for fire-safety doors in its design criteria: performance, reliability, durability, good looks and solution flexibility.

Designed for purpose, engineered to perform

New Zealand's nationwide maritime climate is invasive and corrosive, taking its toll on all but the most durable outdoor surfaces. Swish determined to meet it with materials and engineering to match – marine-grade stainless steel for exterior componentry, stainless steel and high-grade aluminium alloy for concealed mechanisms, high-density composite materials for bearings and guide surfaces.



Left: For superior performance, Swish selects marine-grade stainless steel for all exterior componentry.

Case studies, news updates and home-pool safety problem-solvers from Swish Automation.
info@swishautomation.com
www.swishautomation.com
0800 279 474



Right: Robust engineering still has respect for décor. This stainless-steel horizontal SelfClose™ mechanism disappears into the sliding doorframe in the closed position.



Future trends

Trends continue towards more extensive glazing in architectural design. Energy-saving building codes will demand heavier door profiles for double-glazing. In 2005 the average weight of a slide-door panel was about 50kg, but has since almost tripled.

Swish SelfLatch/SelfClose™ systems have a proven record of being up to the task, with successful solutions for door panels up to 160kg. In an 8-year history of installations, the systems to carry these demanding loads have required little or no ongoing maintenance to maintain performance.

A trend towards open-wall lifestyle architecture and larger door panels will demand robust safety systems for the pool zone. For those few projects where SelfClose/SelfLatch systems may not be practicable, for example, for bifold doors and very heavy door panels, Swish have safety-compliant solutions to fit – to be presented in our next issue.