

OPEN & SHUT CASES

Raising the standard for home pool safety

As the pool zone becomes more integrated into home design, the need for new, fit-for-purpose pool safety solutions is on the rise.

The Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 required a barrier around home pools to prevent unsupervised access by small children. The Act allowed walls to form part of the barrier provided that doors to the pool area were self-closing and self-latching.

Since then, home design parameters have been in a state of constant change, presenting new challenges for even the most robust self-closing systems. Door loads have almost tripled as a result of several factors. Energy-saving legislation now demands double glazing for many new homes in colder climate zones. Open-wall architecture has found wider popularity. And indoor-outdoor recreation areas are becoming more integrated, many with home pools as a central feature.

It became urgent to broaden the Act to include the introduction of practical new pool safety solutions to cope with these changes, as well as an expanding diversity of new door designs and configurations.

Welcome guidelines

NZS 8500:2006 offered welcome guidelines to standardise pool safety systems nationwide until



Left: Although this 145Kg home spa pool door is operated successfully with a SelfLatch/SelfClose system, doors heavier than this can present challenges. Similarly, self-closers are impractical for bifold doors, especially if the passage door is hinged on a folding section. DoorMinder alarm systems offer effective home-pool safety solutions for both, with innovative componentry concealed within the door-frame.

FoSPA was upgraded to meet changing demands.

The standard provides 'approved alternative solutions' to FoSPA with the objective of unifying the diverse and often contradictory interpretations of the Act by territorial authorities. And one particular alternative solution was to stand out from the rest – an innovative system which was designed to not only meet NZS 8500:2006, but exceed it ...

DoorMinder™ SelfLatch/Alarm System

Door alarms and manual doorbolts might have been considered an adequate pool safety measure under NZS 8500:2006 2.3.2(f), but DoorMinder has added

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an extra safety level by incorporating the Swish SelfLatch device as part of the system.

For heavy slide doors, this puts simultaneous unlatching and opening beyond a small child's reach, strength and co-ordinative ability. And regardless of door style, the 85dB alert sounds ten seconds after an unlatching and opening action to warn that the pool-zone barrier has been breached.

Integrated with SelfLatch, the alarm provides a practical alternative to the SelfClose device, meeting the intent of the Act by warning that the door should be closed and latched after each use. The use of such alternative safety solutions requires 'by-exemption' approval from territorial authorities in the compliance consent process, well in advance of installation.

At the very least, DoorMinder sends a clear signal for safety awareness – an audible reminder for constant supervision of children in the pool-zone. ■

Right: The entire DoorMinder system fits neatly out of sight inside the door stile. The SelfLatch lever features on both sides of the door, at least 1500mm above floor level, beyond reach of little hands.

