



# CODE TOPICS

## 2020 FBC 7<sup>th</sup> ED, SECTION 454.2, RESIDENTIAL POOLS WATER DISTURBANCE ALARMS

### TOPIC BACKGROUND

Water disturbance alarms were recently allowed by statute and code as part of residential pool child safety. This option has a number of challenges that are seen in plan reviews and inspections. Our view, this is the least desirable option for child safety.

### WHAT THE CODE SAYS

FBC 454.2.17 requires the combination of barriers unless a pool cover meeting ASTM F1346 is used.

FBC 454.2.17.1 allows a FOUR sided barrier such as fencing, mesh barrier or cage.

FBC 454.2.17.1.9 allows a THREE sided barrier where the dwelling wall is the FOURTH side BUT must have barrier from doors and windows by either:

- A. Door and window alarms meeting UL 2017
- B. Self-closing self-latching doors
- C. Water Disturbance Alarm(s) meeting ASTM F2208

THIS MEANS CAGE OR YARD FENCING THAT CONNECTS TO THE HOUSE IS REQUIRED WITH OPTIONS A, B, OR C.

### REQUIRED AT PLAN REVIEW

The plan must show that cage or yard fencing will be used.

The brand/model must be stated on the plan and product sheet provided showing it meets ASTM F2208.

Multiple devices may be required if there is a spa or the install instructions state so based on shape/size of the pool.

Because, the over the coping type device Poolguard Model PGRM-2 does not have installation instruction on “champagne spas”, that product is not permitted in those cases.

Due to the varying water levels and water disturbance in negative edge basins, water disturbance alarms are not appropriate for that design.

### REQUIRED DURING INSPECTION

#### INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

- ☐ All alarms must be installed and operating at the time of inspection.
- ☐ Multiple units may be required on larger pools as recommended by the product manuals.
- ☐ A separate unit is required for the spa.
- ☐ The sounding alarm must be heard from the outside unit and inside unit. This requires access to the residence to verify the interior portion is operational.
- ☐ A bucket with attached retrieval rope must be provided at the time of inspection to test the systems as described in the product manuals. This is typically a minimum of two gallons and may be single or multiple buckets.
- ☐ If the water disturbance alarm is sounding upon arrival due to wind, the inspection would be a “fail.” FYI, it seems the Lifebuoy product has an adjustment for windy conditions.

Disclaimer: This is offered as summary and guidance on code requirements. This does not authorize a code violation.

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