

Installing child-safety covers

By Vincent & Darlene Fuggetta, Safety Pool Covers

Readying the client's pool for an automatic, child-safety pool cover is not difficult. The pool contractor must provide a cover vault. The cover vault must have a drain. If it is a hydraulic system, provide a 2" conduit from the power-head side to the pool equipment pad where the hydraulic pump will be located. If any 90 degree turns are to be made in the 2" conduit, use 2" electrical sweeps. This 2" conduit must not exceed 100 feet. Provide enough room on the pool equipment pad for the hydraulic pump which is no larger than a regular one horsepower pool pump. An electrician must wire the motor and key switch and properly bond the cover system.

The tracks are usually installed in the walls of the pool underneath the coping material on a rectangular pool. If the pool is free form and the homeowner wants the tracks to be flush with the decking material the contractor must provide 2¼" wide by ¾" deep grooves on each side of the pool behind the coping material. The grooves must be continuous and parallel from the vault to 3" past the coping material on the opposite side of the pool. The grooves must have a minimum of 2" of concrete under them to properly anchor the tracks.

The standard systems usually come with an aluminum pit cover. However, for an additional dollar amount, stainless steel pans and brackets can be installed so that the masonry material can be continuous around the pool. These can be pricey, so if the homeowner doesn't want to spring for them, the tracks, leading edge bar and aluminum pit cover can be powder coated so that they closely match the deck color.

A system can also be retro-fitted to existing pools using a bench instead of a vault.

Practically, these covers are ASTM certified stand-alone, child-safety barriers meeting the state's requirements. They can save the homeowner up to 70 percent of their energy costs when heating the pool and they keep the leaves out. Since they move at the rate of one foot per second, they are the most convenient covers on the market.