HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE

TITLE 9. SAFETY

SUBTITLE A. PUBLIC SAFETY

CHAPTER 757. POOL YARD ENCLOSURES

Sec. 757.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Self-closing and self-latching device" means a device that causes a gate to automatically close without human or electrical power after it has been opened and to automatically latch without human or electrical power when the gate closes.

(2) "Doorknob lock" means a lock that is in a doorknob and that is operated from the exterior by a key, card, or combination and from the interior without a key, card, or combination.

(3) "Dwelling" or "rental dwelling" means one or more rooms rented to one or more tenants for use as a permanent residence under a lease. The term does not include a room rented to overnight guests.

(4) "French doors" means double doors, sometimes called double-hinged patio doors, that provide access from a dwelling interior to the exterior and in which each of the two doors are hinged and closable so that the edge of one door closes immediately adjacent to the edge of the other door with no partition between the doors. "French door" means either one of the two doors.

(5) "Keyed dead bolt" means a door lock that is not in the doorknob, that locks by a bolt in the doorjamb, that has a bolt with at least a one-inch throw if installed after September 1, 1993, and that is operated from the exterior by a key, card, or combination and operated from the interior by a knob or lever without a key, card, or combination. The term includes a doorknob lock that contains a bolt with at least a one-inch throw.

(6)(A) "Keyless bolting device" means a door lock not in the doorknob that locks:

(i) with a bolt with a one-inch throw into a strike plate screwed into the portion of the doorjamb surface that faces the edge of the door when the door is closed or into a metal doorjamb that serves as the strike plate, operable only by knob or lever from the door's interior and not in any manner from the door's exterior, and that is commonly known as a keyless dead bolt;

(ii) by a drop bolt system operated by placing a central metal plate over a metal doorjamb restraint which protrudes from the doorjamb and which is affixed to the doorjamb frame by means of three case-hardened

screws at least three inches in length. One half of the central plate must overlap the interior surface of the door and the other half of the central plate must overlap the doorjamb when the plate is placed over the doorjamb restraint. The drop bolt system must prevent the door from being opened unless the central plate is lifted off of the doorjamb restraint by a person who is on the interior side of the door; or

(iii) by a metal bar or metal tube that is placed across the entire interior side of the door and secured in place at each end of the bar or tube by heavy-duty metal screw hooks. The screw hooks must be at least three inches in length and must be screwed into the door frame stud or wall stud on each side of the door. The bar or tube must be capable of being secured to both of the screw hooks and must be permanently attached in some way to the door frame stud or wall stud. When secured to the screw hooks, the bar or tube must prevent the door from being opened unless the bar or tube is removed by a person who is on the interior side of the door.

(B) The term does not include a chain latch, flip latch, surface-mounted slide bolt, mortise door bolt, surface-mounted barrel bolt, surface-mounted swing bar door guard, spring-loaded nightlatch, foot bolt, or other lock or latch.

(7) "Multiunit rental complex" means two or more dwelling units in one or more buildings that are under common ownership, managed by the same owner, managing agent, or management company, and located on the same lot or tract of land or adjacent lots or tracts of land. The term includes a condominium project. The term does not include:

(A) a facility primarily renting rooms to overnight guests; or

(B) a single-family home or adjacent single-family homes that are not part of a condominium project.

(8) "Pool" means a permanent swimming pool, permanent wading or reflection pool, or permanent hot tub or spa over 18 inches deep, located at ground level, above ground, below ground, or indoors.

(9) "Pool yard" means an area that contains a pool.

(10) "Pool yard enclosure" or "enclosure" means a fence, wall, or combination of fences, walls, gates, windows, or doors that completely surround a pool.

(11) "Property owners association" means an association of property owners for a residential subdivision, condominium, cooperative, town home project, or other project involving residential dwellings.

(12) "Sliding door handle latch" means a latch or lock that is near the handle on a sliding glass door, that is operated with or without a key, and that is designed to prevent the door from being opened.

(13) "Sliding door pin lock" means a pin or rod that is inserted from the interior side of a sliding glass door at the side opposite the door's handle and that is designed to prevent the door from being opened or lifted.

(14) "Sliding door security bar" means a bar or rod that can be placed at the bottom of or across the interior side of the fixed panel of a sliding glass door and that is designed to prevent the sliding panel of the door from being opened.

(15) "Tenant" means a person who is obligated to pay rent or other consideration and who is authorized to occupy a dwelling, to the exclusion of others, under a verbal or written lease or rental agreement.

(16) "Window latch" means a device on a window or window screen that prevents the window or window screen from being opened and that is operated without a key and only from the interior.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.002. APPLICATION. This chapter applies only to:

(1) a pool owned, controlled, or maintained by the owner of a multiunit rental complex or by a property owners association; and

(2) doors and windows of rental dwellings opening into the pool yard of a multiunit rental complex or condominium, cooperative, or town home project.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.003. ENCLOSURE FOR POOL YARD. (a) Except as otherwise provided by Section 757.005, the owner of a multiunit rental complex with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool shall completely enclose the pool yard with a pool yard enclosure.

(b) The height of the pool yard enclosure must be at least 48 inches as measured from the ground on the side away from the pool.

(c) Openings under the pool yard enclosure may not allow a sphere four inches in diameter to pass under the pool yard enclosure.

(d) If the pool yard enclosure is constructed with horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is at least 45 inches, the openings may not allow a sphere four inches in diameter to pass through the enclosure.

(e) If the pool yard enclosure is constructed with horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is less than 45 inches, the openings may not allow a sphere 1-3/4 inches in diameter to pass through the enclosure.

(f) The use of chain link fencing materials is prohibited entirely for a new pool yard enclosure that is constructed after January 1, 1994. The use of diagonal fencing members that are lower than 49 inches above the ground is prohibited for a new pool yard enclosure that is constructed after January 1, 1994.

(g) Decorative designs or cutouts on or in the pool yard enclosure may not contain any openings greater than 1-3/4 inches in any direction.

(h) Indentations or protrusions in a solid pool yard enclosure without any openings may not be greater than normal construction tolerances and tooled masonry joints on the side away from the pool.

(i) Permanent equipment or structures may not be constructed or placed in a manner that makes them readily available for climbing over the pool yard enclosure.

(j) The wall of a building may be part of the pool yard enclosure only if the doors and windows in the wall comply with Sections 757.006 and 757.007.

(k) The owner of a multiunit rental complex with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool is not required to:

(1) build a pool yard enclosure at specified locations or distances from the pool other than distances for minimum walkways around the pool; or

(2) conform secondary pool yard enclosures, located inside or outside the primary pool yard enclosure, to the requirements of this chapter.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.004. GATES. (a) Except as otherwise provided by Section 757.005, a gate in a fence or wall enclosing a pool yard as required by Section 757.003 must:

(1) have a self-closing and self-latching device;

(2) have hardware enabling it to be locked, at the option of whoever controls the gate, by a padlock or a built-in lock operated by key, card, or combination; and

(3) open outward away from the pool yard.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (c) and Section 757.005, a gate latch must be installed so that it is at least 60 inches above the ground, except that it may be installed lower if:

(1) the latch is installed on the pool yard side of the gate only and is at least three inches below the top of the gate; and

(2) the gate or enclosure has no opening greater than one-half inch in any direction within 18 inches from the latch, including the space between the gate and the gate post to which the gate latches.

(c) A gate latch may be located 42 inches or higher above the ground if

the gate cannot be opened except by key, card, or combination on both sides of the gate.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.005. EXISTING POOL YARD ENCLOSURES. (a) If a pool yard enclosure is constructed or modified before January 1, 1994, and no municipal ordinance containing standards for pool yard enclosures were applicable at the time of construction or modification, the enclosure must comply with the requirements of Sections 757.003 and 757.004, except that:

(1) if the enclosure is constructed with chain link metal fencing material, the openings in the enclosure may not allow a sphere 2-1/4 inches in diameter to pass through the enclosure; or

(2) if the enclosure is constructed with horizontal and vertical members and the distance between the tops of the horizontal members is at least 36 inches, the openings in the enclosure may not allow a sphere four inches in diameter to pass through the enclosure.

(b) If a pool yard enclosure is constructed or modified before January 1, 1994, and if the enclosure is in compliance with applicable municipal ordinances existing on January 1, 1994, and containing standards for pool yard enclosures, Sections 757.003, 757.004(a)(3), and 757.004(b) do not apply to the enclosure.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.006. DOOR. (a) A door, sliding glass door, or French door may not open directly into a pool yard if the date of electrical service for initial construction of the building or pool is on or after January 1, 1994.

(b) A door, sliding glass door, or French door may open directly into a pool yard if the date of electrical service for initial construction of the building or pool is before January 1, 1994, and the pool yard enclosure complies with Subsection (c), (d), or (e), as applicable.

(c) If a door of a building, other than a sliding glass door or screen door, opens into the pool yard, the door must have a:

(1) latch that automatically engages when the door is closed;

(2) spring-loaded door-hinge pin, automatic door closer, or similar device to cause the door to close automatically; and

(3) keyless bolting device that is installed not less than 36 inches or more than 48 inches above the interior floor.

(d) If French doors of a building open to the pool yard, one of the French doors must comply with Subsection (c)(1) and the other door must have:

(1) a keyed dead bolt or keyless bolting device capable of insertion into the doorjamb above the door, and a keyless bolting device capable of insertion into the floor or threshold; or

(2) a bolt with at least a 3/4-inch throw installed inside the door and operated from the edge of the door that is capable of insertion into the doorjamb above the door and another bolt with at least a 3/4-inch throw installed inside the door and operated from the edge of the door that is capable of insertion into the floor or threshold.

(e) If a sliding glass door of a building opens into the pool yard, the sliding glass door must have:

(1) a sliding door handle latch or sliding door security bar that is installed not more than 48 inches above the interior floor; and

(2) a sliding door pin lock that is installed not more than 48 inches above the interior floor.

(f) A door, sliding glass door, or French door that opens into a pool yard from an area of a building that is not used by residents and that has no access to an area outside the pool yard is not required to have a lock, latch, dead bolt, or keyless bolting device.

(g) A keyed dead bolt, keyless bolting device, sliding door pin lock, or sliding door security bar installed before September 1, 1993, may be installed not more than 54 inches from the floor.

(h) A keyed dead bolt or keyless dead bolt, as described by Section 757.001(6)(A)(i), installed in a dwelling on or after September 1, 1993, must have a bolt with a throw of not less than one inch.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.007. WINDOW AND WINDOW SCREENS. A wall of a building constructed before January 1, 1994, may not be used as part of a pool yard enclosure unless each window in the wall has a latch and unless each window screen on a window in the wall is affixed by a window screen latch, screws, or similar means. This section does not require the installation of window screens. A wall of a building constructed on or after January 1, 1994, may not be used as part of a pool yard enclosure unless each ground floor window in the wall is permanently closed and unable to be opened.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.008. BUILDING IN POOL YARD. Each door, sliding glass door, window, and window screen of each dwelling unit in a residential building located in the enclosed pool yard must comply with Sections 757.006 and

757.007.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.009. INSPECTION, REPAIR, AND MAINTENANCE. (a) An owner of a multiunit rental complex or a rental dwelling in a condominium, cooperative, or town home project with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool shall exercise ordinary and reasonable care to inspect, maintain, repair, and keep in good working order the pool yard enclosures, gates, and self-closing and self-latching devices required by this chapter and within the control of the owner or property owners association.

(b) An owner of a multiunit rental complex or a rental dwelling in a condominium, cooperative, or town home project with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool shall exercise ordinary and reasonable care to maintain, repair, and keep in good working order the window latches, sliding door handle latches, sliding door pin locks, and sliding door security bars required by this chapter and within the control of the owner or property owners association after request or notice from the tenant that those devices are malfunctioning or in need of repair or replacement. A request or notice under this subsection may be given orally unless a written lease applicable to the tenant or written rules governing the property owners association require the request or notice to be in writing. The requirement in the lease or rules must be in capital letters and underlined or in 10-point boldfaced print.

(c) An owner of a multiunit rental complex or a rental dwelling in a condominium, cooperative, or town home project with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool shall inspect the pool yard enclosures, gates, and self-closing and self-latching devices on gates no less than once every 31 days.

(d) An owner's or property owners association's duty of inspection, repair, and maintenance under this section may not be waived under any circumstances and may not be enlarged except by written agreement with a tenant or occupant of a multiunit rental complex or a member of a property owners association or as may be otherwise allowed by this chapter.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.010. COMPLIANCE WITH CHAPTER. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) and Section 757.011, a person who constructs or modifies a pool yard enclosure to conform with this chapter may not be required to construct the enclosure differently by a local governmental entity, common law, or any

other law.

(b) An owner of a multiunit rental complex or a rental dwelling in a condominium, cooperative, or town home project with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool may, at the person's option, exceed the standards of this chapter or those adopted under Section 757.011. A tenant or occupant in a multiunit rental complex and a member of a property owners association may, by express written agreement, require the owner of the complex or the association to exceed those standards.

(c) A municipality may continue to require greater overall height requirements for pool yard enclosures if the requirements exist under the municipality's ordinances on January 1, 1994.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.
Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1509, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 757.011. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY. The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission may adopt rules requiring standards for design and construction of pool yard enclosures that exceed the requirements of this chapter and that apply to all pools and pool yards subject to this chapter. An owner of a multiunit rental complex or a rental dwelling in a condominium, cooperative, or town home project with a pool or a property owners association that owns, controls, or maintains a pool shall comply with and shall be liable for failure to comply with those rules to the same extent as if they were part of this chapter.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.
Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 219), Sec. 3.1510, eff. April 2, 2015.

Sec. 757.012. ENFORCEMENT. (a) A tenant of an owner of a multiunit rental complex, a member of a property owners association, a governmental entity, or any other person or the person's representative may maintain an action against the owner or property owners association for failure to comply with the requirements of this chapter. In that action, the person may obtain:

(1) a court order directing the owner or property owners association to comply with this chapter;

(2) a judgment against the owner or property owners association for actual damages resulting from the failure to comply with the requirements of

this chapter;

(3) a judgment against the owner or property owners association for punitive damages resulting from the failure to comply with the requirements of this chapter if the actual damages to the person were caused by the owner's or property owners association's intentional, malicious, or grossly negligent actions;

(4) a judgment against the owner or property owners association for actual damages, and if appropriate, punitive damages, where the owner or association was in compliance with this chapter at the time of the pool-related damaging event but was consciously indifferent to access being repeatedly gained to the pool yard by unauthorized persons; or

(5) a judgment against the owner or property owners association for a civil penalty of not more than $5,000 if the owner or property owners association fails to comply with this chapter within a reasonable time after written notice by a tenant of the multiunit rental complex or a member of the property owners association.

(b) A court may award reasonable attorney fees and costs to the prevailing party in an action brought under Subsection (a)(5).

(c) The attorney general, a local health department, a municipality, or a county having jurisdiction may enforce this chapter by any lawful means, including inspections, permits, fees, civil fines, criminal prosecutions, injunctions, and, after required notice, governmental construction or repair of pool yard enclosures that do not exist or that do not comply with this chapter.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.013. TENANT'S REQUEST FOR REPAIRS. A tenant in a multiunit rental complex with a pool may verbally request repair of a keyed dead bolt, keyless bolting device, sliding door latch, sliding door pin lock, sliding door security bar, window latch, or window screen latch unless a provision of a written lease executed by the tenant requires that the request be made in writing and the provision is in capital letters and underlined or in 10-point boldfaced print. A request for repair may be given to the owner or the owner's managing agent.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.014. APPLICATION TO OTHER BODIES OF WATER AND RELATED FACILITIES. The owner of a multiunit rental complex or a property owners association is not required to enclose a body of water or construct barriers between the owner's or property owners association's property and a body of

water such as an ocean, bay, lake, pond, bayou, river, creek, stream, spring, reservoir, stock tank, culvert, drainage ditch, detention pond, or other flood or drainage facility.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.015. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS. (a) The duties established by this chapter for an owner of a multiunit dwelling project, an owner of a dwelling in a condominium, cooperative, or town home project, and a property owners association supersede those established by common law, the Property Code, the Health and Safety Code, the Local Government Code other than Section 214.101, and local ordinances relating to duties to inspect, install, repair, or maintain:

(1) pool yard enclosures;

(2) pool yard enclosure gates and gate latches, including self-closing and self-latching devices;

(3) keyed dead bolts, keyless bolting devices, sliding door handle latches, sliding door security bars, self-latching and self-closing devices, and sliding door pin locks on doors that open into a pool yard area and that are owned and controlled by the owner or property owners association; and

(4) latches on windows that open into a pool yard area and that are owned and controlled by the owner or property owners association.

(b) This chapter does not affect any duties of a rental dwelling owner, lessor, sublessor, management company, or managing agent under Subchapter D, Chapter 92, Property Code.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.016. NONEXCLUSIVE REMEDIES. The remedies contained in this chapter are not exclusive and are not intended to affect existing remedies allowed by law or other procedure.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.

Sec. 757.017. INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION. The provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed to promote its underlying purpose which is to prevent swimming pool deaths and injuries in this state.

Added by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 517, Sec. 2, eff. Jan. 1, 1994.