

Communal Pool Depth in North Cyprus

What the law actually says, what it doesn't, and how to fix a flat-bottomed 1.5 m communal pool before it's finished.

A HOMEOWNER & SITE COMMITTEE GUIDE · TRNC · SEPTEMBER 2026

This guide was written in response to a question from a Çatalköy resident: an unfinished communal pool, 6 m × 15 m, dug to **5 ft (1.52 m) at both ends** — too deep for children who can't swim, and uncomfortable for shorter adults. It's one of the most common problems we're called in to correct on North Cyprus developments, and it's far cheaper to solve now than after handover.

THE SHORT ANSWER

There is no TRNC law setting a minimum or maximum depth for a communal swimming pool.

That is not the same as saying the depth doesn't matter. Absence of a specific depth rule does not remove liability, and it does not make a uniform 1.5 m pool a sensible design for a residential site with families on it.

1. Don't confuse North with South

The Republic of Cyprus passed the **Swimming Pools Law of 2025 (Law 137(I)/2025)**, in force from July 2025. It replaced the 1992 public pools law, created a three-tier classification covering communal and self-catering pools, and aligned the rules with the European standard **EN 15288-2:2018**.

None of that applies in Çatalköy or anywhere else in the TRNC. It is quoted constantly in North Cyprus community groups and it is simply the wrong jurisdiction. Anyone telling you that your communal pool now legally requires a lifeguard, an operating licence or a specific depth profile is quoting a law that stops at the Green Line.

2. What does apply in the TRNC

Building permit — Fasil 96

Once Şehir Planlama Dairesi approves a development, a construction permit must be obtained from the local belediye under **Fasil 96, Yollar ve Binalar Düzenleme Yasası** (the Streets and Buildings Regulation Law). Nothing is built inside municipal boundaries without it. Çatalköy now falls under **Çatalköy-Esentepe Belediyesi** in the Girne district.

The pool will appear on the approved project drawings. **This is your single strongest lever** — see Section 6.

No dedicated pool safety regulation

The TRNC has no equivalent of the Turkish Health Ministry pool regulation or the EU design standard. This is a recognised gap, not an oversight on your part. In June 2026 the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association (KTTB) publicly stated that hygiene and safety conditions at beaches and pools have serious deficiencies that have gone unaddressed for years, and called for analysis results from pools open to public use to be released. The Health Ministry publishes drinking water and sea water analyses; pool results are not in that set.

Liability — Fasil 148

Negligence in the TRNC falls under **Fasil 148, Haksız Fiiller Yasası** (the Civil Wrongs Law). If a child drowns, or an adult enters head-first and sustains a spinal injury, that is where the claim lands — against the developer, and later against the site management committee.

THE POINT MOST PEOPLE MISS

"There's no law about it" is not a defence. Under Fasil 148 the test is whether a reasonable person would have foreseen the risk and taken reasonable steps. A uniform 1.5 m pool with no depth markings, no shallow area and no signage, on a site with children living on it, is not a difficult case to argue.

3. The benchmark numbers to argue with

There is no TRNC standard, but there are recognised design benchmarks. Most engineers and pool contractors working in North Cyprus design to **TS 11899**, the Turkish pool standard, and these are the figures a court, an insurer or a developer's own architect

will recognise.

ELEMENT	BENCHMARK	BASIS
Children's / toddler pool	50 cm max	Mandatory under TS 11899 and the Turkish Health Ministry regulation, and required to be separate from the adult pool
Adult swimmable depth	1.35 m	The standard design depth for general swimming under TS 11899
Residential / site pool ceiling	1.50 m	Turkish pool designers' consistent advice is never to exceed this on a residential pool
Safe head-first entry	Not at 1.5 m	1.5 m is far below any diving-safe depth. No residential pool at this depth should be entered head-first from the side
Perimeter walkway	1.5 m wide	Non-slip surround, standard practice for shared pools

WHY 1.50 M SPECIFICALLY

The recurring warning in Turkish pool design guidance is that 1.50 m is precisely the critical depth at which a non-swimming child who falls in drowns — and the non-swimming parent who goes in after them drowns too. It is deep enough to be lethal to both and shallow enough that people assume it's safe.

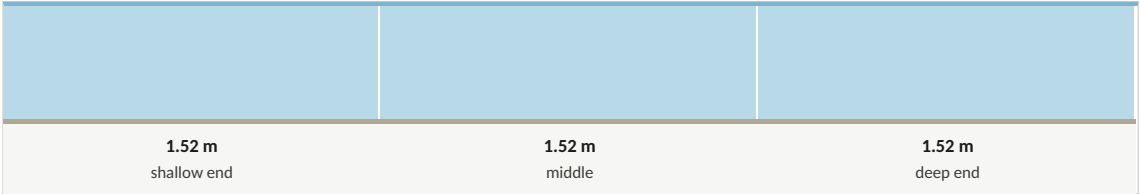
The pool in question is 1.52 m. At both ends.

4. Why a flat 1.5 m pool is the worst of both worlds

A uniform depth pool fails at both ends of the user range simultaneously:

- **Too deep to stand.** Anyone under roughly 1.65 m tall cannot stand comfortably with their head clear. That rules out most children and a good number of adults, everywhere in the pool — there is nowhere to retreat to.
- **Too shallow to enter head-first.** Fifteen metres of poolside with no depth markings is an invitation, particularly to teenagers. This is how spinal injuries happen.
- **No supervised shallow zone.** Parents of small children have no safe area, so either the children don't use the pool at all, or they use it in a way nobody is comfortable with.
- **More water, more cost.** A 6 × 15 m pool at 1.52 m holds roughly 137 m³. Every centimetre of unnecessary depth is water, heat, chemicals and pump running cost the site pays for, every year, forever.

AS CURRENTLY DUG — 6 M × 15 M, UNIFORM DEPTH

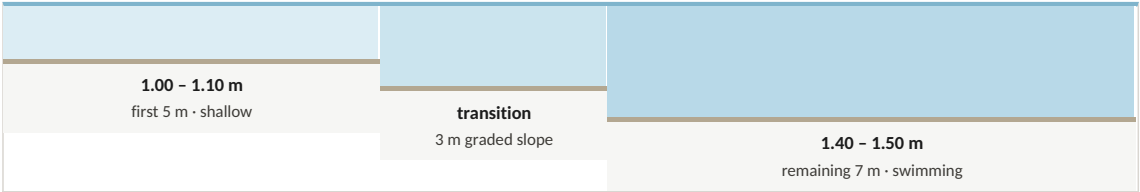


No standing zone anywhere · no toddler area · below diving-safe depth across the whole 15 m

5. The fix — and the time to do it is now

The pool is unfinished. Raising a section of floor before the screed and tiling go on costs a fraction of what it costs to break out a finished pool later. Here is the profile we would build on a 6 × 15 m communal pool serving families:

RECOMMENDED PROFILE — GRADED, SAME FOOTPRINT



Standing depth for shorter adults and supervised children · full-depth swimming lane retained · roughly 18 m³ less water to heat and treat

The full specification we'd recommend

1. **Raise one end.** Approximately the first 5 m of the 15 m built up to 1.00–1.10 m, with a graded slope over about 3 m rising into

the deeper section at 1.40–1.50 m. Reinforced raise, new screed, then tile.

2. **Beach entry or Roman steps** at the shallow end rather than a vertical ladder. Far better for children, older residents and anyone with limited mobility — and it's the single feature residents comment on most after handover.
3. **Separate toddler pool at 30–40 cm** if the plot allows, positioned within sight of the main pool but physically separate.
4. **Depth markings in both metres and feet**, tiled into the coping and onto the pool wall, at both ends and at the point the floor changes.
5. **NO DIVING / ATLAMAYIN tiles** at intervals along the deep side. This costs almost nothing and it is the first thing anyone looks for after an accident.
6. **Handrails and ladders at both ends**, plus a grab rail on the long side.
7. **Non-slip surround**, minimum 1.5 m wide, in a material that doesn't hold heat — critical in a Kyrenia summer.
8. **Pool rules board in Turkish and English**, stating plainly that there is no lifeguard and that under-12s must be accompanied.

6. Your leverage with the developer

Before you accept the pool as complete:

- ☐ **Request the onaylı proje** — the approved project drawings — from the developer, or from Çatalköy-Esentepe Belediyesi directly.
- ☐ **Compare built depths against approved depths.** If what has been dug doesn't match what was approved, or doesn't match the sales brochure and contract, the developer corrects it at their cost.
- ☐ **Raise it formally at a residents' meeting** and have it minuted in writing, with the specification you want, before handover.
- ☐ **Check the site's public liability insurance** and whether cover is conditional on safety measures being in place.
- ☐ **Do not sign off the pool** as complete until the profile, markings and signage are agreed in writing.
- ☐ **If the developer resists**, a TRNC avukat working on a Fasil 148 negligence footing tends to focus minds quickly.

TERMS YOU'LL NEED IN TURKISH

Onaylı proje	The approved project drawings held by the belediye
İnşaat ruhsatı	Building permit (issued under Fasil 96)
Fen İşleri	The municipal technical / building control department
Müteahhit	The contractor / developer
Havuz derinliği	Pool depth
Çocuk havuzu	Children's pool
Site yönetimi	Site management committee
Atlamayın / Atlamak yasaktır	No diving

7. Who to speak to

- **Çatalköy-Esentepe Belediyesi** — **Fen İşleri** for the approved drawings and permit position.
- **The project architect** (a KTMMOB Mimarlar Odası member) who stamped the drawings.
- **A TRNC avukat** if the developer won't engage.
- **A pool contractor who will survey the shell before it's finished** and cost the raise properly — which is where we come in.

Thinking about a pool? Or stuck with one that isn't right?

365 Build & Design builds and remedies swimming pools across North Cyprus — groundworks, structure, profiling, surrounds and tiling. If your communal or private pool has been dug to the wrong profile, we will survey it, tell you honestly what can and can't be changed at this stage, and cost the correction properly.

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Important: This guide is general construction and practical guidance, not legal advice. 365 Build & Design is a construction company, not a law firm. Legislation and municipal practice in the TRNC change, and the position on any individual site depends on its permit, its title and its contracts. Take advice from a qualified TRNC avukat before relying on the legal points above in a dispute.

Referenced: Swimming Pools Law of 2025, Law 137(I)/2025 (Republic of Cyprus) · EN 15288-1 and EN 15288-2:2018, Swimming pools for public use · Fasil 96, Yollar ve Binalar Düzenleme Yasası (TRNC) · Fasil 148, Haksız Fiiller Yasası (TRNC) · TS 11899, Turkish Standard for swimming pools · Yüzme Havuzlarının Tabi Olacağı Sağlık Esasları Hakkında Yönetmelik (Türkiye) · Kıbrıs Türk Tabipleri Birliği statement on beach and pool safety, June 2026.

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