

OUTDOOR LIVING
POOL & PATIO

POOL BUYING GUIDE



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There are many things to consider before you choose the swimming pool builder that is right for you. Please read everything this has to offer in order to educate yourself about choosing your builder, protecting your monetary investment, the building process itself, and the protection of your investment after the pool is completed and paid for.

EXPERT TIPS

First, let's start with the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex and what it has to offer. There are over 400 pool builders in this area. There are no licensing requirements to become a pool builder. A simple \$12.00 payment to the Secretary of State and a catchy name is all it takes for someone to call themselves a pool contractor. The pool construction business is known for unscrupulous salesmen and shoddy and or incomplete construction. It is also the only construction business that takes payments up front prior to work being performed. This is a very bad equation for a trusting homeowner and a less than an upstanding company. How do you weed out the bad companies? Listed below are several tips.

QUESTIONS TO ASK



1. HOW MANY YEARS HAS THE COMPANY BEEN IN BUSINESS AND HAVE THEY BEEN IN BUSINESS UNDER ANY OTHER NAME?

Also, ask how long they have been in business in Texas. This is especially important right now. Pool builders from California and Arizona are rushing to Texas to build pools here. Our economy is much stronger. Do you want to build with a company that will leave in two years to go back to their home state? The longer in business, the better, but don't take a verbal answer. Check up on the company with the local Better Business Bureau.

2. IS THE BUILDER INSURED?

What are the insurance limits? Does the builder require their subcontractors to carry general liability insurance? Will the builder provide you with a certificate of proof? Any kind of harm done to your property or to anyone in and around the property during construction needs to be covered.

3. IS IT A LOCAL SWIMMING POOL COMPANY, A BRANCH, OR FRANCHISE?

Be sure your pool builder is a locally owned company. Branches and franchise owned often come and go. You want to know that they stand behind every swimming pool and warranty.

4. IS THE POOL BUILDER AN ESTABLISHED COMPANY?

Do they own their own equipment and vehicles? Are they in their own building? Can you see samples of pools they have built on display or do you have to inconvenience their customers to view the company's construction, work, and options? You will want to drive to and physically go into their business office. Many new builders or those with cash flow problems may work out of their house or truck. This may mean that they are using your money to pay for someone else's pool. More established builders will own their own building and may have a pool on display. This gives you the opportunity to see their work. You can also see features and benefits and take away the guessing of what your pool will look like. You can touch the surfaces and see the color in real life! You can see and hear the water features; you can put your feet in the pool or on decking choices to feel the surfaces on your feet!

5. ASK FOR REFERENCES.

Any reputable pool builder will provide you with a list of references of previous customers. Ask them about the building process and customer service after completion.



6. PRICING TACTICS AND TRICKS.

Although picking the least expensive option might be great for small mass produced items, it is not the rule of thumb for choosing a pool builder. There is an adage that states “If you think the cost of a professional is expensive, wait until you hire an amateur.” Make sure you sit down and compare “apples to apples”. Just because you have less expensive bids does not mean that pools are being priced with the same features. Some pool companies offer low pricing to get you to sign a contract with them and then continuously ask you for money after construction has begun.

Do you see advertisements promising pools at very low prices? It is possible to build a pool at a very low price. But most of these “incredible deals” are nothing more than bait and switch tactics to get you to call. You should be aware that to build a pool at a low price, quality would have to be compromised. The cost of the pool may be cheap, but your time and money spent to upkeep the pool could be 4 to 5 times more if the pool was not built right.

Why do cost estimates vary when pools seem to be the same size? The price of a pool is determined by much more than size and shape of the pool. A lot of builders do not include some of the most important factors affecting cost in their proposals. Because there are so many factors that go into building a pool, there are a lot of places to cut corners. Here are some of them: Craftsmanship, Quality of Materials (smaller pumps, filters, etc), Design, Underground Strength, Ease of Maintenance, Warranties.

Sure the less expensive pool may look the same as the more expensive option as you look at it from your living room window, but what is it made of? You wouldn't buy a car without looking under the hood, would you? Good work is never cheap, and cheap work is never good! Get every last little item in writing.

7. PAYMENTS AND MILESTONES.

Most companies will secure a small payment at contract signing. This money goes towards pulling permits and construction drawings. After that, payments are usually set up with 3 payments of 30% of the contract amount and a final payment of 10%. If a contractor asks you for more than that upfront, be very cautious. Before you sign a contract, verify a number of payments and when they are due. Get it in writing!



8. HOW LONG WILL CONSTRUCTION TAKE?

Most simple pool/spa combos usually take 6 weeks. The more elaborate the pool the longer the construction. Most builders have shorter construction windows from August through January. Verify build times with previous customers who have had a pool built by the same company. How long did their pool sit with no work being done?



10. WARRANTIES.

Warranties should cover the pool structure, filter tank, heater and other integral components. Pool builders with strong reputations and outstanding records in the swimming pool industry will have programs with the industry's top-quality equipment manufacturers. They are often able to offer extended warranties beyond that of other pool builders. These premier builders have the first in leading edge technologies too. Some areas may have extreme soil conditions that can cause structural issues. Ask your designer if there may be any problems with your pool and what will they do to address the potential problems.

You DREAM It, We BUILD It



11. RED LIGHT WARNINGS.

Bait and switch sales tactics...you are offered one pool on “sale” and then the sales person attempts to convert you to a more costly option.

Your pool is at a reduced price because it will be a “model” for their company. Pressure to sign a contract.

Requests for significant down payments. Unprofessional proposals. If a company can't take the time to type a professional proposal for you, how will they take the time to build you a professional pool?

If you don't have it in writing, don't sign a contract.



AWARD-WINNING TOP 50 POOL BUILDER & BEST OF DENTON COUNTY



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