

Pool Services **BUYER'S GUIDE**

VITAL FACTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE CHOOSING A POOL CARE PROFESSIONAL

Don't forget ...

your pool is an asset to your home and what a substantial investment you may have made to have your pool.

Most swimming pool owners are passionate and, in many cases, even proud of their swimming pools.

Choosing a caretaker can be a very important decision.

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The swimming pool industry is like no other industry in so many ways.

While certain aspects of the business are, of course, universal, many pool care circumstances will vary from pool to pool, location to location, customer to customer, and so on for a vast number of reasons. Pool care needs must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. A qualified complete pool care provider should not be underestimated. Your pool requires a huge range of expertise.

No matter how long an individual has been in the industry, a seasoned professional will recognize the nature of a situation immediately. He or she will often network in order to problem solve and keep current in the swimming pool industry.

Consider just a few areas such as, but not limited to:

- **pool products**
- **water chemistry**
- **pool finishes,**

Complete understanding of pool equipment such as:

- **pumps**
- **motors**
- **filters**
- **pool and spa heaters**
- **timers & controls**
- **automation**
- **online automation**
- **electrical**
- **plumbing**
- **leak detection**
- **products and sales, etc.**

Decades of experience and/or often collaboration with others can be necessary and are qualities you will want to find in your pool care provider.

Just because pool care professionals are extremely plentiful does not mean they are all qualified.

Know the credentials of your swimming pool care provider. Most service providers in Florida these days carry only an occupational business license. This type of license requires very little dedication and investment and, while often violated, is extremely limited regarding the tasks and procedures the provider is approved and qualified to perform.

This type of qualification should not be confused with a State of Florida Certified Swimming Pool Contractors License. Holding a certified contractors license is a huge commitment to the swimming pool industry. All too often caretakers are chosen to be trusted with your investment without any knowledge of the true qualifications of that individual or company.

Be weary of certification certificates.

There are a number of certifications available with only a few hours of commitment and you are out the door with a formal-looking certificate. Most of these are good to have but do not confuse them with a “qualified State of Florida Certified Contractors License”.

Learn the safety concerns we have in the swimming pool industry related to you, your pool, your property, and service technician so you can be certain your pool care provider has an active safety awareness program in place for their operation.

Be aware of the nearly never ending list of pool issues that can occur over time.

While most issues are not serious, if not handled correctly, they can become detrimental to your swimming pool or even worse, a safety hazard. While stating experience these days is nearly a clishea, it is vital that you choose a service provider with a vast knowledge of swimming pool problems, products, equipment, and operation, just to name a few. A seasoned, certified swimming pool contractor will recognize issues you may face right away and will be capable of offering guidance and immediate assistance and resolution.

Choosing a company large enough and established enough to have a support system in place is important.

The pool service business is loaded with single-operator pool maintenance providers. As is the case in most service businesses, the pool service industry is a chronic and demanding business to be in. A single operator can certainly be a wonderful provider, but keep in

mind, in more cases than not statistics indicate that single providers will migrate out of the industry in 2-3 years time. Without a support system of others involved, a single-operator provider often finds it impossible to take a vacation or cover the demands during times when his or her personal life is in need.

Always ensure you choose a company that is properly insured.

As is the case with all insurance, you have it hoping you never need it.

Reputation is another vital clue.

Know the ownership behind the company, the company's philosophy and long-standing reputation in the industry and community. There should be documented credentials available such as, but not limited to, state certified contractors licensing in the company's name, years of experience, AAA rating with the local BBB, and testimonials available upon request.

Commercial qualifications and experience is another credential to look for.

Commercial work can require more advanced business skills and vetting. A company with a good reputation regarding commercial work can be another clue of an established, capable, and seasoned professional.

Cost of pool service. How much should pool service cost?

Most cities in Florida have hundreds of pool care providers. As is always the case, a huge number of providers brings the cost of the service down. It is important to know that this also dilutes and reduces the number of truly qualified quality providers in the industry as well. Having so many providers in an industry can give a false impression. It often implies that the tasks and requirements are simple, anyone can do it, which leads to the expectation of a low cost service.

Remember, complete swimming pool care is much, much more than just "pool cleaning."

The right company in this industry is rarely, if ever, the least expensive one. Know that it takes a larger margin to have and maintain a company of qualified professionals in order to provide the quality of service your pool requires and pool owners expect.