

Swimming Pool Buyer's Guide

Hiring a Florida Swimming Pool and Spa Contractor

Choosing a contractor to build your swimming pool or spa can be a daunting task. You do not want just any contractor, you want the contractor that is right for you and will help you transform your backyard into your personal paradise. Use the list and tools below to guide you through this important step in the swimming-building process.

1. Use the Find a [Florida Pool Pro Member Directory](#) and recommendations from family and friends to make a list of at least three possible companies.
2. Verify their contractor's license is current, active, and covers the work to be done. You can verify the contractor's license and scope of work with the State of Florida [HERE](#). All of the contractors you are considering should have their Florida Contractor's License number prominently displayed on their website and marketing materials. It is important to only hire licensed contractors. Unlicensed contracting is illegal and can lead to delays and additional costs.
3. Research your potential contractor's work. Browse their website and social media pages, read customer reviews and testimonials, and ask for references. It is important to get a feel for the type of work and customer service your contractor offers. Do not skip this step!
4. Meet face-to-face with the contractors you are considering. The face-to-face consultation is the final step in finding your contractor; this is your chance to explain your vision and hear how your contractor can make it a reality.

Why Hire an FSPA Member?

License and insurance verified (when required). Upon joining, and during annual renewal, the FSPA confirms the company has a licensed professional when required (water maintenance does not need one, but repairs and building do). A copy of liability insurance and workers' compensation (or an exemption) is also submitted.

No unresolved consumer complaints. Membership is not just a payment. Applicants are researched to find any complaints against their license filed with the Better Business Bureau or significant issues in online reviews. Unresolved issues can prevent approval.

Code of ethics. FSPA members agree to a code of ethics when they join. Ethics complaints can result in membership termination.

Education and information. FSPA members have access to free education for everyone in the company, as well as access to information, tips and best practices through weekly emails and a monthly magazine.

Building Your Oasis

2020 and 2021 have been a time of explosive growth in the Florida swimming pool and spa industry. Check out FSPA's [State of the Florida Pool Industry Bulletin](#) to learn how increased demand, product shortages, and labor shortages have affected the Florida swimming pool and spa industry.

1. **Building Times and Start Times.** Under the current industry conditions, it is not unusual for new swimming pool builds to begin six months or more after your contract is signed. Once your build starts, the build time will be dependent on material availability, labor availability, weather, and building permitting and inspections. Progress on a swimming pool is measured in weeks, not days. It is important to maintain open lines of communication with your contractor to stay up to date on your pool's progress and possible delays.

2. **Phases of Construction**
 - a. **Engineering / Permitting:** After you and your builder decide on the design you want, engineered plans are finalized and permits are pulled by the contractor.
 - b. **Excavation and Shell:** The crew places stakes on your property following the layout of the pool with extra room for the concrete and steel. Heavy equipment is brought in to dig and remove dirt. Steel reinforcing bars are installed. An inspection is required during this phase. A concrete crew will form the shell. Building inspectors and weather can cause unexpected delays, which may affect time frames.
 - c. **Tile / Plumbing:** Plumbing lines are installed below the surface and equipment will be installed. An inspection may be required in your area. The tile is installed.
 - d. **Decking / Grading:** The ground is graded for the deck and the deck is formed and installed.
 - e. **Equipment / Electrical:** A licensed electrician will perform the necessary electrical work. Installation of equipment is done.
 - f. **Fence or Screen:** Pools must be enclosed by a screen, a fence, or a wall.
 - g. **Child Safety:** The Barrier Law requires door and window alarms, an approved safety pool cover, self-closing, self-latching doors, or a safety fence to be installed.
 - h. **Final Cleanup / Grading:** The crew will remove any construction materials and level the ground around the pool.
 - i. **Interior Finish:** The interior finish you have selected is done and the pool will be filled with water.
 - j. **Balancing / Start-up:** Instruction will be given on how to properly maintain your new pool and how to add chemicals, etc.

Enjoying Your Swimming Pool

Now that your dream backyard is your reality, it's time to relax with a cold drink and enjoy your new swimming pool. Make sure your pool is always ready and always sparkling by finding a Florida swimming pool and spa maintenance professional to hire by using the [Florida Pool Pro Member Directory](#).