

New Above Ground Pool? What to Expect... ?

With the purchase of a new swimming pool comes a lot of questions and concerns. This guide was written in the hopes of answering those questions - starting from the purchase of the pool right up to enjoying it on those hot lazy days of summer. All of us at Pioneer Family Pools hope this guide will be helpful to both the first time buyers and seasoned veterans of swimming pools. With that said, let's get right to it.

First Steps...

Now that you've just purchased a swimming pool, there are a few things that need to be considered.



Building permit

In most townships and cities, you are required to get a building permit for the installation of your pool. The steps involved in doing just that are fairly simple, but do require some planning. First, visit or contact online, your city or town hall and get all the permit requirements. Most places will hand out a prepared document. This will consist of all the by-laws that must be respected when setting up a swimming pool, everything from the distance between the pool and your property line to the noise restrictions of the pump. Since each city and township has different requirements that vary greatly, don't be surprised if the salesperson did not cover everything. We highly recommend that you begin this process early since, in some areas it can take a couple of weeks to obtain your permit. To speed up this process, make sure you meet all the requirements and have all the necessary information. Don't be afraid to ask questions at the by-law office. Probably the best question you can ask is "When people get a permit for a swimming pool, what mistakes do they often make?" If you find you're having problems, don't hesitate to give us a call.



Position of the pool

One detail that often gets overlooked until the last moment or even until after the installation has begun is the positioning of the pool. The first thing to do is to ensure that the pool will fit in your yard, taking into account all of the township and city by-laws. In every case, they will specify the minimum distance the pool must be from your fence, property line or other object. The best way of doing this is to draw out a diagram of your property and include all the restrictions. This will then leave you with the portion of your yard you can actually use for the pool. Once you have this rough diagram in hand, use a long extension cord or garden hose to actually lay out the shape of the pool in your yard. This will really help to visualize the pool. Just remember that it will always look slightly smaller than the real thing.

Next, when laying out the position of the pool, you need to take into account the position of the filter and the pump. The standard installation is with the pump and filter about 1 to 2 feet away from the pool and placed anywhere around the perimeter of the pool. Always remember that you will need access to the equipment for regular maintenance. For that reason we don't recommend placing the equipment under a deck or other small enclosure unless steps are taken to allow easy access. Also remember that township or city by-laws will place some restrictions on placement of the pump and filter.

In some cases, our customers prefer to place the pump and filter a distance from the pool. This can be done, but there are some considerations to take into account. First, when placing the equipment at a distance from the pool, we must ensure that the plumbing will still function properly. Ask the salesperson about this before the installation in order to eliminate confusion on the day of installation. Of course this type of installation will involve some extra cost for material and extra labour; again consult the salesperson with these details to ensure there is no confusion.

One situation we encounter quite often that can cause some concern are the existing decks. In almost every instance where we have installed a pool with an existing deck, it has proved impossible to get everything to fit just right - from the height of the pool to how close we can get it. The installers can, in most cases, get it pretty close, but a perfect fit is impossible and should not be expected.

If you foresee a potential problem with the location of your pool, please give us a call and we will do our very best to have somebody go and take a look. It should be understood that during the months of May, June and July, it is very difficult to inspect every job site before hand. The best advice we can give is to

be present when the installation is being done, and have a rough plan of what you want. Don't hesitate to ask questions even if they might seem ridiculous. Often it's the smallest details that cause the biggest problems. We always try to keep communications efficient between the sales staff and the installation crews, but unfortunately, some details can sometimes get lost. **Talk to the installers.**

The Installation

Now that the preliminaries have been taken care of and everything is ready for the installation crew to come over and get it done, what's next?



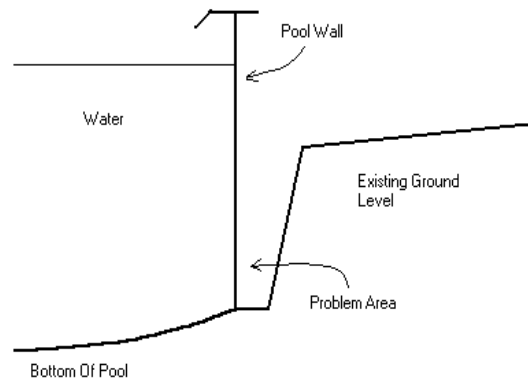
Excessive slope/grade

When you purchase the pool, the installation price that is given includes the yard preparation. However, if the pool area has more than 6" of slope (distance from highest to lowest point of pool area), then there is an additional cost for the extra excavation.

When using excavation equipment there are certain things to consider. First is access. The machine of course needs to have a way of getting into your backyard. It is imperative that the machine is given a 4ft 4" flat plane path to the pool, if there is not a flat plane a 5ft path is required. The next thing to remember is that once you have a machine in your backyard, there will be damage done to the sod, especially if the ground is wet. This damage is always kept to a minimum, but is unavoidable. We are not responsible for this damage

At this point it is important that we discuss how we level off a sloped yard.

The diagram shows what an above ground pool installation looks like when dug down. As we can see, there is an existing grade that is much too high. When a pool is installed, it is important to remember that it cannot be backfilled more than 6" up the wall. Because we cannot fully backfill the wall, it creates an area between the



pool and the undisturbed earth where water can accumulate. During the summer this is not much of a problem. However in the late fall and especially in the spring, water which accumulates in the problem area can freeze, thaw and refreeze. This action can, in some cases, cause damage to the pool which can be serious enough to make it collapse. Having water pool in the problem area can also cause the soil to become very soft (a situation known as soil saturation), so soft that the pool could possibly start sinking in that area. The solution to this is to have **drainage pipe** (also known as weeping tile or "Big O") installed once the builders have completed the installation of your pool. Talk to your installation team for advice.

No matter how the slope is in your backyard, the important thing to remember is to communicate with the installer on how you prefer the work to be done. While it is possible for some details to be taken care of with the salesperson you deal with in the store, things like grade of the yard can really only be done right if you, the customer and the installer, talk it over first. Once the pool is installed, there's no way to change it.

When is my pool getting installed?



When a pool is bought from Pioneer Family Pools certain things begin to happen. Within a short time, your sales contract is processed at our head office. From this point the contract is assigned to our Installation Department. When the sales contract is finalized, a tentative installation week is written down. This week of course is tentative since the weather can affect our plans.

It is simply not possible to install a swimming pool when the weather isn't co-operating. This can be rain, wind or low temperatures. If it's raining, well it's quite obvious we can't do the work. This may also cause a few days of further delay due to wet yards (it is not possible to install a pool when the yard is saturated). Wind can also delay work since the pool is quite vulnerable to a gust of wind before water is added to it. Next are low temperatures. This comes into play only in the spring and fall. What happens here are problems with the liner stretching. When it's cold (anything around 0-15 Celsius depending on the liner), the liner simply won't stretch. When a liner won't stretch, it can't be installed.

Next you will receive a call to set up the delivery of the material. The pool is normally delivered the week prior to the installation. Don't worry if this call

doesn't come until just a few days before the installation. Since the installation schedule is ever changing and prone to weather delays, our delivery schedule can also be affected by these delays. It's important to remember that payment is due when the pool is delivered.



Since most people work during the week, it's quite possible that the delivery will occur while the customer is not at home. This is a situation we deal with every day and should not cause any concern. The pool is normally delivered to the garage (or shed) or to the backyard. If it's not possible for our customers to be at home for the delivery, we ask that the backyard or garage be left unlocked or that alternative arrangements be made for accessing the designated areas. The materials will take up an area of approximately 6' x 8' or about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the space that a car would take up. The materials are packaged separately and can be split apart should you not have a large enough space to store them all together. A Pioneer Family Pools representative will call you to go over all of the details the day before the delivery.

You will receive a phone call from the installer within roughly one week of the pool delivery.



The installers are in the yard...

When the day comes for the pool to be installed, certain details need to be taken care of. Apart from the normal things like where the pool is being installed and so forth, the installer will need to know certain things from you. By being prepared, the entire installation process can be more efficient.



The first major concern is water. Above ground pools require quite a bit of water. There are two options for filling the pool. First is by using a garden hose. Of course this can be rather slow and, in some areas with water meters, expensive. The installers do require some water in the pool in order to finish the installation. If this occurs, the installer will have to leave the installation incomplete until your garden hose can fill it up enough. In most cases, the

installer will return the next day and complete the installation. If possible, try to have some of your neighbours lend a hand by sharing their garden hoses. This will speed up the filling process quite a bit.

The second option is to hire a water haulage company. With this option, the problems associated with having enough water to complete the installation are resolved. It does require a little more planning on your part though. The first step is to shop around. Water haulage companies can have varying prices for different sizes of trucks. When you are shopping for water, always remember to ask for the quantity of water being hauled. Ask our sales staff for recommendations.

Once you have decided on a certain company, ask them how much notice they require. This is important since you will need to reserve their services. Once you get your installation date, call the water company, reserve them and confirm how many hours of notice they need. Some companies do not allow for flexible times. If this is the case, you may want to look for another water haulage company. When the installer arrives, have the phone number ready for him as well as the number of required hours of notice. Since you have already reserved your water truck for that day, it's only a matter of the installer giving the company a call to confirm the exact time the water will be needed.

Having the position of the pool and filter determined in advance is also important. If you wish to make any type of major changes regarding the distance of the pump and filter from the pool, remember to discuss this with our installation manager **before** the day of the installation. Our installers are carrying a limited quantity of extra material, but it may not be enough to permit the changes you wish.

If there are by-law concerns that must be addressed, please ensure that they are discussed with the installation crew before they start the work. If there is a problem with the position of the pool in regards to the installation, the installation crew will discuss it with you until a solution can be found.

If a machine excavation has been decided upon, it may be necessary for things like fence post and so on to be moved before hand. These details should be addressed **before** the excavator arrives. Ensure that a clear path is available for the machine. This also applies to a manual excavation. Make sure that the installers will be able to move freely from their vehicle to the pool site with a wheelbarrow.

As a final note, the installation crews are normally concentrating on their work and often forget to watch out for children. The job site can be somewhat dangerous for children until the pool is up. Also, kids being kids, they will sometimes explore areas they shouldn't. During some parts of the installations, the pool may be rather fragile. A slight push from small hands could lead to damage.



Legal stuff and such

At this point we will talk about some of the legal stuff you find on our contracts and some important information you should know.

1. *The owner shall be responsible for the cost of:*
 - A) *water for filling of swimming pool*
 - B) *Electrical hook-up of equipment*
 - C) *Backwash hook-up to house drain, if required*
 - D) *Patio stones (for filter and pump)*
 - E) *Installation of solar roller and blanket*
 - F) *Installation of ladder/ Drop In Stair*
 - G) *Installation of fencing*
 - H) *Obtaining building permit, if required*
 - I) *Haulage of excess fill from excavation site.*
 - J) *A grade that exceeds 6"*

All of the above simply states the things that are not included with the sale of the swimming pool.

2. *Owner agrees that if any damage occurs to swimming pool after installation which is occasioned by Owner draining the pool, from natural disasters and acts of God, ground frost, ice damage, deck movement or other natural causes, contractor shall be held harmless therefrom.*

Basically if anything happens to the pool, we are not responsible. If something happens because the pool or any parts of it are defective, then of course we will replace/repair it.

3. *Owner is responsible for pool location and all by-law requirements.*

Here we are saying that if the city is not happy because the pool doesn't follow all the by-laws or if you didn't get your permit, we won't be responsible. That's why it's so important to keep track of all these details before and during the installation of the pool to avoid problems.

4. It is specifically understood and agreed that no claim may be filed under the warranty and no obligation to make adjustment there under will accrue until full indebtedness (including extras if any) is or are paid to the Contractor.

In order for us to help you with warranties and/or change things around if necessary, we must be paid for the pool.

5. It is understood that all measurements referred to in this agreement are approximate and that minimal wrinkles and bottom unevenness are sometimes unavoidable.

If the pool is two inches from where it was planned, we are not responsible. Wrinkles and unevenness in a swimming pool are a fact of life. There is a great deal of effort that goes into avoiding this, but it happens and must be expected.

6. Crevasses or wrinkles caused by insects (ants, worms, etc.) shall not be warranted.

7. Owner should contact his/her insurance company to discuss coverage of pool from natural disaster, acts of God, rodents, etc.

Certain home insurance policies cover swimming pools while most don't. It's possible to cover your swimming pool normally for only a few dollars more a month. We recommend that you contact your insurance company just to see what your coverage includes.

One final recommendation. In order to benefit from your new pool and to protect you from potential problems, we suggest you to follow these recommendations:

Do not build a deck over the top rail of your pool. Instead, you should build it at the same level as the pool and keep one free inch between the deck and pool.

Do not back fill the pool higher than 6 inches over the bottom of the wall.

Call the nearest Pioneer Family Pool store in the fall in order to winterize your pool properly.

Final Words...

Pioneer Family Pools and the author have used their best efforts in preparing this guide. The author makes no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this guide. No warranties may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The accuracy and completeness of the information provided herein and the opinions stated herein are not guaranteed or warranted to produce any particular results and the advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every individual. Neither Pioneer family Pools, nor the author shall be liable for any loss or any other damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

