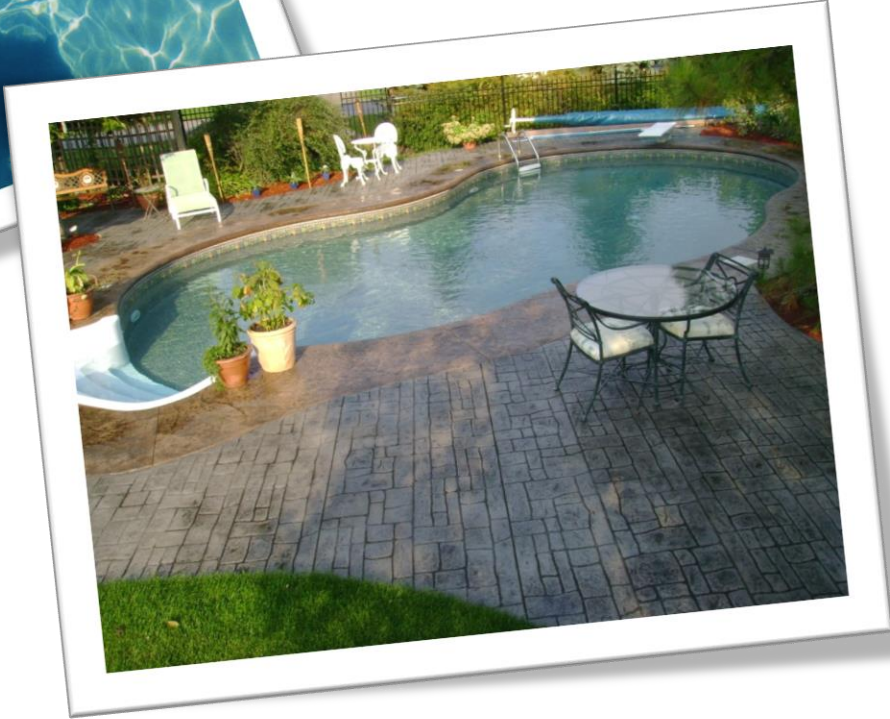
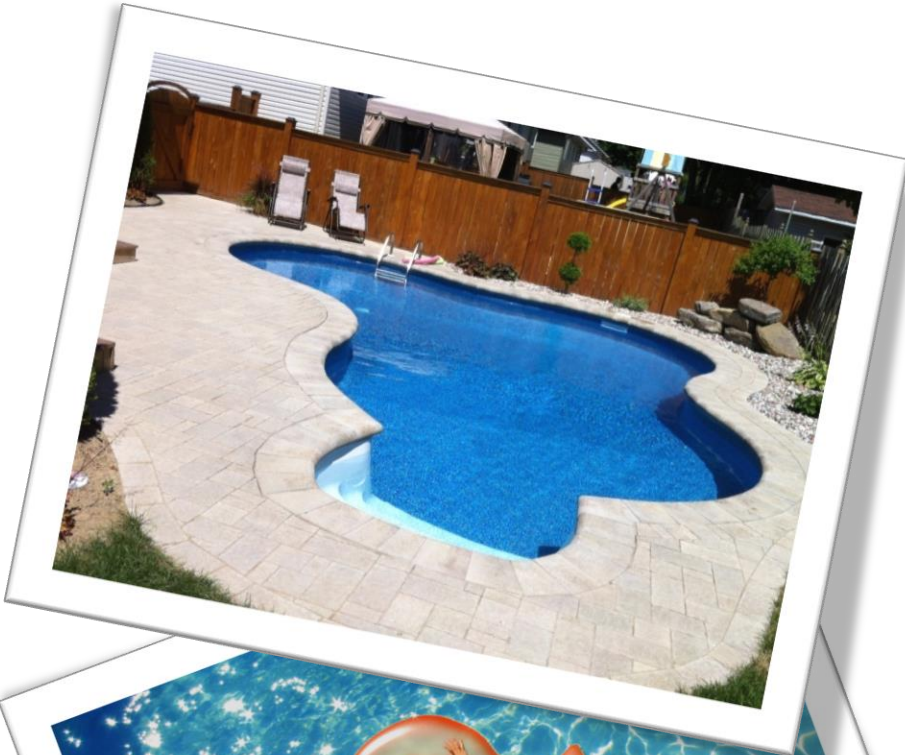


CAMPBELL POOLS

Thinking of an Inground Pool? It's a big project and a big investment so you probably have some questions and need some guidance. Hopefully this guide can help do just that. Down below we'll discussed a bit about...

- Design
- Options
- Budget
- Building Process

After 30 years of being in business, nearly fifty years of experience in the industry and thousands of successful installations, we hope our guide will empower you and help with your project.



Step 1 : Design and Planning

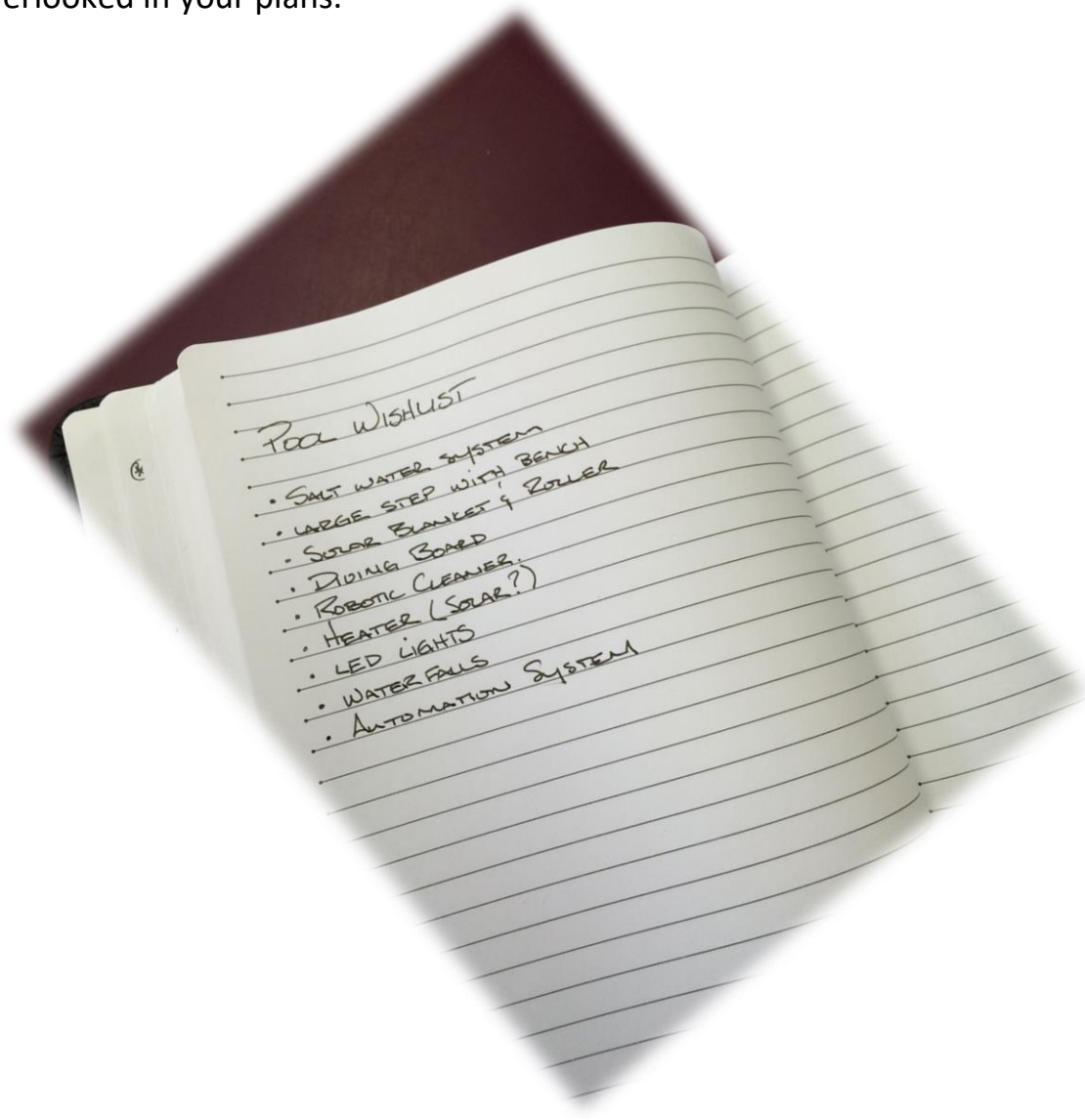
An inground swimming pool is rarely a spur of the moment decision. It's something that has been in some form of planning for months or years. As you begin the process you may well have a very detailed idea and plan for what you want the backyard to look like **or** you may be starting from scratch without even a notion of the shape or size.

Regardless of whether or not you have a plan, we would recommend two exercises that will help getting things started. It may even make you realize something you overlooked in your plans.

Create a Wish List

Put a quick list together of all the things you may have seen or heard of that you'd like on your pool.

This will give you a starting point when you meet a pool builder. During that meeting the pool builder will be able to answer any questions and discuss options and feasibility.



Create an “ Idea Book”

Sometimes it can be difficult to put your design ideas into words.

Gather as many pictures as you can of what you like and would like to re-create in your backyard.

[Landscape design and home design magazines are a great source as is Google image.](#)

When meeting a Pool Builder or Landscape Architect, being able to pull out a picture and say “This is what I’m looking for” is invaluable and ensures everybody is on the same page.

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words... so let’s write a book!

Working with a designer?

Some folks have a clear idea in mind for what they want their back yard to look like and they can communicate that idea easily and clearly. For others, all they know is they really want a pool and that’s it. No clear idea of what it will look like.

Don’t feel bad if you need some help with the design of your backyard. Afterall there wouldn’t be any landscape architects if we could all figure it out ourselves.

Most pool companies can certainly guide you and answer your questions. Some even offer formal design services.

Landscaping companies for the most part also offer a design service and can provide fully fleshed out designs with formal plans and 3D renderings.

Pro Tip! - Landscaper Design vs. Independent Designer

When working with a landscape designer it’s important to be aware of who you are working with and their motives.

If you are working with a landscaping company that sells and installs interlocking stone, you’ll probably have a design that includes quite a bit of stone...

We highly recommend working with a professional designer whether they represent a landscaping company or if they are independent. Just be aware.

When working with an independent designer they tend to not have any ulterior motives in their designs and will reflect your ideas and wants more exactly.

What I'm I going to use my pool for?

One of the questions that you need to ask when thinking about building an inground pool should be "What do I want to use the pool for?" The answer to this question can have a dramatic impact on the design process. Let me explain.

If the main reason for having an inground pool is for the kids and family to play, then it might make more sense to have a pool with a larger shallow end or even a pool with a resort style bottom so that you can touch the bottom in most of the pool.

Maybe the main reason for the pool is to do laps for fitness. Well in that case we'd focus on designing a pool that has more length and uses a straighter, linear design.

Perhaps you'll want to use the pool and attached patio area to primarily entertain. Then we want to focus on the living spaces in the yard and incorporate a pool shape has a focus on spaces and how they connect and flow.

When the time comes to sit down with a pool professional and discuss design, he or she will be able to help guide the process much better with a basic understanding of what the pool will be used for.

But remember to keep an open mind. For example, we often hear that the pool will be used "For my young kids to have a place to play in the summer". This is fantastic, but it often leads to a design focused on children that will be grown up in just a few years.

Design Tip! – "Poolanitis"

One the big challenges we often encounter during the planning and design phase of an inground pool project is something we jokingly refer to as "Poolanitis"

It is a condition in which the homeowner is looking to build the absolute largest pool that will legally fit on their property.

If you feel you may have a case of "Poolanitis", please remember the following.

- You need space around the pool to 'live'. Don't underestimate how much room the patio furniture, barbecue and other items will take.
- Thinking long term; a yard that has too large a pool with little to no living space will be a huge turn off for potential home buyers.

Design Tip! – Rectangle vs. Freeform Pools

A few things to think about when considering the shape of an inground pool.

- Rectangular pools tend to be more formal than freeform shapes but are 'classic' and will fit any shape or size of yard
- The rectangle is ideal for swimming laps
- Most freeform pools are designed around elements in nature or to blend into a natural setting.
- In a small yard, the Freeform pool will typically "fit" better because there are no corners jutting out.

Step 2 : Types of Inground Pools

Inground pools come in three main flavours: Concrete, Fibreglass and vinyl. Each has its advantages and disadvantages and choosing between them becomes a question of picking the best construction method for your money and environment.

Let's take a quick look at the three types and what they are all about.

Concrete Pool

The concrete pool, known as a gunite or shotcrete (depending on the mixing) pool, is a very popular type of construction method in many parts of the United States and Europe that have moderate climates in the winter.

They allow for virtually any design you can imagine and are extremely durable. If you seen inground pool builds on TV, such as Pool Kings on HGTV, these are the types of pools that are featured.

Depending on the exact type of surface finish, these types of pools do need to be re-surfaced every five to fifteen years.

The disadvantage for this type of pool in Ontario is cost. Because of our rather harsh winter climate, the gunite concrete pool must be built to withstand some extreme ground frost. The extra material and labour required to build a gunite pool to these standards makes them roughly two to three times the price of either a vinyl or fibreglass type pool.

The long-term maintenance costs of a gunite pool tend also tend to be slightly more than either the fibreglass or vinyl pool.

You will typically only see these as new projects in public pools such as hotels, city/municipal pools or at campsites. They are far rarer in residential applications.

Fiberglass Pool

Fibreglass pools are manufactured in a factory and leave that factory fully ready to be put in the ground as a single large pool shell. They have a very durable surface that doesn't need any regular maintenance and can go about 15-20 years before needing a resurfacing. They can also be repaired in the event of a crack or puncture.

Fibreglass pools however have a few disadvantages. First is the limited size and design choice. Because these pools must be shipped to the installation site, they must fit on a transport truck. This limits the size and shape to what you can fit on the truck bed. You also have no way of customizing shape and size. You must choose from a limited selection and make the yard fit the pool rather than the pool fit the yard.

The second disadvantage of the fibreglass pools is how it deals with wet areas. Because the fibreglass pool is a single large shell, it can be thought as a large boat hull. If the level of ground water rises sufficiently, it can actually push the fibreglass pool up. The same is true in cold climates where ground movement due to frost can be a concern.

There are of course ways of mitigating these issues but in doing so the cost of a fibreglass pool tends to be slightly more than the equivalent vinyl pool.

Vinyl Pools

The vinyl inground pool can be broken down into two types, a steel frame or a polymer frame. Both systems use the same type of construction and offer the same finished product. Vinyl pools are by far the most popular type of inground swimming pool in the Eastern Ontario area and in most of Canada, Eastern United States and more and more in the Southern United States.

Much like the concrete pools, vinyl pools have virtually unlimited possibilities for size and design. With the addition of built in steps, benches and sun ledges, any design feature found in a fibreglass pool can easily be incorporated into a vinyl pool. Long gone are the days of only having two or three choices in possible shapes.

Because of how vinyl pools are built, they deal very well with various soil conditions in virtually any type of climate. This makes them ideal for our very warm and dry summers and wet and cold winters.

The downside of the vinyl pool is the vinyl liner that holds the water. It can be punctured or cut leading to a water leak far more easily than concrete or fibreglass. Luckily, they can be repaired easily and permanently by welding a patch. The liner will also need to be changed about every fifteen years from normal wear and tear. This can be done by a professional crew in less than a day.

So, when we look at the three types of pool construction and compare price, design freedom, suitability to local conditions and durability, the vinyl over steel or polymer type tends to come out ahead in Eastern Ontario.

Steel vs. Polymere?

This is one of the most common questions we get asked. 'Which is better, polymer or steel?'. When we compare both systems, we need to remember that everything else is the same. The pool equipment, the accessories, the possible acrylic steps and benches and the vinyl liner. Both products offer limited lifetime warranties, and both are expected to last for longer than we can expect to be around.

But there are a few differences and each one does have some advantages and disadvantages. Let's take a look.

Steel Wall Advantages:

- Corrosion resistance: The type of steel wall used by Campbell Pools is a 14 gauge galvanized steel using a G235 coating (or Z700 using the metric system). This is the heaviest coating weight to galvanize steel and should resist corrosion once buried for over 50 years.
- Steel walls are much stronger than the polymer equivalent. Which makes sense; after all they build skyscrapers and bridges out of steel and not polymer.
- Steel walls are easier to adjust during the installation and this makes it easier to ensure the pool wall is straight and level.
- There is a much greater variety of panel length and radius's available giving greater options in design, acrylic step and bench placement and coping options.
- Steel walls also have a larger thermal range (deal better with extreme cold and hot weather) and deal better with shifting soil conditions.
- Very wide range of possible custom step and bench designs possible using our Vinyl over Steel system.

Steel Wall Disadvantages:

- The G235 or Z700 galvanization should not corrode, but years after installation it is possible to have slight surface corrosion.

Polymer Wall Advantages:

- Built from non-corrosive resin material, can not and will never corrode.

Polymer Wall disadvantages:

- Slightly more expensive than steel.
- Less design options and more panels required to achieve certain designs which means a higher cost of material when compared to steel.
- Limited to using acrylic or fiberglass inserted steps and benches.

So at the end of the day which one is better? Well the answer is both. Campbell Pools sells and installs both so it comes down to our clients preference. Both come with a lifetime warranty and both will produce a beautiful, long lasting inground pool.

Whichever is used, it's the right choice.



Step 3 : Find a Pool Builder.

Now that you've decided to become an inground pool owner it's time to choose the builder. Like any construction or renovation project, you want to make sure you get the best professional people for the job.

Picking your builder

Talk with several candidates and ask them about the building process. Don't be afraid of asking questions. Any experienced and reputable builder will be able to answer all your relevant questions.

Ask about what work do they do themselves and what do they contract out. It's not uncommon for a pool builder to contract the excavation work. Ensure that everybody who's going to be working in your yard is certified and insured.

Ask for references and check them out. This is a bit more challenging than a few years ago due to privacy concerns but should be no issue for a good company.

Since you will be working with this builder for several months, you'll want to choose somebody you feel comfortable with and feel you can communicate well with.

What about Landscapers?

It's very likely that you'll be looking to not only build an inground swimming pool but also landscape your yard around the pool. It's important to realize that this will often require the service of a professional landscaping company separate from the pool builder.

Most reputable pool builders will have strong relationships with good landscapers that can be brought onboard for the landscaping work.

Some builders will offer the full 'turn-key' service and will have landscaping service as part of their pool build. The important question to ask here is whether they are really doing the landscaping themselves or if it is being sub-contracted.

Is the crew doing the actual work reputable and experienced? After over 30 years in business we are master pool builders, but we don't have the expertise or people to do top quality landscaping work. Therefore we leave it up to the pros and work closely with them.

We often see the reverse being true also. There are several landscape companies that offer pool installations. That's alright and there is a market for that, you just need to be aware and ask yourself if you want professional landscapers and amateur pool builders involved in your project.



Step 4 : Creating a budget for your project.

You probably already have a good idea of what you're willing to spend on your new swimming pool but it's important to speak with your pool builder and start getting hard numbers for your project.

Getting a Quote

Any good builder will be able to give you a good idea of what the cost of your project will be during your discussions. But you'll also want to get a firm quote in writing before making any decisions.

When you do get a written quote, you will want to make sure that everything is well itemized, so you know exactly what you are getting in the quoted price.

Make sure that any particularities about your project, such as the removal of existing elements in the yard or any special needs for gaining access to the yard are spelled out in the quote.

Sometimes it's difficult to compare quotes as they may have different items as part of the quote compared to another. Don't hesitate to discuss this with the different builders and have them explain the reason and value of each difference.

Beyond the quote for the pool

It's important to realize that your pool builder may not be the only professional you need to work with to make your project a reality. In some cases you may need to get quotes for other items that are beyond the scope of the pool but necessary to its completion. Ensure that you take the following into account.

- Electrical work
- Natural Gas or Propane connection (with a pool heater)
- Fencing; even if your yard is fenced, it may need some updates to bring it up to code.
- Landscaping; this also applies to the cost of repairing any damage to the property from the construction of the pool.

Tip! – Talking about your budget

Talk to your builder about your budget from the start! It's not uncommon for people to be uncomfortable or even sometimes unwilling to discuss how much they are prepared to spend. They assume they will 'get a bad deal' and be charged more if they tell their builder how much they are prepared to spend. Huge Mistake.

By letting the potential builders know that you will be getting several quotes, each will strive to be as competitive as they can. But more importantly, by discussing your budget upfront with a builder, he or she will be able to work with you to get your vision to fit your budget. You may need to adjust your plans or you may have the resources to add to the initial concept, but in either case it's important that both you and your builder know what the budget is from the start.



Step 5 : Get the features you really want.

We just told you to come up with a budget and stick to it (great advice), but don't settle if you can help it. It's almost always far more expensive and more difficult to retrofit a swimming pool than doing it during the initial installation.

So, if you really want that water feature or automation system, then go for it. If this busts the budget, then ask your pool builder how you may be able to save elsewhere. You just don't want that 'almost perfect' pool.

Finishing touches - It's the little things that matter

Placement of the lights, height of that water feature, adding color to the concrete deck around the pool.

These are just some of the little details that can really make or break an inground swimming pool project.

A good pool designer / builder will take the time to explain what features and options are available and how they can add value, convenience or aesthetics to your pool. But don't forget to speak up if there is a certain feature or finished look you want.

If a landscaper is involved it becomes even more important to ensure there is proper communication between your pool builder and the landscaper.

Campbell Pools prides itself on being able to coordinate large, complicated projects, with ease. We've done thousands of pools while working with landscapers and have figured out how to ensure that your final vision becomes a reality.

We've learned that in order to create amazing projects we need to be flexible and able to adapt to the needs of our clients.

Tip! – How to do it later.

Sometimes it's just not possible to incorporate every element that you may want into a working budget. But that might not necessarily mean the end of it.

With proper planning it's often possible to prepare for future add-ons without incurring extra costs. For example, if you really want a water feature but can't make it work in your budget right now, it's possible to run the underground plumbing and prepare any of the structural work needed around the pool for a few hundred dollars during the installation.

That way, if five years down the road you are ready to put in the water feature, you don't need to spend thousands to run new underground plumbing and pour extra concrete to support things since they've been done. All you need to do is have the water feature built at the same cost it would have been during the initial installation.

If you are bumping up against your budget, talk to your pool builder about what needs to be done now, what can wait and what would need to be done to make something happen later at a lower cost.



Step 6 : Check your local building codes

This is something that your pool builder will be able to help with, but it's a good idea to know the rules yourself.

A quick trip to the local building permit office will typically do the trick. In many cases they have handout packages ready with all the by-laws that apply to pools and what steps need to be taken to get your permit and so forth.

They can also quickly look up your address and let you know of any special building restrictions or noise restrictions that might apply.

How hard is it to apply and get the permit?

Not hard at all. Most by-law offices realize that these are permits that will be applied for by the homeowner and have made the process and requirements very simple.

In our case, Campbell Pools will take care of applying and obtaining your building permit for you (In some areas outside of Ottawa we may not offer this service) at no extra charge.

Most jurisdictions even prefer to deal with the homeowner and make the process much easier for the homeowner versus a contractor.

Do I really need a building permit?

A question that gets asked a lot is whether you really need a building permit for a pool and the answer is... Yes... but it can depend.

Most jurisdictions do require you to obtain a building permit while a handful don't. This is something your pool builder or a quick visit to the local building permit office will answer.

Today most of the information is available online and is only a few clicks away. Take advantage of this and spend a few minutes looking it up.

It's also important to get the permit for liability issues. By obtaining the permit and having the related inspections passed, the pool is then certified as compliant in your jurisdiction.

Here at Campbell Pools we do require a permit be obtain in those jurisdictions that them before we begin any work. I would be hesitant of any company that is willing to build an inground pool without a permit...



Step 7 : What are the costs associated with owning an inground pool?

It's important to take a moment to consider the costs of owning and inground pool and it's a frequent question asked. Let's take a quick look.

Seasonal Costs

These will include such things as:

- Electrical
- Natural Gas or Propane
- Chemicals / Salt
- Replacement items
- water

Electrical: Based on an average pool running a two speed pump full time, with a salt system and lights, you can expect somewhere between \$150 - \$175 a month at the very high end.

Gas: Very difficult to give an exact number since there are so many variables that come into play. But based on an average pool in an average summer, we would expect about \$500 - \$700 a season for natural gas and about three and half times that for propane.

Chemicals: This will vary depending on pool size and therefore on how much water is in the pool. But on an average 16'x32' pool it would be reasonable to expect about \$300 a season in chemicals including salt if using a salt system.

Replacement items: This is everything that wears out over time and needs to be replaced. Some years it will be next to nothing, other years it may be more. But on average you should expect to budget about \$200 a season.

Water: Having to fill up the pool every spring is common plus there will be a need to top up the pool regularly during the summer. You can therefore expect your water bill to be slightly higher with a pool.

Long Term Costs

Here we are talking about costs that will need to be address five plus years down the road. Most of these are the replacement of items that will wear out over time such as solar blankets, salt system cell and so forth.

There is also maintenance costs on items such as the heater, automatic cleaner, LED lights and the pump.

This will vary quite a bit from pool to pool and it's something that your pool builder can go over with you on your specific pool.

The one big item that will need to be looked at about fifteen years after the pool is built is the vinyl liner. On an average pool this will be about \$3,500 to \$4,000.

Like everything in life, if your pool is well maintained from the start then your long-term costs down the road will be less. Your pool builder will be able to walk you through the basic maintenance that will keep your pool in good working order for years to come.

Step 8 : Don't forget about insurance.

Installing an inground pool adds a substantial element to your property and is a major investment. It's important to talk with your insurance broker about your coverage and possible addition costs.

Insurance, really?

Yep, it's important to look at your insurance policy and find out if your new inground pool is covered.

Over the years many insurance providers have removed swimming pools from their home insurance policies. This means that if a tree falls into the pool or some other unforeseen accident occurs you may not be covered.

It's worth the time to talk to your broker and find out exactly what your policy covers. In some cases, it may cost you a bit more a year to have the pool and its equipment fully covered.

In some rare cases it may even save you a few dollars to have a pool in your yard. In rural areas where there are no fire hydrants, having thousands of litres of water readily available to the fire department may lower the fire protection portion of your policy.

Next Steps

There you have it. This guide should be able to get you started on putting together the right pieces of information as you consider a pool.

If you want to read more details about buying or owning a swimming pool – be sure to go back to our blog and read about the topics that matter to you.

<http://Blog.campbellpools.ca>

If you are looking at getting a quote, feel free to request one from us by clicking the image below.

Hope this guide helped you and share it with others. Thank you.

[Request a Quote for Pool](#)