



The pool environment and FAQ's Not every instructor – therapist – coach – or frequent visitor to the pool needs to be a Certified Pool Operator (although it's not a bad idea) but they do need to know more than the casual pool user. Below are some FAQ's about pools and some answers to that may dispel some of the urban myths that we commonly hear.

Frequently Asked Questions

When I go to indoor motel pools – I can smell the pool when I get off the elevator. Why does Chlorine have to smell so bad? *First of all, it is probably not Chlorine you are smelling but rather its Black Sheep of the Family cousin, Chloramines. These are the bad guys of indoor pools. When the pool is not maintained properly, or the air handling system is not adequately designed Chloramines prevail. The solution is for people to shower before they go into the pool, use the bathroom and not pee in the pool, and for the indoor pool to install a Medium Pressure UV treatment system in their filter room.*

I've heard SALT pools are the way to go now-days. No chlorine and softer water. *What you've heard are advertising gimmicks and wishful thinking. There is no such thing as a Chlorine or Bromine free pool that is open to the public. Salt pools still must maintain the same Chlorine concentration of a regular pool by State Health Department regulations. They just generate chlorine on site in the filter room by "zapping" the NACL and splitting it into sodium (NA) and chlorine (CL). The salt-generated chlorine method comes with its own set of challenges and cost of constantly replacing pool equipment.*

Our pool water is clear but my skin itches after swimming. *Clear water does not always mean safe water. The pH can get lower than 7.4 and the water still be crystal clear. When the pH (red test with the Taylor test kit) goes under 7.2 it can be dangerous to swimmers. The symptoms are; Itchy skin, loss of hair on arms and other parts of body, softening of finger and toenails, yellowing of the enamel on teeth, rashes or sores along spine, under arms, and other places. The ideal basic chemical test readings are 1.8 to 2.5 ppm of Chlorine – 7.4 pH – and no more than .01 of combined chlorine (chloramines). The pool is required by law to take and record pool test results at least 3 times a day.*

Every once-in-a-while, the water is cloudy, but the pool management says it's OK to get in because the water test normal. *Absolutely NOT. If you can't see a quarter on the bottom of pool and tell whether it is heads or tails, stay out of the water, IT'S NOT SAFE.*

The pool operators and management keep telling me there is not a problem with the pool water or air when I know there is. What can I do? *Understand you must have your own health and safety as your #1 priority. If worst comes to worst, you can always call your Department of Public Health Swimming Pool Division and file a formal complaint. Have your facts written down so the details are clear when you talk to them. Also, be aware that this may result in the pool being shut down until they correct the problems.*

When I was growing up we used to be required to take a shower before getting into the pool. What happened to that? *Good question! It's still a regulation in every state. We are one of the only countries who don't take enforcement of this code seriously. There are literally hundreds of chemicals in our shampoos, conditioners, perfumes, deodorants, lotions and oils, and multi-use bath and body products that can adversely affect pool water quality. This is the number one culprit causing bad air and water in our pools. Society and pool owners have gotten lazy and apathetic about this very important issue.*

When is the water too warm or cold to be safe for swimmers? *There are quite a few variables that need to be considered before answering this.*

- Age of person doing the activity
- Physical condition and overall health of swimmer or exerciser
- Experience of swimmer or exerciser
- Body fat %
- Type of swimming or exercise being done e.g. Aerobic – Anaerobic – Cross Training – Interval – Vertical or Horizontal – etc.
- Humidity
- Wind Chill (outdoors)
- Altitude
- Barometric pressure
- Water temp
- Protective apparel being worn Etc.

So, bottom line is, there is no definitive answer and there is a difference between a safe environment and an ideal environment. What's comfortable or acceptable for one person may not be for another.

I have heard about these new pools like those used at Olympic Trials. The ones that go on-the-ground then a wood deck is built around them. Can I afford to build one of these types of pools? *Programming Precedes Design. Available funding will also play an important part in this decision-making process. This is where TAP can help. We have resources with all types of manufacturers and can help you decide not only what you want but what you need. mick@totalaquatic.llc*

My city used to operate the pool, but it has become so “run down” that they are going to close it. Don't municipalities owe their citizens the service of running the local pool?

Before the high cost of utilities, equipment maintenance, and operational supplies, the cities job was to run the pool in the summertime-peak season. Times have changed and many of those pools that we all had when growing up are no longer functional. They have old style metal piping that is rusting away. The concrete tanks are cracking, and the pools are leaking profusely. The city must repair or renovate the pool, decommission the pool, or build a newer more modern facility. Which option the city chooses may be decided by the level of involvement and interest of the community. TAP can assist you with programming and design ideas that will service every member of the community. sue@totalaquatic.llc

The pool we use for team practices is no longer large enough for our growing membership. Can a USA Swim Club afford to build their own pool? *That is only half the question. Can you build and operate your own pool? Many times, the capital campaign to raise funds to build the pool is easier than creating enough annual revenue to operate the pool once it is built. In general, the answer is resounding YES – a club or coach can own and operate their own facility. Using the principle “programming precedes design” the properly sized facility needs to be planned. Competitive swimming will not pay all the bills. Community programming, learn-2-swim, rehab, adult exercise, and other services need to be considered. If competitive swimming is all that you are interested in, stay in the “rent water” business and out of the “own water” business.*

We have a local health club that wants to build a pool for their membership. How do we approach them to ask if they are interested in making the pool large enough for our swim team to use? *Partnerships with health clubs and medical entities are good ideas for USA Swim Clubs if proper time is taken to discuss how both organizations will work together. Many times, the health clubs are looking to outsource the responsibility of pool operation. The health club wants a clean properly maintained pool for their membership. The USA Club can provide this service plus operate additional programs that do not conflict with the health club. Contract negotiations are extremely important for this type of partnership.*

Our city pool charges \$5.00 a day for access or \$75.00 for a season pass. Our council has been talking about a newer facility with water slides and a lazy river with a spray pool. The project is estimated to cost over \$6 million. Our town is only 32,000 people. That means that every person in our city would have to buy a 2 season pass for the pool to be paid for. How does this make sense? *One of the things publicly owned and operated pools are having to deal with are fee structures and income predictions. Access fees are only part of the equation. The other income generating options for whoever is responsible for “running” the pool could be: swim lessons, pool rental for parties and meets, pool rental of swim team practices, community exercise and rehab programs, etc. These programs must have fees per-program that are commensurate with the level of staffing expertise conducting them. The daily or seasonal access fees should not be the major income generating factor when looking at the overall budget. One thing we want to make sure of is that there is a competitive rectangular pool in the new design.*

Our city would love to have a pool. We have formed a focus group to research this possibility. Where do we start? *If there is an existing USA Swim Club in your area, we would suggest talking to them to see how you can help each other. TAP can offer programming and design consultation plus put you in contact with some of the best manufacturers and builders in the country. If you do not have a USA Swim Club in your area, USA Swimming Sports Consultants can work with you to help in the formation of a new club. TAP also have*

some very helpful information that we can e-mail you that will get you started doing things in the best order. Also, USA Swimming host "Build-a-Pool" conferences and regional workshops throughout the country at multiple locations each year. sue@totalaquatic.llc

Are there GRANTS to help build or renovate a pool? Every once-in-a-while we see a renovation grant listed on the news but they are usually locally based. Many clubs have resources in their community they are not aware of. Since swimming is one of the healthiest lifestyle activities and addresses the "drowning" issue and childhood obesity issue, many local companies and organizations are willing to listen to your presentation and consider assistance.

We are in a rural area that cannot support a large aquatic facility. What would you consider to be the "ideal" facility for an area such as ours? Much depends on the actual population located within a 20-minute drive of your proposed site. Rule of thumb is that you should have at least 30,000 people to make a "stand alone" aquatic facility successful. With that said, there are quite a few existing successful exceptions. If you have 5,000 people who will all support the facility, one can be designed. Ideally 2 or 3 pools, all on separate filtering and heating systems should be planned.

Pool #1 = The first pool should be 25 yards long by at least 42 feet wide. The more width, the more lanes for programming. There should be a side stair entry or even a ramp. Water depth should be 4' at the shallowest end and 5' at the deepest end to accommodate starting blocks. This pool should be kept at around 82 degrees. This pool will focus on lap swimming, and some high intensity vertical aerobic exercise. It will be the primary pool for competitive swim training by swim team, masters, and triathletes and recreation.

Pool #2 = The second pool should be about 50 feet long by at least 18 feet wide. There should be a side ramped entry that is not included in the 18 feet of width. Water depth should be 42" at ramped entry base to 52" at the deepest part. This pool should be kept around 88 degrees. This pool will focus on swim lessons, water walking, vertical flexibility and relaxation training.

Pool #3 = The third pool should be 20 feet long by 15 feet wide. There should be both a side stair and a lift entry designed. Water depth should be 36" at the base of the steps graduating to 48" for 20 feet of the length of the pool. This pool should be kept at around 90 degrees. Specialty hydrotherapy jets and benches can also be designed. This pool will focus on Aquatic rehab/therapy, special needs lessons, and water disciplines that have a very low activity level.

In addition, the facility should have adequate dressing and shower areas including at least 2 unisex dressing/shower rooms. Offices, viewing area, meeting rooms, vending areas, and dry land exercise areas should also be included. Retail rental spaces can also be considered. The minimum size for such a facility is 21,000 square feet. It can of course be designed to 30,000 square feet to include more features.

Why can't USA Swimming or our LSC build a pool where we can have championship meets? There are a host of reasons. First and foremost because meets do not pay for the operational cost of a facility during the week e.g. Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday. Even the high dollar rental fees for the weekend charged by facilities to the teams who host meets do not really cover all the cost for the days used. Also, the LSC or USA Swimming cannot be in the aquatic management and programming business and at the same time continue to deliver the existing services they are known for. These service organizations are just not equipped or staffed for this monumental task.

We simply can't afford an indoor 50-meter pool let alone 2 or 3 pools. We are in a relatively mild climate but can usually only use the pool 6 to 8 months a year. How can we keep our team solvent for the other 4 months? PHASE 1. One of the answers is a year-round learn 2 swim program coupled with community programming. Consider building an indoor 25-yard pool with a smaller indoor community pool alongside. PHASE 2. Next to the indoor facility plan for an outdoor larger pool to be built when the indoor programming shows a profit. PHASE 3. After that the larger pool could be covered with a temporary building so it also could also be used 12 months a year.

How much does it cost to build a pool? Wow! That's like asking how much a house cost. There are literally hundreds of variables that should be taken into consideration before even a ball-park estimate can be given. TAD can help you answer this question after you attend a Regional Build a Pool Conference or host a TAD Build a Pool Workshop.

Website: www.totalaquatic.llc