



The 10 Signs Checklist

Is your pool actually leaking? Tick what you're seeing — ranked by how urgently each sign deserves attention.

Advanced Leak Detection — Pools & Spas · Serving Tampa Bay, St Pete & Sarasota since 1997 · (727) 467-0078
State Certified CPC 056992

How to use this checklist

Most pool leaks hide underground and show **no visible symptoms at all** — Gulf Coast sandy soil drains escaping water away before you ever see a puddle. So the signs below are ordered the way our technicians weigh them in the field: from the ones that settle the question, to the ones that merely raise it. Tick everything that applies to your pool, then check your count against the rule at the end.

The 10 signs

- ☐ **01 Losing more than 1/4 inch a day — and the bucket test agrees** CONFIRMED
 The definitive sign. If the pool drops more than the bucket over the same 24 hours, that difference is a leak, measured. Leaks never fix themselves — escaping water erodes its own escape route wider over time.
- ☐ **02 The water level drops to a specific height, then stops** CONFIRMED
 Water finds its own level: where the loss stops is roughly where the leak lives. "It always stops at the bottom of the skimmer" points to the skimmer body, skimmer pipe, or a tile-line crack at that exact elevation. Note the precise level — it can shave hours off a detection.
- ☐ **03 Air bubbles in the pump basket or from the return jets** STRONG
 Persistent air means the suction side of the plumbing is breached: it pulls air in while the pump runs, then bleeds water into the soil when it stops. This is the classic "loses water only at night" leak — and it's missed constantly.
- ☐ **04 A spike in your water bill** STRONG
 With an auto-fill on city water, the leak shows up on your bill before it shows up at the pool. An unexplained jump of \$40–\$200 a month with no change in household use is a strong indicator.

- ☐ **05 The auto-fill runs more than it used to** STRONG

Auto-fill systems are leak-hiding machines — they quietly replace what's escaping. If the fill valve cycles frequently or never seems to stop, treat it as a leak until proven otherwise.
- ☐ **06 Wet spots, soggy ground, or a permanently damp equipment pad** MODERATE

A persistent soggy patch, pavers that stay dark after everything else dries, soft or sinking ground near the pool. In our soil, surface wetness usually means the leak is substantial or shallow.
- ☐ **07 Visible cracks in the shell or along the tile line** MODERATE

Not every crack leaks — some live only in the surface finish. But bond-beam cracks behind the waterline tile and vertical shell cracks can run deep enough to let water out. An underwater inspection tells you which kind you have.
- ☐ **08 Chemistry that won't hold** MODERATE

If chlorine, pH, alkalinity or salt refuse to stay balanced no matter how much you dose, fresh fill water may be diluting the pool faster than you can adjust. Salt pools make this vivid: salt doesn't evaporate.
- ☐ **09 The heater seems to run constantly** CONTEXT

A leak means a steady trickle of cold fill water, so the heater keeps working to recover temperature. Weak on its own — meaningful alongside other signs.
- ☐ **10 Decking settling, cracking, or developing depressions** LATE-STAGE

By the time escaping water has undermined the soil enough to move concrete, the leak has usually run for months. If deck movement is accelerating, don't schedule "sometime."

Three false alarms that fool almost everyone

1 • THE POST-PARTY DROP

A weekend of cannonballs displaces a shocking amount of water. If the level fell right after heavy use, refill, wait a normal week, and measure again before worrying.

2 • THE NEW-HEATER "LEAK"

Heating a pool can double its evaporation. Every winter we take calls blaming the heater installer — usually it's just warm water meeting cold, dry air.

3 • THE SEASONAL SHIFT

When autumn's drier, windier air arrives over still-warm water, evaporation jumps. A pool that was rock-steady in August can visibly drop in November with nothing wrong at all.

The rule of three

OUR FIELD RULE

One CONFIRMED sign is enough. Otherwise: three or more ticks — stop watching and start diagnosing. Detection starts at \$360, minor repairs happen on the spot for \$5–\$65 more, and every diagnosis carries a 60-day written warranty. Early diagnosis is nearly always the cheaper path: soil erosion, deck settlement and rebar corrosion all price by the month.

Need a specialist's eyes on it?

Detection from \$360 · No draining · Written reports 2–3× more detailed than the industry standard · 60-day written warranty on every diagnosis.

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Read the full guide: advancedleak.com/guides/signs-of-a-pool-leak/