Pool Cleaning Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Weekly service on a dense route is the core of the business
- Learn water chemistry well, and consider CPO training
- Check state and county licensing before offering chemical or repair work
- Charge a flat monthly rate and decide whether chemicals are included

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Rules vary a lot: some states and counties require a license or registration for pool service, or for repair and chemical work, so check your state and county before you start. Many pros take Certified Pool & Spa Operator (CPO) training to learn water chemistry and safety. Carry general liability insurance and store and transport chemicals safely.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Telescopic pole, skimmer net and leaf rake
- [ ] Pool brushes (wall and tile)
- [ ] Manual vacuum head and hose
- [ ] Water test kit (drop-based) or test strips
- [ ] Chlorine, pH balancers and other chemicals, stored safely
- [ ] Truck or SUV with secure chemical storage

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time

- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge
- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Door hangers in neighborhoods where you can see pools on the map
- [ ] Ask every customer to refer neighbors, since route density is everything
- [ ] Partner with real estate agents and property managers
- [ ] Google Business Profile listing pool cleaning and service areas
- [ ] Consider buying an existing route from a retiring pool tech
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year

General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Rules vary by state and city.