

Recycling Your Old Pool

PROBLEM:

Our pool leaks are growing, our pool interior surface is rough and difficult to maintain and our pool gutter is inadequate. What can we do to improve our pool without replacing the entire thing?

SOLUTION:

Take a page out of the conservation movement's book, and don't start from scratch. Why spend three to five times as much money building a new facility, when you can reuse and recycle your existing pool infrastructure? Reusing and recycling your existing pool can help you reduce construction costs, as well as water, energy and chemicals used to keep your pool running. When cracks and leaks develop in the pool, many facility managers take the patch-and-paint approach to fixing the problem, and it can work for a while. But eventually, leaks will take their toll, and the water, chemicals and heat loss will begin to add up.

To save your budget—as well as reduce your consumption of construction materials and energy—you should consider renovating your existing pool. But that doesn't mean you have to completely demolish and replace what you've got. For a long-term solution to cracks and leaks, you should consider installing an envelope of PVC inside your old pool shell.

A textured PVC membrane is watertight, easy to clean, resistant to algae growth, pore-free and maintenance-free, aside from normal cleaning. These reinforced membrane liners have been used successfully in pools of all types, from concrete to fiberglass, steel and aluminum. Owners who have taken this approach have reported dramatic reductions in maintenance requirements, as well as chemical and water use, all while providing what appears to patrons to be an entirely new pool facility.

Maintenance of the pool will be a breeze. Repainting is never necessary, and if your pool is in an area where freeze-thaw cycles can create problems, you no longer need to worry about cracks. Unlike fiberglass and other materials commonly used to fix old pool surfaces, PVC expands and contracts with temperature fluctuations, so it doesn't come away from the pool surface. Repairs are very rarely required, but when they do crop up, they can take place under the water, once again preventing water loss.

A PVC membrane can provide both nonskid and smooth surfaces, and can be found in many colors. Once the liner is installed, things like racing lanes, logos and other pool markings can be constructed of PVC membrane in a contrasting

color and permanently adhered to the PVC surface.

With all of these benefits, you might be concerned about cost, but there's good news there, as well. Installing a PVC membrane typically costs less than other more conventional renovation options, and the membranes come with long warranties. Standard liners typically come with a 10-year warranty, and newer UV and chemical-impervious liners can be warranted for as long as 15 years. Depending on conditions at your facility, you can expect your liner to last anywhere from 15 to 50 years.

If you're also experiencing problems with your pool deck, you should consider adding PVC decking as well. This type of deck provides a long-term, non-slip solution and can be installed anywhere where a watertight seal is essential. Problems like delamination, spalling, flaking and peeling will be eliminated through encapsulation with this surface, and like the PVC pool liner, it's virtually maintenance-free. PVC decking can be adhered over your existing concrete, tile or wooden deck and is not overly abrasive.

What's more, you can add additional padding in areas where fall protection is needed, such as beneath diving boards, starting platforms, water playgrounds, in diving areas, waterslide splashdown pads and so on. If you use PVC decking along with a PVC membrane lining in the swimming pool, the two can be heat-welded together, solving pool and deck problems at the same time.

While you're at it, you may also want to consider your pool's integral supply and return gutters. Stainless steel gutters are best for exterior applications, whereas extruded seamless all-PVC integral supply and return gutters may be used in indoor applications. They function virtually the same as a metal gutter system, but with lower initial cost and maintenance requirements. If your pipes are leaking, you can add this type of system through a simple wall-top demolition of the perimeter of your pool, which removes the existing gutter and underlying concrete.

With these types of renovations, you can make your old pool look like new again, without wasting money, resources and construction materials by demolishing and building a new facility.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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