LEAK BUSINESS INSTITUTE

Pool Leak Detection: The H.U.N.T.E.R. Method

A step-by-step system for finding pool leaks, even if you are just starting out

A beginner's guide by Jeff David

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What This Guide Is About

If you work in the pool industry, or you are thinking about getting into it, this guide shows you a simple, repeatable system for finding leaks.

It is called the H.U.N.T.E.R. Method. Six steps. Clear order. No guessing.

What you will learn:

- The business opportunity most pool pros ignore
- Why pools lose water, and how to tell if it is actually a leak
- The six H.U.N.T.E.R. steps in plain language
- What a real leak detection job looks like from start to finish
- How to research what your market pays and work out your own numbers
- What you still need to learn before you do this professionally

This is not a textbook. It is a roadmap. When you finish, you will understand how leak detection works and know exactly what to learn next.

The Business Nobody Talks About

There are tens of thousands of pool service companies in this country and millions of pools. But most pool companies stay away from leak detection. They think it is too technical, too complicated, or too much investment in equipment, so they refer it out or tell the homeowner to call a specialist.

That leaves homeowners who have been losing water for weeks, watching their water bill climb, and calling company after company looking for someone who can actually find the leak.

Pool Cleaning	Pool Repair	Pool Leak Detection
Competing with everyone. Price pressure. The money stops when you stop.	Inventory, warranties, and customers collecting three quotes.	A specialized skill. Customers who need answers and value the person who finds the problem.

What leak detection pays

In many markets, a residential pool leak detection is priced around $395 to $425. A detection usually takes 45 minutes to 2 hours, depending on how many leaks there are.

> **Example only:** at $395 to $425 per detection, two detections in a day would bring in $790 to $850 before expenses. Some jobs also lead to repair work.
>
> This is arithmetic, not a promise. Prices vary by market, and what you earn depends on your skill, your market, your marketing, your expenses and how much you work. Many people who learn a new trade do not earn these amounts.

Before You Start: Is It Really a Leak?

Not every pool that loses water has a leak. Before you test anything, understand the four reasons pools lose water and rule out the ones that are not leaks.

1. Evaporation

Every pool loses water to evaporation. In hot, sunny or windy conditions it can be significant. Rule this out first.

2. Splash-out

Active pool use, especially with kids, causes water loss from splashing. A busy family pool can lose a surprising amount this way. Normal, not a leak.

3. An auto-fill hiding the problem

Many pools have an automatic filler that keeps the level steady. If it runs constantly, the homeowner may not realize how much water is actually being lost.

4. An actual leak

If evaporation, splash-out and auto-fill are accounted for and the pool is still dropping, that is a real leak. Now the H.U.N.T.E.R. Method takes over.

The bucket test: do this first

The bucket test is the simplest way to separate evaporation from a real leak.

- Fill a bucket with pool water and set it on a pool step
- Mark the water level inside the bucket
- Mark the pool water level on the pool wall
- Wait 24 hours without adding water
- Compare the two drops

> **Both dropped the same amount:** evaporation, not a leak.
> **The pool dropped more than the bucket:** there is a real leak.

The H.U.N.T.E.R. Method

Most people fail at leak detection for one reason: they show up and start guessing. They poke around, try things at random, and two hours later they still do not know where the leak is.

The H.U.N.T.E.R. Method is the opposite: a step-by-step framework that takes you from "I have no idea where to look" to "the leak is right here." You do not skip steps. You follow the system.

H **Hear the customer and the history.** Listen first. The homeowner's story contains clues about where the leak is hiding. Never skip this step.

U **Understand the pool layout and systems.** Walk the property. Map the equipment. Know what you are working with before you pick up a tool.

N **Narrow down the likely leak zones.** Rule out what is not leaking before you chase what is. Eliminate evaporation, splash-out and auto-fill.

T **Test systematically.** Visual checks, dye tests and pressure tests, in order, most likely areas first.

E **Expose the leak source.** Pinpoint the exact location and cause: a structural crack, a fitting failure or a plumbing break.

R **Recommend the repair and verify.** Tell the customer what you found, present repair options, and follow up to confirm the problem is solved.

Walking Through a Real Job

When you arrive

The homeowner is waiting. They are frustrated: the pool has been losing water for weeks and nobody has been able to help.

Your first move is not to open the truck. It is to listen. How long has the pool been losing water? How much? When did they first notice? Has any work been done on the pool recently? Every answer is a clue that points you somewhere.

Walk the pool first

Before you test anything, walk the whole pool area and take notes. You are building a mental map of the system: where water goes in, where it comes out, and where your observations say to look first.

- Waterline staining that shows how far the pool has dropped
- Visible cracks or separations in the pool shell
- Wet ground or soft spots near the equipment pad or pool walls
- Staining near fittings, lights or jets
- Wet spots, corrosion or staining at the equipment pad

Test in order, not at random

Visual checks come first, then dye testing at fittings, surfaces and connections, then pressure testing to confirm underground plumbing leaks, and electronic detection to locate where an underground pipe is failing. Every test confirms or rules something out, and every result tells you where to look next.

Finding the leak

When you find it, document it: photos of the exact spot, photos of the surrounding area, and notes on what you observed and what your tests showed. Then explain it to the homeowner in plain language: where the leak is, what caused it, and what it will take to fix.

After you leave

Write a clear report with your photos. If you do repairs, send an estimate. A few days later, follow up: is the pool still losing water? If it is holding, the job is done. If not, go back through the process with fresh eyes.

> Notice what happened. You did not wander around. You followed a system from the moment you arrived to the moment you followed up. That is how leaks get found consistently.

Working Out Your Numbers

Step 1: find out what your market pays

- Call at least 5 well-rated pool companies in your area that offer leak detection
- Ask each one what they charge for a residential pool leak detection
- Write down every number and find the range. That is your pricing window.

Company	Rating	Price quoted
Company A	4.8 stars	$425
Company B	4.5 stars	$395
Company C	4.9 stars	$450
Company D	4.3 stars	$375
Company E	4.7 stars	$395

Sample research for illustration. Your market will be different, so do this research to find your own number.

Consider two price points

Price point	What it is	How it works
Retail	What you charge homeowners directly	Usually set within your market's range
Wholesale	What you charge pool companies that send you work	A discount that turns pool companies into a referral source

Step 2: work backwards from your goal

Divide the yearly income you want by the weeks you plan to work, then divide by your price per job. That tells you how many jobs a week your goal requires, before expenses.

Example goal	Per week (50 weeks)	Jobs per week at $425
$65,000 a year	$1,300	About 3
$120,000 a year	$2,400	About 6

These are planning examples, not earnings claims. They do not include equipment, vehicle, insurance, marketing or other costs, and they assume you have steady demand, which takes time and marketing to build. Your results will depend on your skill, market and effort.

What This Guide Did Not Teach You

What you just read is the framework: the basic flow that separates a professional from someone who shows up and guesses. There is a lot it did not cover, and being honest about that matters.

- How to interpret what you hear with electronic listening equipment
- Dye testing techniques for different situations
- How to troubleshoot when there is no obvious leak
- The old-school methods that work when electronics fail
- How pool construction tells you where leaks hide
- What to do when test results contradict each other
- How to explain complex findings to customers
- Pricing, scheduling, reports and running your first jobs

You can see the path from start to finish. Walking it with confidence takes training, practice and guidance from someone who has done the work.

Your Next Step

If this guide made sense to you, here is how to keep going, one step at a time.

Start here: The HUNTER Leak Detection System — $47

The 100-page field manual behind this guide. It takes each H.U.N.T.E.R. step deeper: the full dive sequence, pressure testing and what the results mean, acoustic listening for underground plumbing, documenting findings, and the basics of setting up a leak detection business.

Get the book: stan.store/leakbusinessinstitute

Go deeper: Residential Pool Leak Manual — $425

The complete technical manual for residential pool leak detection, for technicians who want a full reference on the job.

See the manual

Learn in the field: 2-Day Ride-Along with Jeff — $1,250

Two days on real pool leak jobs in Palm Beach County with Jeff David. You see the H.U.N.T.E.R. Method used on live jobs, with real equipment and real customers.

See the ride-along

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