



**A series of technical bulletins from SEK-Surebond...
“Achieving Installation Perfection”**

TB.7 Considerations For Sealing Natural Stone

**Natural Stone...
To Seal or
Not to Seal?**

Natural stone used in a hardscape project creates a beautiful finished product that *naturally* leads to a question for most people...

How do I protect natural stone hardscapes and keep them looking beautiful long term?

Just like on the surface of other products such as concrete and pavers, it is wise to consider using a sealer on natural stone for the purpose of protection, easier maintenance and/or enhancing the look of the natural stone. However, it is important to understand the challenges you may face when applying sealers to natural stone. These challenges are common with any product from the various sealer manufacturers because they relate more to the characteristics of natural stone rather than the sealer itself.

With natural stone, the following are some of the factors that may affect the performance and appearance of the sealer applied on it's surface. Be sure to discuss these factors with your customer prior to sealing so they are fully aware of what to expect.

- **Variability:** From quarry to quarry, many of the products available may look and feel the same but usually are not. Although the products may have come from the same quarry, the structure will vary from stone to stone and even sometimes within the same stone. Because of this, the appearance may not be consistent throughout the entire project after applying a sealer.
- **Porosity:** Different types of natural stone products will often have varying absorption rates. Some may be more porous than others and will soak up more sealer which will affect your coverage rate and also create a variance in appearance from stone to stone.
- **Texture:** Each stone may have a different texture with an uneven surface. Due to the inconsistent texture of the stone, you will need to take care in avoiding puddles and pooling of sealers on the surface which could result in an inconsistent finish and look.
- **Surface Stability:** Each and every natural stone surface has its own special characteristics which can lead to future complications if not fully inspected and considered prior to the application of a sealer. Spall (where the surface of the natural stone peels or chips away) and plate separation (where the natural stone actually splits apart) are common occurring issues in certain natural stone products. Once spalling or plate separation occurs after the sealer has been applied, the sealer will no longer be a solid surface and could affect appearance and/or longevity.

In addition to these important factors, it is also necessary to read the label or technical data sheet for the sealer you are considering to determine if it is suited for the type of natural stone you wish to seal. If ever in doubt, we recommend you inquire with the dealer of the product or manufacturer directly before applying to your natural stone product. After you have determined the sealer's suitability for your project, you will want to test a small area or sample stone from the same lot prior to full surface application. Be sure to gain your customer's approval before moving forward.

**Protecting & enhancing natural
stone is an option once you have
considered factors that can affect
the final outcome.**