



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

TB.9 Mistakes to Avoid to Ensure a Successful Polymeric Sand Installation

**Avoid These Top
5 Mistakes
When Installing
Polymeric Sand**

We know what you are thinking... installing polymeric sand is not rocket science, however there are some common mistakes that should be avoided to ensure a successful installation. Sometimes you get lucky and the job turns out fine even though a mistake was made. Other times, the job turns out to be a complete failure resulting in additional time and money spent to fix it. Plus, there is an additional cost that can be high but much more difficult to measure...the damage done to your reputation. To help you achieve a successful polymeric sand installation, we have outlined five of the most common mistakes and what you can do to avoid making them.

1. **Poor Choice of Polymeric Sand** - There are many options of polymeric sand available but all are not created equal. A cheaper price is the best indicator that lesser quality ingredients have been used in the polymeric sand. The reasons some manufacturers use cheap ingredients such as portland cement is to keep cost down and it helps with achieving a quick set up time. Those may sound like positives but one of the biggest downsides of portland cement is that it can leave a haze on the pavers that requires additional time and money to fix. To prevent hazing issues and ultimately protect your reputation, select a polymeric sand that is made with only high quality clear polymers and no portland cement like **PolySweep Polymeric Sand**.
2. **Under or Over Watering** - The amount of water you use and how you apply it does make a difference in the success of your polymeric sand installation. A danger of using too much water too quick creates the possibility of washing away the polymers. Too little water used in the installation process could leave you with a fragile joint. If the joint is not properly watered to at least 2/3's depth, a hardened crust may form at the top of the joint. With the first heavy rain-fall, the top layer of hardened sand could break and easily wash out of the joints. When using **PolySweep** it is important to apply a fine spray of water to moisten the sand until the water just starts to slightly sit on top of the joint. Wait about 5 to 10 minutes allowing the water to soak in. It may take 3-4 proper waterings in order to fully activate the polymeric sand. Test for water depth by digging out some sand to make sure it is wet throughout most of the joint. Replace sand.
3. **Not Compacting** - Some installers may skip this step to save time and may end up with joints that settle, crack and break over time. When you sweep polymeric sand into a joint, there are pockets of air and spacing throughout the sand matrix. Proper compaction of the surface will tighten up the sand particles eliminating pockets of air and voids. If these voids are not eliminated through compaction, the joint may settle after watering or it may show up later when the activated polymers are challenged to maintain a bond as gravity sets in. A tightly compacted joint has the best opportunity for long term success.
4. **Ignoring the Weather Forecast** - You can follow all instructions to a tee but if rain shows up before or shortly after finishing the installation of polymeric sand you will end up with a mess. Installing polymeric sand on a damp or wet surface could cause the sand and polymers to stick to the surface and become difficult to remove. After installation, a hard rain on polymeric sand that has not fully set up could result in polymeric sand all over the top of the pavers. You want to make sure your surface is dry prior to installation and no rain is in the forecast after completing the job for the specified period of time. If a shower shows up that was not in the forecast, cover the project with a tarp to protect the surface. Be sure to remove the tarp as soon as the rain is gone so the air can assist in the curing process.
5. **Not Properly Preparing the Surface Before Activation** - After sweeping the sand into the joints, using a leaf blower to blow off remaining particles is another step that is often rushed through or skipped to save time. However, once water is applied, any remaining polymeric sand particles will harden and remain on the surface resulting in an unhappy customer. Complete a thorough sweeping then use a leaf blower to remove any remaining sand particles. Hold blower on slight angle but close to parallel to the surface and use a slow idle to avoid blowing sand out of the joints.

Achieving Installation Perfection