



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

TB.3 Importance of Correct Watering Technique with Polymeric Sand

**Too Much, Too Little,
Too Late...**

Do you recall the song that contains those words from the late 70's? I bet you never thought it could somehow relate to polymeric sand installation but guess what...**it does.**

When you read the various manufacturers' instructions on their bag of polymeric sand, you begin to notice something most have in common. Although, the directions may vary slightly, they all stress the importance of proper watering technique.

After you have properly distributed the sand on the surface, swept it into the joints, compacted the sand into the joint, added more sand if necessary, repeated sweeping and compacting steps, and blown off remaining particles with a leaf blower...you are **now** finally ready to activate the sand with water. Success in this step requires a little skill and finesse. When installing a sand made with synthetic polymers like PolySweep, gently apply a fine spray of water to moisten the sand taking care not to apply **too much too soon** which could displace sand up and out of the joints. Obviously, you would have a mess to clean up before the sand begins to harden on the surface. We suggest you mist just until the water in the joint starts to slightly sit on top of the joint. Wait about 5 - 10 minutes allowing the water to soak in.

TIP: *Right about this time, on a sunny day, you will see the paver surface start to dry.* It may take 3 - 4 proper wettings in order to make sure the sand is wet the entire depth of the joint. You can test this by taking a long nail or screwdriver and burrowing down to make sure it is wet throughout the joint. After doing so, replace the sand back into the joint.

Why is using the right amount of water important in successful polymeric sand installation?

A danger of using **too much** water, too quick is the possibility of washing away the polymers. This could cause the polymer to float out of the joint or force the polymer down into the joint, neither is good. This would result in polymeric sand that basically turns into common joint sand and does not stabilize properly throughout the project.

What happens if you use **too little** water in the installation of polymeric sand? If the entire joint is not wet, a hardened crust may form at the top of the joint resulting in a fragile joint. With the first heavy rain-fall, the top layer of hardened sand could break and easily wash out of the joints. The remaining dry sand in the joint could wash out as well and activate on the pavers leaving a haze and hardened sand on the surface.

It takes practice and patience in properly watering polymeric sand. Be sure to read and follow the directions carefully or you may be "sorry it had to end this way" just like in that song from long ago.

**Proper Watering Technique Leads
to Successful
Polymeric Sand Installation**