



SURFACEAMERICA®

SurfaceTalk

Article Number 1

Helping You Understand Playground Surfacing

Removing the Mystery From Poured-in-Place

Poured-in-Place surfacing remains a mystery in the minds of many people, partially because they've had limited exposure to the product, but also because the leaders in the industry have done a less than adequate job of explaining what's important and why.

Surface America stands guilty of the latter along with our industry colleagues. Here is an overview of the important factors regarding poured-in-place surfacing systems.

The basic factors which make up a top performing poured-in-place system are:

- Sound base construction;
- Consistently high-quality rubber;
- Proven, high-strength urethane;
- Well designed mixing formulations;
- Generous application volumes;
- Certified installation crews trained in and committed to meeting the specified mixing percentages and application rates – and – having the talent and experience to provide superior craftsmanship.

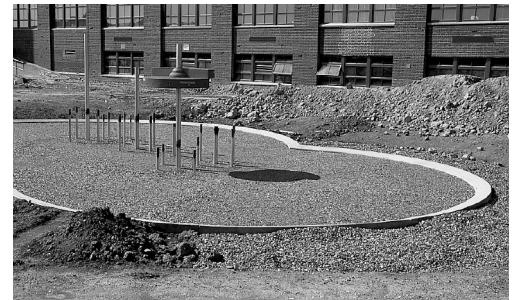
What makes a base sound?

Asphalt and concrete are very common bases. Other than structural failure, there is not much to consider. Structural failure can include cracking, settling of areas that will reveal low spots or raised areas commonly caused by tree roots and subgrade instability. Existing asphalt or concrete that shows any of these symptoms should be addressed and corrected by an asphalt or concrete contractor before the poured-in-place installation.

With new construction, a rule of thumb is that asphalt makes sense if other asphalt work is being done on the site because paving equipment and personnel are already mobilized. If comparing asphalt to concrete and no other asphalt work is planned, concrete is the better choice.

Crushed stone is a viable option as a poured-in-place base. The material costs are generally much less, but the potential for problems is much greater. Follow the Surface America specification closely as *compaction* and *stone size* are critical.

Inadequate crushed stone compaction can cause post installation settling, and the rubber will reflect this settling. Stress cracking of the poured-in-place system is possible if the base settles enough. Using the right sizes and mix of stones is necessary to ensure the completed base is a smooth, even plane.



Final compaction must be done after the playground equipment is installed, with special attention shown to the areas immediately around each playground equipment pole, as these are areas that commonly settle.

A special note to contractors: Often crushed stone is selected over concrete because of reduced material costs without giving labor cost ample consideration. Labor hours to install a crushed stone base to the required specification are commonly twice as many as those to pour concrete. An accurate cost comparison should include material and labor costs.

Leaving project details and logistics out of the equations, Surface America ranks base options as follows: concrete choice #1, asphalt choice #2, crushed stone choice #3.

Look for our next article on rubber and urethane quality.

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