

# Start

## Replaster

There are three types of plaster approved for commercial pools in California: standard, quartz and pebble finish. Standard pool plaster is a mix of Portland cement, water and silica/sand dust; it contains the highest cement content. Quartz and Pebble finish are aggregate finishes. Both increase longevity by replacing some cement with stronger aggregate additives. According to Joey Chavez, Interior Surfaces Specialist for NPT Finishes at Poolcorp, *"The aggregate in the plaster mixture dictates how soft the plaster is. The harder aggregate in the finish, the better it can prevent staining and chemical corrosion and the longer it will last. Depending on the type of plaster selected, water chemistry and maintenance, pool plaster can last from five to twelve years."*

Plaster will last longer in pools that are well maintained, but over time, pieces of plaster will delaminate from the shotcrete and metal substructure or show major rust spots from rebar leeching or extremely deep stains can occur. Even if the plaster doesn't start coming off, it will wear thin over time. Dirt collects in the cracks and the surface may become rough enough to cause skin abrasions and even cuts. If you encounter any of these situations, your pool needs to be replastered.

According to Chavez, additional tips that can extend the life of your replaster project are: *"Confirm your service provider follows a National Plasterers Council (NPC) style start-up. This will provide the most reliable startup. During startup you should also ensure that water is circulating constantly. Your pump should be running 24/7 for at least 3 days,"* and *"Test the fill water. Extremely soft water is low in Calcium. It tries to balance itself by leaching Calcium from the fresh cement within the new pool plaster and etching it away. This situation requires more aggressive chemical balancing by your maintenance team."*

A pool contractor's high season starts in January. By March, the best vendors are booked out through summer. Even though your property is private, replastering requires the creation and submission of new plans for permitting and County Health Inspections - which take time. If you wait until February to decide on replastering your community's pool, you'll be replastering at the end of next summer rather than in time for a Memorial Day Weekend grand reopening.



## Does your Pool need a Facelift?

By Leanne Harvey, California Waters

It's the middle of summer and everyone is enjoying the sun and fun poolside. But you and your Board have realized your property's pool and spa are showing their age. You might have noticed some stains or discoloration. And there's that rust spot near the light. Or you spotted plaster chipping off in a few spots. Some residents even mentioned that the surfaces feel like they are getting rough. Although it might seem too early, it's actually the perfect time to begin planning for next summer - So, what are your options?

### Acid Wash

An acid wash removes or lessens the appearance of surface stains and minor discolorations. Light stains can often be scrubbed out, but deeper stains require a professional acid wash. This strips a thin layer of plaster off the surface of the pool or spa, improving the appearance by exposing a clean layer of plaster underneath. While acid washing can dramatically reduce stains or spots from the surface, it can also make the surface rougher and shorten the lifespan of plaster finishes, so it's only recommended to be performed every 4-5 years. Similar to an acid wash, a chlorine bath is another potential solution for minor discoloration that can be explored with your professional pool maintenance provider.

# Planning Now

Here's the timeline we've found successful for replastering for a Memorial Day Opening:

- August/September: Determine the Scope of Work - In addition to replastering, identify if any of the following need replacing: tile, lights, hand and grab rails, depth and safety markers and equipment. If your pool is old, strongly consider adding optional equipment such as an auto-fill, a Title 22 compliant chemical controller, new variable speed energy efficient pumps and other critical items to keep your pool and spa operating efficiently and to Code. Ask your current pool service provider to assist you in developing the scope of work.
- Distribute your RFP and schedule site visits no later than October – earlier if possible.
- Request quotes in time to review and present them at your November Board meeting. Communicate to the Board that if a decision isn't made by January, you can't guarantee that the pool will be ready for Memorial Day.

- Use the month of December to allow the Board to ask questions and evaluate proposals.
- Select a contractor and sign a contract no later than the end of January; this is especially important if tile replacement is part of your scope.

Following this timeline will put you in the enviable position of opening on Memorial Day with a newly replastered pool and spa– just in time for next summer's fun! ⬆



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