

Surfacing Systems for Asphalt and Concrete Courts

Color Coating

The purpose of color coating systems is to create a uniform playing surface. By filling small voids and depressions, coating systems provide a level of uniformity that cannot be achieved in construction with asphalt and concrete. In addition, coating systems help to provide a surface that has the desired playing characteristics. Also, color coatings help the pavement to resist weathering, reduce surface temperature to promote player comfort, cut glare to enhance play and provide color, contrast and other aesthetic values.

Once cured, the asphalt or concrete pavement is prepared for application of a color surface system. These surface systems vary somewhat from manufacturer to manufacturer; each manufacturer provides instructions for patching, filler coats, mixing and application of its surfacing materials.

To properly apply a color coating system, first, clean the pavement thoroughly. All foreign materials must be removed. Depending upon conditions, blowing debris, hosing or scraping loose material often is sufficient. At other times, particularly when landscaping or fencing work has left mud and debris on the court, power washing may be required.

Next, the pavement is flooded with water and allowed to drain to check for planarity. Low areas, or "birdbaths," are defined as any areas where standing water more than 1/16" deep (commonly measured using a nickel) remains after drainage of the area has ceased or after one hour at 70 degrees F or above in sunlight. Before correcting birdbaths, however, it is important to determine their cause. Are the birdbaths actually low areas, or are they created by adjoining high areas? A simple string test can provide an answer. High areas should be leveled by scraping or grinding. Low areas in the surface should be patched and leveled according to the recommendations of the manufacturer of the color surface prior to proceeding with coating.

Once the pavement has been properly prepared, the next step is the application of filler or texture materials. No coating work, including the filler courses, should be performed when rain is imminent or when the minimum sustained surface and air temperatures are below 55 degrees F. Special care must be taken in the application of the filler course if the pavement is rough or if it has an excess number of voids in the surface. One or more filler coats, compatible with and approved by the colored surface supplier, should be applied to remove minor surface irregularities and to fill the voids in the asphalt surface course. Typically, the filler coat consists of a dry binder mixed with sand and aggregate. Cushion coats or texture coats are then applied.

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