

**Why should you use plaster?**

Plaster has been used on swimming pools for close to 100 years. Plaster is durable and stands up to the environment of proper water chemistry. Plaster is the most economical pool surface and can easily last 15-25 years if properly maintained. Repairable and forgiving, plaster can has stains can be chemically removes and sanded to bring life back to the surface. It is non-toxic and eco- friendly. Pool plaster is made from some of Mother Nature's finest materials.

**How long does plaster last?**

The secret to long life of any pool surface is properly maintained water balance. Improper water balance will destroy any pool surface and in many cases, void the warranty of that surface. Pool plaster is ALWAYS to be under water to prevent delamination to the plaster surface. Properly maintained pools can last **15 to 25 years**.

**When is it time to resurface my swimming pool?**

Knowing when to replaster your pool is essential if you want to avoid additional repairs and unwanted plastering costs. Watch out for these typical signs to determine if it's time to replaster your pool.

***Mineral stains-*** Over time, minerals in the water – for instance, copper and iron – may stain the plaster and ruin the look of your pool. When this happens, it may be time to replace it. However, if these stains appear only a few years after you've replastered last, you might need to locate the source of the stains and deal with them.

***Gunite showing through-*** Most pools are constructed of Gunite or Shotcrete, tough concrete-like substances that form the structural support of the basin. The plaster over the top acts as a waterproof layer and provides visual appeal, so when you start to see patches of darker structural materials showing through, it's time to replaster.

***Pool owners decide for a pool facelift-*** Some pool owners want to change the color or surface material of their pool, and that's another reason for pool replastering.

***Pool plaster is pitted or etched-*** If your plaster has surface irregularities, which may take on a beige hue, you have what's commonly called etching. This etching or pitting can be caused by low pH or alkalinity; an acidic condition. Etching can also be the result of plaster problems, from the many plaster mix, application or curing variables. Plaster etching can also be the result of aggressive or improper acid washing.

***Pool plaster has large, Dark Areas-*** You may be seeing the Gunitite or Shotcrete beneath the plaster beginning to show through. You better start budgeting for that re-plaster. Relax, it's probably a stain, especially if it is around the main drains and you just opened the pool (worms). But, when plaster does wear very thin, you will begin to see the gray or tan colored substrate showing through. This would be a good time to re-plaster, or you can mix-up some of our pool plaster mix, and make a plaster patch, dry or underwater.

### **Plaster has delaminated?**

Known as bond failure, this will occur as areas where the plaster has popped off. This is a common pool plaster repair, usually seen on re-plaster jobs, where the plaster to plaster bond may never be as strong as the original plaster to concrete bond. This is repaired with a pool plaster repair mix. Plaster normally does not delaminate from the Gunitite; this bond failure can more easily occur, plaster to plaster.

### **Pool surface has cracks-**

***Crazing cracks-*** Known as crazing or checking, the tiny, barely visible cracks are usually caused by extreme temperature variations, especially during initial curing. These are only shrinkage cracks, and pose no structural hazard or danger of leaking. Light acid washing could remove the crazed layer. Larger cracks should be cut out in a butterfly or dovetail fashion with a 4" or 7" grinder, and filled with a pool plaster repair mix or a Flexible Sealer can be used where further movement is suspected.

***Structure cracks-*** Structure cracks typically occur in places where there's stress on the pool shell and/or substandard construction. Skimmers, steps, corners and depth transitions are all places where there's greater stress and potentially weaker spots in the structure.

### **How long does a typical replaster job take?**

Most jobs can be completed within a week (2 weeks including start-up).

### **How soon can I swim in my newly plastered pool/spa?**

As soon as the start-up is completed (typically 5 days after completion of plaster).

### **What is the warranty on a newly plastered/finished pool & spas?**

10 years for residential pools and 5 years for commercial pools. The warranty is on bonding- we guarantee our plaster will not detach, peel, or break.

## How Long Does Pool Caulking Last?

Generally speaking, it's about 5 years before enough movement and deterioration will need repair or replacement. Sections of your caulking run can last up to 10 years.

Without caulking covering the expansion joint, over time leaves, dirt and sand will fill the joint, removing the room for expansion. In the long term, the pool wall will lose the fight against the horizontal pool deck. Cracking through the beam of the pool, at the tile line could be the eventual result of not maintaining a true and clean expansion joint around the pool.

Another reason for caulking around the pool is to prevent water from freezing in the joint during winter, expanding inside the joint, putting pressure on the pool wall and the pool deck. Again, the pool wall loses the fight. Over years of freeze/thaw cycles, portions of the beam around the pool can crack, a very expensive repair.

## Why is my tile is falling off?

Tile can begin to fall off of the pool structure for many reasons. Freeze damage, a compromised bond beam, and even time can lead to deterioration. After ensuring the coping stone and bond beam are properly set and are structurally sound you can replace and re-adhere the tile to the pool's tile line. Older tiles may be hard to match if you're in need of replacements. It's always a good idea to hold on to an extra sheet or two from the original construction. You can also touch up and repair tile before cementing to the structure and grouting.

This could be a result of bond failure of the "mud" that was used to set the tile in. Look behind the tile for a horizontal crack. This could be evidence of a cracked beam. "Popped" tile could be the result of not having caulking in the expansion joint between the coping and the deck, allowing water to run behind the tile and freeze. Water freezing in the expansion joint itself, or an expansion joint that is not "true" and where the pool and deck are touching, will also cause tile to fall off, and create beam damage.

## Tile has white deposits?

Known as *efflorescence*, mineral salts such as calcium and magnesium may come out of the grout or from the setting mud and deposit on the front of the tile. It may also originate from the pool water. The efflorescence can be scraped off with a flathead screwdriver or putty knife, and/or "burned" off with a tile acid wash. In areas of the southwest familiar with hard water pool tile deposits, service companies offer pool tile cleaning using a bead blasting technique, similar to sand blasting. Using sequestering agents and limiting use of calcium based pool shock can reduce efflorescence deposits on pool tile.

## Pool tile is cracked?

This may be caused by a cracked bond beam, or perhaps from freezing surface water pressing against the tile during expansion. Or maybe it wasn't Frost Free pool tile to begin with. Small cracks can be filled in by spreading a waterproof tile grout over the tiles, but cracks running through will become visible.

## Pool tile is dirty and dull?

Cleaning tile to remove the bathtub ring can be accomplished with a small amount of abrasive cleaner such as Comet or Bon Ami, sprinkled onto a textured sponge.

### **Do I replace or reset pool coping?**

Coping around the pool perimeter in any form is subject to damage. It can become unsecured from a damaged bond beam, crack, or become unlevel through ground movement. In some cases damage to coping is apparent and in other cases it can be elusive.

Resetting coping will entail removing the stone or brick by first cutting away any grout that is between joints. You may even need to gain leverage by removing grout beneath the coping between the tile and the coping itself. Once you have removed the necessary section of coping you may have to rebuild and level the bond beam using hydraulic cement and then reset the brick or stone.

### **What is the Virginia Greame Baker Act?**

The Virginia Greame Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act promotes the safe use of pools, spa, and hot tubs by imposing mandatory federal requirements for suction entrapment avoidance and by establishing a voluntary grant program for states with laws that meet certain minimum requirements as outlined in the Act. Effective December 20, 2007, the Act is being administered by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). All pools/spas are required to split each suction drain OR connect it to a certified safety vacuum release system, as well as the installation of certified V.G.B. compliant drain covers. However, for existing residential pools/spa, regulations differ by city. Please contact your city's building and safety department for more information.

### **Determine the location of the leak in your pool?**

If you determine that your pool is losing water, turn off the filtration system and note where the water stops dropping.

- If the water stops at the bottom of skimmer opening, the leak is probably in the skimmer or filtration system (including the pipes). If you suspect you have a leak in the filtration system:
- Check, first, to see if you see air bubbles in the water in the return line when the pool's pump is running. If so, there is a leak in the suction side of the filtration system.
- Ensure the pump basket lid is on tight and that the lid o-ring is lubed and in good condition.
- If the water stops at the light, the leak is probably at the light housing.
- If the water drops below the light, then there may be a leak in the drain at the bottom the pool. Check for cracks.