



## Tips on Filling the Pool and Initial Start Up

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### **Responsibility For Filling The Pool**

Once the interior finish has been installed, the water is typically started by the Plastering Company. Certain interior finishes may require a same-day or next-day treatment of the surface prior to fill. In this case, the fill may be delayed until the surface has been treated. In either case, it is important to determine the Party responsible to turn off the water, as well as the Party that will be performing the necessary initial start-up procedures. The NPC has the *NPC 'Start-Up Procedures'* card, which details the common-trade practice, and other considerations for fill, start-up, and initial maintenance. For proprietary finishes, it is important to adhere to the manufacturer's fill and start-up instructions.

Typically, hard-trowel smooth finishes that do not utilize high-performance materials, such as traditional white cement and marble, limestone, or dolomite sand without modifiers, should be filled as soon as possible after final set. Finishes that utilize high-performance materials, such as polymer modifiers, or quartz or silicate-based sand or pebbles, may require extra time to cure, or to be cleaned, buffed, exposed, or polished prior to filling the pool. These processes are typically done on the same day, or on the day following the installation, and the Plastering Company typically will start the water upon the completion of their work.

Although the start of the fill water and the time to fill a pool can vary, it is recommended that the interior finish be fully submersed as soon as practical, to avoid an increase in shrinkage cracking, or the potential for debonding of the interior finish from the substrate. The interior finish should then remain fully submersed during its' service life, except for limited servicing or repair.

### **Considerations For Filling the Pool**

Clean potable water should be used. Do not use soft water, or reverse osmosis water to fill the pool. It is recommended to test the fill water for pH, total alkalinity (TA), calcium hardness (CH) and metals. Record test results. Due to uniqueness of the fill water or other environmental factors, some portions of the start-up procedures may need to be modified to protect the pool finish. For example, filling the pool with water having extremely high/low calcium hardness, high/low pH, or high/low total alkalinity may necessitate changes to these procedures.

Prior to installing the interior finish, make sure the pool filtration equipment is operational. If the pool filtration system is not adequately cleaning (removing the plaster dust), a portable pool filtration system should be used.

Upon filling, a clean cloth should be fixed to the end of the hose and positioned at the deepest area of the pool to prevent damage to the surface. If a water truck is required, it is recommended that a minimum of 24 inches (60 cm) of water should be placed at the deepest area for a water cushion, followed by the water from the water truck cascading into the accumulated water.

Optionally, some water trucks are equipped with diffusers that can be placed on the end of the hose with a clean cloth wrapped the diffuser and secured.

Once started, the water must fill continuously, uninterrupted, and as rapidly as possible, until the water reaches the middle of the skimmer (or operating water level). This is important, any interruption in the fill can cause an unsightly discoloration, or bowl ring, at the level where the water was stopped. A prolonged stoppage of the water can also cause an increase in visible shrinkage cracking above the level where the water was stopped.

To prevent streaking or spotting, it is important not to allow any external source of water to contact the surface of the interior finish prior to the pool being full of water.

For bather safety, it is not recommended to swim in the pool until the water is properly balanced and sanitized. At no time should any person or pets be allowed in the pool prior to the pool being full of water.

### **After The Pool Is Full**

Test fill water daily for pH, total alkalinity (TA), calcium hardness (CH) and metals. Record test results.

Start the pool equipment filtration system immediately after the pool is full to the middle of the skimmer (or operating water level). DO NOT turn on the pool heater/chiller for 28 days. DO NOT add wheeled vacuums until the water is chemically balanced and no cloudiness ('plaster dust') remains in the pool (typically 7 – 10 days after fill), or as per manufacturer's recommendations.

It is recommended to use the *NPC 'Start-Up Instructions' Start-Up Card* which is based on proven common trade practice and methods shown to produce the best aesthetic results and longevity of the interior finish. However, there are other start-up procedures that are known to produce similar good results. Proprietary finishes should always follow the manufacturer's fill and start-up instructions.

Initial start-up procedures must include frequent brushing and daily testing and adjusting of the pool water.

### **General Considerations**

The pool interior finish is especially susceptible to staining, scaling, and discoloration within the first 28-days, so it is very important to follow the initial start-up care to 28-days prior to switching to an 'ongoing water chemistry & maintenance program'.

Maintaining the proper initial and ongoing pool water chemistry, brushing the surface, installing a good pool cleaning system, and regular equipment maintenance are vital to achieve the anticipated lifespan of the finish.



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