



Maintenance guidelines for sand filled artificial surfaces.

Regular maintenance should begin immediately the carpet installation is completed, most installers and manufacturers, recommend regular dragbrushing and no more, this is not adequate to keep the surface free draining and in good condition!

All organic matter should be removed from the surface as soon as possible. Playing on a surface covered in leaves /debris leads to a rapid breakdown of the organic matter which is then pushed down into the infill, by foot pressure, likewise drag brushing when debris is present will break the debris into smaller particles which are then pushed down into the surface, eventually these particles in combination with broken fibres, atmospheric pollution and algal growth will lead to failure of the drainage characteristics of the infill material, this in turn renders the surface dangerous and unplayable with the resultant need and significant cost of a major renovation.

To stop the above happening all organic debris should be removed from the surface regularly, this can be achieved using leaf blowers or with a greensweep or cleansweep machine, a full sized hockey pitch can be cleaned with a 4.8 metre green sweep gang in approximately thirty minutes and will remove most foreign bodies from the surface .

The surface needs to be dragbrushed regularly, ideally weekly when conditions allow to keep the infill mobile, the pile upright and decompacted. The Sweepfast system utilising purpose built dragbrushes, Cleansweeps and Greensweeps in combination provides a method of in-house maintenance which can remove some of the contamination from the infill.

Annually or Bi-annually, depending on the amount of contamination in your area the sand infill should be cleaned/ recycled using a purpose built S.M.G. or similar machine. These machines effectively remove contamination, organic debris and broken fibre from the infill whilst decompacting the carpet and straightening the fibres at the same time. Under extreme conditions this process may need to be carried out twice yearly.

Moss and algae control are really important as with milder conditions encouraging growth, once they becomes established control is really difficult. Moss spraying with a proprietary moss killer should be carried out at a minimum annually with regular spot spraying between times. Ideally the surface should be sprayed within two weeks of annual infill treatments so that any spores exposed and distributed across the surface are killed!

Sand levels, these are important for two main reasons.

Firstly most sand filled carpets are designed to be filled with sand to within one mm of the surface. the sand is there to support the pile., carpets that are under sanded will suffer excessive foot wear and the pile will bend allowing more of it into contact with feet, brushes etc. Excess sand is dangerous on the surface for football, tennis and multisports surfaces although some hockey players find this desirable as it limits foot lock. So a balance has to be found.

Secondly the sand is there as a drainage/ filtration medium the coarser the sand infill the faster the surface drains the downside to this is that the contamination goes deeper into the infill, finer sands give faster more consistent bounces but drainage tends to fail sooner however as it is contained nearer the surface it can be easier to remove .

Brushing operations tend to migrate the sand off the playing surface so removal of excess sand from the edges of a sports pitch and replacement with new onto playing surfaces will be needed, Sand levels may need adjusting through the playing surface during the year i.e. removal as it dries in the spring and replacement in the autumn.

The above represents the ideas and information gained by Sweepfast Ltd at this time and should only be used in conjunction with guidelines from your manufacture/installer.