

Choosing the Right Company

Contractor's License

When you contract to have work done in your home that totals over \$500, the company must have a valid Contractor's License. As far as synthetic turf installation is concerned, ensure that your installer possesses a 'C27' designation on their license. By being licensed, you are ensuring that they are bonded, insured, and possess worker's compensation to protect you from liability.

Warranty

Make sure that your warranty remains valid even if the installation company goes out of business. Warranties are only as good as the company offering them. Fountain Valley requires an 8-year minimum warranty.

References

Ensure that the company is willing to provide references and will let you view existing installations to see what the product looks like in different lighting conditions.

What does the Code say?

Materials

Cut-pile type artificial turf, composed of polyethylene and/or polypropylene with an 8-year minimum no-fade warranty.

Installation

Turf must be installed by a licensed professional in accordance with manufacturer specifications, anchored at the edges and seams, with a proper drainage system and bender board installed to safeguard against weeds.

Maintenance

Turf must be maintained in a green, fadeless condition, free of stains, weeds, debris, impressions, and discoloration.

The use of outdoor nylon or plastic carpeting as a replacement for natural or artificial turf is not allowed.

Landscaped areas shall be planted with live plant materials or synthetic turf meeting the above requirements for a minimum of 50% of the subject area.

Synthetic Turf Guidelines and Considerations



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At the June 2, 2009 City Council meeting, Councilmembers voted to approve an ordinance allowing the installation of synthetic turf as a replacement for natural turf surfaces in all zoning districts.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to inform residents who are considering installing synthetic turf what the code requires as well as some considerations regarding the installation of synthetic turf.

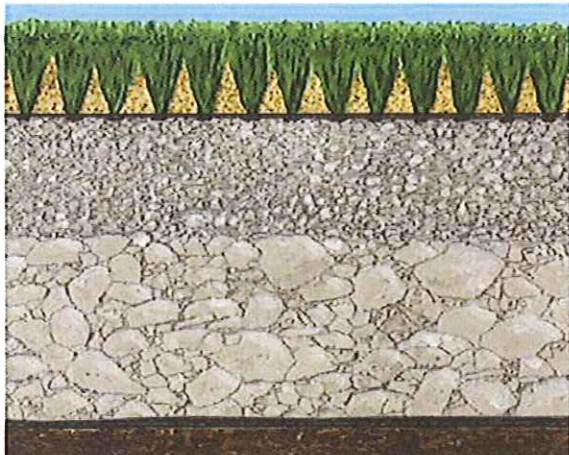


Infill vs. Non-infill Turf

There are two main varieties of synthetic turf: infill and non-infill. Both types are allowed per the municipal code, however, potential buyers should be aware of the differences and potential benefits of each type before deciding upon which to install. Most installers suggest using an infill surface if they anticipate heavy traffic or sports usage, but most residential customers will probably choose non-infill turf as it is cheaper and may work better for residents with kids, pets, a pool, or plan on installing on a sloped surface.

Infill:

- Contains rubber crumbs or sand for cushion and to keep blades upright.
- Originally designed for sports fields
- Is generally hotter than non-infill turf as black rubber crumbs absorb more sunlight
- Black rubber crumbs may migrate over time



Infill vs. Non-infill Turf Cont'd.

Non-infill:

- Does not use rubber crumbs; instead, small coiled mossy looking fibers keep blades upright
- You get what you pay for: cheaper products tend to have less grass blades per square inch and look worse than more expensive products.



Cost and Benefit of Synthetic Turf

Synthetic turf can help reduce water use associated with irrigation and also eliminate the need for pesticides and fertilizers. Additionally, less time will need to be spent mowing and trimming lawns.

Conversely, the installation cost of synthetic turf can be quite high (though there are rebates to help offset this cost). Also it should be noted that polyethylene and polypropylene are both petroleum derivatives so there is an environmental cost associated with their production.

Health Concerns

As with any synthetic product, there have been concerns as to the possible health effects stemming from the presence of certain chemicals and compounds in both the turf blades (lead) and in crumb rubber infill (zinc, chromate, PAHs, and VOCs).

Lead chromate was commonly used as an additive in turf blades to help them retain color. Some older fields, which are composed of nylon, tested positive for the presence of lead, but within legal limits. It should be noted that nylon synthetic turf is not allowed within the City.

Crumb rubber infill is composed of recycled tires and athletic shoes. Most studies suggest that the chemicals present in these products don't leech or outgas enough to constitute a public health risk.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has ruled that synthetic turf is safe for everyday use.

Heat Considerations

Surface temperatures of synthetic turf tend to be higher than natural turf. Like asphalt, crumb rubber in infill-based synthetic turf surfaces gets hotter than other surfaces as darker colors absorb more sunlight than lighter ones. Another reason why biological turf is cooler is due to water evaporation from irrigation that cools grass to ambient temperatures.