

## Hardscaping & Paver Department

### What is Poly Sand? (By Tina Kearney)

For years the standard construction method for dry laid patios was to brush masonry sand in between the joints. Unfortunately, those joints were vulnerable to weather and weeds and as a result made dry laid patios fairly high maintenance for homeowners.

In recent years, Gaspers and other landscape contractors have started to use polymer sands (or Poly sand) in dry laid patio joints. Polymer sand is an aggregate mix of sand or some type of finely crushed grey stone that is mixed with polymers and Portland cement. This mixture is then brushed and/or vibrated into the patio joints. When it is activated by water, it hardens up. Using polymer sand between your concrete or natural stone pavers helps to stabilize your hardscape project, keeps weeds from growing between the joints and keeps ants from nesting. This works in dry laid applications because the polymers in the mix allow the sand to be somewhat flexible under wet or frozen so that it does not get forced out of the joints. It usually comes in grey or beige. Polymer sand is a cost efficient alternative to a wet laid patio which would have a higher initial installation cost.

Older patios which may have initially be laid using masonry sand in the joints can fairly easily be converted to polymer sand joints by using a power washer to remove the existing joint sand. This is also possible for patios that have been installed for a few years and need to have their polymer sand joints redone. Any repairs to the patio or walkway should be made prior to the new application, and the area should be allowed to thoroughly dry. Polymer 'haze', which is a cloudy film left on the surface of the pavers, can occur if polymer sand is made when conditions are not completely dry. Polymer haze can usually be removed with a stiff brush and very hot/boiling water. We also sell a product called SRW Paver wash which highly effective on light poly haze.

We carry two types of poly sand made by Alliance which are the best on the market and which we use on all of our hardscape projects.