



## Creating Fun, Interactive & Safe Splash Pads

*Learn why splash pads are becoming a top choice for outdoor recreation in apartment complexes, city parks, hotels, child-care centers, and other public facilities.*

### INSTALLATION GUIDE

“Splash pads are growing in popularity because they are accessible to people of all ages and abilities,” says Korey Soderberg of Kraftsman Commercial Playgrounds & Waterparks in Spring, Texas.

“Plus, they often have lower ongoing costs than pools that require continual maintenance, oversight by lifeguards, and extra insurance.” Many of these advantages are reason managers of cities, youth organizations, apartment complexes, and multi-family living facilities are choosing splash pads as the main focal point of outdoor entertainment spaces.

Jason Unruh, National Commercial Sales Representative at SUNDEK, notes that these spaces are often the centerpiece of a larger park or outdoor entertaining area. “We often see splash pads surrounded by walkways, benches, gazebos, barbeque areas, and trees,” says Unruh. Soderberg adds, “I call them splash *parks* because they are often integrated into the surrounding landscape.” ▶

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This open design that connects the splash area to the rest of a park or outdoor area often means big crowds, too. It's big crowds that cities and other facilities want—often looking to provide for city residents, tenants, or buyers. Unruh says, “splash pads are attractive destinations.”

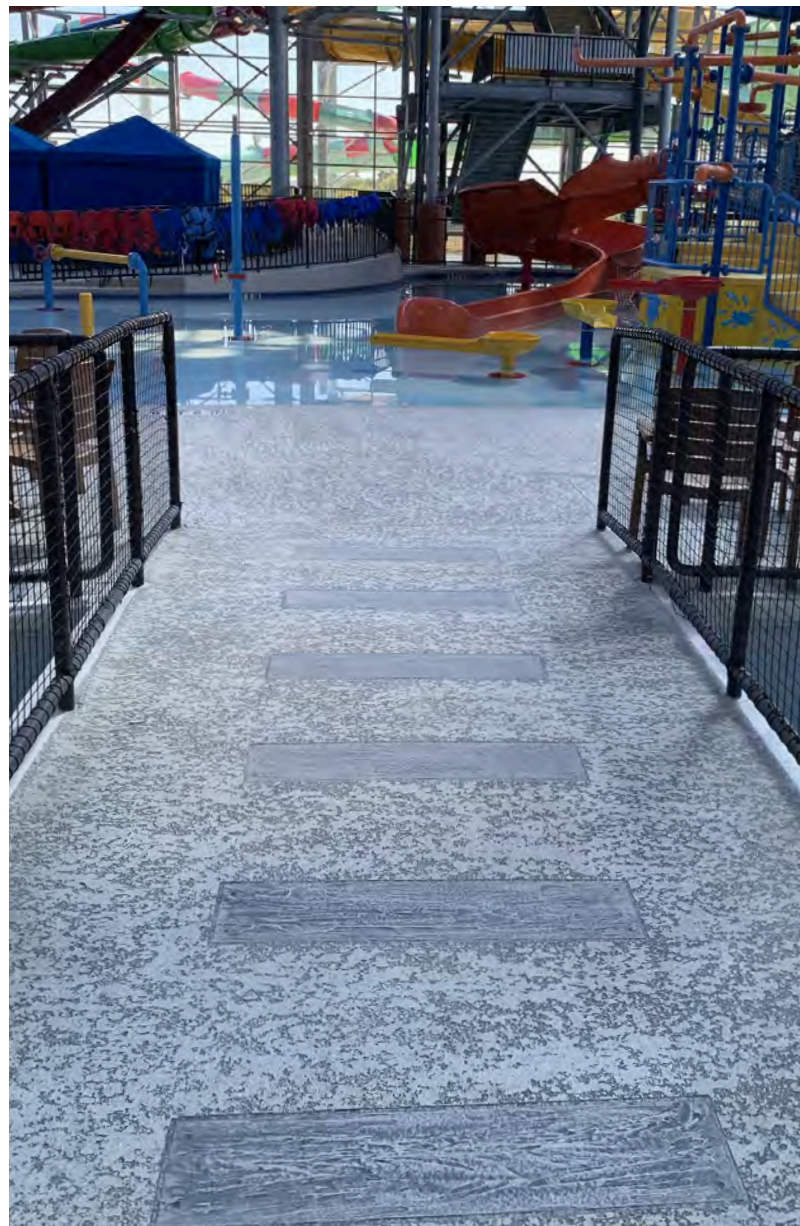
Having installed over 100 splash pads over the years, Soderberg notes that one of the main attractions of splash pads is how multiple generations can play together. Not only can younger kids play with older siblings, but children can also play with parents and grandparents very easily in a safe environment. Children and adults of all abilities can enjoy the same space. “Splash pads are also ADA accessible,” says Soderberg. “In the initial design, we plan for heavy use and foot traffic as well as accessibility.”

Safety and accessibility are of primary importance to cities, youth organizations, and multi-family housing facilities where splash pads are being installed. The safety benefits of splash pads go beyond reducing, or nearly eliminating, drowning risks. Splash pads are also designed with slip-resistance and hot weather in mind. Through the use of SUNDEK overlays, the concrete surfaces of many splash pads are safer to walk on because the textured surface provides better grip when wet. The overlays also stay cooler in hot weather and provide an opportunity to create fun, colorful patterns that kids and families enjoy.

“The sky is the limit in terms of the design and look of splash pads,” says Unruh. “The design can match nearly any building or be extremely vibrant and colorful.” SUNDEK has worked with splash pad installers on all type of surface designs—from swirling color patterns to 3D effects. It's really up to the owner or facility manager installing a splash pad to decide on the look, but SUNDEK and the contractors installing splash pads can provide ideas and final designs to choose from.

**“The point is that splash parks are fully customizable and can fit your needs. And remember, there's maintenance to plan for, but it's often far less costly than pool maintenance.”**

Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark, Grand Prairie, Texas.  
Classic Texture with Tuscan in Franciscan Tan and  
SunH2O Midnight Color  
Contractor: ATD Concrete Coatings



The colors and look are often the starting point for a design, but Soderberg notes that the water use is often a primary concern during the design phase as well. “I typically recommend using fresh water that’s later filtered and used for irrigation or diverted to a nearby manufactured lake or pond,” says Soderberg. Splash pads systems can be designed so they fit local codes and water usage recommendations put in place by municipalities.

Another big question is cost. Soderberg and the team at SUNDEK work with owners and facility managers to design projects to fit various budget levels and installation timelines. In some cases, splash pads can be installed in a little as several months at a cost somewhere around \$150,000 if it’s a turnkey project. More complex systems can

take several years of planning, permitting, and construction with costs over a million dollars. “The point is that splash parks are fully customizable and can fit your needs,” says Soderberg. “And remember, there’s maintenance to plan for, but it’s often far less costly than pool maintenance.”

A splash pad project of any scale requires expertise and thoughtfulness to ensure success. The following tips and guidelines provided by Unruh, Soderberg, and Tony Hernandez of ATD Concrete Coatings can be used in developing the scope of your splash pad project. Once you’re ready to begin, be sure to contact SUNDEK to resurface your splash pad or to be connected with splash pad expert for more specific advice.

Great Wolf Water Park, Gatlinburg, Tennessee. SunStamp System  
Contractor: ATD Concrete Coatings





Parr Park Splash Pad, Grapevine, Texas.  
Classic Texture Indian Wheat and custom blue colors  
Contractor: ATD Concrete Coatings

## PROJECT GUIDELINES

### Planning Guidelines

- Splash pad project timelines can range from 4 months to 3 years from design to final installation. The length of time depends on the size and complexity of a project. The average timeline for projects is around 1 year (this includes all planning, design, permitting, and installation).
- Costs can run from \$150,000 to more than \$1 million. Cost is often affected by amenities such as water recirculation or filtration, additional walkways, gazebos, shade structures, and integration with an existing park or building. The average cost of a medium to large splash pad is around \$400,000. Soderberg installed a splash pad at the Houston Zoo for around \$370,000 which included a variety of shade structures and seating areas. He recommends planning for these additional amenities early in the process.
- Discuss water usage early in the project development. Cities and utilities often have codes or regulation for water usage. Contact a local expert or installer early in the process. Soderberg recommends using fresh water that can be filtered after use and diverted to irrigation or used to fill manufactured lakes or ponds.
- Splash pads often attract large crowds. Plan for paths, gazebos, seating, trash cans, and other amenities surrounding splash pads. It's easier to develop a plan and a budget for these amenities early in the design phase than waiting until after installation.
- SUNDEK overlays can be used on concrete surfaces to provide slip resistance, cooler walking surfaces, and colorful designs. A broom finished concrete is an option, but it does not have enhanced slip resistance or color options. Broom-finished concrete can also be very hot to walk on in warm weather.

### Installation Guidelines

- Ask your contractor about the application of an epoxy primer before an overlay is applied. The epoxy primer provides a stronger bond to the concrete and helps waterproof the surface. This is an especially important step in protecting the concrete that will be frequently covered with water. The extra step can add to the installation cost but will make the overlay last much longer.

- Installation can be quick with turnkey splash pads. Soderberg has installed small systems in as little as 3 days (not including design and permitting). Often, larger projects in city parks or multi-family buildings take 2 to 6 months to install.
- Be sure any play equipment, water jets, or drains are installed before the SUNDEK overlay application. This will allow the overlay contractor to properly seal everything during the overlay installation.
- SUNDEK overlays are usually installed at the very end of the installation process. Once all play areas, water management equipment, and concrete surfaces have been installed, a SUNDEK installation contractor will come out to install the overlay.
- SUNDEK overlays can also be installed on existing splash pads that already have an overlay or that are bare concrete. An installation contractor can prepare the surface for a new custom-designed pattern. Cracks, joints, and existing damage can be fixed before the new overlay is installed.
- After overlays are installed it's important to make sure the surface is sealed properly. This typically means applying a polyurethane sealer with sand-like aluminum oxide grain broadcast into the sealer. The sealer helps protect the concrete from foot traffic, water abrasion, and UV damage. The aluminum oxide grain provides added traction to the surface and is preferred over silica grain that tends to wear down over time.

## Maintenance Guidelines

- Be sure to clean the surface regularly. This can be done by a maintenance crew on site, or you can ask a SUNDEK installation contractor about providing ongoing maintenance. SUNDEK installation contractors also provide a warranty on installed overlays. Make sure you ask about warranties and recommended maintenance schedules.
- Concrete surfaces that get heavy use may need to be resealed or recolored every couple of years. Plan for this ahead of time or talk to a SUNDEK installation contractor to make an ongoing maintenance plan.

## FIND A LOCAL SUNDEK INSTALLATION CONTRACTOR

SUNDEK has project managers and over 60 installation contractors nationwide to serve you.

### CONTACT US

Phone: 877-478-6335

Email: [solutions@sundek.com](mailto:solutions@sundek.com)

Website: [www.sundek.com](http://www.sundek.com)

Whisper Falls Splash Pad, San Antonio,  
TX. Classic Texture custom colors  
Contractor: Sundek of San Antonio

