



How Your Erosion Control Choice Can Add Value to Your Residential Property

Pedestrian safety and aesthetics are particularly valuable for residential developments. Your choice in erosion control solutions can cost far more than the price of erosion itself. Erosion is a gradual but powerful force that can halt or otherwise complicate construction, generate unseen costs, and create hazardous conditions for workers and pedestrians. Your erosion control solution needs to adequately protect your investment—but when it comes to residential developments, your erosion control measures must also be people-friendly and aesthetically pleasing to residents.

Residents want to live in a place they are proud of. They want to use every inch of their available outdoor space, including shores and edges of ponds. They don't want to endure the sounds and sights of crews and heavy machinery when erosion control measures need to be installed, maintained, or reinstalled when they fail. As opposed to industrial, agricultural, or other similar developments, residential developments require a certain level of livability in their erosion control solutions. InstaTurf® fills that need.

InstaTurf is a hybrid-turf mat designed with a simulated grass texture and a soil-protecting fabric backing. The grass texture helps prevent erosive forces from reaching the soil and the backing prevents soil loss to provide

outstanding short- and long-term erosion protection. Vegetation can grow through InstaTurf unimpeded—that's why we call it a hybrid-turf. InstaTurf is ideal for residential developments where safety and aesthetics are valued as well as protection from soil erosion. In this article, we will lay out the safety and aesthetic benefits of using InstaTurf in areas where pedestrians and residents will congregate.

Hard Armor is Unfriendly

When compared with hard armor solutions like rock rip-rap, InstaTurf is a much softer, lighter weight, and cheaper alternative. Upon installation, InstaTurf provides the same soil erosion protection as 24-inch diameter rock

riprap and is much less equipment-intensive to install and maintain. **In fact, just one 270 sq ft roll of InstaTurf effectively covers the same ground area as 30-40 tons of rock.** In turn, using InstaTurf instead of rock can eliminate dangerous and annoying dump truck traffic through your residential developments.

Though rock riprap is usually effective and widely used, it is also an eyesore. It's conspicuous and unnatural looking. Unlike rock riprap, however, InstaTurf allows local vegetation to grow through. Where hard armor often harbors unwanted weeds that require removal by hand equipment or herbicide spraying, InstaTurf fosters local pollinator populations by encouraging healthy vegetation growth. Once vegetation grows in, InstaTurf provides even better soil protection while weeds can compromise rock riprap installations. This means that if you have rock riprap and a year goes by, it will still look like bare rock with perhaps a few ugly patches of weeds that managed to grow through. InstaTurf, on the other hand, will look like natural flora in under a year's time and your residents won't even know a permanent reinforcing mat is installed underneath. With the inviting and accessible appearance of InstaTurf, prospective residents and buyers will value your development more highly.

Hard armor erosion control solutions also present a danger to pedestrians and workers. Ask any angler and they'll tell you: rock riprap is difficult to stand and walk on. The large stones are prone to throw a pedestrian off-balance and the gaps present a real risk of ankle sprains or worse. Imagine if somebody were to injure themselves walking on a rock riprap installation on your residential property; it's a situation that could lead to heavy litigation fees and fines levied against the development. When it comes to your residential development, and your reputation, why risk it? When your property is effectively protected with a solution like InstaTurf, part of your useable land doesn't have to be sacrificed to a pedestrian-unfriendly solution like riprap. InstaTurf helps you and your residents use every square foot of the property.



Soft Armor Can Be Untrustworthy

Soft armor solutions incorporate natural and manmade materials to establish and, in some cases, permanently reinforce vegetative cover. Compared to hard armor, these solutions are much easier to transport, install, and maintain. Soft armor erosion control materials range from cheap, temporary soil protection like straw or wood fiber erosion control blankets, to permanent materials such as Turf Reinforcement Mats (TRMs). Unfortunately, conventional erosion control blankets and turf reinforcement mats may not be enough for today's larger, more frequent storms.

When it comes to soft armor erosion control solutions, appearance is a top concern. Temporary erosion control blankets look cheap and don't provide any long-term support for vegetation, so they're only good for moderate slopes and areas with limited water flow and erosive action. Furthermore, these materials often contain plastic nettings which don't break down, leaving wads of unsightly netting residue on the ground where it's easily caught in mowers. These nettings also pose an entanglement threat to birds and reptiles. Residents of a development would not be too happy to see plastic netting "tumbleweeds" blowing across their yards, or dead ducks stuck in netting along their ponds.

More permanent solutions like TRMs also have their drawbacks compared to InstaTurf. Most TRMs require 6-12+ months of vegetation growth before they can provide the high level of erosion protection often needed for drainage channels, swales, shorelines, and outfall areas. During this grow-in period TRMs are at risk of failure, possibly resulting in costly fines due to stormwater permit violations, product reinstallation, poor aesthetics, and mud deposits on streets, sidewalks and other areas. When crews and machinery are constantly working on a property, residents tend to ascribe a lower value to that property. This TRM failure could also prove hazardous if the mat comes up due to water ingress, creating a tripping/slipping hazard. InstaTurf is immediately many times more effective than TRMs upon installation, so the chance of failure is exceedingly low. You can feel confident that your erosion solution won't fail on you and cause headaches for you and your residents.



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The Best of Both Worlds

InstaTurf combines the reliable soil protection of hard armor solutions with the flexibility and “people friendliness” of soft armor solutions. When planning your residential development, specify InstaTurf for protecting drainageways, pond and lake shorelines, streambanks and culvert/pipe outfall areas to save on materials and avoid costly reinstallation and maintenance. Our innovative hybrid-turf technology is ready to handle your erosion control needs while looking good and providing a safe surface for people to walk, work and play on.



Contact Tim Lancaster to discuss your property's needs.

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