# **AIRDRAIN FOR GOLF**

SUBMITTAL PACKAGE FOR GREENS, TEE BOXES, BUNKERS AND FAIRWAY APPLICATIONS

SPRING 2025



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## AIRDRAIN

### BY AIRFIELD SYSTEMS

An advanced geocell solution for modern natural turf constriction. AirDrain provides rapid water drainage, collection, retention, and reuse for sports fields, greens, bunkers, tee boxes and fairways. It is the most efficient, water saving drainage design and is made of 100% recycled content, making it a practical part of true green building.

### AN AIRDRAIN SYSTEM CONTRIBUTES TO A HEALTHIER ROOT PROFILE AND A PERFECT PERCHED WATER TABLE



A five year research project At Texas A&M University, jointly funded by the United States Golf Association and AirField Systems concluded that AirDrain provided up to three more days of plant available water than a USGA recommended gravel and sand profile.

An AirDrain System also has the unique ability to flush the profile quickly and efficiently anytime it is needed. This practice is particularly common where salt laden irrigation water is used, and in areas along the east, gulf, and California coasts, and the desert southwest.

### BENEFITS OF AN AIRDRAIN NATURAL GRASS SYSTEM INCLUDE:

- Up to 3 more days of plant available water stored in the root zone, depending on climate.
- Significantly reduces daily irrigation needs, as told to us by our customers.
- Healthier turf and a stronger root system, as told to us by our customers.
- 100% vertical drainage under the entire playing surface, creating an almost perfect perched water table.
- Made with 100% recycled copolymer polypropylene plastic with an impact modifier added to achieve a no-break plastics classification.
- Helps eliminate standing water and simplifies maintenance, as told to us by our customers.
- Minimal site disturbance and far less excavation and disposal.
- Several installation days are saved over a gravel installation.

#### GRID SPECIFICATIONS

The AirPaver design is simple, less expensive to ship, and quick to install. Each part is 32" x 32" x 1", weighs 3.10 lbs, and is 8% solid.

#### SHIPPING SPECIFICATIONS

Each 390 lb. Pallet contains 114 parts, or 798 sq. ft. A trailer holds 114 pallets, or 90,972 sq. ff. and is loaded 3 wide x 2 tall x 19 deep.

\*This drawing, specifications and the information contained herein is for general presentation purposes only. All final drawings and layouts should be determined by a licensed engineer(s).













## **AIRDRAIN SPECIFICATIONS**

### The corresponding match the cross section.

General Information				
General				
Const	ruction	Injection Molded Copolymer		
Composition		Copolymer Polypropylene Using Impact Modifier		
Dimensions		31.784" x 31.880" x 1.000" (7.03 sq ft.)		
Unit Weight		3.100 lbs.		
Foi	ms	Pellets		
Shipping				
Parts Per Pallet		114		
Pallet Dimensions		33" x 33" x 48"		
Pallet Weight		390 lbs.		
Area Per Pallet		798 sq.ft.		
Pallets Per Trailer		114 (3 wide x 2 tall x 19 deep)		
Area Per Trailer		90,972 sq.ft.		
	ASTMand IS	OProperties <sup>1</sup>		
Physical		Nominal Value	Test Method	
Specific	Gravity	0.940	ASTM D792	
Melt Mass-Flow Rate (230°C/ 2.16 kg)		20 g/ 10 min	ASTMD1238	
Mechanical		Nominal Value	Test Method	
Der	sity	57.490lb/ft3	ASTMD1505	
Tensile Strength (Yield, 73°F)		2,145 psi	ASTM D638	
Tensile Elongation (Yield, 73°F)		16%	ASTM D638	
Flexural Modulus (73°F)		100,175 psi	ASTMD790	
Compression Strength (73°F)		233 psi (unfilled)	ASTMD6254	
		6,747 psi (sand lileu)	To at Matha d	
Impact		Nominal value		
INOTCHED IZOD IMPACT (73 F, 0.125 In)			ASTIVID250	
Inermal		Nominal value	Test Method	
Unannealed		160°F	ASTM D648	
Expansion/Contraction Index <sup>1</sup>				
Temperature	Humidity	Length	Width	
100°F	98%	31.881"	31.817"	
-5°F	0%	31.765"	31.713"	
Change		.116"	.104"	
Joint Expansion/Contraction Capacity		.420"	.572"	
Safety Factor		362%	550%	
Examples of Useage				
Application		Required Strength	Safety Factor	
Auto		40 psi	x 168	
Truck		110 psi	x 61	
DC10		250 psi	x 27	
SpaceShuttle		340 psi	x 19	

<sup>1</sup>Independent laboratory testing conducted by TRI/Environmental, Inc. - TSI/Testing Services, Inc. and Wassenaar.

## Comparison of Putting Greens Constructed with Airfield Systems and USGA USGA Designs

Kevin J. McInnes, Keisha Rose–Harvey, James C. Thomas Texas A&M Agrilife Research

Turfgrass and Environmental Research Online Volume 12, Number 4 | July – August 2013

Note: The information in this article has been adapted from the original work published in Crop Science titled "Water Storage in Putting Greens Constructed with United States Golf Association and Airfield Systems Designs" (McInnes and Thomas, 2011, 51:1261–1267) and in HortScience titled "Water Flow Though Sand-based Root Zones atop Geotextiles" (Rose-Harvey et al., 2012, 47:1543–1547). The research was collaboratively funded by Texas A&M University, Airfield Systems (Oklahoma City, OK), and the United States Golf Association.

Airfield Systems offers an alternative to the standard USGA putting green design. Their design utilizes a highly porous, 1–inch deep plastic grid (AirDrain, Figure 1) in place of a 4–inch deep gravel layer. As with gravel, AirDrain allows rapid lateral movement of excess water to drains and thus provides for uniform horizontal moisture content within the root zone. While voids in AirDrain are very effective in transmitting water, they are much too large for the sand in the root zone to bridge for self–support so a geotextile is used atop the grid to prevent infilling of the void space. Use of geotextiles in putting green construction has been controversial due to the perceived potential for clogging of the fabric by migrating fine particles and eventual loss of permeability.



Figure 1. The highly porous, 1-inch deep AirDrain (right) offers an alternative to the 4-inch deep gravel layer in the standard USGA putting green design (above left).

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We became interested in the hydraulic performance of the Airfield Systems design after Texas A&M University constructed a soccer field with the Airfield System design in 2002. Anecdotal evidence from field managers suggested that the new field required less frequent watering than the University's football field that had been constructed following the USGA design. While the two fields were constructed with different root zone mixtures and the physical environments surrounding the fields are quite different, we suspected that there may have been a difference in the amount of water stored in root zones on fields constructed with the two designs (i.e., a difference in the vertical distributions of water content in the root zones). We knew from the physics of water in sand that the amount

of water stored in a root zone decreases with increasing tension at the bottom of the root zone, and we expected because of the geometrical and physical differences in the designs that there would be differences in water tension at the bottom of the root zones.



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While the root zone may be saturated above the drainage layer, the water is under tension so the term 'perched water table" often used to describe the state of water in the root zone immediately above the drainage layer is a bit of a misnomer. A better term might be "perched capillary fringe." Capillary fringe is the saturated zone above a water table where water is under tension. The further upward from the bottom of the root zone the greater the water tension. As distance increases upward and water tension increases, the root zone eventually begins to desaturate as the largest pores drain. As distance increases beyond this height water content continues to decrease. As a consequence, the tension that develops at the bottom sets the starting tension and determines the thickness of the saturated zone and the amount of water stored in the root zone profile (Figure 2). The depth and hydraulic properties of the drainage layer determine the magnitude of tension that develops at the bottom of the root zone.

AirDrain is 1-inch deep so the maximum tension that can develop at the bottom of the root zone during drainage in the Airfield Systems design would be 1 inch of water. Gravel is typically 4 inches deep so the tension that could develop would be up to 4 inches of water, depending on the hydraulic properties of the gravel and the depth to which sand ingresses pores of the gravel. Water is slow to drain from small pores into large pores, but if both systems were sealed from evaporation the tensions would eventually reach 1 and 4 inches at the bottom of the root zone in the Airfield Systems and USGA design greens, respectively. An occasional finger of sand penetrating the gravel in the USGA design green can lead to an appreciably quicker increase in tension at the root zone gravel interface.

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To test for differences in tension developed at the bottom of the root zones of the two designs, we constructed laboratory-based test cells from 4-inch diameter PVC pipe containing profiles of the Airfield Systems and USGA greens. Using tensiometers, we were able to demonstrate that the tension that developed at the bottom of the root zone in the Airfield Systems design was appreciably less than that in the USGA design. At that point we thought it worthwhile to investigate this finding on a slightly larger scale and a more realistic setting. To this end, we constructed test greens in 14-inch diameter PVC pipe. Three sands and three gravels were chosen such that they covered the ranges from coarser to finer sides of the USGA recommendations for particle size distribution. To create root zone mixtures, the coarser two sands had peat moss added to increase water retention. The finer sand was



Figure 2. Graphic representation of the dependence of water-holding capacity on tension at the bottom of the profile for a typical root zone mixture meeting USGA recommendation for total, air-filled, and capillary porosities. The curved lines to the right represent the relationship between water tension and water content for the root zone mixture.

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Figure 3. Test greens constructed in 14-inch PVC pipe with either gravel or geotextile atop AirDrain as the drainage layers. Both types of test greens contained a pair of porous cups connected to plastic tubing that formed manometer-tensiometers to allow measurement of water pressure or tension at the root zone-drainage layer interface.

not amended. These three root zone mixtures were used in combination with the three gravels to construct test greens of the USGA design. The gravel layer in all of the test greens was 4 inches deep. An intermediate choke layer of coarse sand was not used. The same three root zone mixtures were used in combination with four geotextiles atop AirDrain to construct test greens of the Airfield Systems design. We used the Lutradur polyester geotextile prescribed by Airfield Systems at the time and chose three additional geotextiles that had the same apparent opening size (0.2 mm), but differed in material and/or manner of construction. Manometertensiometers were used to measure pressure or tension that developed at the root zone-drainage layer interface of both designs (Figure 3). After the test green columns were packed with 12 inches of the root zone mixtures they were sprigged with MiniVerde bermudagrass supplied by King Ranch Turfgrass-Wharton Farms (Wharton, TX). Following a period to grow-in the grass, a series of experiments were conducted that measured the amount of water stored in the root zone profiles and the water tension that developed at the bottom of the root zones of the different treatments after irrigation and drainage. Vertically oriented time domain reflectometry TDR probes were used to measure the amount of water stored in the root zone profiles (Figure 4).

Periodically during the course of the study, the test greens were watered until drainage was observed and then the amount of water stored in the profiles and the water tension at the bottom of the root zones were recorded for 48 hours. As with our preliminary lab study, we found that the water at the bottom of the root zones of test greens constructed with the Airfield design

©2013 by United States Golf Association. All rights reserved. Please see Policies for the Reuse of USGA Green Section Publications. was under less tension than the water in test greens constructed with the USGA design, by about 2.2 inches of water tension (Figure 5). This lower tension was associated with an increase in water storage of about 0.5 inch in the Airfield System design greens above that in the USGA design greens (Figure 5). This increase in water retention could lead to less frequent necessity to irrigate.

Because of reduced tension at the bottom of the root zone, these results also implied that the tension at which root zone mixtures should be tested for capillary porosity when intended to be used in an Airfield System design green should be reduced to achieve similar



Figure 4. Test green with vertically installed, 1-ft long TDR probe used to measure average water content within the root zone profile.



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Figure 5. Range in the mean amount of water stored in 12-inch root zone profiles in Airfield Systems (geotextiles atop AirDrain) and USGA (gravels) design test greens 12 hours after irrigation. Means were of the three root zone mixture treatments and variations shown were from drainage-type treatments (i.e., type of geotextile or gravel). Stored water in the profile was measured by TDR and water tension was measured with manometertensiometers.

moisture retention to greens built according to the USGA recommendations. In doing so, slightly coarser sand would meet specifications for capillary water retention in the Airfield design. Conversely, sands that push the very fine side of the current recommendations might not meet specifications for air-filled porosity.

The question of whether or not geotextiles used in a green will clog with fines migrating out of the root zone was also studied. To address this issue, we conducted a

year-long laboratory experiment to investigate a range of geotextiles that were suited to supporting sand in the Airfield System design and determine whether or not they limit drainage out of the root zone. In this experiment, 6-inch diameter PVC columns were used to contain combinations of 12 inches of three sand mixes with 10 geotextiles held atop AirDrain (Figure 6). Manometer-tensiometers again were used to measure pressure or tension at the sand-geotextile interfaces. Mix 1 had a particle size distribution that ran down the center of the USGA specs. Mix 2 was made by blending Mix 1 with a sandy clay loam (9:1 by mass) and Mix 3 was made by blending Mix 1 with a sand having excess fines (1:1 by mass). Mix 1 and Mix 2 met USGA recommendations. Mix 3 contained twice the recommended amount of very fine sand. The apparent opening sizes of the geotextiles used ranged from 0.15 to 0.43 mm. After the sands were added to the columns they were regularly irrigated. Periodically, the rate that 1-inch of irrigation water drained from a column was measured and the pressure/tension at the sandgeotextile interface was recorded.

For the first six months, any particles that washed out of the sand through the geotextiles were accumulated and analyzed for total dry weight and particle size distribution. At the end of the study, the saturated hydraulic conductivity of the sand-geotextile combinations were measured. Statistical analyses showed that drainage rate, saturated hydraulic conductivity, and mass of eluviated particles were not dependent on the properties of the geotextiles, but rather on the properties of the sands (Figure 7). Most all of the particles that washed out of the columns were of clay and silt sizes. This could be construed as evidence that the geotextiles were sieving out larger particles, but we found that the size of particles in the drainage water was not related to the apparent opening size of



Figure 6. Columns used to measure potential clogging of geotextiles by fines migrating out of the root zone.

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Figure 7. Size distribution of particles washed out of the three sand mixes through the geotextiles. The solid line for each sand mixture represent the mean fraction of particles finer than a given diameter over 30 columns containing the mixture (10 geotextiles with 3 replicates) and the dashed lines represent one standard deviation each side of the mean.

the geotextiles, which it should have been if the geotextiles were acting as sieves (i.e., the geotextiles with the larger AOS would have let larger particles pass, and vice versa, but this did not happen). The geotextiles obviously prevented the passage of particles as their purpose is to prevent migration of the root zone sand into the drainage layer, but it appeared in our study that the sands were responsible for determining the particle sizes leaving the columns.

Drainage rates from the columns containing the sand without added fines increased over the year, presumably because pore channels in the sand were widened when silt and clay washed out of the profile. Drainage rates of the columns containing the two sands with additional fines decreased over the year, but the decrease was not statistically related to the properties of the geotextiles. To test if the sands themselves were clogging, saturated hydraulic conductivities were measured as layers of sand were removed from columns. Since saturated hydraulic conductivity would not depend on the depth of sand in a hydraulically uniform column, any observed changes would be due to difference in the conductivity of the layers removed compared to those remaining. We found that when surface layers were removed the saturated hydraulic conductivity increased, indicating that the surface layers had lower conductivities. This was not too surprising as the majority of inter-particle pores of sand meeting USGA recommendation are smaller than the apparent opening sizes of the geotextiles we tested. In support of our conclusion that the sands were clogging and not the geotextiles, we did not notice a build-up of positive

©2013 by United States Golf Association. All rights reserved. Please see Policies for the Reuse of USGA Green Section Publications. pressure atop any of the geotextiles during drainage, as would have occurred if the geotextile had been restricting drainage out of the column.

In conclusion, the results of our studies gave no reason to prevent more widespread use of Airfield Systems' design as an alternative to the USGA method for putting green construction. Airfield Systems design produces additional water holding capacity above the USGA design, which leads to more plant available water, given the same root zone mixture, and, possibly, less frequent requirement for irrigation. Our data also support the general use of properly sized geotextiles to support sand based root zones in putting greens. Geotextiles with apparent opening size of 0.2 mm worked well in our test greens and a woven geotextile with an apparent opening size twice as large (0.43 mm) retained the root zone sand just as well.

#### **Summary Points**

- Water at the bottom of the test green rootzones constructed with the Airfield design was under less tension than the water in test greens constructed with the USGA design (about 2.2 inches of water tension).
- This lower tension was associated with an increase in water storage of about 0.5 inch in the Airfield System design greens above that in the USGA design greens.
- Geotextiles with apparent opening size of 0.2 mm worked well in test greens and a woven geotextile with an apparent opening size twice as large (0.43 mm) retained the root zone sand just as well
- The geotextiles that were tested prevented the migration and passage of the sand rootzone mixture into the drainage layer, but it appeared that the tested sands were responsible for determining the particle sizes leaving the columns.
- The results gave no reason to prevent more widespread use of Airfield Systems' design as an alternative to the USGA method for putting green construction.

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## PROPER SEQUENCING ORIENTATION OF AIRPAVE GEOCELL PANELS FOR RAPID INSTALLATION

Pallet Staging: AirPave pallets cover approximately 798sqft. per pallet and should be staged accordingly within the installation area to minimize the amount of time to stage the AirPave grid. AirPave pallets are typically placed every 65 feet across and 15-20 feet back from each other. (Call AirField with questions that you might have about proper staging and installation.)

## All Installations must start in the Top Left Corner of the project and work Left to Right to be installed properly.

- 1. Orientate the AirPave GeoCell materials with the integral indicator tab to the panel's bottom left corner (painted yellow). Install the AirPave units by placing units with connectors and the pinning platforms flush against the prepared subbase. If the female connectors do not go over the male connectors then the orientation is incorrect, please call AirField Systems Immediately at 405-359-3775.
- 2. Install the AirPave panels across the field in a rowed pattern. Staggering of rows will allow for multiple row completion by a multi-manned crew.



- 3. Secure the first panel to the base with pins (Only in AirPave paved grass installations) and commence with panels 1-2, 1-3, and so on with one directional pull to secure. (Optional)
- 4. Once the first row has progressed across the project, start with a second row. Have a person staging the panels in groups of three snapped together along the row. The crew can then install the left side of the panel while elevating slightly the top portion (so the male and female connectors don't touch each other) once the left side has been snapped with a pull along the row direction, the top portion should fall into place and with a bottom vertical pull holding the inside of parts 1 & 3 snap all three parts in place.



- 5. AirPave panels can be shaped to individual field areas as needed with appropriate cutting device.
  - A. If only a few parts need to be trimmed, use tin snips.
  - B. If many parts require trimming, set up a table and use a circular saw with a no melt, plastic cutting saw blade.
- 6. AirPave units placed on curves and slopes shall be anchored to the base course, using 8 inch (203 mm) Chisel Point Pins 6 gauge BB Wire and 1 1/2 (35 mm) round attached washers, as required to secure units in place.

DISCLAIMER: The preceding and following drawings and/or general installation guidelines are provided only to show a concept design for installation and are not instructions for any particular installation. These drawings and general instructions are not complete and are provided only to assist a licensed Geo-Technical Engineer, a Landscape Architect and/or Civil Engineer in preparing actual co struction and installation plans. These drawings and instructions must be reviewed by a licensed Geo-Technical Engineer, a Landscape Architect and/or Civil Engineer in preparing actual co struction and installation plans. These drawings and instructions must be reviewed by a licensed Geo-Technical Engineer, a Landscape Architect and/or Civil Engineer and adapted to the condition of a particular installation site and to comply with all state and local requirements for each installation site. THESE DRAWINGS AND/OR GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS DO NOT MODIFY OR SUPPLEMENT ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES INCLUDING MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, IF APPLICABLE RELATING TO THE PRODUCT.

## THOMAS TURF SERVICES, INC. WILL CONSULT ON NATURAL TURF PROFILES FOR AIRDRAIN SYSTEMS

Mr. Blackwood:

Thank you for your call today and congratulations on your new projects. I would be pleased to work with you and your customers to help select appropriate sands and/or amendments if needed to use with your AirDrain system for natural turf. As you know, we have been pleased with its performance here in Texas and I think we can help others have equally good experiences with it.

Please feel free to have people contact me at the following cell phone, fax, and email address.

Samples may be mailed to me at the address below.

Sincerely,

James c. Thomas, President Thomas Turf Services, Inc.

11183 State Hwy. 30 College Station, TX 77845

Fax: (979) 744-1604 Mobile: (979) 575-5107 Email: soiltest@thomasturf.com



## **GREENS COUNTRY CLUB GOLF BUNKER DESIGN**

The Greens Country Club in Oklahoma City chose an AirDrain system for a bunker renovation that was completed with minimal install time and should drain perfectly for many years to come. This golf bunker design can be installed by the existing course grounds crew at your own pace, drastically reducing the overall cost of installation, making it a design that all courses can afford. AirDrain raises the sand profile an inch across the entire floor bringing gravity into play in draining the bunker, effectively making the entire floor of the bunker a drain. The filter fabric and grid is only on the floor of the bunker.

To answer the debate of clogging geotextiles/filter fabrics see the final report from the 5 year study by the USGA on page 9. Although with the AirDrain bunker system the entire floor of the bunker is a drain, even if a few feet of the bunker did clog over a 15 year span the remaining portion still allows for optimal drainage by water moving vertically through the profile.



Sand removed and base prepared for AirDrain install.



Bunker prepared for AirDrain Bunker System.



AirDrain 32"x32" pallets are easily transported to the bunker.



Small installation crew needed with minimum course impact.



Installed with a layer of filter fabric above and below the AirDrain.



Installed with a layer of filter fabric above and below the grid.



Installing the filter fabric lengthwise to minimize the seams.



Trimming the filter fabric to fit the bunker walls.



Pinning the bottom and top filter fabric together around grid.

## **BELLERIVE COUNTRY CLUB GOLF GREEN DESIGN**

After reviewing the findings of the 5 year USGA study on putting greens constructed with the AirDrain system vs the USGA system on page 9, Bellerive Country Club, host to the 100<sup>th</sup> Championship, chose in August, 2018 to install this 7,600 sq. ft. Practice golf green on their championship course. They were very pleased with the AirDrain system and how quickly and easily it was installed.



Photos courtesy of John Cunningham CGCS, Golf Course Superintendent, and Jared Brewster, 2nd Assistant Superintendent at Bellerive Country Club.

Major Championships held at Bellerive Country Club:

- 1949 Western Amateur Championship = Champion: Frank Stranahan
- 1953 Western Open Champion: Dutch Harrison
- 1965 U.S. Open Champion:Gary Player
- 1981 U.S. Mid-Amateur Champion: Jim Holtgrieve
- 1992 PGA Championship Champion Nick Price
- 2001 World Golf Championships/American Express Championship (Not Contested)
- 2004 U.S. Senior Open Champion: Peter Jacobsen
- 2008 BMW Championship Champion: Camilo Villegas
- 2013 Senior PGA Championship

## **100% POST MANUFACTURED CONTENT**

The AirPave GeoGrid is made of 100% post-manufactured material, you can feel good about helping the planet while adding valuable LEED Points to your project! We also add an impact modifier for incredible strength and superior performance in extreme heat and cold - on top of the already durable AirPave design.

### AirPave Co-Polymer with an Impact Modifier Performance and Temerature durability

Attached you will find the specifications of the resin used to product both the 32 x 32 and the 32 x 18 Geocells. This material is a co-polymer polypropylene that is 100% recycled resin. In order to be able to produce a consistent recycled resin a PIR (post industrial resin) is used for the base resin. This is the only way to product a consistent material as opposed to a PCR (post consumer resin) which is dependent on the consumer to supply a consistent material. Using the PIR as a base resin, 3% carbon black is added to insure good UV stabilization and metallocene (an ethelyne base material) is used as an impact modifier.

### **Impact Modifier**

The impact modifier is added in an amount that achieves a 10.0 notched izod impact which comfortably qualifies this material as a NO BREAK material (4.0 and greater are normally considered no break material). The AirPave resin offers and advantage over many ethylene and HDPE products since the AirPave resin is often superior when it comes to pliability, warping and internal stress related issues. Referening to the attached specification sheet you will notice that all testing is done to specific ASTM standards.

### **Resin Bleands**

AirPave's blend of resins gives it the ability to perform in extreme temperatures. AirPave does not need a temperature above 40 degrees Fahrenheit to be installed or warmed in the sun to be pliable on site for install. In addition, AirPave's unique resin blend also helps prevent breakage and cracking in extreme temperatures, thus giving it the ability to withstand repeated freeze thaw cycles.

PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA



# **AIRFIELD SYSTEMS**

THE PROVEN GOLF COURSE DRAINAGE SOLUTION



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