

Get The Real Facts on Synthetic Ice

Buyer Beware: Good questions to ask Synthetic Ice companies...

Purchasing synthetic ice can become a major investment. Parents are already shelling out thousands of dollars for their kids to play hockey or figure skate. And yet, they are always looking to give their children an edge over the competition or simply to allow them more freedom with their time by enabling their kids to practice in the comfort of their own home or backyard, anytime of year. Synthetic ice gives them training options. So if you are considering this investment or are even just curious about it this article can save you time, money and allow you to avoid making mistakes.

There are a lot of sellers, re-sellers, and distributors coming into the market now, most of which are simply

re-branding a product that is already out there by another name in the market. Some of these newer players take the time and do their research into what makes a good product – and therefore a good investment for you. Most however are either ignorant of the product facts or simply don't take the time to understand different products and materials. The purpose of this article then is to arm the wary consumer with enough information to ask intelligent questions and understand what to expect for answers. Consumers need to know enough to differentiate between poor products, good products and excellent products.

Good companies can be understandably leery of providing any amount of technical information with respect to their product because so many competitors are popping up now, they do not want to give competitors easy access to their information.

Here are some examples of questions you can ask any company selling synthetic ice products.

1) What is the molecular weight of your product?

Consumer Insight:

This is probably the single most important thing to understand about these products. If they don't know then that's probably not a good sign and that company should be avoided. In very general terms the higher the molecular weight the better the product will perform – to a point. We could write an entire article about this topic alone but in the short term just ask the question to see if they answer it. If they say "it's a secret" then avoid that company.

2) Where exactly is your factory that makes the product?

Consumer Insight:

Many companies call themselves manufacturers to make the consumer think they are buying direct to get a better deal. Mention that you'd like to go on a factory tour sometime - that usually flushes out those that say they are manufacturers - but in reality they aren't.

3) Are they members of an organization like BBB or Chamber of Commerce?

Consumer Insight:

If so you can easily check if they are reputable. If not - well frankly you could be taking a chance.

4) Ask them to provide appropriate references in your area.

Consumer Insight:

This is a "nice to have" but not critical. It's always better to call someone who has a system installed to get their comments good or bad. Chances are you won't be given a bad reference but it's still a chance to gain insight direct from a user.

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6) Ask to see the material safety data sheet of the glide solution.

Consumer Insight:

You want to make sure they have one and that the solution is absolutely safe. After all it's your children that will be using the product.

7) What exactly is the return policy?

Consumer Insight:

If they don't have one - run. They should be willing to offer a complete money back guarantee if you are not satisfied. The best companies will even pay for returned shipping if you are not completely satisfied.

8) Do they kids or adults on the videos – if they have any?

Consumer Insight:

Most adults who are strong skaters have no trouble moving on even the worst synthetic ice. So don't be fooled

by videos showing an ex-pro or instructor making it look easy. Look for the companies that show young kids doing what they would normally do on real ice. Chances are that's a better product.

If you have other questions we have not covered here then ask us. We'll do our best to get that answered for you directly.

About the author

Tim Oldfield is owner of SmartRink. He has watched his daughter and son grow up playing hockey and develop into elite athletes who love the game. As company owner, Tim is committed to ensuring buyers and consumers of synthetic ice are educated and well informed on product choices.

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