



Poly Meta Forms®: A Versatile Alternate to Wood

Wouldn't it be nice to eliminate the hassle of picking up and sorting through hardscaping form lumber to find straight lengths to accurately stake straight or radius applications when pouring concrete?

This is just the kind of annoying problem facing many landscape contractors who install sidewalks, patios, pool decks and driveways. Terra Tec Landscaping, a fullservice landscaping company in Richfield, Wisconsin (near Milwaukee), is one such company.

"You can spend two hours looking for enough 14-foot long 2x4s for a job, or pay a premium price to get a good quality product," bemoaned Dave Ladewig, Terra Tec manager. Ladewig began investigating a solution to the nagging problem and discovered Poly Meta Forms® about a year ago. The company now owns some 1,000 lineal feet in straight and radius styles. These light and durable forms, made by Metal Forms Corp. of Milwaukee, are of a highdensity polyethylene.

The form materials used for pouring concrete include everything from wood to steel. For contours, flexible materials include Masonite, polyethylene, polystyrene foam, interlocking Styrofoam, aluminum and sheet metal.

The forms, unlike those made of wood, are easier to reuse; there are no nails to pull. Sections are easy to join with inserts that provide a connection between forms. Moveable stake pockets can be positioned anywhere along the form's length, making them easier to stake as needed for the shape being poured. Because the forms are lighter than wood, they are easier to haul and workers experience less fatigue when handling them.

"Changing elevation is easier than with wood forms," explains Ladewig. "We can loosen the stake pocket wedges to make the adjustment, and we're not whacking things out of shape. That's much easier than pounding wood forms loose and pulling nails out. The forms are much easier to disassemble

if I have to strip them while the concrete is still workable so I can put joints in," he adds.

Because patios, steps and other configurations sometime require special dimension, Ladewig like the ability to combine the forms with wood when necessary.

"Curves are another area where the forms are nice," Ladewig asserts. "It's a pain to keep Masonite in stock all the time, and we need to use more pins or back-fill to keep it rigid. Now for a round patio we just put a bunch of forms together and bend them to shape; then we go through with stakes here and there, adjust them a bit, and we're ready to pour." Polyethylene is the most prevalent plastic in the world, from grocery bags and shampoo bottles to children's toys and bullet proof vests. This versatile material is a simple commercial polymer, a molecule chain of carbon atoms with two hydrogen atoms attached to each carbon atom.

