

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Natare<sup>®</sup> Corporation Introduces NataTread<sup>™</sup>** **An Exclusive Slip-resistant Surface for Swimming Pool and Aquatic Environments**

Indianapolis, Ind.—In an effort to make surfaces in and around aquatic environments even safer, Natare<sup>®</sup> Corporation introduces NataTread<sup>™</sup>, their exclusive slip-resistant<sup>1</sup> surfacing. The company began offering this stainless steel treatment to its customers in the late spring of this year. Given the excellent results of field-testing, NataTread<sup>™</sup> has replaced sand blasting on the horizontal surfaces of all their perimeter gutter systems.

While a variety of grinding, blasting or abrading treatments have been used for producing slip-resistant surfaces over the years, Natare has constantly been seeking a better solution that will balance the need for slip-resistance with the requirement for good corrosion resistance. NataTread<sup>™</sup> is that answer. Recent acquisitions of CNC punching and machining equipment have allowed us to explore certain new technologies. Our research has produced a process that provides a uniform, clean and well-defined surface that can be produced on stainless steel.

In a continuing effort to improve the process of slip-resistant treatment, Natare has developed a process that allows us to punch the metal surface from the underside of the stainless steel, using specialized tooling that does not penetrate the surface, but instead produces a pattern of small dimple-like projections or protrusions, similar to the surface on Braille name plates.

“The pattern is an extremely uniform and aesthetically pleasing surface that is quite slip-resistant,” said Michael Walsh, President of Natare Corporation. “This surface is also comfortable to the touch and is less abrasive as it does not produce the ‘cheese-grater effect’ of many slip-resistant surfaces.”

In addition to the obvious benefits of slip-resistance, the tread pattern is a series of protrusions up from the surface, rather than a profile or pit carved into the surface. Dirt does not accumulate, water sheds away rather than evaporating, and the inherent corrosion-resistance of the stainless steel surface is maintained. The configuration of the profile is inherently self-cleaning and does not wear or degrade over time.

Horizontal and sloping surfaces in a swimming pool or aquatic environment must provide a certain measure of slip-resistance in order to provide sure footing and a safe surface. While many pool construction materials such as

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ceramic tile and concrete are inherently slip-resistant, other smooth materials like stainless steel and various plastics are not appropriate for use in aquatic environments without some means to provide a slip-resistant surface.

The slip-resistance of these surfaces is typically measured using ASTM 1028C, which is a protocol and standard for measuring and quantifying the slip-resistance of a surface. The results of this testing use the coefficient of friction to establish the relative roughness or slip-resistance of a surface.

Stainless steel construction was introduced to the pool industry over 30 years ago. The typical surface finish on stainless steel used in an aquatic environment ranges from the raw, perfectly smooth 2B finish to the highly polished number seven surface (industry standard designations of surface finish). Generally, a number three finish has been the standard. None of these standard finishes provides an appreciable degree of friction, particularly when wet.

Since stainless steel was first introduced, a variety of treatments have been used in an effort to render the surface of stainless steel slip resistant. These include grinding the exposed horizontal surface with a circular grinder or abrading the surface through the use of sandpaper or other abrasives. The most widely use treatment is an abrasive blast, using sand, ground glass or metal shot. Each process provides slip resistance by roughing, gouging and causing surface irregularities or “profile”. These treatments are neither attractive nor functional. They also decrease the durability of the stainless steel surface.

The mechanics of corrosion on stainless steel are well understood and are directly related to the smoothness or lack of profile, pits or irregularities on a surface. Minor depressions or pits can contribute to the deterioration of the stainless surface. In a pool or aquatic environment, the importance of a smooth, uniform surface is paramount as any depressions or pits lead to accelerated damage. The corrosive surfaces become increasingly injured through water evaporation, dirt accumulation or electrolytic differential. These processes are well documented in the *American Society of Metals Handbook, Volume 13, Tenth Edition*.

Natare<sup>®</sup> Corporation is the leading supplier of equipment, systems and services for public and commercial swimming pools, aquatic facilities and water feature in the United States and around the world. They provide the necessary consulting, engineering and technical services to make a pool or aquatic facility successful. Some of their products include their Uniwall<sup>®</sup> stainless steel swimming pool systems, Natatec<sup>®</sup> PVC Membrane Systems, Natatec<sup>®</sup> Perimeter Recirculation Systems, NataDek<sup>™</sup> Floor and Deck Surfacing as well as filtration and mechanical systems, whirlpools, bulkheads and accessory equipment.

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<sup>1</sup>Natare<sup>®</sup> uses the term “slip-resistant” rather than the more-common “non-slip” because they do not believe that any surface, particularly those in and around a swimming pool or aquatic environment is truly “non-slip”.