



While 380-CC alginate is terrific for regular hand casting, it just set too quickly for large projects like entire families.

We've done extended families of up to 15 hands in a single LifeCast and we needed the extra time for a couple of reasons:

First, mixing a very large amount of alginate takes a while. We had 4 buckets with 4 power drill/jiffy mixers going but it still took a couple of minutes to get it all mixed and in the molding box that we built.

Second, it then took at least a minute to get everybody in place and settled in their places- even after a lot of practice beforehand. We used a longer setting 570-PGV alginate and it came out great.

For the above project, the client wanted a sculpture that would fit on their mantle over their fireplace. We measured the mantle and constructed a box out of plywood and 2x4's so the finished base would fit nicely. As I said, on the big day, we did a lot of practicing. The main problem was actual physical room for all those bodies around the box. I'm not sure how you could do more people than we did without suspending some of them from the ceiling.

It turned out to be a great piece- 5 generations in all. The great grandmother ended up passing about 8 months later and the sculpture took on a whole new level of preciousness for the family.

It took a lot of work, but the family has an heirloom that they cherish.

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Here's the math we used to calculate our alginate/water requirements:

1. A cubic foot of water weighs 62 pounds.
2. A gallon of water takes up 231 cubic inches.

We measured the inside of our box (in inches), multiplied the length x the width x the depth, and divided by 231. We could have measured our box in feet and done the same math and multiplied by 62, but we would have had to use decimal feet (2.35 feet) instead of feet and inches so the math was easier when done in inches.

When we had our water weight, we divided that figure by 4 and that was our alginate requirement. This will give you about 10% more than you need, so you can reduce everything by 10% and be fine.