



# DRIVEWAY MAINTENANCE GUIDE

**PAVEMENT**  
MAINTENANCE & RECONSTRUCTION





# INTRODUCTION



**W**hether you're a contractor or a customer, you need to protect those driveway investments.

Driveways are one of the most used areas of a home and are often overlooked until they stain or crack. To keep up curb appeal and protect driveway investments, these pavements need the attention they deserve through proper maintenance and necessary repairs. Reputable contractors will lay

out a preventative maintenance strategy for their customers and educated customers will follow that plan or pay a higher price later when the pavement undoubtedly fails.

This guide can be used as a reference tool to help homeowners understand their driveway needs and the possible solutions, but can also be used by contractors as an educational selling tool for their customers as well.





# DRIVEWAY MAINTENANCE



**T**o get the most life out of a driveway, a proper maintenance plan should be put into place. Proper maintenance will help prolong the life of your asphalt and prevent premature replacement.

**The most common types of driveway maintenance are:**

## ✓ CRACK FILLING:

When analyzing cracks in a driveway, it is important to determine whether cracks are superficial or have widened enough to put the base in peril. It is primarily these deeper cracks (expansion or linear) that need attention. Expansion cracks are caused by the ground shifting due to temperature and moisture changes. They should be professionally cleaned or routed, sealed and filled with a hot rubber crack sealant which will keep moisture - the enemy of driveways everywhere - from seeping under the asphalt and damaging its base.



## ✓ SEALCOATING:

This liquid coating is applied to driveways to help shield the asphalt surface from water, weather and UV rays. It also improves the appearance (aka curb appeal) of a driveway by returning the asphalt to its original rich, black color. Sealcoating is an affordable way to extend the life of asphalt provided it is done correctly. Proper sealcoating should always be completed by a reputable contractor who adheres to all application and safety protocols for the material.







# DRIVEWAY REPAIR

**W**ithout a proper care plan, a driveway can fall out of the maintenance stage of care and into the repair stage. When you don't sealcoat and crack fill your pavement regularly, water can seep under the pavement and cause more extensive damage. Repairs are needed when the asphalt pavement or parts of it have begun to deteriorate to the point where normal maintenance will not be cost-effective. Trust us, you want to repair now instead of replace later.

**The most common types of repairs needed are:**



## ✓ ALLIGATOR CRACKS OR FATIGUE CRACKING:

These cracks resemble the skin of an alligator and are generally a sign that the base under the asphalt is failing. The base could be too thin or the drainage system could be nonexistent or not working properly. The damaged asphalt should be removed, the base compacted and a new asphalt patch installed. If the area(s) are large or plentiful, a full replacement may be the recommended solution.



## ✓ POTHoles:

We are used to seeing potholes on roadways, but they can happen in driveways too. Potholes can be an eyesore, which distracts from your home's curb appeal and can also be a safety risk for people and vehicles. Minor potholes can potentially be cleaned, prepped and filled but patching them may not fix the real cause of the problem. Multiple or large potholes are a sign that replacing the driveway may be a better solution to repairing it.



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## ✓ SETTling:

This can happen anywhere within a driveway and the suggested repairs really depend on the location and severity of the settling. Homeowners may notice that the asphalt has settled along a garage apron, sidewalk, pavers or street approach. It's not uncommon because these are two different material surfaces which shift independently of each other. However, if it creates a hazardous situation, a patch should be considered.





# DRIVEWAY REPAIR CONTINUED

## ✓ LOW AREAS:

If your driveway has low areas that tend to puddle and collect water, it is annoying. If you live in northern climates, those puddles can turn into dangerous, icy spots. An estimator will be able to recommend the right course of action for a driveway if there are dangerous low areas.



## ✓ RUTTING:

These channel-like depressions are caused by lateral movement of the asphalt, base and subbase layers when under the weight and pressure of a vehicle. If the ruts are deep enough, surface patching will help to smooth out the area but not address the underlying issue. If the rutting is severe, either the affected section or the entire driveway should be excavated - both the asphalt and base layers - so that a geotextile fabric can be installed to stabilize the subbase



## ✓ SINKHOLES:

These are usually caused by an improper or weak foundation, a broken water line or other unusual occurrences that happen underground. The asphalt surrounding the sink hole should be removed so that the hole, no matter how bottomless it may seem, can be filled and the base properly compacted.



## ✓ APRON REPAIR:

If the holes in the apron are along the garage floor, it indicates that the garage's foundation blocks are "open." This surprisingly common problem can be repaired by removing the asphalt (or concrete) garage apron as well as the base so that the blocks can be accessed, filled and capped off prior to patching.



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# DRIVEWAY REPLACEMENT



**M**aintenance will always cost less than repairing a driveway and repairs will always be much more cost effective than a full removal and replacement of a pavement. However, most contractors will recommend a removal if a driveway has more than one of the repair issues discussed above, or if the damage covers more than 30 percent of the total area. If that's the case, a new asphalt driveway can help to increase both your home's value and your peace-of-mind.





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