

How to Seal Coat a Driveway

When your blacktop driveway is fading to gray, a fresh seal coat will protect it and get it looking new again. Plan ahead. If you have large holes to fill, you'll need to allow time for your patch product to cure before you put on a seal coat. Do the seal coating when you can expect 24-48 hours of clear and dry weather, with temperatures above 65 degrees.

1. CLEAN

- Sweep away leaves and debris. Scrape dirt and roots out of cracks in the surface. Oil spots can eventually bleed through the seal coat, so, use soap and water and a stiff brush to clean them up. For tough spots, scrub with a specialty driveway detergent. After you spot clean, clean the entire surface using garden hose or power washer. Let the surface dry completely.

2. FILL SMALL CRACKS

- Squeeze a specialty crack filler product into any cracks up to ½ inch wide. Smooth it over with a putty knife and let it cure according to the label. Use a toothpick to see if your crack sealant is fully cured. If it comes out black or wet, it's not ready yet.

3. PATCH LARGE HOLES & REPAIR

- Fill large cracks and potholes with a ready-to-use patch product. Use a trowel to scoop the patch product and work it into the gap. Use a tamper to even out the patch with the surface of the driveway.

4. MIX SEALANT

- Stir the sealant. Gel sealants need little to no stirring, non-gel sealants need a bit more mixing. A paint stirring attachment for your drill works great for this. Whatever product you choose, let it sit upside down for at least 24 hours before you open it. As you go, mix the end of one pail with the beginning of the next batch to keep the color consistent.

5. SPREAD 1ST COAT OF SEALANT

- Begin by pouring a line of sealant directly onto the surface. For the first coat, zig-zag across the width of the driveway. Use a squeegee, or brush to pull the sealer towards the edges, creating as thin of a layer as possible. Overlap each pass to get an even coat. Let it dry according to the label. If you start early in the morning and have full sun on the driveway, you could be ready for your second coat in the same day.

6. SPREAD 2ND COAT OF SEALANT

- Apply the second coat working up and down the length of your driveway.

7. LET IT DRY

- Line up the empty sealant buckets at the end of the driveway to create a barricade – so no one drives on it for 24-48 hours. To check to see if the sealant is dry, run a white towel along the surface to see if it comes up clean. If it leaves a black spot, continue to let it dry. Use a toothpick to see if your crack sealant is fully cured. If it comes out black or wet, it's not ready yet.

HELPFUL TIPS:

- You'll need about one 5 gallon bucket for every 350 square feet of driveway.
- If you live in a mild climate, seal your driveway every three years. Every other year if you experience heavy rain, snow, or extreme heat.
- Never seal a new driveway. Asphalt needs to cure for 6 months to a year
- Look for water-based asphalt products. Generally, these won't cause skin irritation and are good choices for families with children or pets.

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NOTE: Always follow manufacturer's recommended safety precautions and instructions for the products you use.