

Driveways Need Fixing, Too

With the home-improvement craze more popular than ever, a commonly overlooked area is one homeowners use each and every day: driveways. While patios or decks are more seasonal features of most homes, driveways are put to use 365 days a year. Still, many homeowners don't list driveways high on their home improvement priority list, which isn't good. A driveway



that's not maintained properly can eventually force homeowners to dig deep into their wallets for repair costs. For residents of colder climates, water that gets through the cracks in an asphalt driveway can freeze. The resulting expansion and contraction will form heaves (essentially upward swells in the asphalt) in the driveway's surface, leading to bigger cracks and eventually ruining the driveway altogether. While the consequences aren't quite as severe in warmer climates, water that seeps through a cracked driveway in such climates will eventually cause even bigger cracks. Homeowners also need to consider the potential damage to their vehicles, as well as the likelihood of their children possibly getting hurt by playing in a poorly maintained driveway. With all of those compelling reasons, resealing a damaged driveway should move higher up your list of fix-ups. Such a job can be performed without professional assistance by simply adhering to the following tips.

- Beware the weather: Resealing a driveway can't be done in a single day. Rather, it's a process that takes a few days to complete properly. Also, it's a job that can't be done in the rain, so make sure you check the weather and go ahead with your project when you've been assured there's no rain in the forecast.
- Clean up first: The first step of the resealing process is to clean

your driveway. This can be done with a thorough sweeping or with a light sweep followed by a power-washing. Most home-improvement chains and even some grocery stores rent out power washers. Buying one would be foolish, as you won't use it nearly enough to make it worth the cost. Once you've thoroughly swept or washed your driveway, apply an asphalt cleaner. This will remove unsightly oil spills and stains, which in addition to being an eyesore actually contribute to cracks as well. As asphalt is a petroleum-based product, oil will soften its surface, making it easier for water to seep through.

- Fill the cracks: Once the driveway's been cleaned, it's time to fill the cracks. Before you apply any filler, however, it's best to undercut any cracks so you can widen the base. That way, when you apply the filler a wider crack at the base will allow the filler to be anchored, making it stronger at the surface. Once that's been done, make sure you overfill the crack, and then smooth out whatever's left on the surface. (Note: For especially deep cracks, fill them nearly to the surface with sand before applying any filler.) This is akin to caulking a shower, and in fact some fillers actually come with an applicator very similar to a caulking gun.
- Fix and holes: Holes in the driveway, which are more of an eyesore than an actual problem, can be fixed with cold patch, a substance sold at most home-improvement stores. Made up of asphalt that's been premixed with aggregate, cold patch should be packed tightly into each hole and then allowed to settle overnight.
- Start resealing: Once you're ready to reseal, it's especially important that the weather forecast isn't calling for rain. To be effective, sealer needs to dry

thoroughly. Different sealers require different tools, so whichever type you choose, make sure you have the right tools to apply the sealer. Once you've finished and the sealer has dried, your driveway will be as good as new. And more importantly, you'll have significantly improved your property at very little cost.



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