Asphalt Sealcoating - How it Works

If you have asphalt paving at your commercial or residential property, you’ve no doubt heard of asphalt sealcoating. This maintenance service is designed to keep your asphalt looking its best and protected from the elements, but just how does it work? Let’s take a closer look.

What is a Sealcoat?

A sealcoat is a resistant coating applied to the top of asphalt as a protective layer. It is one of the asphalt services offered to maintain your asphalt’s durability and aesthetic appeal. It minimizes the amount of water and other liquids, like oil, that are able to penetrate the asphalt, weakening it over time. A sealcoat also protects your asphalt from the sun and heavy vehicle traffic, maintaining its durability and keeping it looking jet-black and fresh.

How Often Should I Sealcoat My Asphalt?

After your asphalt is laid initially, the ideal time to perform the first asphalt sealcoating is about a year. After that, once every 24-36 months is frequent enough to keep your asphalt protected and maintained. If you apply sealcoat more often than this, the layered build-up can start to crack and flake off in an unsightly way. Less often, and your asphalt will be exposed to the elements, resulting in damage.
Is Asphalt Sealcoating like Crack Sealing?

No, sealcoating and crack sealing are not the same things.

Asphalt sealcoating is part of a regular maintenance program that should be followed to extend the durability and life of your asphalt.

While crack sealing can help extend the life of your asphalt, it’s considered the first defense against further pavement deterioration. It’s a method of repair rather than a preventative step.

Crack sealing repairs small cracks and issues when they first appear. Sealcoating attempts to prevent those cracks from appearing for a long time.
Will Asphalt Sealcoating Fix My Asphalt?

As a preventative, protective layer, the purpose of sealcoating as an asphalt service is to prolong the life of your asphalt, not to fix the damage that is already there. If you have damaged asphalt, like alligator cracks, low spots, uneven areas, or other more serious issues, sealcoating will not fix it.

Despite the fact that some sealcoats claim they can ‘resurface’ your asphalt, resurfacing is a different process altogether. Laying an asphalt sealcoat over damaged asphalt will make it look good cosmetically, but the underlying issues will not be repaired, and damage will show through again quickly.

How Should I Prepare My Asphalt for Sealcoating?

When you work with a reputable paving company, they will do most of the prep work for you. The best way to help prepare is to block off the area which needs sealcoating so there are no vehicles parked on the asphalt or foot traffic wandering through.

Before sealcoating takes place, repairs should be done. This includes any cracks that need to be filled, potholes, leveling, and more. Once the repairs are performed and set, the asphalt resurfacing can take place.

What is the Sealcoating Process Like?

Your contractor will clean the asphalt, making sure it’s free from debris and water. Then, they’ll ensure it’s dry, because if there is any moisture left on the surface, the sealant won’t properly adhere.

Once the asphalt is dry, the sealcoating can be applied. It’s best to apply asphalt sealcoats in two thin layers rather than one thick layer. Bear this in mind when you speak to your contractor. Depending on the condition of your asphalt, the sealcoat will be applied with a sprayer, a squeegee, or a combination of the two methods.

After sealcoating is complete, you should prohibit any vehicles or foot traffic for 24-36 hours, as this will ensure proper curing and drying time. Once the sealcoat is properly dried, business can resume as normal, and you’ll have fresh-looking asphalt with an increased lifespan and durability.
Conclusion

Sealcoating is an effective and affordable way to extend the life of your asphalt. It helps to protect against wear from vehicles, the weather, and adds to the aesthetic appeal of your lot. The process is simple and can be handled by professionals in a timely manner.

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact us today and ask how our asphalt services can benefit you.