

## Driveway Checklist

This checklist is designed as a reference tool to help homeowners understand their driveway needs and present possible solutions.

**Asphalt Maintenance:** Proper maintenance will help prolong the life of your asphalt and prevent premature replacement. The most common types of driveway maintenance are listed below:

- **Crack Filling.** When analyzing cracks in your driveway, it is important to determine if whether they 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 of your driveway by returning the asphalt to its original rich, black color. Sealcoating is an affordable way to extend the life of your asphalt provided it is done sparingly. Always allow the old sealant to wear off for before reapplication, otherwise the sealant itself can build up damage the asphalt that you are trying to protect. The length of time it takes for sealer to wear depends on a variety of factors including weather.

**Asphalt Repair:** 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.

- **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.** This may be the culmination of untreated alligator cracks. Potholes can be an eyesore, which distracts from your home's curb appeal. They 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.
- **Settling.** Settling can happen anywhere within a driveway and the suggested repairs really depend on the location and severity of the settling. You may notice that the asphalt has settled along your 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, you will want to consider having it patched.
- **Low Areas.** If your driveway has low areas that tend to puddle and collect water, it is annoying. If it you live in northern climates, those puddles can turn into dangerous, icy spots. The suggested actions range from using salt on the area in the winter (it won't

harm asphalt) to surface (or “skin”) patching if the areas are deep enough to starting over with a new driveway. Your estimator will be able to recommend the right course of action for your driveway.

- **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.
- **Sink Holes.** Sink holes 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.

**Asphalt Replacement:** If the driveway has more than one of repair issues discussed above, or if the damage covers more than 30% of the total area, a full replacement is the likely recommendation. If that’s the case, your new asphalt driveway can help to increase both your home’s value and your peace-of-mind. And that is money well spent!