

Repairing the Driveway

Preventative maintenance will often extend its life for decades

Filling in cracks each year and sealing your driveway smooths the way home, while helping to ensure that it lasts as long as intended. It's a little time consuming and there are material purchases involved, however, so paying someone to do it for you can run into the hundreds of dollars. Here's how to save on those labor costs.

DIFFERENT MATERIALS

Most driveways are made of concrete, because smaller crews and experienced handymen can install and repair them. It's a very strong material, and lasts as long as 50 years. Smaller cracks of less than an inch can be fixed with filler from a standard caulking gun, while larger cracks require a foam pre-caulking rod. Flaking usually means a more extensive resurfacing. Asphalt driveways require a much larger team to install, but can typically be worked on by individual homeowners. Meant to last a couple of decades, asphalt can usually be repaired with sealant from a caulking gun.



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or liquid driveway cleaners to get rid of tree sap or motor oil on the surface. Sealing it yourself should only cost about \$100 or so, according to home-improvement experts. Individual containers vary in price, depending on whether you select a premium product with higher-end stabilizers and resins. Applying the sealer only takes a few hours on a typical driveway. The time-consuming part is actually in preparation, with cleaning, prepping and filling in cracks.

AVOIDING THE PITFALLS

Don't rely on the sealer to fill in cracks in the driveway, since it's not designed for that purpose. Clean and prep everything before you start, because sealants can't attach to a dirty surface. You'll end up having to redo the whole project. Properly stir the sealer before use to ensure that its resins and stabilizers have the proper consistency. Discuss which applicator to use with a pro, either at your local hardware store or home-improvement center. Finally, be aware of how the weather could impact your project. Temps should be above 50 degrees, both day and night, for the sealant to properly cure. Very high temps will lead to faster drying times and a less-effective seal — and rain, of course, will simply wash it all away.

REAL ESTATE 101

When to Remodel

Want to raise the value of your home? Upgrading the bathroom, remodeling the kitchen, improved landscaping and increasing energy efficiency are some of the sure-fire ways to do it. Find out more about remodeling projects that work at bobvila.com/articles/reconsider-renovating-home.

GETTING IT DONE

You'll need some specialized

tools to seal a driveway, including an application brush,

broom, squeegee, duct tape and mixing paddle. Use degreasers



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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Equity loan: A real estate loan based on the borrower's equity (ownership) in the property. The amount that the bank might loan could be determined by the fair market value of the property minus any current mortgages secured by the property, subject to the owner's other debt commitments and credit history. SOURCE: MLS.com

AD SPACE