

# PAVER MAINTENANCE & REMEDIES



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**Once your pavers have been laid, here are a few tips to keeping your new addition looking like the day it went down.**

## Cleaning

Washing down the pavers with a hose or a high pressure domestic cleaner is not recommended until the pavers have settled and the grout sand has set between the paving joints. The best type of sand to use between the joints is a dried sand or a polymeric sand best known as Paveset or similar. This is sold at most of the Australian Paving Centre stores.

During the settling in period, sweep only with a stiff outdoor broom or use a garden blower. When using the blower, don't blow it straight in to the paving joints, use it at an angle so as to not blow any joint sand out.

Frequent sweeping and occasional washing reduces the effect of dirt and grime and maintains the attractiveness of a paved area.

## General Maintenance

During the initial settling in period and ongoing, keep a bag of dried sand or polymeric sand on hand to top up any paving joints that may need a little extra between the joints.

When you poison the weeds in the garden, do the same to any weeds in the paving. The polymeric sand is better for stopping weed growth.

Poison any paving areas that do not get a lot of sunlight or are prone to be moist, damp or cold as these areas tend to promote the growth of fungus and mould.

If you are pulling any weeds out of the pavers, try to get to them before they grow too big. If they are allowed to grow too large, as you pull them out it will take the gap sand with the root system.

Preventative spot spraying of the pavers, whilst you are doing the garden is the best way to keep the paving free of weeds.

Tip; when doing the pavers and you have a garden wall or retaining wall, spray the face of the blocks every now and then to prevent mould or fungal growth.

After the pavers have been down for some time, there is nothing wrong with giving them a pressure clean every now and then. DO NOT use a commercial pressure cleaner as this may pit the surface of the pavers, dependent upon the type of paver they are. Use a domestic pressure cleaner of about 1500 psi or less.

If you do pressure clean the paving you must top up the sand in the joints. When using a polymeric sand such as Paveset, read the instructions on how to apply it. Do not over fill the joints when using this type of joint sand. APC have a separate DIY Paving document (see Step 6) which explains how to apply this type of joint sand.

## Tips to Maintaining your Pavers

- Do not allow moss, weeds or algae to develop on the paved surfaces. It is important to keep driveway surfaces clean and clear. Use standard pesticides on these surfaces.
- Regularly sweep or clean the pavers with a stiff outdoor broom or garden blower
- Occasionally pressure clean your driveway to remove stubborn dirt
- Top up the joint sand when required
- Always maintain good drainage away from the paving and ensure your storm water drains are clean and running water freely away from the paved area.



## Common Stains and Stain Removal

The removal of stains is not always easy but by following these basic principles it can be made a bit easier.

- First, determine if the use of chemicals are necessary. If dry sweeping or washing or scrubbing with clean soapy water or detergent fails to bring the paved area to an acceptable state of cleanliness, then you should at least consider it.
- Rather than automatically using an acid cleaner such as spirits of salts (hydrochloric acid), it is essential to first identify the substance to be removed.
- Follow the correct cleaning procedures: Always test the chemical on a small, inconspicuous patch before tackling the whole paved area. By testing first, it will ensure that no extensive chemical damage is done to the area from using an inappropriate substance.
- Safety precautions are essential. There are few chemicals that are entirely safe and some may be potentially dangerous. A few elementary precautions are necessary to ensure that no harm is done to yourself and those around you.

- Protect yourself against inhaling the fumes and against acid burns on your skin or in your eyes.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Dilute acids in the open with the breeze behind you.
- Always add acid to water and never add water to acid. This is absolutely vital.
- Whilst working with these chemicals keep people (especially children) and animals out of the area. Upon completion ensure the chemicals are safely stored.

## Efflorescence

Efflorescence is a white powdery deposit or residue that forms when moisture from within the masonry product dries out or evaporates leaving behind a white salty deposit.

Although efflorescence looks unsightly and aesthetically displeasing it does not affect the product if dealt with quickly and correctly. Efflorescence may generally disappear over time.

The process can be accelerated by dry brushing off any residue and removing it from the surface of the pavers. This can be done by sweeping with a stiff broom, using an outdoor vacuum cleaner and by scrubbing with a brush and clean soapy water.

Sometimes it is necessary to follow this up with a wash of weak acid (hydrochloric acid 1 part acid to 15 parts water ratio) or use a cleaner commonly called "Anti Eff".

If using acid always add acid to water and never add water to acid. This is absolutely vital.

Always test an area or paver first either using a spare paver or testing the process on an inconspicuous area.

If the salts are not removed from the site they will just be reabsorbed into the masonry product when washed down. Repeat the process until the problem has stopped.

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Efflorescence may mean there is:

- Presence of soluble salts
- Excessive amounts of water entering the masonry

Soluble salts can be introduced to your masonry product in a number of different ways. They can be found externally in the fill, soil or sand surrounding the product or brought in by the environment such as sea spray. Occasionally the soluble salts can be found in mortar, grout, dried sweeping sand and even the masonry units themselves.

It is always recommended that a good quality washed bedding sand be used under your pavers to help minimize the presence of soluble salts. As the name suggests, washed sand has been washed to remove a lot of the finer material, which also removes any of the salts that may be present.

## Dirt and Grime

Dirt and Grime can discolour the pavers no matter what material they are made of. Frequent sweeping and occasional washing reduces the effect of dirt and grime and maintains the colour and freshness of a paved area.

## Fresh Mortar Stains

The simplest way to remove wet mortar stains is to lightly cover the pavement before the mortar sets hard, with clean but slightly damp washed sand. Sweep the sand towards the edges of the pavement. If necessary continue to repeat this until the surface is almost clean. The most important point to remember is that the sand must be free of clay.

Follow this up with a further sweep with a dry washed sand. Any sticky wet mortar residues that escaped the wet sanding will be removed. Once again, the sand must be free of clay.

One or two days after the pavement has dried, some mortar residues may still be visible as a faint white mark. Normally this will weather away.

## Dried Mortar Stains

Experiment on a small section of the pavement with decreasing proportions of water mixed with acid, starting with one part acid to ten parts water (remembering to pour the acid into the water, not the other way around).

Once you have determined the appropriate proportion of acid to water, or the type of proprietary cleaning solution needed, proceed as follows:

- Slightly wet the pavement with a fine spray of water.
- Using a stiff brush, apply the acid mixture over the areas stained with mortar. Loosen thick mortar patches with a hard implement such as a steel scraper. Work on the mortar stain until it is dissolved.
- Give the area a good hose down.
- Repeat steps one to three until the whole pavement has been cleaned.
- A final rinsing of the pavement with a domestic pressure cleaner is often beneficial. However, many pavers can be damaged by the over use of high-pressure water jets so check with APC before commencing. Take care not to remove sand from the paver joints.



## Fungi, Moss and Lichens

These are common, particularly in shady or damp parts of the pavement. They sometimes appear as localised dark stains or patches of green, giving a dirty and unsightly appearance. These growths will not damage the pavement but will cause it to become quite slippery.

To remove these growths, vigorously brush the affected area when it is dry. Domestic pressure cleaners may also be used. While the surface may now appear to be completely cleaned it is important to sterilise the area with a poison or strong fungicide, which should be allowed three or four days to act. Blue crystals (copper sulphate) is one such poison, whilst hypochloride (liquid chlorine, White King) and formaldehyde are fungicides. Other proprietary brands are available from plant nurseries. The surface should be brushed again when it is dry.

You can also pour boiling water on moss and lichens to kill them and clean the pavement.

Please note: Some of the poisons and fungicides may discolour the pavement. Check their effect on a small part of the pavement before proceeding to clean the entire area. Pay attention to nearby garden plants or lawn, especially on the lower side of the area being treated.

Chlorine is another way to bleach out and remove these stains. Applying Chlorine with a garden sprayer is one option and this particularly works well removing stubborn fungal stains. Thoroughly wash off the Chlorine afterwards with clean water.

## Tannin Stains

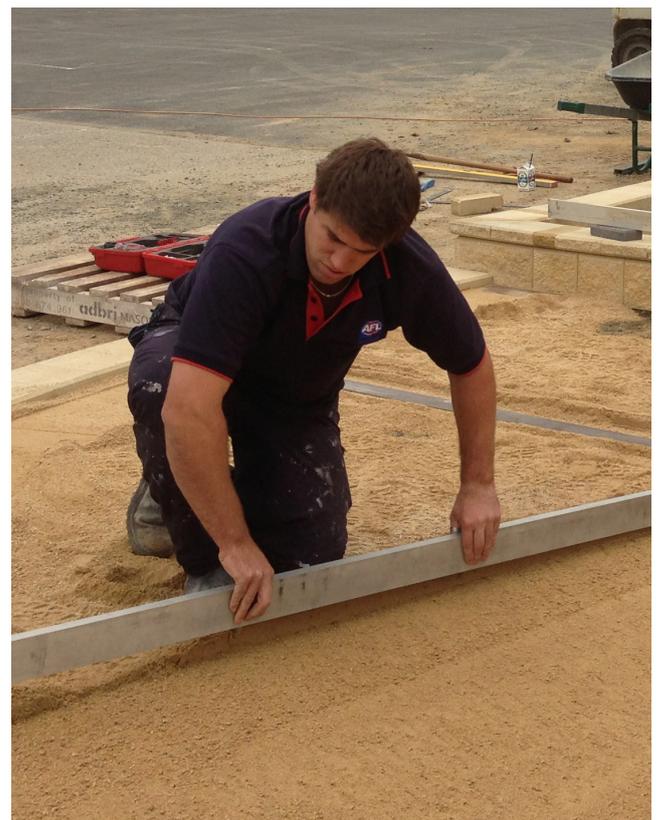
Tannin from gum leaves or bark is partially hard to remove. Once again Chlorine will remove these stains but test a spare paver or test it in an inconspicuous area first. Chlorine is a bleach, therefore it may discolour the paver so a test is imperative and leave the paver to stand for a duration of time to ensure it does not bleach out the colour. Lighter coloured pavers are less likely to be affected than darker colours.

## Oil or Grease stains

Coca-cola has been used with great success. Tip the coke on to the affected paving and leave it for a duration of time and then wash off. Repeat this process until it removes all of the stains.

## Sealing the Pavers

The most effective way to keep paving clean is to use a sealer. There are a number of good quality sealers available which have a life span of 8 - 12 years. Sealing the pavers as soon as possible after the project is done is the most ideal situation, however we have cleaned and sealed pavers up to 10 years old with brilliant results that make them look as good as new. There are several types available and your local APC store can advise the best and most suitable sealers to suit the paving product.



# PAVING SEALERS



Sealing pavers assist in the protection of pavers from the damage it faces from weathering, grime, mould, dirt, oil and other substances like red wine!

Paver sealers help to repel particles that may stain the paving surface.

Certain penetrating paver sealers also help to prevent and eliminate corrosion or salt attack,

However, sealers are not only used because of the durability it offers - it also has appearance enhancing benefits in colour, texture and design.

The colour of pavers and its surface texture can also be enhanced using some sealers, whilst other sealers offer a natural unaltered appearance to your paver.

The natural penetrating sealers will only be detectable once you pour liquid on to the surface of the paver. In this instance, you will see water bead on the surface of the paver for instance.

## Natural Finish

For a natural type of sealer that does not alter the appearance of the paver, we recommend Cementaide Driwall P6\*, a silicon based penetrative sealer suitable for the long-term protection of clay pavers, wire cut bricks, concrete pavers, sandstone, Travertine, Mt Gambier Stone and WA Limestone.

At APC, we also strongly recommend Driwall P6\* for our block wall systems. This sealer is easily applied with a general household garden sprayer and will help to eliminate fungi, mould and stop general weathering and staining of the walling blocks.

Other paver sealers offer a blend of penetrating sealant that works its way in to the substrate of the paver, whilst also leaving a light acrylic surface coat that enhances the colour of the paver product and gives a slight sheen appearance to the paver, similar to a satin finish.



## Satin Finish

This type of sealer seems to be the most popular from our experience. This sealer type also tends to make it a bit easier to clean your entertainment area for instance.

The product we recommend is Cementaide Silicon S50. This is an excellent product consisting of a 50/50 mix of silicon based Driwal P6\* and a gloss look acrylic based sealer named LB9, again another Cementaide product.

Silicon S50 give long-term protection to pressed and wire cut bricks, concrete pavers, concrete walling and retaining wall block, sandstone, Mt Gambier stone and terracotta or cement tiles.

## Gloss Finish

The LB9 sealer is the type of paver sealer which coats the top of the paver as a penetrating surface coat. This tends to be a thicker glossier finish which repels staining, weathering, dirt, oil and grease.

The LB9 makes cleaning of pavers with a blower vac or hosing down, very easy!

It enhances the paver product colours and gives a wet look appearance. It also assists in removing the effects of efflorescence.

This paver sealer is recommended on pavers in driveways, around your paths and in your entertaining areas.

It also looks fantastic on our range of exposed aggregate pavers.

LB9 is an acrylic resin in a penetrating solvent and contains no silicon.

Acrylic sealers are easy to apply and are renowned for its cost effectiveness. It has a high UV repellence and helps in enduring the colour of the pavers.

It provides long term protection for brickwork, pavers, roof files and concrete where you require a long-lasting gloss finish.

Paver sealers are particularly popular for pool pavers that are exposed to salt chlorinated chemicals - however it is vital to use the right pool sealer for the pavers you have selected.

Sealing pavers is also a great solution in having your old, weathered existing paving restored and looking beautiful.

For more information about sealing pavers, visit our Knowledge Centre.

Or visit your local APC store to ascertain the best and most suitable sealer for your paver.

