

PMP Tips and Answers

Tips For Maintaining New Driveways

Asphalt Driveways

You should not drive on your driveway for at least one week after it is constructed.

Please be aware for at least six months after construction, parking any vehicle (including trailers, motorcycles, bicycles, etc) on your driveway, especially when the blacktop temperature is above 60 degrees Fahrenheit, may leave depressions in the pavement. Also, avoid making sharp turns because they can scuff the new surface.

Though some depressions and scuffing are expected because the new asphalt is tender for several months until it has time to cure, parking in your garage is recommended to keep depressions and scuffing to a minimum.

Applying sealers normally does not result in any structural benefit; however, if you choose to use a sealer, it is recommended not to use any products labeled "coal tar." Instead, use asphalt emulsion sealers. Follow the manufacturer's directions for application of these products. Wait three years before applying any sealer.

Concrete Driveways

The contractor sprays the new concrete with curing compound when it is poured. This seals the concrete to keep it moist and help it cure.

Wait until next fall before sealing your concrete driveway. Several concrete sealant products, including clear acrylic sealers, linseed oil, and penetrating sealers, are available from a variety of retailers. The City identifies three in its driveway maintenance literature: Construction Materials of St Louis Park (952-929-0431), Construction Midwest of New Hope (763-536-8336), and Brock White of St Paul (651-647-0123). Many more concrete sealer retailers are listed in the Yellow Pages under "Concrete - Seal & Waterproof."

Tips for Maintaining New Sod

NOTE: The contractor is responsible for maintaining new sod for 30 days. After that, City staff will mark any dead sod that needs to be replaced. All sod that is acceptable after the warranty period becomes the homeowner's responsibility.

Mowing

Do not mow for the first three weeks. The leaf blades are all that remains for the plant to live. Do not take what is left of the grass because it may not come back.

After three weeks, set the mower deck at least two inches high or at the highest setting. Do not cut more than half the plant off at a time, and do not mow during hot weather. It's better to have long green grass than short brown dirt. Please cut your new sod at this height for the remainder of the year.

Watering

The contractor will water sod as needed for the first 30 days only! During that time, if you notice the sod is drying out, please help out and water it accordingly.

You will be responsible for watering and maintaining your new sod after 30 days. New sod roots take a whole year to reach full length. New sod requires at least two inches of water per week in three or four applications. To check if you are watering enough, place a shallow, flat-bottomed container under the sprinkler. Then measure the water depth in the container.

Fertilizing

Your sod was fertilized where it was grown; therefore, it will not need fertilizer until next spring. If you fertilize too soon, you risk killing the sod.

Q&A

What do those stakes mean?

The stakes tell the contractor where new pipe and drainage structures go for the storm sewer and water main.

This includes areas where manholes must be raised or lowered and hydrants moved. Stakes are marked with pink paint or ribbon and are offset from the actual pipe or structure.

When the streets are staked for curb and gutter or utilities, the stakes are labeled with an “O” with an “S” inside it. These letters mean the stake is offset the distance marked on the stake, such as 10 feet. The mark “3’ B/C” indicates that the stake is offset three feet from the back of the new curb (ie, the back of curb will be three feet closer to the center of the street than the stake).

Does the paint mark on my driveway indicate where the new street will be?

No. The new street will be about the same width and in the same location as it is now. The paint mark indicates where the driveway will be cut to match the grade on the new street. Minor grade changes are being made to improve drainage, and driveways will require some grading to match. If you are having your driveway replaced as part of the street construction project, the portion of the driveway beyond the paint mark, adjacent to the street, will be paid as part of your street assessment.

I'm worried about my trees and shrubs near the excavation area. Is there anything I can do?

If you want to help limit stress to trees and shrubs near the excavation areas, the best thing you can do is add water. Watering trees and shrubs before and during reconstruction will lessen any impacts to root loss or root exposure. The healthier the tree or shrub, the more it can tolerate. The contractor will minimize impacts to root zones by not stockpiling excavated materials near the driplines, by limiting excavation near trees as much as possible, and by cutting significantly exposed roots clean to promote callusing or new root proliferation.

If you have more questions concerning your trees or shrubs, contact the City Forester at 763-593-8046 or Assistant City Forester at 763-593-3976.

It's not raining. Why isn't the contractor working?

When it rains more than a little, construction has to stop to avoid turning everything to mud. Golden Valley's silty soils tend to hold moisture. If soil is too moist, it turns to ruts and clumps when graded and cannot be properly compacted to build a good street. If grading is started before the surface is somewhat dry, the moisture is pumped deeper into the soil, making more mud. Muddy conditions can also limit accessibility when excavated soil must be hauled to other sites.

Why are streets dug up so often during reconstruction?

Digging is necessary to meet the different requirements for each utility. Furthermore, health department regulations specify a minimum distance between the utilities to prevent cross contamination if a leak occurs. The sanitary sewer must be deep enough to pick up the sewage coming out the pipes under the basement floors, while the water main and services need to be a minimum of 7.5 feet deep to keep them from freezing. Storm sewer, however, is kept as shallow as possible so it does not conflict with other utilities. Finally, when utility work is complete, streets are excavated to remove bad soils and install sand and the pavement section.

Construction Terms

Reclaimed: To conserve resources and reduce cost, crews recycle existing blacktop and gravel by grinding it up to make new gravel base for the new streets. The reclaimed material also provides a good temporary surface to drive on during construction. This recycling also saves valuable landfill space.

Subgrade Correction/Subcut: The subgrade is the material under the aggregate base, curb, and blacktop used to construct the street. If this soil is poor and will not structurally support the street or drain properly, it is removed (subcut) and replaced with sand to correct the problem. The depth of the correction is determined by the type of soil and the traffic the street will carry

Pipe Work: Pipe work includes repairing sanitary sewer and water mains and services and storm sewer. Sometimes crews can do the repair work from manholes, and sometimes they have to dig up the street. Both methods can disrupt traffic. For example, crews must park equipment in the middle of the street when working from manholes, and when the street is dug up, cars have limited access.

Trench: Trench refers to the area the contractor is digging to work on utilities that are located underground.

Force Main: Most sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems are gravity systems and the water runs down hill. Where this is not possible, pumps are installed to force the water uphill until it reaches a point where it can run down hill again. Hence the term “force main.”

Cover: “Cover” is the distance that the pipe is buried below the finished pavement grade.

Base Course: “Base course” refers to the first layer of blacktop (asphalt, bituminous) paved on a street.

Raising Iron: “Raising iron” refers to setting the manhole castings at their final grade. When the first layer of asphalt is placed, the manholes must be low enough for the paver to go over them. Therefore, the contractor leaves all the manholes low until just before the final layer of asphalt is placed. They are then raised to the final elevation.

Wear Course: "Wear course" refers to the final layer of blacktop (asphalt, bituminous) paved on a street.

Punch List: A "punch list" is a list of things that need to be fixed. It refers to a past practice of punching a hole by each listed item as it was repaired.

Rip-Rap: "Rip-rap" refers to the large rocks placed on embankments to help prevent erosion.