



## Can My Parking Lot Be Seal Coated? Not Always! Here's Why

As the asphalt in your parking lot ages, cracks appear, and the surface loses its smooth sheen. Sealcoating is a popular solution touted to extend the lifespan of your asphalt. But is sealcoating always the answer? The truth is, sealcoating offers excellent protection in specific scenarios, but it's not a magic bullet, and sometimes it can be a waste of money. This is where you have to be careful of the seal coating contractor you are asking to scope your parking lot because most seal coating contractors will “over sell” the capabilities of seal coating!

### Here's what asphalt pavement sealer excels at:



**Resists gas and oils** which soften, weaken and destroy asphalt pavement.



**Seals against moisture accumulations** in blacktop which can severely damage pavements under the “freeze-thaw” cycle.



**Shields against the drying action of the sun** which causes raveling and cracking of the pavement and allows water penetration.



**Beautifies asphalt** pavements by providing a charcoal black color which gives the pavement a rich, new-look appearance.

- **Protecting against Sun Damage:** Sunlight breaks down asphalt, making it brittle and prone to cracking. Sealcoat acts as a protective layer, shielding the asphalt from harmful UV rays and slowing down the aging process.
- **Preventing Moisture Intrusion:** Water seeping into cracks can lead to further damage during freeze-thaw cycles. Sealcoat acts as a barrier, minimizing water infiltration and protecting the asphalt base.
- **Enhancing Flexibility:** Over time, asphalt loses its flexibility, making it more susceptible to cracking. Sealcoat adds a layer of flexibility, helping the asphalt better withstand temperature fluctuations and minor movement.

- **Minor Crack Prevention:** Sealcoating can help prevent hairline cracks from developing into larger ones. However, it cannot repair existing significant cracks.

However, sealcoating has its limitations. Here's where it won't be effective and can be a waste of money:



- **Major Cracks and Potholes:** If your parking lot has extensive cracks wider than ¼ inch or large potholes, sealcoat won't fix them. These require proper crack filling and pothole patching before sealcoating can be considered. Applying sealcoat over major cracks will simply mask the problem and won't prevent water infiltration or further damage.
- **Already Failing Asphalt:** If your asphalt has significant base failures, like large alligator cracks or severe depressions, sealcoating is a temporary solution at best. The underlying structural issues need to be addressed first through asphalt repairs or even resurfacing. Sealcoating over failing asphalt will postpone the inevitable and likely crack again soon.
- **Oil Stains:** Sealer won't adhere properly to oil-stained surfaces. Oil needs to be properly cleaned and removed before sealcoating can be applied. Otherwise, the sealcoat will peel and become ineffective.
- **New Asphalt:** Freshly paved asphalt should not be seal coated any sooner than 90 days after installation. The new asphalt binder contains enough oils to protect the surface during this curing period. Applying sealcoat too early can trap moisture and hinder the curing process.

***BEWARE of contractors who tell you that if you don't let them apply a sealer, curing agent or rejuvenator immediately after paving that your warranty will be void and your asphalt will deteriorate. This is the oldest trick in the book. Most will spray an oil-based sealer that is diluted with gasoline, kerosene, or paint thinner. This product will actually "soften and damage" your new asphalt.***

Here are some specific examples to illustrate these points:

- **Scenario:** You have a parking lot with a few hairline cracks and some minor surface wear.

**Solution:** Sealcoating can be a good option here. The sealer will protect against further damage from sun and water and extend the life of your asphalt.

- **Scenario:** Your parking lot has large, interconnected cracks and uneven surfaces with significant depressions.

**Solution:** Sealcoating won't solve these problems. Crack repairs, pothole patching, and potentially even asphalt resurfacing might be necessary before considering sealcoating.

- **Scenario:** You notice oily patches on your parking lot surface.

**Solution:** Sealcoating won't adhere to oil. Address the oil stains through proper cleaning and priming before proceeding with sealcoating. Sealcoating is essential to help prevent oil degradation of the asphalt.

By understanding the capabilities and limitations of asphalt pavement sealer, you can make informed decisions. In some cases, sealcoating can be a cost-effective way to protect your investment. However, in other situations, it might be a waste of money and a temporary fix. Consulting a qualified paving contractor can help you assess your parking lot's condition and determine the best course of action for optimal results.



**BEWARE: “Every Seal Coating Contractor wants to seal coat your asphalt. It doesn’t mean they are qualified to or have your best interest in mind beyond making a quick sale!”**

It’s essential to have a **pavement preservation expert**—not just an ordinary sealcoating contractor—assess your asphalt parking lot. A qualified expert can evaluate whether your parking lot is truly a good candidate for sealcoating. While sealcoating can offer valuable protection and improve the appearance of asphalt, applying it to a surface that is too deteriorated or structurally compromised provides little to no benefit and may waste your investment.

An experienced professional will:

1. **Assess Pavement Condition:** They will carefully inspect for cracks, potholes, oxidation, raveling, and structural integrity to ensure the surface is in good shape to benefit from sealcoating.
2. **Determine Suitability:** If the asphalt has significant underlying damage, such as base failure or excessive alligator cracking, they may recommend repairs like crack sealing, infrared restoration, or milling and paving instead of sealcoating.
3. **Recommend Value-Driven Solutions:** Experts focus on long-term preservation, ensuring any service performed adds measurable value by extending the life of your pavement.

By consulting an expert in **pavement preservation**, you’ll avoid unnecessary or ineffective treatments and focus your maintenance budget on solutions that truly work. This ensures that sealcoating is applied at the right time and under the right conditions to maximize its benefits, such as protecting against UV damage, oxidation, and water infiltration. Investing in expert guidance upfront can save significant time, money, and frustration, ultimately preserving the quality of your parking lot and delaying costly repairs or full reconstruction.

Contact [Fixasphalt.com](http://Fixasphalt.com) at 1-877-349-2774 for an honest, transparent – nonbiased assessment. FixAsphalt.com is a nationally recognized expert in assessing a pavements condition.