**What is Sealcoating?**

Sealcoating is the application of is a layer thin layer of deep black material to driveways and pavement. It contains chemicals that are harmful to humans and the environment. There are two common types of sealcoat: coal tar-based and asphalt-based that contain chemicals called PAHs (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons), but coal tar-based sealcoat contains higher levels of these compounds that harm fish and can pose a risk of cancer to humans. Humans are exposed to PHAs by inhalation of air, contamination of our drinking water and bioaccumulation in the food chain.

**Sealcoating Concerns**

Sealcoating products are now banned in many states, counties and cities. Minnesota, Washington, The District of Columbia, Austin, Texas, Greenville and Boone, North Carolina, and counties in Maryland, New York (Suffolk) and Wisconsin. The NY State Assembly has also passed a bill to ban sealcoating that was defeated by the Senate.

Health concerns as well as cleanup costs are driving the banning of these products. Metro cities in Minnesota estimate cleanup costs up to $1 billion for removing contaminated sludge in stormwater ponds contaminated with PAHs. The cost to clean up one pond was $450,000.

Coal tar –based sealants are no longer sold at Home Depot, Lowes, Ace Hardware and other stores that have voluntarily removed them. But other companies including those that often go door-to-door use coat-tar based sealcoat materials.

***Did you know?***

• Water running off a parking lot covered with coal tar-based sealcoat had 30 times more PAHs than water from an unsealed parking lot.

• Soil near the parking lot had highly elevated levels of PAHs, and those levels remained high for three years after the sealcoat was applied to the lot.

• Dust with highly elevated levels of PAHs was transported up to 20 yards from the sealcoated surface by tire tracking and wind.

So when your driveway seems in disrepair with cracks and crevices, you are actually doing the lake a favor. Driveways that have no sealcoat have two benefits:

1. No additional toxins from PAH’s in the sealcoat to contaminate our drinking water, and
2. Stormwater pollutants are allowed to infiltrate into the soil where pollutants are broken down by soil bacteria or bound to soil particles

**Assembly Point Driveways**

Recently, 2 volunteers from the APWQC undertook a survey of sealcoating on the Point. Of the 304 properties on Assembly Point, only 39 are seal coated and 6 are stamped and covered with polymer modified asphalt emulsions. We have a real chance to prevent further sealcoating from being a polluter of the Lake.

Please think twice before sealcoating and better yet consider using pervious pavement. Permeable pavement allows stormwater to infiltrate into the soil before it reaches our waterbodies reducing contaminates. The infiltration process aids in the partial removal of pollutant such as total suspended solids, total phosphorus, total nitrogen, zinc, motor oil and copper.

A list of types of permeable pavement and their effectiveness can be found on our website. Consideration must be given to materials used, constructions techniques, site characteristic and maintenance. A first step in the process may be to reduce the overall size of a driveway whenever possible.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/south/178256821.html?refer=y>

<http://www.unh.edu/unhsc/sites/unh.edu.unhsc/files/UNHSC%20Seagrant%20sealcoat%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

<http://www.cflhd.gov/programs/techDevelopment/pavement/polymer/documents/02_Polymer_Modified_Asphalt_Emulsions_main_report.pdf>

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/education/low-impact-development/permeable-paving>