



Barrington Area Council
Of Governments

PAVEMENT SEALANTS – YOU HAVE OPTIONS

Are you considering sealcoating your driveway this spring? Did you know certain sealants can be harmful to your health?

Sealcoat products are used on asphalt driveways, parking lots and playgrounds to give a restored appearance. But some sealants, such as coal tar-based products, are toxic to aquatic life and, with prolonged exposure, pose a risk of cancer in humans, especially children.

The problem with some sealants is they contain high amounts of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which are known carcinogens. Many of these high-PAH sealants are coal tar-based, but other products are coming on the market that do not contain the term “coal tar” – but they also have high levels of PAH.

Sealants don't stay put. The sealcoat flakes off in tiny particles that are washed away by rain into bodies of water or onto lawns. Sealcoat surfaces also deteriorate in sunlight and with wear and abrasion – and the flakes become dust that is tracked into homes by pets and people, where it can be inhaled, ingested and absorbed through the skin.

In 2016, the BACOG member governments jointly agreed to eliminate the use of these dangerous sealants on their own properties to better protect residents and the environment.

At about the same cost, a great alternative is to use asphalt-emulsion sealants which are widely available. They have far lower PAH levels – about 1/1,000th the PAH in coal tar sealants and the other high-PAH sealants. If you use a driveway sealant service, be sure to ask the contractor what they plan to apply and request an asphalt-emulsion or latex sealant.

To learn more, check out the Barrington Area Council of Governments' (BACOG) website at: www.BACOG.org or call us at 847.381.7871.

The Barrington Area Council of Governments is a regional planning and legislative advocacy organization representing nine local governments in the northwest metropolitan area. BACOG's members are the Villages of Barrington, Barrington Hills, Deer Park, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, South Barrington and Tower Lakes, and Barrington and Cuba Townships.