

VANCOUVER INTERLOCK

Interlock Repair

Paver releveling, sunken area repair, joint sand replacement, and restoration of shifting interlock surfaces damaged by Vancouver's moisture and root intrusion

20 Expert Answers from Interlock IQ

vancouverinterlock.com/construction-brain

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How much does interlock repair cost in Vancouver?

Interlock repair costs in Metro Vancouver typically range from \$1,500-\$4,000 for releveling a 200 sq ft area, with most homeowners paying \$8-\$20 per sq ft for professional repair work. The final cost depends on the extent of damage, accessibility, and whether the existing base needs rebuilding.

Common Repair Scenarios and Costs:

Minor settling and releveling (10-50 pavers) runs \$500-\$1,500. This involves lifting sunken pavers, adding or removing bedding sand to correct levels, re-compacting, and relaying the pavers with fresh polymeric sand. This is the most common repair in Metro Vancouver, often caused by inadequate initial base preparation or water infiltration that has softened the subgrade.

Moderate repair (100-200 sq ft of shifting or settling) costs \$1,500-\$4,000. This typically requires lifting pavers across a larger area, correcting base issues, possibly adding additional base material, re-screeding bedding sand, relaying pavers in proper pattern, and applying new polymeric sand. Areas near downspouts, at the bottom of slopes, or where tree roots have caused heaving often fall into this category.

Extensive repair requiring base reconstruction (300+ sq ft) runs \$4,000-\$8,000+. When the original base was inadequate or drainage problems have saturated and destabilized the foundation, contractors must excavate down to the subgrade, rebuild the base with proper depth and compaction, and essentially reinstall the paver surface. At this cost level, many homeowners opt for complete replacement with upgraded materials.

Metro Vancouver Climate Factors:

The region's persistent rainfall and clay-heavy soils create specific repair challenges that affect pricing. **Drainage-related failures** are the leading cause of interlock problems here — water that pools beneath pavers saturates the base material and softens clay subgrade, causing differential settling. Repairs in areas with ongoing drainage issues cost 20-30% more because contractors must address the water management problem, not just the surface symptoms.

Moss and joint sand erosion are ongoing maintenance issues rather than structural repairs. Professional moss treatment and polymeric sand replacement runs \$3-\$6 per sq ft. Many homeowners can handle this DIY for \$1-\$2 per sq ft in materials.

When to Repair vs. Replace:

Repair makes sense when the base is fundamentally sound but pavers have shifted due to minor settling, tree root intrusion, or localized drainage issues. **Replace rather than repair** when you're dealing with widespread settling

(indicating inadequate base depth), repeated failures in the same area, or when repair costs exceed 60-70% of replacement cost.

Professional vs. DIY Repair:

Homeowners can reasonably handle **small-scale relevening** (5-10 pavers) by lifting pavers with flat screwdrivers, adjusting sand levels, and relaying. However, **hire a professional** for repairs involving more than 20 pavers, any base reconstruction, drainage corrections, or when the cause of failure isn't obvious. Improper repair often makes the underlying problem worse and more expensive to fix correctly.

Getting Accurate Repair Quotes:

Quality contractors will assess not just the visible damage but the underlying cause — inadequate base depth, poor drainage, root intrusion, or edge restraint failure. Expect contractors to probe the base with a steel rod to check depth and compaction. Beware of quotes that only address surface symptoms without investigating why the pavers failed initially.

Need help finding an interlock repair specialist? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges and soil conditions.

Q2

What does it cost to fix sunken pavers on a driveway in Surrey?

Fixing sunken pavers on a Surrey driveway typically costs \$15-\$35 per square foot for professional repair, with most homeowners spending \$2,500-\$8,000 depending on the affected area and underlying cause. The wide cost range reflects whether you're dealing with isolated settling that requires lifting and relevening a small section, or widespread base failure that demands complete reconstruction.

Understanding the Root Cause

Surrey's clay-heavy soils are notorious for creating challenging conditions for paver driveways. When pavers sink, it's rarely just a surface issue — the problem usually stems from inadequate base preparation during the original installation or water infiltration that has compromised the foundation. Clay soil doesn't drain well and becomes unstable when saturated, which is exactly what happens during Metro Vancouver's heavy winter rains from October through March.

The most common causes of sunken pavers in Surrey driveways include insufficient base depth (many installations use only 4-6 inches when driveways require 10-12 inches), poor compaction during installation, lack of geotextile

fabric to separate clay subgrade from the gravel base, and inadequate drainage that allows water to pool beneath the pavers. Vehicle traffic on an unstable base accelerates the settling process.

Repair Cost Breakdown

For **minor settling affecting 50-100 square feet**, expect to pay \$1,500-\$3,500. This involves lifting the affected pavers, adding and compacting base material or bedding sand to correct the grade, and relaying the pavers with fresh polymeric sand. The contractor can often reuse the existing pavers if they're in good condition.

Moderate repairs covering 150-300 square feet typically run \$3,500-\$7,500. This usually indicates more significant base issues that require excavating deeper, adding proper drainage, and potentially installing geotextile fabric that was missing from the original installation.

Extensive reconstruction affecting 400+ square feet can cost \$8,000-\$15,000 or more, especially if the entire base needs to be rebuilt to proper depth with adequate drainage. At this point, you're essentially paying for a new driveway installation while reusing some existing materials.

Surrey-Specific Considerations

Surrey's clay soil requires special attention during repairs. Professional contractors will typically excavate below the failed area, install geotextile fabric if it's missing, and build up the base in properly compacted lifts. They may also install drainage pipe at low points to prevent future water accumulation — this is especially important in Surrey where clay doesn't allow water to percolate naturally.

The repair cost increases significantly if the sunken area is near your home's foundation or if water has been pooling against the house. Proper drainage slope (minimum 2% away from the building) must be reestablished, and this sometimes requires regrading a larger area than just the sunken section.

When to Repair vs. Replace

If less than 30% of your driveway has settling issues and the pavers are in good condition, repair makes financial sense. However, if you're seeing widespread settling, multiple low spots, or if this is the second time you're fixing the same area, complete reconstruction is often more cost-effective long-term. A properly rebuilt driveway with adequate base depth and drainage will last 20-25 years, while patched repairs on inadequate infrastructure may fail again within 2-5 years.

Professional vs. DIY

Driveway paver repair is not a DIY project. The excavation depth, base compaction requirements, and need for proper drainage design require professional equipment and expertise. Attempting to fix sunken driveway pavers without addressing the underlying base and drainage issues typically results in the same areas settling again within

6-18 months.

Need help finding an interlock repair specialist in Surrey? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand local soil conditions and proper repair techniques for lasting results.

Q3

Is it cheaper to repair or replace an old interlock driveway?

The decision between repairing or replacing an old interlock driveway depends on the extent of damage, but repair is typically 50-70% less expensive when the base is still sound. For most Metro Vancouver driveways showing settling, weed growth, or missing joint sand, repair runs \$3,000-\$8,000 compared to \$12,000-\$25,000 for complete replacement.

When Repair Makes Financial Sense

If your driveway has isolated sunken areas, widespread weed growth, faded pavers, or missing joint sand but the majority of pavers are still level and stable, repair is usually the smart choice. Common repair work includes lifting and releveling settled sections (\$15-\$25 per sq ft), removing all old joint sand and applying fresh polymeric sand (\$3-\$6 per sq ft), pressure washing and sealing (\$3-\$7 per sq ft), and replacing a percentage of cracked or stained pavers (\$8-\$15 per sq ft including labour).

The key factor is whether the original base preparation was adequate. If your driveway was built with proper 10-12 inch compacted gravel base and only has surface-level issues, repair can extend its life by 10-15 years. Metro Vancouver's minimal freeze-thaw cycles mean that properly built interlock driveways can last 25-30 years with periodic maintenance, making repair a worthwhile investment on structurally sound installations.

When Replacement Is Necessary

Complete replacement becomes necessary when the base has failed, typically evidenced by widespread differential settling (some areas much lower than others), pavers that rock when stepped on, or water pooling in multiple areas. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, inadequate original base depth is the most common cause of driveway failure. Driveways built with only 4-6 inches of base material instead of the required 10-12 inches will eventually fail as the base saturates and loses stability during heavy winter rains.

Other replacement indicators include pavers that have shifted so extensively that the surface is no longer driveable, widespread paver cracking from vehicle loads on an inadequate base, or drainage problems that direct water toward your foundation. If more than 40% of your driveway needs releveling, replacement often makes more

economic sense than extensive repair.

Metro Vancouver Cost Realities

A typical 600 sq ft driveway repair addressing settling, joint sand replacement, and sealing runs \$4,500-\$7,500. Complete replacement of the same driveway runs \$15,000-\$24,000 including removal and disposal of existing pavers, new excavation, proper base preparation, 80mm pavers rated for vehicular traffic, and polymeric sand installation.

However, factor in that a properly rebuilt driveway should last 25+ years with minimal maintenance, while repairs on a fundamentally flawed installation may only buy you 3-5 years before more extensive problems develop. Clay-heavy soils common in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley are particularly unforgiving of inadequate base preparation.

Making the Decision

Have an experienced interlock contractor assess your driveway's base condition by lifting pavers in the worst areas to examine the base material underneath. If the base is still well-compacted, drains freely, and shows no signs of contamination with clay or organic matter, repair is likely your best option. If the base is saturated, contaminated, or was never adequate for driveway loads, replacement will ultimately be more cost-effective than throwing money at repeated repairs.

When to Hire a Professional

Both major repairs and replacement require professional expertise. Driveway releveling involves proper base assessment, precision screeding of bedding sand, and edge restraint work that requires professional tools and experience. DIY driveway work almost always leads to recurring problems because achieving proper compaction and drainage on vehicular surfaces requires specialized equipment and knowledge.

Need help finding an interlock contractor to assess your driveway? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals for free estimates on both repair and replacement options.

How much does it cost to re-level a paver patio in Burnaby?

Re-leveling a paver patio in Burnaby typically costs \$8-\$20 per square foot, so a standard 200-300 sq ft patio runs \$1,600-\$6,000 depending on the extent of settling and underlying issues. The wide price range reflects whether you need simple re-screeding of bedding sand versus complete base reconstruction.

Minor releveling (lifting pavers, adjusting bedding sand, and relaying) costs \$8-\$12 per sq ft when the base is still sound but pavers have settled slightly due to bedding sand washout or minor compaction. This involves lifting the affected pavers with paver pullers or flat bars, adding or removing bedding sand to correct the grade, re-compacting, and relaying the pavers with fresh polymeric sand.

Major releveling requiring base repair costs \$15-\$20 per sq ft when the underlying gravel base has failed, typically due to inadequate initial compaction, insufficient base depth, or drainage problems. This requires excavating beneath the pavers, rebuilding the base in proper lifts with a plate compactor, installing new bedding sand, and relaying all pavers. In Burnaby's clay-heavy soils, base failure often stems from clay migration into the gravel base when geotextile fabric wasn't used during original installation.

Burnaby's challenging conditions make paver settling more common than in well-draining areas. Much of Burnaby sits on clay-based soils that don't drain well and can shift seasonally. The city's significant elevation changes mean many patios are built on sloped lots where drainage management is critical. Poor drainage from Burnaby's 1,200mm+ annual rainfall saturates inadequate bases and causes differential settling where some areas sink while others remain stable.

Additional costs include disposing of contaminated base material (\$200-\$500), installing drainage improvements like catch basins or perforated pipe (\$500-\$2,000), and replacing damaged pavers that crack during lifting (\$3-\$8 per paver). If the settling was caused by root intrusion from Burnaby's mature trees, root barrier installation adds \$15-\$25 per linear foot.

Warning signs that indicate your Burnaby patio needs releveling include pavers that rock when stepped on, visible gaps between pavers, water pooling on the surface after rain, or a noticeable slope toward your house foundation. Burnaby's wet climate makes these problems worse quickly — water that pools due to settling saturates the base further and accelerates the deterioration.

Hire a professional for releveling projects over 100 sq ft or when drainage issues are suspected. Proper releveling requires a plate compactor, laser level for accurate grading, and experience identifying whether the base can be salvaged or needs complete reconstruction. DIY releveling of small areas (10-20 pavers) is possible, but larger areas require professional equipment and expertise to ensure the problem doesn't return within a year or two.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for your Burnaby patio repair? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced local professionals who understand Burnaby's soil conditions and drainage challenges.

Q5

What's the cost to re-sand and re-seal an interlock driveway in Vancouver?

Re-sanding and re-sealing an interlock driveway in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$3-\$8 per square foot, or \$1,500-\$6,400 for a standard 500-800 sq ft driveway. The wide price range depends on the current condition of your pavers, whether polymeric sand replacement is needed, and the type of sealer selected.

Re-sanding costs \$1.50-\$3.50 per square foot and involves removing old, deteriorated joint sand, cleaning the joints thoroughly, applying new polymeric sand, and activating it with controlled water application. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, polymeric sand typically needs replacement every 3-5 years as the constant rainfall gradually breaks down the polymer binding agents. If your driveway has significant moss growth in the joints, weed intrusion, or visibly empty joints, re-sanding is essential before sealing.

Sealing costs \$1.50-\$4.50 per square foot depending on the sealer type and surface preparation required. Basic acrylic sealers (\$1.50-\$2.50/sq ft) provide modest protection and color enhancement but need reapplication every 2-3 years. Premium urethane or polyurethane sealers (\$3-\$4.50/sq ft) offer superior durability, stain resistance, and typically last 5-7 years in Vancouver's climate. The sealing process includes pressure washing, allowing 48+ hours drying time (critical in Vancouver's humid conditions), applying sealer in thin, even coats, and maintaining traffic restrictions for 24-48 hours while curing.

Surface preparation significantly affects total cost. Driveways with heavy moss growth, oil stains, or efflorescence (white mineral deposits) require additional cleaning treatments that can add \$0.50-\$1.50 per square foot. Pressure washing alone costs \$0.75-\$1.25 per square foot, but moss treatment with iron sulphate, degreasing oil-stained areas, and efflorescence removal require specialized products and extra labor time.

Timing matters in Metro Vancouver's marine climate. The optimal window for re-sanding and sealing is May through October when you can count on 48-72 hours of dry weather for proper curing. Attempting this work during the October-to-March rainy season often results in poor polymeric sand activation, sealer application problems, and premature failure. Many contractors offer 10-15% discounts for off-season scheduling but will only proceed during confirmed dry weather windows.

DIY vs. professional considerations: Re-sanding is the most valuable DIY maintenance task homeowners can perform — quality polymeric sand costs \$35-\$50 per 50-pound bag (covers roughly 100 sq ft), and the process

involves sweeping, cleaning joints, applying sand, and water activation. However, sealing requires professional equipment for even application, proper surface preparation, and experience timing the work with Vancouver's unpredictable weather. Poorly applied sealer creates a blotchy, peeling mess that's expensive to strip and redo.

Warning signs you need this maintenance: Empty or eroded joints, moss growing between pavers, weeds sprouting from joints, pavers shifting slightly when walked on, or a faded, weathered appearance. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, delaying joint sand replacement allows water to penetrate the base material, potentially causing settling and requiring much more expensive releveling repairs (\$8-\$15 per square foot).

A typical maintenance schedule for Metro Vancouver driveways includes re-sanding every 3-5 years and sealing every 4-7 years depending on traffic, exposure, and sealer quality. Properties with heavy tree cover or north-facing exposure may need more frequent attention due to accelerated moss growth and reduced drying between rain events.

Need help finding an interlock maintenance contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges and use proper materials for long-lasting results.

Q6

How much does it cost to fix heaved pavers from tree roots?

Repairing heaved pavers from tree root intrusion typically costs \$15-\$35 per square foot in Metro Vancouver, depending on the extent of root damage and whether the tree remains. For a typical 100-200 square foot affected area, expect to pay \$1,500-\$7,000 for professional repair.

The cost varies significantly based on the repair approach required. **Minor heaving affecting 50-100 square feet** where roots haven't completely destroyed the base runs \$1,500-\$3,500. This involves lifting the affected pavers, cutting protruding roots, adding new bedding sand, and relaying the pavers. **Major root damage requiring base reconstruction** costs \$25-\$35 per square foot because the contractor must excavate deeper, remove root-contaminated base material, install root barriers, rebuild the base with fresh gravel, and reinstall pavers with new polymeric sand.

Tree removal versus preservation dramatically affects repair costs. If you're keeping the tree, root barriers (solid HDPE sheets installed vertically in the soil) add \$8-\$15 per linear foot to deflect future root growth away from the paver area. However, cutting major structural roots can destabilize or kill the tree, especially mature maples, cedars, and Douglas firs common in Metro Vancouver. An arborist consultation (\$200-\$400) helps determine which

roots can be safely cut. If the tree must be removed, add \$1,500-\$5,000+ for professional tree removal, but this eliminates future root problems permanently.

Metro Vancouver's wet climate complicates root repairs because disturbed soil around cut roots becomes saturated during our October-to-March rainy season. Proper drainage design becomes even more critical when the natural root system that helped manage water is disrupted. Many contractors recommend upgrading to a deeper base (8-10 inches instead of the original 6 inches) and installing perforated drain pipe in root-damaged areas to prevent future water-related settling.

Prevention costs less than repair. Root barriers installed during original paver installation cost \$8-\$12 per linear foot. Large trees within 3-5 metres of interlock installations will eventually cause heaving - it's not a matter of if, but when. Maples are particularly aggressive, with surface roots that can lift pavers within 5-7 years of installation.

DIY root repair is not recommended for areas larger than 20-30 square feet. Cutting tree roots requires knowledge of tree biology to avoid killing the tree, and rebuilding a proper base requires plate compaction equipment. However, homeowners can temporarily re-level a few heaved pavers by lifting them, adding sand beneath, and relaying - though this is only a temporary fix if roots remain.

Get multiple quotes because repair approaches vary significantly between contractors. Some focus on minimal disruption (cutting roots and releveling), while others recommend complete base reconstruction for long-term stability. The right approach depends on the tree species, root size, your long-term plans for the tree, and your budget for ongoing maintenance.

Need help finding an interlock repair contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand root damage repair in Metro Vancouver's unique conditions.

Why are my interlock pavers sinking in certain spots?

Sinking pavers are almost always caused by inadequate base preparation or water infiltration that has compromised the foundation beneath your installation. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, this is unfortunately one of the most common interlock problems, and it typically gets worse over time if not properly addressed.

Base Preparation Issues

The most likely culprit is insufficient base depth or poor compaction during the original installation. Residential patios and walkways require a minimum 6-8 inches of compacted granular base, while driveways need 10-12 inches to support vehicle loads. If your installer cut corners and used only 3-4 inches of base material, or failed to compact it properly in 2-inch lifts, the pavers will inevitably settle into the subgrade soil below.

In Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils — particularly common in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley — inadequate base preparation is even more problematic. Clay expands when wet and contracts when it dries, creating movement that transfers directly to the pavers above. Without sufficient granular base acting as a stable platform, pavers follow every movement of the clay subgrade beneath.

Water and Drainage Problems

Metro Vancouver receives over 1,200mm of annual rainfall, and water infiltration is the second most common cause of sinking pavers. If water is pooling beneath your installation due to poor surface drainage, blocked drain pipes, or roof runoff concentrating on the paver area, it saturates the base material and softens the subgrade soil. This creates a cycle where traffic loads on wet, unstable base material cause progressive settling.

Look for signs like standing water on the paver surface after rain, moss or algae growth in the affected areas, or pavers that feel spongy underfoot when wet. These indicate that water is not draining properly through or away from your installation.

Root Intrusion and Soil Movement

Tree roots within 3-5 metres of your paver installation can cause differential settling as they grow and shift the soil structure. Large trees like maples, cedars, or Douglas firs are particularly problematic. Additionally, if the original excavation disturbed utility lines, septic systems, or underground drainage, settling along these disturbances can create localized sinking.

Repair Solutions

Small areas (10-20 pavers) can often be relevelled by lifting the affected pavers, adding or removing bedding sand to correct the grade, and relaying them. However, if the sinking is widespread or recurring, the problem lies deeper

in the base preparation and requires professional repair.

Professional repair typically involves excavating the affected area down to the subgrade, installing proper geotextile fabric if missing, rebuilding the base to correct depth with proper compaction, and reinstalling the pavers. For a 100 sq ft area, expect repair costs of \$1,500-\$4,000 depending on how much base reconstruction is needed.

When to Hire a Professional

If more than 25% of your paver installation is affected, if the sinking is near your foundation or affecting drainage away from your house, or if you're seeing recurring settlement after previous repairs, this requires professional assessment. A qualified hardscape contractor can determine whether the issue is localized base failure or a more serious subgrade problem requiring engineering solutions.

Don't ignore sinking pavers — they create trip hazards, allow water infiltration that worsens the problem, and become significantly more expensive to repair as the affected area spreads to adjacent pavers.

Q8

Can you replace a few broken pavers without redoing the whole area?

Yes, individual broken pavers can absolutely be replaced without redoing the entire installation. This is one of the major advantages of interlocking pavers over poured concrete — damaged units can be lifted out and replaced while leaving the surrounding pavers undisturbed.

The replacement process involves lifting the damaged paver and surrounding units, correcting any base issues, and reinstalling with a matching paver. Start by removing the polymeric sand from around the broken paver using a narrow chisel or oscillating multi-tool. Then lift the damaged paver with flat pry bars or specialized paver pullers — you may need to remove 2-3 adjacent pavers to access the broken one if it's in the middle of the installation. Once the broken paver is out, inspect the bedding sand beneath for low spots or contamination and add or remove sand as needed to restore proper level and grade.

Finding matching pavers is usually straightforward if the installation is less than 10 years old. Most major paver manufacturers (Expocrete, Barkman, Belgard, Techo-Bloc, Mutual Materials) maintain consistent product lines, and local suppliers typically stock popular colours and styles. Bring a sample of your existing paver to the supplier for the best colour match — concrete pavers can fade slightly over time, so a brand-new paver may appear slightly darker than your weathered installation initially. The colour difference typically evens out within 6-12 months of weathering. For installations over 15 years old, you may need to check with specialty suppliers or architectural salvage yards, or consider replacing a small section with a complementary accent colour.

Metro Vancouver's wet climate makes proper joint sand replacement critical after paver replacement. Once the new paver is installed and leveled, sweep polymeric sand into all the joints around the repair area and activate it according to manufacturer instructions. Standard play sand will wash out during the first heavy rainfall, leaving the repaired area vulnerable to shifting. The persistent moisture in our climate means that any gaps in the joint sand become pathways for moss and weed growth within weeks.

Common causes of paver breakage in Metro Vancouver include tree root pressure, settling from inadequate base preparation, and impact damage from heavy objects. If you're replacing pavers due to root heave, address the root issue with root barriers or consider that periodic maintenance may be needed. If pavers are breaking due to settling or base failure, the underlying problem needs correction — simply replacing the broken units without fixing the base will result in repeated breakage.

When to hire a professional: Single paver replacement is a reasonable DIY project for most homeowners. However, if multiple pavers are broken in the same area, if the base appears saturated or contaminated, or if the repair involves edge restraints or drainage issues, hire an experienced interlock contractor. Widespread paver breakage often indicates base failure that requires professional assessment and correction.

The repair typically costs \$150-\$400 depending on the number of pavers, accessibility, and whether base correction is needed — far less expensive than replacing an entire section.

Q9

How do you fix weeds growing between interlock pavers?

Weeds growing between interlock pavers are primarily caused by deteriorated or missing joint sand, and the fix involves removing the weeds, addressing the underlying sand issue, and applying preventive treatments. In Metro Vancouver's moist climate, weed growth in paver joints is one of the most common maintenance challenges homeowners face.

The root cause of weeds in paver joints is almost always compromised joint sand. When the original sand between pavers washes out (common with standard mason sand in Vancouver's heavy rainfall), erodes due to foot traffic, or was never properly installed, it creates gaps where soil accumulates and weed seeds germinate. Metro Vancouver's mild, wet winters and warm summers create ideal growing conditions for dandelions, clover, moss, and grass in these joints.

Start by removing existing weeds manually or with targeted herbicide application. For manual removal, use a narrow weeding tool or old kitchen knife to dig out weeds and their root systems when the soil is moist (easier

digging). For larger areas, apply a selective herbicide designed for use around hardscaping - glyphosate-based products work well but require careful application to avoid damaging surrounding plants. Never use rock salt or chlorine bleach, as these damage polymeric sand and can harm nearby vegetation.

After weed removal, address the joint sand issue permanently. Sweep out all loose, contaminated sand from the joints using a stiff brush or shop vacuum. The joints should be cleaned to within 1/8 inch of the bottom of the pavers. Apply new polymeric sand (Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete brands perform well in Vancouver's climate) according to manufacturer instructions. Sweep the polymeric sand into joints, ensuring they're completely filled, then activate with a controlled water mist - not flooding. Properly activated polymeric sand hardens and creates a barrier that resists both weed growth and sand washout during Metro Vancouver's October-to-March rainy season.

For ongoing prevention, maintain your polymeric sand every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver's climate. Even high-quality polymeric sand degrades over time due to the persistent moisture and frequent rainfall. Inspect joints annually in spring and top up any areas where sand has settled or eroded. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide in early spring before weed seeds germinate - corn gluten meal is an organic option that prevents seed germination without harming established plants.

Consider paver sealing for additional weed resistance. A quality penetrating sealer applied over clean pavers and properly cured polymeric sand creates an additional barrier against weed seed penetration and makes future cleaning easier. Sealing typically costs \$3-6 per square foot and should be reapplied every 3-5 years.

Hire a professional for large areas or if the problem keeps recurring. If weeds return quickly after treatment, the issue may be inadequate base preparation, poor drainage causing soil migration from below, or tree root intrusion. Professional assessment can identify whether the pavers need to be lifted, the base rebuilt, or drainage improved - particularly important in Metro Vancouver where clay soils and high rainfall create unique challenges.

Need help finding an interlock maintenance professional? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand Metro Vancouver's specific climate challenges and can provide long-term solutions for weed-free paver installations.

What causes polymeric sand to wash out between pavers in Vancouver?

Polymeric sand washes out between pavers in Vancouver primarily due to improper activation during installation, choosing low-quality products that can't withstand the region's heavy rainfall, and the natural degradation that occurs faster in Metro Vancouver's persistently wet climate.

The most common cause is **incorrect water activation during installation**. Polymeric sand must be activated with a controlled mist of water — not flooded or soaked. Many installers either use too much water (which washes the binding agents away before they can cure) or too little water (which prevents proper chemical activation). In Metro Vancouver's humid conditions, installers sometimes assume the ambient moisture is sufficient, but polymeric sand requires deliberate water activation to form the chemical bonds that hold it in place.

Low-quality polymeric sand simply cannot withstand Vancouver's rainfall intensity. Budget polymeric sands from hardware stores often use inferior binding agents that break down quickly when exposed to Metro Vancouver's 1,200mm+ annual rainfall. Premium brands like Techniseal, Alliance Gator Maxx, and Sakrete PolySweep are formulated specifically for wet climates and perform significantly better. The price difference between budget and premium polymeric sand is typically \$10-20 per bag, but the performance difference is dramatic — quality polymeric sand lasts 4-6 years in Vancouver conditions while cheap alternatives may wash out within 6-12 months.

Metro Vancouver's extended rainy season accelerates natural degradation. Even properly installed, high-quality polymeric sand gradually breaks down under constant moisture exposure from October through March. The combination of heavy rainfall, freeze-thaw cycles (though minimal compared to Eastern Canada), and UV exposure during summer months causes the binding agents to weaken over time. This is why polymeric sand typically needs replenishment every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver, compared to 5-8 years in drier climates.

Installation timing is critical in Vancouver's climate. Polymeric sand should never be installed during active rainfall or when rain is forecast within 24 hours. The sand needs time to cure and form strong bonds before being exposed to heavy water. Many washout failures occur because contractors rush installation during Vancouver's brief dry windows without allowing proper curing time.

Moss and organic growth accelerate joint sand erosion. Vancouver's humid conditions promote moss, algae, and weed growth in paver joints, which physically disrupts the polymeric sand structure. Moss roots penetrate and break apart the hardened sand, creating channels for water penetration and further erosion. Regular moss treatment with iron sulphate-based products helps preserve joint sand integrity.

Poor surface drainage compounds the problem. When paver installations lack proper slope (minimum 2% away from buildings) or have low spots where water pools, the prolonged water exposure overwhelms even high-quality

polymeric sand. Standing water on paver surfaces during Vancouver's heavy rain events creates hydraulic pressure that forces water into joints and gradually erodes the sand from below.

Prevention requires quality materials and proper technique. Use only premium polymeric sand rated for wet climates, ensure proper water activation (light misting until sand is evenly damp but not flooded), install only during dry weather with 24+ hours of no rain forecast, and maintain proper surface drainage. Even with perfect installation, plan to replenish polymeric sand every 3-5 years as part of normal maintenance in Metro Vancouver's challenging climate.

When polymeric sand washes out, address it promptly. Empty joints allow pavers to shift laterally under traffic loads, permit weed and moss intrusion, and create trip hazards. Re-sanding is a manageable DIY project — sweep out remaining loose sand, clean joints thoroughly, apply new polymeric sand, and activate with controlled water misting during a dry weather window.

Q11

How do you repair interlock pavers that have shifted or spread apart?

Repairing shifted or spread-apart interlock pavers requires lifting the affected pavers, correcting the underlying base issues, and reinstalling with proper edge restraints and joint sand. The repair approach depends on whether the shifting is localized (a few pavers) or widespread (indicating base or edge restraint failure).

Diagnosing the Problem First

Before starting repairs, identify why the pavers shifted. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, the most common causes are inadequate edge restraints, washed-out joint sand from heavy rainfall, base settlement due to poor drainage, or root intrusion from nearby trees. Look for patterns — if pavers have spread uniformly along an unconfined edge, missing edge restraints are likely the culprit. If pavers have settled in low spots or near downspouts, drainage and base issues are probable. Random shifting throughout the installation often indicates insufficient base compaction or joint sand washout.

Small Area Repairs (Under 50 Square Feet)

For localized shifting affecting 10-20 pavers, homeowners can often handle the repair as a DIY project. Start by removing the shifted pavers using flat pry bars or paver pullers — work from the outside edges inward to avoid damaging adjacent pavers. Once the pavers are lifted, inspect the bedding sand layer. If the sand is contaminated with clay, organic matter, or has washed away entirely, scrape it out and replace with fresh concrete sand. Check that the base layer beneath (should be compacted 3/4-inch crushed gravel) is still firm and level. Add base material

if needed and compact with a hand tamper.

Re-screed the bedding sand to a uniform 1-inch thickness using a straight board, then relay the pavers with tight joints. Install or repair edge restraints along any unconfined edges — snap-edge or aluminum L-channel restraints spiked into the compacted base every 12-18 inches. Finish by sweeping polymeric sand into all joints, removing excess from paver surfaces, and activating with a fine water mist according to manufacturer instructions. This type of repair typically costs \$1,500-\$4,000 when professionally done in Metro Vancouver.

Widespread Shifting (Major Repair)

If shifting affects large areas or the entire installation, the problem likely stems from inadequate base preparation, failed drainage, or missing edge restraints throughout the project. This requires professional repair because the base layer may need complete reconstruction. The contractor will lift all affected pavers, assess the base condition, and potentially excavate deeper to install proper drainage and achieve adequate base depth (6-8 inches for patios, 10-12 inches for driveways).

In Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils, widespread paver shifting often indicates that the original base was too shallow or that clay has migrated upward into the gravel base, destroying its drainage capacity. Professional repair includes installing geotextile fabric between the subgrade and base, ensuring proper compaction in 2-inch lifts, and establishing correct surface drainage slopes. Major repairs typically run \$8-\$15 per square foot, making it 50-75% the cost of complete reinstallation.

Edge Restraint Installation

Missing or failed edge restraints are the leading cause of paver spreading in Metro Vancouver. Every unconfined edge (not against a building, concrete curb, or retaining wall) must have proper edge restraints. Snap-edge restraints are most common for residential work — they're spiked through the base into the subgrade every 12-18 inches with 10-inch galvanized spikes. The restraint sits against the paver edge at the same height as the finished paver surface.

For curved edges, flexible aluminum or steel edge restraints bend to follow the curve. The key is that edge restraints must be installed during the base preparation phase, not added afterward. Retrofitting edge restraints to an existing installation requires lifting the edge pavers, installing the restraint system, and relaying the pavers against the restraint.

Metro Vancouver Considerations

Vancouver's persistent rainfall makes joint sand washout a chronic issue that accelerates paver shifting. Even with polymeric sand, joints require replenishment every 3-5 years. During repair, always use high-quality polymeric sand from manufacturers like Techniseal or Alliance — budget polymeric sands perform poorly in Vancouver's wet

conditions and may need replacement within 1-2 years.

Clay soils prevalent in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley create additional challenges. If clay has contaminated the base layer, it must be excavated and replaced with clean gravel. Installing geotextile fabric during repair prevents future clay migration. Properties with mature trees (common in older Vancouver neighborhoods) may experience ongoing root-related shifting that requires periodic maintenance rather than permanent solutions.

When to Hire a Professional

Hire a professional for repairs affecting more than 100 square feet, any driveway repairs, or situations where the base layer appears compromised. Professional contractors have plate compactors, laser levels, and experience diagnosing base failures that aren't obvious to homeowners. They can also connect repairs to proper drainage systems and ensure compliance with municipal requirements if the work affects property drainage patterns.

Q12

Can a paver driveway be relevelled without removing all the pavers?

Yes, a paver driveway can often be relevelled without removing all the pavers, but this depends on the extent of settling and the underlying cause of the problem. For minor settling in isolated areas (typically 10-30% of the driveway surface), experienced contractors can lift and relay sections while leaving the stable areas intact.

Partial releveling works best when settling is localized — such as areas near the garage door where heavy vehicles repeatedly load the same spots, or sections where a water leak saturated the base material. The process involves carefully lifting the affected pavers with specialized paver pullers or flat bars, assessing and correcting the base material underneath, adding or removing bedding sand to achieve proper grade, re-compacting if necessary, and relaying the pavers with fresh polymeric sand in all joints.

However, widespread settling across 50% or more of the driveway typically requires complete removal and reinstallation. This is especially true in Metro Vancouver where inadequate base preparation is the most common cause of driveway failure. If the original installation used insufficient base depth (less than 10 inches for driveways), poor-quality base material, or inadequate compaction, the settling will continue and spread to previously stable areas. In these cases, attempting partial repairs becomes an expensive cycle of chasing problems across the driveway.

Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils and persistent rainfall make base issues particularly problematic. Clay soils in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley can migrate upward into inadequately prepared gravel bases,

destroying drainage capacity and causing widespread settling. When this happens, the entire base system needs rebuilding with proper geotextile fabric separation, adequate depth, and controlled compaction in lifts.

Professional assessment is essential before deciding on partial versus complete releveling. An experienced interlock contractor can determine whether the base material is fundamentally sound or compromised. They'll probe the base depth, check for proper drainage, and assess the extent of settling. If the base is adequate but bedding sand was washed out or poorly screeded, partial releveling may be successful. If the base is too shallow, poorly compacted, or contaminated with clay, complete reconstruction is the only permanent solution.

Expect partial releveling to cost \$8-15 per square foot for the affected areas, including lifting pavers, base correction, releveling, and new polymeric sand throughout the driveway. Complete driveway reconstruction typically runs \$15-30 per square foot depending on size, access, and base requirements. While partial releveling costs less upfront, it's only worthwhile if the underlying base system is sound — otherwise you're likely to need complete reconstruction within 2-3 years anyway.

When to hire a professional: Any driveway releveling work requires professional assessment and installation. Driveways must withstand vehicle loads on a properly engineered base, and improper repairs create safety hazards and costly recurring problems.

Need help finding an interlock contractor to assess your driveway settling? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals for a free evaluation.

How often should interlock pavers be re-sanded in the Vancouver climate?

Interlock pavers in Metro Vancouver should have their joint sand replenished every 3-5 years, compared to 5-8 years in drier climates. Vancouver's heavy rainfall (over 1,200mm annually) and persistent humidity accelerate joint sand erosion, making regular re-sanding one of the most important maintenance tasks for paver longevity.

Why Metro Vancouver Requires More Frequent Re-sanding

Vancouver's marine climate creates unique challenges for joint sand retention. The region receives approximately 70% of its annual rainfall between October and March, with frequent heavy downpours that wash standard jointing sand out of paver joints. This sand loss destabilizes pavers, allows lateral movement under foot traffic, and creates pathways for weed seeds and moss spores to establish in the joints.

The persistent humidity levels (typically 60-80% outdoors year-round) also accelerate the breakdown of polymeric sand. While polymeric sand hardens when activated with water to resist washout, Vancouver's constant moisture exposure gradually degrades the polymer binders over time. You'll notice this when joints start appearing hollow, weeds begin growing through cracks, or moss establishes in the joint lines.

Signs Your Pavers Need Re-sanding

Watch for joint sand that appears 1/4 inch or more below the paver surface, visible gaps between pavers, moss or weeds growing in joints, or pavers that rock slightly when stepped on. These indicate that joint sand has eroded enough to compromise the installation's stability. Don't wait until pavers are visibly shifting — preventive re-sanding is much easier and less expensive than releveling settled pavers.

Polymeric Sand vs. Regular Sand Performance

Standard play sand or mason sand washes out of Metro Vancouver paver joints within weeks of heavy rainfall.

Always use high-quality polymeric sand from manufacturers like Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete for re-sanding projects. Polymeric sand costs 3-4 times more than regular sand but lasts 3-5 years in Vancouver's climate versus 3-5 months for standard sand.

Re-sanding Process and Timing

The best time for re-sanding is late spring through early fall (May-October) when you can count on 48-72 hours of dry weather for proper polymeric sand activation. Clean out old sand with a pressure washer or joint scraper, allow joints to dry completely, sweep in new polymeric sand, and activate with controlled water application. Professional re-sanding for a 400 sq ft patio typically costs \$400-800, while DIY re-sanding costs \$100-200 in materials.

This is an ideal DIY maintenance task that most homeowners can handle with basic tools and attention to manufacturer instructions. However, if pavers have shifted significantly or the base appears compromised, hire a professional to assess whether simple re-sanding is sufficient or if more extensive repairs are needed.

Q14

What do I do about ants pushing sand out between my pavers?

Ants excavating sand from paver joints is a common problem in Metro Vancouver, especially during the drier summer months when ant colonies are most active. The solution is switching to polymeric sand, which hardens when cured and creates a barrier ants cannot easily excavate through.

Ants are attracted to regular jointing sand because it's easy to dig through and provides ideal nesting material. They'll systematically remove sand from joints to create tunnels and chambers for their colonies, leaving your pavers loose and unstable. This problem is particularly noticeable with standard play sand or mason sand, which offers no resistance to ant excavation.

Polymeric sand is the most effective long-term solution for ant problems in paver joints. Unlike regular sand, polymeric sand contains polymer additives that activate with water, causing the sand to harden into a semi-flexible, cohesive mass that ants cannot easily penetrate or remove. Quality polymeric sand brands like Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete create a barrier that's firm enough to resist ant excavation but flexible enough to accommodate minor paver movement without cracking.

The installation process is critical for success. Remove all existing sand from the joints using a pressure washer or manual tools, then sweep the new polymeric sand into clean, dry joints until they're completely full. Use a plate compactor with a protective pad to vibrate the sand down into the joints, then add more sand as needed. The activation process requires a fine mist of water applied in multiple passes — never flood the surface, as this can wash out the polymers and cause white hazing on the paver surface.

In Metro Vancouver's climate, **timing the polymeric sand installation is important.** Apply it during a dry weather window when you can guarantee 24-48 hours without rain after activation. The rainy season from October through March makes proper curing difficult, so plan this work for late spring through early fall.

Additional ant deterrent measures can complement the polymeric sand solution. Diatomaceous earth (food grade) sprinkled around the paver edges acts as a natural ant deterrent without harming pets or plants. Coffee grounds, cinnamon, or borax-based ant baits can help control existing colonies, but addressing the root cause — easy access to nesting material in the joints — is more effective than ongoing chemical treatments.

For severe ant infestations, you may need to address the underlying colony before installing polymeric sand. Pour boiling water into the joints where you see the most ant activity, or use ant bait stations around the perimeter of the paved area to eliminate the colony at its source.

Professional installation is recommended for large areas or if you're not comfortable with the polymeric sand activation process. Improperly activated polymeric sand can haze paver surfaces permanently or fail to cure properly, requiring complete removal and reinstallation. A professional installer will ensure proper joint preparation, correct sand application, and proper activation timing.

Expect to pay **\$3-\$6 per square foot** for professional polymeric sand installation, including removal of old sand, cleaning, new polymeric sand, and proper activation. For a typical 400 sq ft patio, budget \$1,200-\$2,400 for professional re-sanding.

When to hire a pro: If your paver area is larger than 200 sq ft, if you've never worked with polymeric sand before, or if the existing joints need significant cleaning and preparation, professional installation ensures proper results and protects your investment in the paver surface.

Q15

How do you fix edge pavers that are crumbling along the driveway border?

Crumbling edge pavers along a driveway border indicate missing or failed edge restraint, inadequate base support at the edges, or traffic loads exceeding the paver's capacity. This is a structural issue that requires removing the damaged pavers, rebuilding the edge support system, and installing proper edge restraints to prevent future failure.

The most common cause of crumbling driveway edges in Metro Vancouver is **missing edge restraint**. Pavers along unconfined edges spread laterally under vehicle loads, creating stress concentrations that cause the concrete to crack and crumble. Without proper edge restraint spiked into the compacted base, even high-quality 80mm driveway pavers will fail at the edges within 2-3 years. This problem is accelerated by Metro Vancouver's wet climate, where water infiltration through damaged joints saturates the base material and reduces its load-bearing capacity.

Edge restraint failure is equally problematic. Many installations use plastic edge restraint that becomes brittle in UV exposure and breaks, or aluminum restraint that wasn't properly spiked into the base. The edge restraint must be continuous along every unconfined edge and spiked every 12-18 inches into the compacted gravel base — not just into the bedding sand. When edge restraint fails, pavers immediately begin spreading outward, and the edge

pavers bear concentrated loads they weren't designed to handle.

Inadequate base preparation at driveway edges is another common cause. The base material must extend 6-8 inches beyond the edge pavers and be compacted to the same density as the main driveway base. Many installers shortcut this step, leaving the edge pavers sitting on poorly compacted or insufficient base material. Vehicle tires tracking off the paved surface onto grass or gravel create dynamic loads that cause edge pavers to settle, tilt, and eventually crack.

To properly repair crumbling edge pavers, you'll need to remove the damaged pavers and any loose edge restraint, excavate the edge area to expose the base material, rebuild the base with proper compaction extending 6-8 inches beyond the new paver edge, install new edge restraint (aluminum L-channel or snap-edge) spiked every 12-18 inches into the compacted base, and install new 80mm driveway pavers with fresh polymeric sand. This typically costs \$25-\$45 per linear foot for professional repair, depending on the extent of base reconstruction required.

Temporary fixes like concrete crack filler or paver adhesive will fail quickly under driveway loads. The underlying structural problem — lack of edge restraint and inadequate edge support — must be addressed, or the new repairs will crumble within months. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, water infiltration through cracks accelerates the deterioration process.

This is professional work requiring proper excavation, base compaction with a plate compactor, and precise edge restraint installation. Attempting to patch crumbling edges without addressing the structural cause wastes time and money. A qualified interlock contractor can assess whether the main driveway base is sound or if more extensive reconstruction is needed.

Need help finding an interlock contractor to properly repair your driveway edges? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's specific installation requirements and wet climate challenges.

Can you lift and relay pavers to fix a drainage problem?

Yes, existing pavers can be lifted and relaid to fix drainage problems, but success depends on the underlying cause and extent of the drainage issue. This approach works well for localized settling or minor grade corrections, but major drainage problems often require more extensive base reconstruction.

When Lifting and Relaying Works

If your drainage problem is caused by a few sunken pavers creating low spots where water pools, lifting and relaying is often an effective solution. This typically happens when the base material under specific pavers has settled or washed away, creating depressions that collect water instead of allowing it to flow toward drainage points. A qualified contractor can lift the affected pavers, add and compact base material or bedding sand to restore proper grade, and relay the pavers to eliminate the ponding areas.

Minor grade corrections are also feasible with this approach. If your patio or walkway lacks adequate slope away from your house (minimum 2% or 1/4 inch per foot), contractors can lift sections of pavers, adjust the bedding sand grade to create proper drainage slope, and relay the pavers. This is much less expensive than complete reconstruction and preserves your existing paver investment.

When More Extensive Work Is Needed

However, lifting and relaying has limitations, especially in Metro Vancouver's wet climate. If the drainage problem stems from an inadequate or saturated base layer, simply adjusting the surface grade won't solve the underlying issue. Clay-heavy soils common in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley can migrate into the base material over time, destroying its drainage capacity and creating persistent water problems that require complete base reconstruction.

Similarly, if your interlock installation lacks proper drainage infrastructure — perforated drain pipe at low points, adequate base depth, or geotextile fabric to prevent clay contamination — surface adjustments won't address the root cause. Major drainage problems often require excavating the entire area, installing proper drainage systems, rebuilding the base with clean granular material, and then relaying the pavers on a properly graded foundation.

Metro Vancouver Considerations

Vancouver's 1,200mm+ annual rainfall means that even minor drainage deficiencies become major problems over time. Water that can't drain away saturates the base material, softens the subgrade soil, and causes progressive settling that gets worse with each heavy rain event. The persistent moisture also promotes moss and algae growth in areas where water pools, creating both aesthetic and safety concerns.

Professional Assessment Required

A qualified interlock contractor should assess your specific drainage problem to determine whether lifting and relaying will solve it or if more extensive reconstruction is needed. They'll evaluate the base condition, existing slope, drainage outlets, and the extent of any settling or base contamination. Expect to pay \$8-15 per square foot for lifting, grade correction, and relaying existing pavers, compared to \$15-30 per square foot for complete reconstruction with new materials.

When to Hire a Pro

Any drainage correction involving more than 50-100 square feet should be handled professionally. Contractors have the laser levels needed to establish proper grade, plate compactors for base work, and experience identifying whether the existing base can be salvaged or needs replacement. DIY attempts at drainage correction often create bigger problems by disturbing stable areas or failing to address the underlying cause.

Need help finding an interlock contractor to assess your drainage issues? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique drainage challenges.

Q17

Why is there white residue on my interlock pavers and how do I remove it?

The white residue on your interlock pavers is called efflorescence — a natural process where calcium carbonate leaches from the cement in concrete pavers and appears as a chalky white film on the surface.

This is completely normal for new concrete pavers and typically fades on its own within 6-12 months through normal weathering and rain exposure.

What Causes Efflorescence

Efflorescence occurs when water moves through the concrete paver, dissolving calcium compounds from the cement, and then evaporates at the surface, leaving behind white mineral deposits. In Metro Vancouver's marine climate with high humidity and frequent rainfall, efflorescence is extremely common on new paver installations. The process is most noticeable during the first year after installation, particularly during periods when pavers get wet and then dry repeatedly — exactly the conditions we experience during Vancouver's wet fall and winter months followed by drier spring weather.

The white residue is more visible on darker-colored pavers (charcoal, brown, red) and less noticeable on lighter colors (gray, tan, beige). It appears as a powdery white film, white streaks, or patchy white areas across the paver

surface. Some pavers may show more efflorescence than others, even within the same installation, due to slight variations in concrete density and moisture content.

How to Remove Efflorescence

For light efflorescence, start with **gentle cleaning methods**. Scrub the affected pavers with a stiff brush and plain water, or use a pressure washer at moderate pressure (1,500-2,000 PSI) with a rotating surface cleaner attachment. Many cases of efflorescence will respond to this mechanical cleaning, especially if the deposits are fresh and haven't had time to harden.

For stubborn efflorescence, use a **specialized efflorescence cleaner** available at hardscape supply stores or home improvement centers. Products like SureKlean, Prosoco, or Alliance efflorescence removers are specifically formulated to dissolve mineral deposits without damaging concrete pavers. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully — these are typically acid-based cleaners that require proper dilution, protective equipment, and thorough rinsing. Never use muriatic acid or other strong acids without proper knowledge, as they can permanently etch and discolor pavers.

Important: Do not seal your pavers while efflorescence is still active. Sealing traps the mineral deposits beneath the sealer film, creating permanent white hazing that cannot be removed without stripping the sealer. Wait until efflorescence has stopped appearing (typically 6-12 months) before applying any paver sealer.

Prevention and Long-Term Outlook

Efflorescence cannot be completely prevented — it's an inherent characteristic of concrete products. However, proper installation techniques minimize its severity. **Quality polymeric sand** in the joints helps reduce water penetration that contributes to efflorescence. Ensuring proper drainage around the paver installation prevents water from pooling and repeatedly wetting the same areas.

In Metro Vancouver's climate, most efflorescence resolves naturally within the first year as the pavers cure and weather. The frequent rainfall actually helps by gradually washing away mineral deposits as they form. **Patience is often the best approach** — many homeowners find that efflorescence that seemed concerning in the first few months becomes barely noticeable after a full year of weathering.

If efflorescence persists beyond 12-18 months or seems unusually severe, consult with your paver installer. Excessive efflorescence can sometimes indicate installation issues like inadequate base drainage or contaminated bedding sand, though this is uncommon with professional installations.

When to Hire a Professional

While homeowners can safely clean light efflorescence with water and brushing, hire a professional for severe cases requiring chemical cleaners. Experienced hardscape contractors have the proper equipment, cleaning

products, and knowledge to remove stubborn mineral deposits without damaging your pavers or surrounding landscaping.

Q18

How do you match replacement pavers to an older interlock installation?

Matching replacement pavers to an existing installation requires identifying the original manufacturer, product line, and colour — though perfect matches are often impossible for installations over 5-10 years old due to weathering and product discontinuation.

The most practical approach starts with **identifying the original manufacturer and product specifications**. Look for any remaining packaging, receipts, or installation documentation that lists the paver brand, style name, and colour. Common manufacturers in Metro Vancouver include Barkman, Belgard, Techo-Bloc, Expocrete, Mutual Materials, and Abbotsford Concrete Products. Each has distinct sizing, textures, and colour formulations that help narrow identification.

Take sample pavers to local hardscape suppliers for visual matching. Remove 2-3 pavers from an inconspicuous area (like behind a planter or near the house foundation) and bring them to suppliers who carry multiple paver lines. Experienced staff can often identify manufacturers by examining the paver's underside texture, dimensions, and colour characteristics. The underside typically shows less weathering and fading, making manufacturer identification easier.

Weathering and fading complicate exact matching in Metro Vancouver's climate. Concrete pavers fade 10-20% in their first 2-3 years from UV exposure, and the persistent moisture accelerates colour changes. North-facing installations and shaded areas retain more original colour, while south-facing areas exposed to full sun show the most fading. Even if you find the exact original product, new pavers will appear noticeably brighter and more vibrant than the weathered existing installation.

Strategic placement minimizes colour differences. Install new pavers in less visible areas first — behind planters, along house foundations, or in corners where the colour contrast is less obvious. Use the removed original pavers (which match the weathered colour perfectly) in the most visible repair areas. This "paver shuffling" technique makes repairs nearly invisible when done thoughtfully.

Consider partial replacement strategies for large damaged areas. Rather than trying to match individual scattered pavers, consider replacing entire sections with a complementary colour or pattern that creates an intentional design feature. Adding a border, accent strip, or geometric pattern with new pavers can turn a repair into

an upgrade while avoiding the impossible task of perfect colour matching.

Accelerated weathering techniques can help blend new pavers faster. Applying a diluted concrete stain or antiquing solution to new pavers before installation helps them blend with existing weathered pavers. Some contractors use pressure washing with specific techniques to artificially weather new paver surfaces, though this requires experience to avoid damage.

Product discontinuation is common in the paver industry. Manufacturers typically discontinue colours and styles every 5-7 years, making exact matches impossible for older installations. When the original product is discontinued, focus on finding pavers with similar size, texture, and undertone rather than exact colour matching. A close match that's readily available is better than hunting for perfect matches that may not exist.

Professional colour matching services are available through some Metro Vancouver suppliers. Companies like Barkman and Belgard can sometimes provide colour-matching services for their discontinued products, creating custom runs of older colours for large repair projects. This is typically only cost-effective for repairs exceeding 500-1000 square feet.

When to Hire a Pro

Professional contractors have established relationships with suppliers, access to discontinued inventory, and experience with colour-matching techniques. For repairs larger than 50 square feet or in highly visible areas like front walkways, professional installation ensures proper base repair, precise leveling, and the best possible aesthetic outcome. Contractors can also advise whether partial replacement or full renovation makes more economic sense for severely weathered installations.

Can damaged pavers from snow removal be individually replaced?

Yes, individual damaged pavers can absolutely be replaced — this is one of the key advantages of interlocking pavement over poured concrete. Unlike concrete slabs that crack permanently, damaged pavers can be lifted out and new ones installed without affecting the surrounding installation.

Snow removal damage typically affects pavers in predictable ways. Metal snow shovels, ice chippers, and snow blowers can chip paver edges, crack surfaces, or cause spalling (surface flaking). Salt and de-icing chemicals don't damage the concrete itself but can accelerate efflorescence (white powdery residue) and may affect colored pavers over many seasons. The good news is that this type of damage is usually limited to a few pavers near building entrances, walkway edges, or high-traffic areas where aggressive snow removal occurs.

The replacement process is straightforward but requires some care. First, remove the polymeric sand from around the damaged paver using a narrow chisel or oscillating multi-tool — don't just pry the paver out or you'll damage adjacent ones. Lift the damaged paver with flat pry bars or specialized paver pullers (available at tool rental shops). Check the bedding sand underneath — if it's been disturbed, add or remove sand to restore the proper level, then screed it smooth. Drop in the new paver, ensuring it sits flush with surrounding pavers. Finally, sweep polymeric sand into all the joints and activate it with water according to manufacturer instructions.

Finding matching replacement pavers can be challenging depending on the age of your installation. Paver manufacturers occasionally discontinue colors or change formulations, and even the same product can vary slightly between production runs. If your installation is less than 5 years old, most suppliers can order matching pavers. For older installations, check if your installer kept extra pavers (good contractors always order 5-10% extra for future repairs). If exact matches aren't available, consider using a complementary color as an accent or replacing a larger section with a new color to create an intentional design element.

Metro Vancouver's climate actually makes paver replacement easier than in colder regions. Our minimal freeze-thaw cycles (only 5-15 per year compared to 40-80 in Eastern Canada) mean the base and bedding sand remain stable, so replacement pavers typically don't require extensive base work. However, our persistent moisture means you should time the replacement during a dry period — ideally May through October — so the polymeric sand can cure properly without being washed out by rain.

Prevention is worth considering for future winters. Use plastic snow shovels instead of metal ones, apply sand instead of salt for traction (salt isn't necessary in Metro Vancouver's mild winters), and consider having your pavers sealed every 3-5 years to resist staining and make spring cleaning easier. A quality penetrating sealer won't prevent mechanical damage from snow removal tools, but it will protect against salt staining and make moss removal easier during our wet season.

When to hire a professional for paver replacement depends on the scope. Replacing 1-5 individual pavers is a reasonable DIY project if you have the tools and can source matching pavers. However, if damage is extensive (more than 20-30 pavers), if the base has been disturbed, or if you discover drainage issues when you lift the damaged pavers, hire an experienced interlock contractor. Extensive damage often indicates underlying problems — inadequate base preparation, poor drainage, or settling — that require professional assessment and repair.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for extensive paver replacement? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who stock common paver styles and understand proper replacement techniques for Metro Vancouver's climate conditions.

Q20

Should I hire a pro or DIY to fix a few sunken pavers on my patio?

For a small area of sunken pavers (10-20 pavers), this is one of the few interlock repairs that many homeowners can successfully DIY. However, the underlying cause of the sinking determines whether a DIY fix will be temporary or long-lasting.

What causes pavers to sink in Metro Vancouver is usually one of three issues: inadequate base compaction during original installation, water washing away bedding sand from underneath the pavers, or tree roots displacing the base material. If only a few pavers in a small area have sunk and the rest of your patio remains level, you're likely dealing with a localized bedding sand issue that can be corrected with basic tools.

The DIY repair process involves lifting the sunken pavers with flat pry bars or specialized paver pullers (available at tool rental shops), adding or redistributing bedding sand underneath to bring them back to the proper level, tamping the sand with a hand tamper, and relaying the pavers. You'll need to match the surrounding grade and ensure proper drainage slope away from your house. The key is achieving the right amount of bedding sand — typically 1 inch of coarse sand that's screeded level and lightly compacted before laying pavers.

Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils and persistent rainfall mean that sunken pavers often indicate deeper base problems, especially in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley. If the sunken area is larger than about 20 pavers, if multiple areas of your patio are sinking, or if the same pavers keep sinking after you've leveled them, the issue is likely inadequate base preparation or poor drainage — problems that require professional excavation and base reconstruction.

Signs you should hire a professional include: widespread settling across your patio, pavers that rock or shift when walked on, water pooling on the patio surface, or if the sunken area is near a retaining wall or building

foundation. These indicate structural issues with the base that DIY releveling won't solve. Professional repair typically costs \$15-25 per square foot and includes proper base correction, not just surface releveling.

If you proceed with DIY, work during dry weather (challenging in Metro Vancouver from October through March), take photos before lifting pavers to remember the pattern, and plan to replenish polymeric sand in all the joints after completing the repair. The repair is only as good as your ability to achieve proper compaction and drainage — if water continues to wash sand from underneath, the pavers will sink again within a season or two.

Need help finding an interlock professional for larger repairs? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand Metro Vancouver's unique drainage challenges.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Vancouver Interlock. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any interlock or paving project. Information is current as of March 15, 2026 and may change. Visit vancouverinterlock.com for the latest answers.