

VANCOUVER INTERLOCK

Interlock Sealing

Paver sealing, joint stabilisation, moss prevention, and colour enhancement products suited to Metro Vancouver's persistent moisture and organic growth

20 Expert Answers from Interlock IQ

vancouverinterlock.com/construction-brain

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How much does it cost to seal interlock pavers in Vancouver?

Paver sealing in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$3-\$7 per square foot, with most residential projects ranging from \$1,500-\$3,500 for a standard 500 sq ft area. This includes professional cleaning, joint sand replenishment if needed, and application of a two-coat sealer system.

The total cost depends on several factors specific to your installation. **Surface preparation is the largest variable** — if your pavers need deep cleaning to remove moss, algae, or oil stains (common in Vancouver's humid climate), expect to pay toward the higher end of the range. Properties with significant moss growth, which is extremely common on north-facing installations and shaded areas in Metro Vancouver, require additional cleaning time and specialized treatments before sealing.

Joint sand condition significantly affects pricing. If your polymeric sand has washed out or degraded — a frequent issue in Vancouver's heavy rainfall climate — contractors need to remove old sand, clean joints thoroughly, and apply fresh polymeric sand before sealing. This joint sand restoration adds \$1-\$2 per square foot to the project but is essential for proper sealer performance. Sealing over empty or compromised joints traps moisture and leads to sealer failure within 1-2 years.

Metro Vancouver's marine climate creates unique sealing challenges that affect both timing and cost. The persistent moisture and humidity mean pavers must be completely dry for 48 hours minimum before sealer application, and contractors need a weather window of at least 24 hours after application with no rain forecast. This limits the sealing season to roughly May through September, creating higher demand and pricing during these months. Many contractors charge premium rates for sealing work scheduled during the optimal summer window.

Material quality varies dramatically in price and performance. Budget acrylic sealers cost \$0.50-\$1.00 per square foot in materials but typically last only 2-3 years in Vancouver's wet conditions before requiring reapplication. Premium penetrating sealers or hybrid systems cost \$1.50-\$3.00 per square foot in materials but provide 5-7 years of protection and better resistance to Vancouver's frequent rain, moss growth, and UV exposure from summer sun.

Professional cleaning and preparation typically accounts for 40-60% of the total sealing cost. This includes pressure washing at appropriate PSI levels (1,500-2,500 PSI to avoid surface damage), treating moss and algae growth with specialized cleaners, removing efflorescence or staining, and ensuring complete drying. Contractors experienced with Vancouver's climate understand that rushing the preparation phase leads to sealer adhesion problems and premature failure.

When to hire a professional for sealing: Any installation larger than 200 square feet, areas with significant moss or staining, or pavers that haven't been sealed in 5+ years should be professionally sealed. The specialized equipment for proper surface preparation, knowledge of sealer compatibility with different paver types, and experience with Vancouver's climate conditions make professional sealing a worthwhile investment for most homeowners.

DIY sealing is possible for small, clean installations if you have 3-4 consecutive dry days and the pavers are already in good condition with intact joint sand. However, improper surface preparation or sealer application in Vancouver's challenging climate often creates problems that cost more to fix than professional sealing would have cost initially.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for sealing? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate requirements and use appropriate sealer systems for long-lasting protection.

Q2

What's the price per square foot for interlock sealing in Metro Vancouver?

Interlock sealing in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$3-\$7 per square foot, with most residential projects falling in the \$4-\$5 range. For a standard 400 sq ft patio, expect to pay \$1,600-\$2,800 for professional sealing including surface preparation, cleaning, and two-coat application.

The wide price range reflects several factors that significantly impact sealing costs in Metro Vancouver's climate. **Surface preparation is the most labour-intensive component** — pavers must be thoroughly cleaned of moss, algae, dirt, and efflorescence before sealing. In Vancouver's humid climate, moss growth on north-facing or shaded installations requires pressure washing, chemical treatment, and sometimes manual scraping, which can add \$1-\$2 per square foot to the base sealing price.

Joint sand condition heavily influences pricing. If polymeric sand joints are eroded, missing, or contaminated with organic growth (common after 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver), contractors must remove old sand, clean joints, apply new polymeric sand, and allow it to cure before sealing. This joint restoration adds \$1.50-\$3.00 per square foot but is essential — sealing over compromised joints traps moisture and debris, leading to premature sealer failure.

Premium sealers cost more but perform better in Vancouver's wet climate. Solvent-based sealers (\$5-\$7 per sq ft) penetrate deeper and resist Vancouver's persistent moisture better than water-based sealers (\$3-\$4 per sq

ft). High-quality sealers from manufacturers like SealMaster, Foundation Armor, or Techniseal last 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver conditions, while budget sealers may fail within 18-24 months due to the region's heavy rainfall and UV exposure.

Timing affects both price and performance. Sealing requires 48+ hours of dry weather for proper curing, making the May-to-September window optimal in Metro Vancouver. Contractors often charge premium rates (\$6-\$8 per sq ft) for sealing during brief dry periods in fall or winter. **Never seal wet pavers or during Vancouver's rainy season** — trapped moisture causes white hazing, peeling, and complete sealer failure.

Additional cost factors include: difficult access (narrow side yards common in Vancouver neighbourhoods add \$0.50-\$1.50 per sq ft), efflorescence removal on newer pavers (\$1-\$2 per sq ft), and stain treatment for oil, rust, or organic stains (\$2-\$4 per sq ft for spot treatment).

DIY sealing is possible for experienced homeowners but requires proper equipment (pressure washer, surface cleaner, pump sprayer or roller) and perfect weather timing. Professional sealing includes warranty coverage (typically 2-3 years) and expertise in surface preparation that determines long-term performance.

When to hire a professional: Any installation over 300 sq ft, pavers with significant moss or staining, or if joint sand needs replacement. Professionals have commercial-grade cleaning equipment and experience timing sealer application between Vancouver's frequent rain events.

Need help finding an interlock sealing contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's climate challenges and use appropriate sealers for long-lasting protection.

Q3

Is sealing interlock pavers worth the cost in Vancouver's rainy climate?

Sealing interlock pavers in Metro Vancouver provides meaningful benefits that justify the cost for most homeowners, particularly given our persistent rainfall, high humidity, and moss growth challenges. The investment typically pays for itself through reduced maintenance, enhanced appearance, and protection against Vancouver's unique climate conditions.

Protection Against Vancouver's Climate Challenges

Metro Vancouver's marine climate creates specific conditions that make sealing particularly valuable. With over 1,200mm of annual rainfall and 60-80% humidity levels year-round, unsealed pavers absorb moisture that promotes

moss, algae, and efflorescence formation. Quality penetrating sealers create a protective barrier that reduces water absorption by 80-90%, significantly slowing moss establishment on paver surfaces. This is especially important for north-facing installations and areas shaded by trees or buildings, where moss becomes a genuine safety hazard during the October-to-March rainy season.

Sealing also helps prevent the white powdery efflorescence that appears on concrete pavers when calcium carbonate leaches from the cement. While efflorescence is natural and typically fades within 6-12 months, sealing after this initial period prevents recurring efflorescence that can make pavers look perpetually dusty and aged.

Enhanced Color and Appearance

Quality paver sealers enhance and protect the original color of concrete pavers, preventing the gradual fading that occurs from UV exposure and weathering. This "wet look" enhancement is particularly dramatic on colored and textured pavers, making the investment in premium paver materials more visually rewarding long-term. The enhanced appearance typically lasts 3-5 years before requiring reapplication.

Stain Resistance and Easier Cleaning

Sealed pavers resist oil stains from vehicles, barbecue grease, leaf tannins, and other organic staining that's common in outdoor living spaces. When spills do occur, they clean up more easily from sealed surfaces. This is particularly valuable for driveway installations and outdoor kitchen areas where staining is most likely.

Cost Analysis for Metro Vancouver

Professional paver sealing typically costs \$3-\$7 per square foot in Metro Vancouver, depending on the sealer type and surface preparation required. For a standard 400 sq ft patio, expect to pay \$1,500-\$3,500 including cleaning, joint sand replenishment if needed, and two-coat sealer application. High-quality penetrating sealers (Techniseal, SureBond, or Alliance brands) last 3-5 years in Vancouver's climate before requiring reapplication.

The maintenance savings often justify this cost. Sealed pavers require less frequent pressure washing, reduced moss treatment, and easier stain removal. Unsealed pavers in Vancouver typically need professional cleaning every 1-2 years at \$1-\$2 per square foot, while properly sealed pavers can go 2-3 years between cleanings.

When Sealing Makes the Most Sense

Sealing provides the greatest value for driveways (stain protection), high-visibility front walkways and patios (appearance enhancement), and areas prone to moss growth. Pool decks also benefit significantly from sealing for both slip resistance and easier maintenance. The investment is most justified on premium pavers where protecting the color and texture enhances the overall landscape investment.

Timing and Application Considerations

Never seal new pavers immediately after installation. Wait 6-12 months for efflorescence to stop naturally, or you'll trap the white residue beneath the sealer permanently. Pavers must be completely clean and dry (48 hours minimum without rain) before sealing. In Vancouver's climate, this means scheduling sealing for late spring through early fall when you can guarantee dry weather windows.

When to Hire a Professional

While DIY sealing is possible for experienced homeowners, professional application ensures proper surface preparation, even coverage, and warranty protection. Improperly applied sealer creates white hazing, uneven appearance, and premature failure that's expensive to correct. Professional sealers also have access to commercial-grade products that outperform consumer alternatives in Vancouver's challenging climate.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for sealing or maintenance? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's climate requirements.

How much does it cost to strip and reseal a paver driveway?

Stripping and resealing a paver driveway in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$3-\$8 per square foot, or \$1,500-\$6,400 for a standard 500-800 sq ft residential driveway. The wide price range depends on the current sealer condition, paver type, staining severity, and whether joint sand replenishment is needed.

Why Stripping is Often Necessary

Most paver sealers need removal every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver's wet climate because they break down from constant moisture exposure, UV radiation, and thermal cycling. Old sealer that's peeling, hazing, or wearing unevenly creates a blotchy appearance that looks worse than unsealed pavers. Failed sealer also traps moisture and contaminants beneath the film, leading to efflorescence (white residue), dark staining, and moss growth that becomes increasingly difficult to clean.

Stripping involves applying a chemical sealer remover (usually methylene chloride or caustic-based), allowing it to soften the old sealer, then pressure washing at 2,500-3,500 PSI to remove the dissolved sealer film. This process typically requires 2-3 applications for complete removal, especially if multiple sealer coats were applied over the years. Professional stripping costs \$1.50-\$4 per square foot depending on how many sealer layers need removal.

Joint Sand Assessment and Replacement

Before resealing, contractors must evaluate the polymeric sand in the paver joints. Metro Vancouver's heavy rainfall often erodes joint sand over the same 3-5 year period that sealer degrades. If joints are more than 25% empty or if weeds and moss are growing through, the polymeric sand should be completely removed and replaced before sealing. Joint sand replacement adds \$1-\$2 per square foot to the project but is essential — sealing over compromised joints traps moisture and accelerates paver movement.

Surface Preparation and Cleaning

After stripping, the pavers need thorough cleaning to remove all sealer residue, efflorescence, oil stains, and organic growth. This involves degreasing (for oil stains common on driveways), efflorescence removal with muriatic acid solution, and moss/algae treatment. The surface must be completely clean and dry for 48+ hours before new sealer application. Poor surface prep is the leading cause of new sealer failure within the first year.

Resealing Process and Costs

New sealer application costs \$1.50-\$4 per square foot depending on sealer type and number of coats. **Solvent-based sealers** (\$2-\$4/sq ft) penetrate deeper and last longer in Vancouver's climate but require careful application and adequate ventilation. **Water-based sealers** (\$1.50-\$3/sq ft) are easier to apply and more environmentally

friendly but may need more frequent reapplication. Most professionals apply two thin coats rather than one heavy coat for better durability and appearance.

Metro Vancouver Timing Considerations

Schedule stripping and resealing between May and October when you can guarantee 48-72 hours of dry weather after sealer application. Vancouver's rainy season (October through March) makes sealer application risky — rain within 24 hours of application can cause white hazing, poor adhesion, and uneven coverage that requires complete removal and reapplication.

When to Hire a Professional

Sealer stripping requires chemical handling, high-pressure equipment, and experience recognizing when old sealer is completely removed versus just loosened. DIY stripping often leaves sealer residue that prevents proper adhesion of new sealer. Professional contractors have commercial-grade strippers, appropriate pressure washing equipment, and disposal methods for chemical waste. For driveways over 300 square feet or sealers that have been reapplied multiple times, professional stripping and resealing is strongly recommended.

Cost Breakdown for a 600 sq ft Driveway:

- Sealer stripping: \$900-\$2,400
- Joint sand replacement (if needed): \$600-\$1,200
- Surface cleaning and prep: \$300-\$600
- New sealer application: \$900-\$2,400
- **Total: \$2,700-\$6,600**

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

Q5

What's the most affordable interlock sealer that works in Vancouver weather?

For Metro Vancouver's wet climate, Techniseal EZ Joint and WetLook sealers offer the best value at \$40-60 per 4L jug, covering 150-200 sq ft per coat. While slightly more expensive than big-box alternatives, they're specifically formulated for Canada's freeze-thaw and wet conditions, making them more cost-effective long-term.

Budget-friendly options that perform well in Vancouver's marine climate include Sakrete PermaSand sealer (\$35-45 per 4L) and Alliance Gator Seal (\$45-55 per 4L). These Canadian-made sealers understand our persistent moisture, 70-80% humidity levels, and the 1,200mm+ annual rainfall that destroys cheaper alternatives within 1-2 seasons.

Avoid big-box store generic sealers under \$30 per jug — they're typically formulated for drier climates and fail quickly in Metro Vancouver. The acrylic resins break down under constant moisture exposure, leading to peeling, white hazing, and a blotchy appearance that's expensive to strip and redo. You'll end up re-sealing every 12-18 months instead of every 3-4 years with quality products.

Application timing is critical for sealer performance and cost-effectiveness in Vancouver. Apply only during dry weather windows (typically May through September) with 48+ hours of no rain forecast. Sealer applied before rain or on damp pavers traps moisture underneath, causing the film to fail prematurely. This means you waste the product and labour, making "cheap" sealer very expensive.

Surface preparation dramatically affects sealer longevity and value. Clean pavers thoroughly with a pressure washer (1,500-2,500 PSI) and let dry completely. Replenish polymeric sand in joints before sealing — gaps in joint sand allow water penetration that undermines the sealer bond. Sealer applied over dirty, wet, or poorly maintained pavers fails quickly regardless of quality.

Coverage rates vary significantly with paver texture and porosity. Smooth pavers may get 200+ sq ft per 4L jug, while textured or tumbled pavers absorb more sealer and may only cover 120-150 sq ft. Always buy 10-15% extra sealer rather than running short mid-project — colour matching between batches can be challenging.

Two thin coats outperform one thick coat for durability and appearance. Apply the first coat, let cure for 2-4 hours, then apply the second coat. This builds better film thickness and penetration than flooding the surface once. Most sealer failures in Vancouver result from single-coat application that doesn't provide adequate moisture protection.

Professional application costs \$3-6 per sq ft including cleaning and joint sand replenishment. For a 400 sq ft patio, expect \$1,200-2,400 for professional sealing. DIY sealing costs \$200-400 in materials for the same area, making it one of the most cost-effective maintenance tasks homeowners can handle themselves.

When to Hire a Pro: Large areas over 500 sq ft, severely stained or damaged pavers requiring restoration, or if you're uncomfortable with the 48-hour weather window timing. Professional sealers have commercial-grade equipment and can work more efficiently during Vancouver's limited dry weather windows.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for sealing or maintenance? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges.

How much should I budget for sealing my patio and driveway pavers?

Paver sealing in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$3-\$7 per square foot professionally applied, so budget \$1,500-\$3,500 for a standard 500 sq ft combined patio and driveway project. The wide price range reflects differences in paver condition, required prep work, sealer quality, and whether joint sand replenishment is needed.

Professional sealing costs break down as follows: Basic sealing of clean pavers in good condition runs \$3-\$4 per sq ft, while comprehensive sealing that includes pressure washing, joint sand replacement, stain treatment, and premium sealer application costs \$5-\$7 per sq ft. A typical 300 sq ft patio costs \$900-\$2,100 to seal professionally, while a 500 sq ft driveway runs \$1,500-\$3,500. Most Metro Vancouver contractors charge a minimum of \$800-\$1,200 for sealing projects to cover mobilization costs.

The sealing process involves more than just applying sealer. Professional sealing starts with thorough pressure washing to remove moss, algae, dirt, and efflorescence (white powdery residue common on concrete pavers). In Metro Vancouver's moist climate, moss and algae growth is persistent, especially on north-facing surfaces and shaded areas. After cleaning, contractors assess joint sand condition — polymeric sand that has eroded or been compromised by moss growth must be removed and replaced before sealing. This joint sand replacement adds \$1-\$2 per sq ft to the project cost but is essential for proper sealing results.

Sealer quality significantly affects both cost and longevity. Basic acrylic sealers cost less upfront (\$3-\$4 per sq ft applied) but typically last only 2-3 years in Vancouver's wet climate before requiring reapplication. Premium penetrating sealers or hybrid polymer sealers cost more initially (\$5-\$7 per sq ft) but provide 4-6 years of protection and better resistance to Vancouver's heavy rainfall. Quality sealers from manufacturers like SealMaster, Foundation Armor, or Techniseal perform significantly better than budget alternatives in our marine climate.

DIY sealing can reduce costs but requires proper timing and technique. Sealer itself costs \$0.50-\$1.50 per sq ft for materials, plus equipment rental (pressure washer, pump sprayer, roller). However, sealing requires specific weather conditions — at least 24 hours of dry weather after application, temperatures between 10-30°C, and low humidity. Vancouver's October-to-March rainy season makes DIY sealing timing challenging. Improperly applied sealer creates white hazing, uneven coverage, or peeling that is expensive to correct.

Never seal new pavers immediately. Concrete pavers need 6-12 months to complete the efflorescence process (white residue leaching from cement). Sealing too early traps efflorescence beneath the sealer film, creating permanent white hazing. Also, ensure polymeric sand is fully cured (typically 30 days after installation) before sealing, or the sealer can interfere with the sand's binding properties.

Plan sealing every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver's climate. The combination of heavy rainfall, UV exposure, and moss growth degrades even quality sealers faster than in drier climates. Signs your pavers need resealing include water absorption (water no longer beads on the surface), color fading, increased moss growth, and staining that won't clean off. Regular sealing protects your investment and maintains the enhanced color and appearance that sealer provides.

For large projects or pavers in poor condition, get multiple quotes. Heavily stained pavers, significant moss growth, or extensive joint sand replacement can double the sealing cost. Professional contractors can assess whether your pavers need restoration work before sealing and provide accurate pricing for your specific conditions.

Need help finding a paver sealing contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's climate challenges and use quality materials for long-lasting results.

How often do interlock pavers need to be resealed in Vancouver?

Interlock pavers in Metro Vancouver should be resealed every 3-5 years, compared to 5-8 years in drier climates. Vancouver's persistent rainfall, high humidity (60-80% year-round), and over 1,200mm of annual precipitation accelerates sealer breakdown and makes more frequent resealing necessary for optimal protection and appearance.

The marine climate creates unique challenges for paver sealers that don't exist in Alberta or Ontario. **Constant moisture exposure breaks down sealer films faster**, while the combination of rain, humidity, and mild temperatures promotes moss and algae growth that can penetrate beneath compromised sealer. North Shore properties receiving over 2,000mm annually may need resealing every 2-3 years, especially on north-facing installations that stay damp longer.

High-traffic areas require more frequent attention — driveways and main walkways typically need resealing every 2-3 years, while patios and low-traffic areas can often go 4-5 years between applications. Pool decks, which face constant moisture exposure and chemical splash, may need annual sealer touch-ups in high-wear zones around the pool edge and steps.

Signs your pavers need resealing in Vancouver's climate include water absorption rather than beading on the surface, darkening or staining that won't clean off, moss or algae growth penetrating the paver surface (not just the joints), and a chalky or faded appearance. If you can see efflorescence (white powdery residue) returning after the initial 6-12 month period, the sealer has likely failed and needs renewal.

Timing is critical for sealer application in Metro Vancouver. The optimal window is May through September during extended dry periods — you need at least 48 hours without rain before application and 24-48 hours after application for proper curing. Applying sealer during Vancouver's October-to-March rainy season is problematic because moisture trapped beneath uncured sealer causes white hazing, poor adhesion, and premature failure.

Quality matters significantly in Vancouver's challenging climate. Premium acrylic or polyurethane-based sealers from manufacturers like Techniseal, SealMaster, or Foundation Armor last longer and perform better than budget alternatives. Solvent-based sealers generally outperform water-based products in wet climates, though they require more ventilation during application and have stronger odours.

Professional application is recommended for most homeowners. Proper sealing requires thorough cleaning (pressure washing followed by chemical cleaning if needed), complete drying, joint sand inspection and replenishment, and precise application with appropriate equipment. Poor sealer application — over-application, uneven coverage, or application over moisture — creates problems that are expensive to fix and may require

complete sealer removal and reapplication.

The cost for professional paver sealing in Metro Vancouver runs **\$3-\$7 per square foot**, so a typical 400 sq ft patio costs \$1,200-\$2,800 including cleaning and preparation. While this seems expensive, proper sealing extends paver life, maintains colour vibrancy, reduces moss and stain penetration, and makes routine cleaning much easier — protecting your hardscape investment over the long term.

Need help finding an interlock maintenance professional? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges and use quality sealers designed for our wet coastal conditions.

Q8

Does sealing pavers prevent moss and algae growth in Vancouver?

Sealing pavers provides moderate protection against moss and algae growth in Metro Vancouver, but it's not a complete solution. High-quality acrylic or polyurethane paver sealers create a protective film that makes paver surfaces less porous and easier to clean, which does reduce moss and algae establishment — but Vancouver's persistent moisture, mild temperatures, and organic debris will still allow growth over time, especially in shaded areas.

How Sealing Helps with Moss and Algae

Sealed pavers have a smoother, less porous surface that moss spores and algae have more difficulty adhering to initially. The sealer film also makes cleaning more effective — pressure washing or scrubbing removes moss and algae more completely from sealed surfaces compared to unsealed pavers where growth can establish deep in the concrete's pores. Quality sealers like Techniseal, SureBond, or Seal King provide better moss resistance than budget products, and wet-look sealers generally perform better than natural-look sealers for this purpose.

Sealing also enhances the effectiveness of moss and algae treatments. When you apply iron sulphate-based moss killer or oxygen bleach cleaners to sealed pavers, the treatment stays on the surface longer rather than soaking into the concrete, providing better contact time and more thorough kill of existing growth.

Why Sealing Isn't a Complete Solution in Vancouver

Metro Vancouver's climate creates ideal conditions for moss and algae growth that even the best sealers cannot completely prevent. The region receives over 1,200mm of annual rainfall with 70-80% humidity levels year-round, and temperatures that rarely drop below freezing. Moss, liverwort, and algae will eventually establish on any

outdoor surface — sealed or unsealed — especially on north-facing installations, areas under tree cover, or locations where organic debris accumulates.

Sealed pavers still require regular cleaning and moss treatment, typically every 12-18 months in Vancouver compared to 6-12 months for unsealed pavers. The sealer itself degrades over time from UV exposure and foot traffic, requiring reapplication every 3-5 years to maintain effectiveness. During the degradation period, moss and algae protection diminishes significantly.

Best Practices for Moss and Algae Prevention

The most effective approach combines sealing with proactive maintenance and environmental management. Start with proper drainage design — standing water accelerates moss and algae growth. Ensure your paver installation has minimum 2% slope away from buildings and adequate drainage at low points. Trim overhanging branches to increase sunlight and air circulation, as shaded, still areas are moss magnets.

Apply a quality penetrating or film-forming sealer 6-12 months after installation (once efflorescence has stopped), then maintain it with cleaning and resealing every 3-5 years. Between sealings, treat moss growth immediately when it appears using iron sulphate-based products in fall or early spring, and pressure wash annually to remove organic debris before it provides a growing medium for moss spores.

Polymeric sand in the joints also plays a crucial role — it prevents moss and weeds from establishing in paver joints where they often start before spreading to paver surfaces. Quality polymeric sand like Techniseal or Alliance provides better weed and moss resistance than standard jointing sand, but requires replenishment every 3-5 years in Vancouver's wet climate.

When to Hire a Professional

Professional sealing ensures proper surface preparation, complete efflorescence removal, and correct sealer application rates — mistakes like sealing over moisture or contaminants create permanent hazing that's extremely difficult to fix. For moss and algae treatment, professionals have access to commercial-grade cleaners and can safely apply treatments without damaging surrounding vegetation or violating municipal stormwater bylaws.

Need help finding an interlock maintenance professional? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand Metro Vancouver's unique moss and algae challenges.

Q9

What type of sealer is best for pavers in Metro Vancouver's wet climate?

For Metro Vancouver's wet climate, penetrating sealers are generally the best choice for concrete pavers, while film-forming sealers work well for natural stone applications. The key is selecting a sealer that can handle the region's persistent moisture, frequent rain, and high humidity levels without trapping water or creating maintenance headaches.

Penetrating sealers are the most practical choice for concrete pavers in Metro Vancouver because they soak into the paver surface and cure below the surface level, allowing the pavers to breathe and release moisture vapor naturally. This is crucial in a climate where pavers are constantly exposed to moisture from rain, fog, and humidity. Silane/siloxane-based penetrating sealers provide excellent water repellency while maintaining the natural appearance of the pavers. They typically last 3-5 years in Vancouver's climate and can be reapplied without stripping the previous application.

Film-forming sealers create a protective coating on top of the paver surface and are better suited for natural stone installations where you want to enhance color depth and create a wet look. However, they require more maintenance in Metro Vancouver because the film can trap moisture underneath if the pavers aren't completely dry during application, leading to white hazing or peeling. Film-forming sealers also show wear patterns more readily and typically need reapplication every 2-3 years in this climate.

Specific product considerations for Metro Vancouver include choosing sealers with anti-slip additives for walkways and pool decks, since wet pavers can become dangerously slippery during the October-to-March rainy season. Look for sealers specifically rated for freeze-thaw resistance, even though Vancouver experiences minimal freeze-thaw cycles compared to Eastern Canada. The occasional winter freeze combined with constant moisture can stress sealer films.

Application timing is critical in Metro Vancouver's climate. Apply sealer only during a guaranteed 48-hour dry window, ideally between May and September when humidity levels are lower and rain is less frequent. Never apply sealer to damp pavers or when rain is forecast within 24 hours. The pavers must be completely clean and free of efflorescence (white powdery residue) before sealing, which typically means waiting 6-12 months after installation for new concrete pavers.

Quality brands that perform well in Vancouver's wet conditions include Techniseal, SureCrete, Foundation Armor, and Alliance Gator Seal products. Expect to pay \$0.75-\$2.50 per square foot for sealer material, with professional application adding \$1.50-\$3.50 per square foot including surface preparation and cleaning.

Professional application is recommended for first-time sealing because improper technique in Metro Vancouver's humid conditions often results in white hazing, uneven coverage, or premature failure that requires expensive stripping and reapplication. A 500 square foot paver patio typically costs \$1,500-\$3,500 for professional cleaning and sealing.

Need help finding an interlock contractor experienced with sealer application in Metro Vancouver's climate?
Vancouver Interlock can match you with professionals who understand the specific challenges of our marine environment.

Should I use a wet-look or matte sealer on my interlock driveway?

For Metro Vancouver driveways, a matte or satin finish sealer is generally the better choice over wet-look sealers due to safety concerns with our rainy climate and the practical realities of driveway maintenance.

Wet-Look vs. Matte Performance in Vancouver's Climate

Wet-look sealers create a glossy, high-sheen finish that dramatically enhances paver colors and gives concrete pavers the appearance of natural stone when wet. However, this same glossy surface becomes extremely slippery when wet — which is problematic for a driveway in Metro Vancouver where we receive over 1,200mm of annual rainfall. From October through March, your driveway will be wet frequently, and a glossy sealed surface combined with fallen leaves, moss spores, or light algae growth creates a genuine slip hazard for both pedestrians and vehicles. The enhanced grip needed for safe vehicle traction on slopes (common in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam) makes slip-resistance a critical safety consideration.

Matte or satin finish sealers provide excellent protection against staining, efflorescence, and moisture penetration while maintaining better traction when wet. They still enhance the natural color of your pavers — just more subtly than wet-look products. The color enhancement is permanent as long as the sealer remains intact, typically 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver's UV exposure and rain conditions. Matte sealers also show dirt, tire marks, and wear patterns less obviously than high-gloss finishes, which means your driveway looks cleaner longer between maintenance cleanings.

Maintenance and Longevity Considerations

Driveways endure significantly more abuse than patios or walkways — vehicle traffic, tire turning, hot oil drips, de-icing salt (if used), and constant exposure to the elements. Wet-look sealers show every imperfection, scuff mark, and wear pattern, requiring more frequent cleaning and touch-up applications to maintain their appearance. In Metro Vancouver's climate, moss and algae growth on any sealed surface is inevitable, but it's much more visible and problematic on high-gloss finishes.

Matte sealers are more forgiving of normal driveway wear and still provide excellent protection against oil stains, which are the primary staining concern for driveway pavers. A quality matte acrylic sealer will prevent automotive fluids from penetrating the paver surface, making cleanup much easier when spills occur.

Application Timing and Weather Windows

Regardless of finish choice, sealer application in Metro Vancouver requires careful timing. Wait 6-12 months after installation for efflorescence (white powdery residue) to stop appearing on new concrete pavers. Apply sealer only during a guaranteed 48-hour dry window — typically between May and September. The pavers must be completely

clean and dry, with properly cured polymeric sand in the joints. Applying sealer over moisture, dirt, or uncured polymeric sand creates a hazy, blotchy appearance that requires complete sealer removal and reapplication.

Professional vs. DIY Application

Sealer application is one of the few interlock maintenance tasks homeowners can reasonably DIY, but success depends on proper surface preparation and weather timing. Professional application typically costs \$3-6 per square foot and includes pressure washing, joint sand inspection and replenishment if needed, and two-coat sealer application with proper cure time between coats.

When to Hire a Pro

Consider professional sealer application if your driveway has significant staining, requires joint sand replenishment, or if you're uncomfortable with the surface preparation and timing requirements. Professionals have commercial-grade cleaning equipment and experience reading weather windows for optimal application conditions.

For a typical 600 square foot driveway in Metro Vancouver, professional sealing runs \$1,800-3,600 depending on the condition of the surface and the quality of sealer used. Quality matte acrylic sealers from manufacturers like SureSeal, Foundation Armor, or Techniseal provide 3-5 years of protection in our climate.

Q11

How long after installation should I wait to seal new pavers?

Wait 6-12 months after installation before sealing new concrete pavers. This waiting period allows efflorescence (white powdery residue) to naturally weather away and ensures the pavers and polymeric sand are fully cured.

Why the waiting period is critical: New concrete pavers contain excess calcium hydroxide from the cement manufacturing process. When moisture contacts this calcium hydroxide, it creates calcium carbonate that migrates to the paver surface as a white, chalky residue called efflorescence. This is completely normal and temporary — but if you seal over efflorescence, you'll trap it permanently beneath the sealer film, creating a hazy, blotchy appearance that's extremely difficult to remove.

In Metro Vancouver's marine climate, efflorescence typically appears within the first few weeks after installation and gradually fades over 6-12 months through natural weathering from rain and UV exposure. The process can take longer on pavers in covered areas or north-facing installations that receive less direct rainfall and sunlight.

Polymeric sand curing considerations: Quality polymeric sand continues to cure and strengthen for several months after activation. Sealing too early can interfere with this curing process and may cause the sealer to bond poorly with the sand surface. Wait until you've gone through at least one full rainy season (October through March in Metro Vancouver) to ensure the polymeric sand has reached full strength and any loose material has been naturally cleaned away.

Signs your pavers are ready for sealing: The white efflorescence residue has disappeared, the paver surface appears consistent in color, polymeric sand joints are firm and stable, and you've completed any necessary joint sand touch-ups. The pavers should be completely dry for at least 48 hours before sealer application — challenging during Vancouver's rainy season, so plan sealing for late spring through early fall.

Metro Vancouver sealing timing: The optimal sealing window is May through September when you can count on several consecutive dry days. Sealer applied during the October-to-March rainy season often fails because moisture interferes with proper curing. Many homeowners seal in late spring of the year following installation — this timing allows efflorescence to weather through one full wet season while still protecting the pavers before their second winter.

When to hire a professional: Sealer application requires proper surface preparation, the right product selection for your specific paver type, and precise application technique. Improperly applied sealer creates more problems than it solves — including white hazing, peeling, and uneven appearance that requires expensive removal and reapplication.

Q12

Does sealing interlock pavers help keep polymeric sand in place?

Sealing interlock pavers provides some protection for polymeric sand but is not a substitute for proper polymeric sand application and quality. The sealer creates a surface film that can help reduce sand erosion from wind and light rain, but it won't prevent washout from heavy rainfall or poor initial installation.

How Sealer Affects Polymeric Sand Performance

A quality acrylic or polyurethane paver sealer does offer modest protection for polymeric sand joints. The sealer penetrates slightly into the top portion of the sand and creates a harder surface crust that resists erosion better than unsealed polymeric sand. This is particularly beneficial in Metro Vancouver where we receive over 1,200mm of annual rainfall and experience frequent heavy downpours between October and March that can gradually erode even properly installed polymeric sand.

However, sealer is not a magic solution for polymeric sand problems. If the polymeric sand wasn't properly activated initially (insufficient or excessive water during installation), wasn't compacted into the joints adequately, or is a low-quality product, sealing won't fix these fundamental issues. Poor polymeric sand will still wash out, crack, or fail regardless of sealer application.

Metro Vancouver Considerations

In our persistently moist climate, the bigger benefit of sealing is actually **moss and algae prevention** rather than sand retention. Sealed pavers resist organic growth much better than unsealed surfaces, which is crucial given our 60-80% humidity levels and mild temperatures that create ideal conditions for moss, liverwort, and algae. Moss growth between pavers can actually push polymeric sand out of joints mechanically as it expands.

The timing is critical in Metro Vancouver's wet climate. **Never seal pavers until polymeric sand has fully cured** (typically 24-48 hours after activation) and efflorescence has stopped appearing on new pavers (usually 6-12 months). Sealing too early traps moisture and uncured sand beneath the film, leading to white hazing and premature sealer failure.

Realistic Expectations

Even with sealing, polymeric sand in Metro Vancouver typically needs replenishment every 3-5 years due to our heavy rainfall, compared to 5-8 years in drier climates. The sealer may extend this interval slightly, but **proper drainage design and quality polymeric sand selection are far more important** than sealing for long-term joint stability.

Choose high-quality polymeric sand from manufacturers like Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete rather than budget alternatives. These perform significantly better in Vancouver's wet conditions, with or without sealing.

When to Hire a Pro

Professional sealer application ensures proper surface preparation, appropriate sealer selection for your specific paver type, and correct application technique. DIY sealing is feasible for small areas, but professionals have the equipment and experience to achieve even coverage without streaking or over-application that can create a plastic-looking finish.

Can you seal pavers during Vancouver's rainy season or do you need dry weather?

You need dry weather to properly seal pavers — attempting to seal during Vancouver's rainy season (October through March) will result in poor adhesion, white hazing, and premature sealer failure.

Paver sealing requires a minimum 48-hour dry window before application and 24-48 hours of dry weather after application for proper curing. This makes sealing during Metro Vancouver's wet season extremely challenging and generally not recommended by professional contractors.

Why Moisture Ruins Paver Sealing

Sealer must bond directly to clean, dry paver surfaces to form a protective film. Any moisture present — whether from recent rain, morning dew, or Vancouver's persistent 70-80% humidity — prevents proper adhesion. Wet or damp pavers cause the sealer to:

- Form white hazing or cloudy patches that are permanent once cured
- Peel and flake off within 6-12 months instead of lasting 3-5 years
- Trap moisture beneath the sealer film, leading to efflorescence and discoloration
- Apply unevenly, creating a blotchy appearance

Even pavers that appear dry on the surface may retain moisture in the pores, especially concrete pavers which are naturally porous. In Metro Vancouver's humid climate, pavers need extended dry time to release internal moisture.

Optimal Sealing Window in Metro Vancouver

The best time to seal pavers in Metro Vancouver is **May through September**, with July and August being ideal. This dry season provides:

- Consistent temperatures between 15-25°C (ideal for sealer application)
- Lower humidity levels (typically 50-60% vs. 70-80% in winter)
- Minimal chance of unexpected rainfall during the curing period
- Longer daylight hours for proper application timing

Professional contractors typically stop scheduling sealing work by mid-October and don't resume until late April or May, depending on weather patterns.

Pre-Sealing Preparation Requirements

Before sealing, pavers must be thoroughly cleaned and completely dry. This includes:

- Pressure washing to remove dirt, moss, algae, and staining
- Allowing 72+ hours of dry weather after cleaning for moisture to evaporate
- Ensuring polymeric sand joints are properly filled and cured (polymeric sand needs to be installed during dry weather too)
- Checking that efflorescence (white powdery residue) has stopped appearing on new pavers

Emergency Sealing During Wet Season

If you absolutely must seal pavers during Vancouver's rainy season due to timing constraints, professional contractors use these techniques:

- Tenting the entire area with tarps and using fans to create airflow
- Using fast-cure sealers designed for cooler, more humid conditions
- Applying sealer in smaller sections that can be protected from rain
- Using infrared heaters to warm and dry paver surfaces immediately before application

However, these methods significantly increase cost and still carry higher risk of sealer failure compared to summer applications.

When to Hire a Professional

Sealing is one of the few interlock maintenance tasks homeowners can reasonably DIY, but timing and weather conditions are critical. Professional contractors have experience reading weather patterns, moisture meters to test paver dryness, and access to commercial-grade sealers that perform better in challenging conditions. For valuable installations like natural stone patios or large driveways, professional sealing during the optimal window is worth the investment to ensure long-lasting protection.

The bottom line: patience pays off with paver sealing. Wait for Vancouver's dry season to ensure your sealer investment provides maximum protection and longevity.

Q14

What happens if you don't seal interlock pavers in Vancouver?

Sealing interlock pavers is not mandatory in Metro Vancouver, but skipping it means accepting more maintenance and potentially shorter lifespan for your investment. Unsealed pavers will still function perfectly as a hardscape surface, but they'll require more frequent cleaning and joint sand replenishment in our persistently wet climate.

The primary consequences of not sealing pavers in Metro Vancouver relate directly to our marine climate conditions. With over 1,200mm of annual rainfall and 60-80% humidity levels year-round, unsealed concrete pavers absorb moisture more readily. This creates ideal conditions for moss, algae, and liverwort growth on paver surfaces — especially on north-facing installations or areas shaded by trees and buildings. Moss growth isn't just aesthetic; it creates genuinely slippery surfaces during our October-to-March rainy season, particularly dangerous on walkways and steps.

Staining and weathering occur more rapidly on unsealed pavers. Oil drips from vehicles penetrate deeper into unsealed concrete, making driveway stains much harder to remove. Organic matter like fallen leaves, tree sap, and bird droppings also penetrate the paver surface rather than sitting on top where they can be easily cleaned. Unsealed pavers develop a weathered, aged appearance faster — which some homeowners actually prefer for a more natural look, while others want to maintain that fresh, vibrant colour longer.

Joint sand erosion accelerates without sealer protection. Even high-quality polymeric sand degrades faster when the surrounding pavers aren't sealed. Vancouver's heavy winter rains wash away joint sand more aggressively when water can penetrate both the joints and the paver surfaces simultaneously. This means you'll likely need to replenish polymeric sand every 2-3 years instead of every 4-5 years with sealed pavers.

However, there are legitimate reasons to skip sealing. Some homeowners prefer the natural weathering process and don't mind the additional maintenance. Sealing also requires reapplication every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver's climate, adding ongoing cost and maintenance. Poor sealing jobs can look worse than no sealing — white hazing, peeling, and blotchy appearance are common when sealer is applied to wet pavers, over efflorescence, or with inadequate surface preparation.

If you choose not to seal, focus on excellent joint sand maintenance. Use premium polymeric sand like Techniseal or Alliance, ensure proper activation, and replenish it promptly when joints appear empty or moss starts growing through. Regular pressure washing (1,500-2,500 PSI with a surface cleaner attachment) removes moss and algae before they establish deep root systems.

Most Metro Vancouver homeowners eventually choose to seal their pavers after experiencing a few seasons of moss growth and staining. The protection against moisture penetration, easier cleaning, and enhanced colour retention typically outweigh the cost and maintenance of sealing in our wet climate.

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

Q15

Does sealing make paver driveways slippery when wet?

Yes, sealing paver driveways can make them more slippery when wet, but this depends entirely on the type of sealer used and the texture of the pavers. The key is choosing the right sealer for your specific application and paver surface.

Glossy vs. Matte Sealers and Slip Resistance

High-gloss acrylic sealers create a smooth, shiny film on the paver surface that significantly reduces traction when wet. These sealers are popular because they enhance colour vibrancy and create a "wet look" that many homeowners find appealing, but they're genuinely hazardous on driveways, walkways, and any surface that receives foot or vehicle traffic during Metro Vancouver's rainy season from October through March. The combination of rain, moss spores, and organic matter on a glossy sealed surface creates extremely slippery conditions.

Matte or satin finish sealers maintain much better traction because they don't create the same smooth film. These penetrating sealers soak into the paver surface rather than forming a thick topcoat, preserving the natural texture of the paver while still providing stain protection and colour enhancement. For driveways specifically, always specify a matte finish sealer with anti-slip additives if you're concerned about traction.

Textured vs. Smooth Pavers Make a Difference

Smooth-surfaced pavers become significantly more slippery when sealed, regardless of sealer type. Tumbled pavers, brushed-finish pavers, and pavers with natural texture retain more traction even when sealed because the surface irregularities break through the sealer film. If you have smooth Holland pavers or polished concrete pavers on your driveway, sealing will definitely reduce traction when wet.

Metro Vancouver Climate Considerations

Vancouver's persistent humidity and frequent rainfall from October through March make slip resistance a genuine safety concern. Sealed driveways that are perfectly safe in July and August can become hazardous during the rainy season, especially on sloped driveways common in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam. Moss and algae growth on sealed surfaces compounds the problem — the combination of organic growth and

sealer creates an extremely slippery surface.

Anti-Slip Additives and Alternatives

If you want the benefits of sealing (stain protection, colour enhancement, easier cleaning) without sacrificing traction, specify a sealer with anti-slip additives. These products contain fine aggregate particles that maintain surface texture even after sealing. Brands like SureCrete, Foundation Armor, and Techniseal offer anti-slip formulations specifically for high-traffic areas.

Alternatively, consider sealing only decorative areas like patios and walkways while leaving the driveway unsealed. Modern concrete pavers are quite stain-resistant even without sealing, and regular cleaning with a pressure washer maintains their appearance effectively.

When to Hire a Professional

Sealer application requires perfect timing — pavers must be completely clean, dry for 48+ hours, and weather must remain dry for 24 hours after application. Professional applicators understand which sealers work best for different paver textures and traffic levels, and they have the equipment to apply sealer evenly without streaking or pooling. A poorly applied sealer that creates uneven traction is worse than no sealer at all.

For driveway sealing in Metro Vancouver, the investment in professional application (\$1,500-\$3,500 for a typical driveway) ensures proper product selection and application timing around our unpredictable weather patterns.

Can I seal my interlock pavers myself or should I hire a professional?

You can seal interlock pavers yourself if the surface is properly prepared and you choose the right weather conditions. Paver sealing is one of the more DIY-friendly interlock maintenance tasks, but success depends heavily on preparation, timing, and using quality materials.

Preparation is everything for DIY paver sealing. The pavers must be completely clean, dry, and free of efflorescence (white powdery residue) before sealing. Start with pressure washing using a surface cleaner attachment to remove dirt, moss, algae, and stains. Allow 48-72 hours of dry weather after cleaning before sealing. Check that polymeric sand joints are full and in good condition — if joints are empty or eroded, replenish the polymeric sand first and allow it to cure for at least one week before sealing. Any moisture trapped beneath the sealer will cause white hazing, peeling, and a blotchy appearance that's extremely difficult to fix.

Weather timing is critical in Metro Vancouver's climate. Plan sealing for late spring through early fall when you can guarantee 24-48 hours without rain after application. Avoid sealing during the October-to-March rainy season unless you have an extended dry forecast. Temperature should be between 10-30°C, with low humidity and no direct hot sun during application. Early morning or late afternoon application works best. Never seal pavers that are hot to the touch from direct sun exposure.

Choose a quality water-based acrylic sealer designed for concrete pavers. Water-based sealers are more forgiving for DIY application than solvent-based products, dry faster, and don't trap moisture as readily. Popular brands include SealMaster, Foundation Armor, and Techniseal. Expect to pay \$150-\$300 for sealer to cover 400-500 square feet. Apply with a pump sprayer for even coverage, then back-roll with a 3/8-inch nap roller to eliminate puddles and ensure uniform penetration. Work in manageable sections of 100-150 square feet.

The main DIY challenges are achieving even coverage and avoiding common mistakes. Over-application creates a glossy, artificial appearance and can cause the sealer to peel. Under-application provides inadequate protection. Applying sealer over dirty pavers, wet surfaces, or uncured polymeric sand causes adhesion problems. Walking on sealed pavers before they're fully cured (24 hours minimum) can leave footprints and damage the film.

Hire a professional for large areas over 800 square feet, complex surfaces with multiple levels or intricate patterns, or if your pavers have existing sealer problems. Professional contractors have commercial-grade sprayers that ensure more consistent coverage, experience reading surface conditions, and access to contractor-grade sealers. They also carry liability insurance if something goes wrong. For a 500 square foot patio, professional sealing typically costs \$1,500-\$3,500 including cleaning and joint sand replenishment if needed.

A properly sealed paver installation in Metro Vancouver should last 3-5 years before requiring resealing.

The marine climate's persistent moisture and UV exposure gradually break down sealer films. Signs that resealing is needed include water soaking into pavers instead of beading on the surface, increased moss and algae growth, and fading of the enhanced colour that sealing provides.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for sealing or other maintenance? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's climate challenges and use proven sealing systems for long-lasting results.

Q17

What's the difference between solvent-based and water-based paver sealers?

Solvent-based sealers penetrate deeper and provide longer-lasting protection with enhanced color vibrancy, while water-based sealers are easier to apply, more environmentally friendly, and better suited for Metro Vancouver's wet climate conditions.

The choice between solvent-based and water-based paver sealers significantly impacts both the appearance and long-term performance of your interlock installation, especially in Metro Vancouver's marine climate with its persistent moisture and frequent rainfall.

Solvent-based sealers use petroleum-based carriers that penetrate deeply into concrete pavers, creating a strong chemical bond with the concrete. They typically enhance color saturation dramatically, giving pavers a rich, wet look that many homeowners prefer. The deeper penetration means solvent-based sealers generally last 3-5 years before requiring reapplication, compared to 2-3 years for water-based products. They also provide superior stain resistance and are particularly effective at resisting oil stains on driveways.

However, solvent-based sealers have significant drawbacks in Metro Vancouver's climate. They require completely dry conditions for 24-48 hours during application and curing, which can be challenging to achieve during the October-to-March rainy season. The strong chemical odors require excellent ventilation and can be problematic in densely populated neighborhoods. Many solvent-based sealers also create a glossy finish that becomes extremely slippery when wet — a serious safety concern given Vancouver's frequent rainfall and the prevalence of moss and algae growth on paver surfaces.

Water-based sealers use water as the carrier and cure through evaporation rather than chemical reaction. They're much easier to work with, have minimal odor, and can be applied in cooler, more humid conditions typical of Metro Vancouver. Water-based sealers typically provide a more natural, matte finish that maintains better traction when

wet. They're also more breathable, allowing moisture vapor to escape from the pavers rather than trapping it beneath the sealer film.

The main trade-offs with water-based sealers are shorter lifespan (requiring reapplication every 2-3 years) and less dramatic color enhancement. However, for Metro Vancouver's climate, these characteristics often make water-based sealers the more practical choice. They're less likely to trap moisture beneath the surface, which can cause white hazing or peeling in humid conditions.

For Metro Vancouver specifically, water-based sealers are generally recommended because they perform better in high-humidity conditions, provide safer traction on wet surfaces, and can be applied during the longer dry windows available in summer months. The marine climate's persistent moisture makes the breathability of water-based sealers particularly valuable. Additionally, many water-based formulations now include UV inhibitors and anti-fungal additives that help resist moss and algae growth — the primary maintenance challenge for pavers in this region.

Application timing is critical regardless of sealer type. Never seal pavers until efflorescence (white powdery residue) has stopped appearing, typically 6-12 months after installation. The surface must be completely clean and dry, with polymeric sand properly cured in the joints. In Metro Vancouver, plan sealer application for July through September when you can guarantee 48 hours of dry weather.

When to hire a professional: Sealer application on areas larger than 300 square feet, or when you need guaranteed results for high-visibility areas like front walkways. Professional applicators have spray equipment for even coverage and experience timing applications around Vancouver's unpredictable weather patterns.

Q18

Does sealing pavers change the colour permanently?

Paver sealing typically darkens and enriches the colour of concrete pavers, and this change is semi-permanent — lasting 2-4 years until the sealer wears off and needs reapplication. The colour change is not permanent to the paver itself, but it will persist for the life of the sealer coating.

How Sealer Changes Paver Appearance

Most paver sealers are designed to enhance the natural colour of concrete pavers by creating a "wet look" that deepens and saturates the existing colours. Grey pavers become a richer charcoal, tan pavers become warmer and more golden, and red pavers become deeper and more vibrant. The sealer fills the microscopic pores in the concrete surface, which reduces the light scattering that makes unsealed pavers appear lighter and more washed

out.

Gloss vs. Matte Sealers offer different aesthetic effects. High-gloss sealers create the most dramatic colour enhancement and a shiny, wet appearance that some homeowners love and others find too artificial for their taste. Satin or semi-gloss sealers provide colour enhancement with a more subtle sheen. Matte or natural-look sealers enhance colour minimally while providing protection — these are popular in Metro Vancouver where the goal is often to maintain a natural appearance while protecting against moss and staining.

The Colour Change is Reversible when the sealer eventually wears off through normal weathering, UV exposure, and foot traffic. In Metro Vancouver's climate, most paver sealers last 2-4 years before requiring reapplication. As the sealer wears away, the pavers gradually return to their original unsealed appearance. However, if you want to remove sealer before it wears off naturally, this requires chemical stripping with specialized sealer removal products — a labour-intensive process that most homeowners prefer to avoid.

Critical Timing for New Pavers in Metro Vancouver

Never seal new concrete pavers immediately after installation. New pavers go through a natural efflorescence process where white calcium carbonate deposits appear on the surface as moisture in the concrete evaporates. This typically lasts 6-12 months in Vancouver's humid climate. Sealing before efflorescence stops will trap these white deposits beneath the sealer permanently, creating a permanently hazy or blotchy appearance that cannot be corrected without complete sealer removal.

Test First on a Hidden Area

Before sealing your entire patio or driveway, apply the sealer to a small, inconspicuous area (behind a planter or in a corner) to see exactly how it will change the colour and sheen. Different paver colours and textures react differently to the same sealer. Tumbled or textured pavers often show more dramatic colour change than smooth pavers because the sealer pools in the texture.

When to Hire a Professional

While sealer application looks straightforward, achieving even coverage without streaking, bubbling, or over-application requires experience with spray equipment and proper weather timing. In Metro Vancouver, sealing must be done during a guaranteed 24-hour dry window — challenging to predict between October and March. Professional application typically costs \$3-6 per square foot and includes surface cleaning, joint sand inspection, and proper sealer application with commercial equipment.

How do you prepare pavers for sealing after removing old sealer?

Preparing pavers for sealing after old sealer removal requires thorough cleaning, joint sand inspection, complete drying, and timing the application during Metro Vancouver's dry season for optimal results.

Surface Cleaning and Preparation

After stripping old sealer (typically done with a chemical stripper or pressure washing), your pavers need comprehensive cleaning before new sealer application. Start with a thorough pressure wash using 1,500-2,500 PSI with a rotating surface cleaner attachment to ensure even cleaning without striping. This removes sealer residue, dirt, moss, algae, and any efflorescence that may have accumulated beneath the old sealer.

For stubborn stains or sealer residue, use a commercial paver cleaner or oxygen bleach solution (never chlorine bleach, which damages polymeric sand and discolours pavers). Scrub with a stiff brush and rinse thoroughly. Pay special attention to textured pavers where sealer residue tends to accumulate in the surface texture.

Joint Sand Assessment and Replacement

Inspect all paver joints carefully — old sealer removal often damages or displaces polymeric sand, especially if aggressive stripping methods were used. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, compromised joint sand leads to immediate problems with weed growth, moss intrusion, and paver shifting during winter rains.

Remove any loose, damaged, or contaminated joint sand completely. Clean joints to a depth of 1/8 inch below the paver surface using a joint scraper or pressure washer with a narrow nozzle. Allow joints to dry completely, then apply fresh polymeric sand (Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete). Sweep sand into joints, compact lightly with a rubber mallet and block, then activate according to manufacturer instructions with controlled water application — never flood the surface.

Drying and Timing Requirements

Pavers must be completely dry for 48-72 hours before sealer application — this is critical in Metro Vancouver where high humidity (60-80%) slows moisture evaporation. Any trapped moisture beneath the sealer creates white hazing, poor adhesion, and premature peeling that requires complete sealer removal to fix.

Time your sealing project for Metro Vancouver's dry season (May through October) with at least 48 hours of dry weather forecasted after application. Avoid sealing during the rainy season (November through March) unless you can provide complete weather protection. Check for moisture by taping plastic sheets over several paver sections overnight — any condensation underneath indicates the pavers are still releasing moisture and not ready for

sealing.

Final Surface Inspection

Before sealing, inspect the entire surface in bright sunlight for any remaining sealer residue, stains, or surface defects. Old sealer that wasn't completely removed will prevent new sealer from bonding properly, creating patchy coverage and premature failure. White efflorescence deposits must be completely removed — trapped efflorescence beneath sealer becomes permanent white discoloration.

Test a small, inconspicuous area first with your chosen sealer to verify proper adhesion and desired appearance. Different sealers (penetrating vs. film-forming, matte vs. glossy) produce dramatically different results, and the test area ensures you achieve the look you want before committing to the entire surface.

Professional sealer application typically costs \$3-6 per square foot in Metro Vancouver and includes proper surface preparation, joint sand inspection, and two-coat application with appropriate drying time between coats. Given the complexity of sealer removal and reapplication, and the consequences of moisture-related sealer failure in Vancouver's climate, many homeowners find professional application worthwhile for larger areas over 200 square feet.

Need help finding an experienced paver sealing contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges for sealer application.

Q20

Will sealer prevent oil stains on my interlock driveway?

Paver sealer provides significant protection against oil stains but is not 100% foolproof. A quality penetrating or film-forming sealer creates a barrier that prevents most automotive fluids from soaking into the concrete paver surface, making spills much easier to clean up before they become permanent stains.

How Sealer Protects Against Oil Stains

Unsealed concrete pavers are porous and absorb oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid, and other automotive chemicals within minutes of contact. Once absorbed, these petroleum-based stains are extremely difficult to remove and often leave permanent dark spots. Sealer works by either penetrating into the paver surface and blocking the pores (penetrating sealers) or creating a protective film on top of the surface (topical sealers). Both types give you time to clean up spills before they penetrate.

With sealed pavers, fresh oil spills typically bead up on the surface rather than immediately soaking in. This gives you hours or even days to clean the spill with dish soap and water or a commercial degreaser. The key is addressing spills promptly — even sealed pavers will eventually absorb oil if it sits for weeks or months.

Metro Vancouver Considerations

In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, sealer serves double duty by protecting against both oil stains and the persistent moisture that promotes moss and algae growth on paver surfaces. The region's frequent rainfall actually helps with oil spill cleanup on sealed driveways — rain dilutes and washes away surface contaminants before they can penetrate. However, the same moisture that helps with cleanup also means sealer doesn't last as long here. Expect to reapply sealer every 3-4 years in Metro Vancouver, compared to 5-6 years in drier climates.

Sealer Types and Performance

Penetrating sealers (silane/siloxane based) provide excellent oil protection while maintaining the natural appearance of your pavers. They're ideal for homeowners who want protection without changing the look of their driveway. Film-forming acrylic sealers offer superior stain protection and enhance color, but they can become slippery when wet — a concern during Vancouver's rainy season from October through March.

Application Timing and Cost

Wait 6-12 months after installation before sealing new pavers to allow efflorescence (white powdery residue) to naturally weather away. Sealing too early traps efflorescence permanently. Professional sealer application for a 500 sq ft driveway typically runs \$1,500-\$3,500 in Metro Vancouver, including cleaning, joint sand replenishment if needed, and two-coat application.

When to Hire a Professional

While sealer application looks straightforward, proper surface preparation is critical. Pavers must be completely clean and dry (48 hours minimum without rain), and any polymeric sand issues must be addressed first. Professional applicators have the equipment to ensure even coverage and the experience to handle Metro Vancouver's unpredictable weather windows. DIY sealing often results in streaking, white hazing, or premature failure when moisture gets trapped beneath the sealer.

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.