

VANCOUVER INTERLOCK

Maintenance & Care

Seasonal interlock care, moss and weed prevention, joint sand replenishment, pressure washing guidance, and Vancouver climate-specific maintenance schedules

20 Expert Answers from Interlock IQ

vancouverinterlock.com/construction-brain

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How much does interlock maintenance cost per year in Vancouver?

Annual interlock maintenance in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$200-\$800 per year for a standard residential installation, depending on the size of your paved area, exposure to moss and weeds, and whether you handle basic tasks yourself or hire professionals for everything.

Metro Vancouver's marine climate creates unique maintenance demands that homeowners in drier regions don't face. With over 1,200mm of annual rainfall and persistent 60-80% humidity levels, moss growth, joint sand erosion, and weed intrusion are ongoing challenges rather than occasional problems. The good news is that our minimal freeze-thaw cycles (only 5-15 per year compared to 40-80 in Eastern Canada) mean you won't deal with the frost heave and surface spalling that plague interlock in colder climates.

The biggest annual expense is polymeric sand replenishment, which typically needs attention every 3-5 years in Vancouver's wet conditions. For a 400 sq ft patio, professional polymeric sand replacement costs \$800-\$1,500, including cleaning out old sand, applying new polymeric sand, and proper water activation. If you handle this yourself, materials cost \$150-\$300 plus your time. Many homeowners spread this cost by doing partial joint sand touch-ups annually rather than complete replacement every few years.

Moss and algae treatment is the most frequent maintenance task, especially on north-facing installations and areas shaded by trees. Professional moss treatment and pressure washing runs \$300-\$600 annually for a typical residential installation. DIY moss treatment costs \$50-\$150 per year using iron sulphate or zinc sulphate-based moss killers, plus occasional pressure washing. The key is staying ahead of moss growth rather than letting it establish thick mats that become slippery safety hazards during our October-to-March rainy season.

Sealing costs should be factored every 3-5 years. Professional paver sealing for a 400 sq ft patio runs \$600-\$1,200, including surface cleaning and sealer application. This breaks down to \$120-\$240 annually if you budget for it. Sealing isn't mandatory but significantly reduces moss growth, makes cleaning easier, and enhances colour retention.

Weed control and edge maintenance typically costs \$100-\$300 annually if you hire a landscaper, or \$30-\$80 in materials if you handle it yourself. This includes treating weeds that penetrate joints despite polymeric sand, and maintaining clean edges where pavers meet lawn or garden beds.

Drainage maintenance is critical in our wet climate but often overlooked. Annual inspection and cleaning of drainage systems (clearing leaves from drain grates, ensuring proper water flow away from paved areas) prevents costly water damage. Professional drainage inspection costs \$150-\$300 annually, but most homeowners can handle basic maintenance themselves.

For properties with significant tree coverage - common in Vancouver's mature neighbourhoods - expect higher maintenance costs. Leaf debris, increased moss growth, and occasional root intrusion can add \$200-\$500 annually to maintenance expenses. Properties in West Vancouver, North Vancouver, and Burnaby's forested areas typically see the highest maintenance requirements.

DIY vs. Professional Breakdown: Homeowners who handle pressure washing, basic moss treatment, and minor joint sand touch-ups themselves typically spend \$150-\$400 annually on materials and equipment. Those who hire professionals for everything typically spend \$500-\$1,200 annually. The middle ground - handling routine cleaning yourself but hiring professionals for polymeric sand replacement and sealing - usually runs \$300-\$600 annually.

The investment in proper annual maintenance pays dividends. Well-maintained interlock in Metro Vancouver easily lasts 25+ years and maintains its appearance and property value. Neglected installations often require major repairs or replacement within 10-15 years, costing thousands rather than hundreds annually.

When to Hire a Professional: Handle routine cleaning and moss treatment yourself, but hire professionals for polymeric sand replacement (proper activation technique is critical), sealing (surface preparation and application timing matter), and any drainage issues that affect water flow patterns on your property.

Q2

What's the cost for professional interlock cleaning in Metro Vancouver?

Professional interlock cleaning in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$2-\$6 per square foot, with most residential patios and driveways running \$800-\$2,400 for a complete cleaning service. The wide price range reflects the significant variation in cleaning complexity — from basic pressure washing to comprehensive restoration involving moss treatment, efflorescence removal, and polymeric sand replacement.

Basic pressure washing services start around \$2-\$3 per square foot and include surface cleaning with commercial-grade pressure washers (2,500-4,000 PSI) using rotating surface cleaners to avoid striping. This removes dirt, algae, and light moss buildup but doesn't address deeper staining, efflorescence, or joint sand issues. A typical 400 square foot patio runs \$800-\$1,200 for basic cleaning.

Comprehensive cleaning and restoration ranges from \$4-\$6 per square foot and includes pre-treatment for moss and organic growth, specialized cleaning solutions for efflorescence (the white powdery residue on concrete pavers), removal of old polymeric sand from joints, thorough pressure washing, and installation of fresh polymeric sand. This level of service is what most Metro Vancouver homeowners need every 3-5 years due to our persistent moisture, moss growth, and joint sand erosion from heavy rainfall. A 400 square foot patio with full restoration

typically costs \$1,600-\$2,400.

Metro Vancouver's marine climate makes professional cleaning particularly valuable because moss, algae, and liverwort thrive in our 60-80% humidity levels and frequent rainfall. These organic growths aren't just aesthetic issues — they create genuinely slippery surfaces that are safety hazards, especially on walkways and steps during the October-to-March rainy season. Professional cleaners use commercial moss treatments (typically iron sulphate or zinc sulphate based) that are more effective than consumer products and know proper application rates that kill moss without damaging surrounding vegetation.

Efflorescence removal requires specialized knowledge because the white calcium carbonate deposits on concrete pavers need acidic cleaners (muriatic acid solutions) that can damage pavers if used incorrectly. Professional cleaners understand proper dilution ratios, application techniques, and neutralization procedures. DIY efflorescence removal often results in acid burns on paver surfaces or incomplete removal that returns within months.

Joint sand replacement is the most valuable component of professional cleaning in Metro Vancouver. Our heavy rainfall washes standard sand from joints within weeks, and even polymeric sand degrades faster here than in drier climates. Professional cleaning services remove deteriorated polymeric sand completely (partial removal leads to poor adhesion of new sand), clean joints thoroughly, and install fresh polymeric sand with proper activation techniques. This joint sand service alone typically costs \$1.50-\$3.00 per square foot but extends the life of your interlock installation significantly.

Additional services that affect pricing include sealer removal (if you're planning to reseal), stain treatment for oil or rust spots, and weed removal from joints. Properties with difficult access — common in older Vancouver neighborhoods with narrow side yards or rear-only access — may incur additional charges for manual equipment transport.

Timing affects both cost and results. The optimal cleaning window in Metro Vancouver is May through September when dry weather allows proper polymeric sand curing. Cleaning during the rainy season is possible but requires careful timing between weather windows and may cost 10-20% more due to scheduling constraints and additional protection measures.

When to hire professionals versus DIY: Basic moss treatment and light pressure washing (under 2,500 PSI) is reasonable DIY maintenance, but comprehensive cleaning with polymeric sand replacement requires professional equipment and expertise. The specialized surface cleaners, commercial-grade pressure washers, and proper polymeric sand activation techniques justify the professional cost for most homeowners.

Need help finding an interlock cleaning professional? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges and use proper techniques to restore

your hardscape investment.

Q3

Is it worth paying for annual paver maintenance in Vancouver?

Yes, annual paver maintenance is absolutely worth it in Metro Vancouver's wet climate — it typically costs \$500-\$1,500 per year for a standard residential installation but prevents \$3,000-\$8,000 in major repairs and extends your interlock's lifespan from 15-20 years to 25-30+ years.

Metro Vancouver's marine climate creates unique maintenance challenges that make annual care essential rather than optional. The region receives over 1,200mm of annual rainfall with 70% falling between October and March, creating persistent moisture that accelerates joint sand erosion, promotes moss and algae growth, and saturates paver surfaces. Without regular maintenance, these conditions quickly degrade even high-quality installations.

The most critical annual maintenance tasks include polymeric sand replenishment, moss and weed control, and surface cleaning. Polymeric sand washes out of joints during Vancouver's heavy winter rains, typically requiring replenishment every 3-5 years rather than the 5-8 years expected in drier climates. Empty joints allow pavers to shift laterally under traffic loads, create trip hazards, and provide pathways for weed roots and moss growth. Professional joint sand replacement costs \$2-4 per square foot but prevents the \$8-15 per square foot cost of full paver releveling when base materials become contaminated.

Moss, algae, and liverwort growth is inevitable on north-facing installations and shaded areas in Metro Vancouver's humid conditions. These organisms create slippery surfaces that are genuine safety hazards during the October-March rainy season. Annual moss treatment with iron sulphate or zinc sulphate-based products costs \$200-500 for a typical residential installation but prevents the need for aggressive pressure washing that can damage paver surfaces and erode joint sand.

Annual maintenance programs typically include surface cleaning, joint inspection and sand replenishment as needed, moss and weed treatment, drainage assessment, and minor releveling of settled pavers.

Professional maintenance contracts in Metro Vancouver run \$500-800 for basic service on a 400 square foot patio, or \$800-1,500 for comprehensive care including sealer reapplication every 3-4 years. This investment prevents the \$6,000-12,000 cost of full patio reconstruction that becomes necessary when drainage fails, bases become saturated, and pavers settle extensively.

The alternative to annual maintenance is reactive repair, which costs 3-5 times more than preventive care. Homeowners who skip regular maintenance typically face major repairs within 5-8 years — releveling sunken

areas (\$8-15 per sq ft), replacing contaminated base material (\$12-20 per sq ft), or complete reconstruction (\$15-30 per sq ft). A \$1,000 annual maintenance investment prevents \$10,000+ in premature replacement costs.

You can handle some maintenance tasks yourself to reduce costs. DIY-friendly tasks include applying moss killer in spring and fall (\$50-100 in materials), pressure washing with a surface cleaner attachment (\$0 if you own equipment), and spot-treating weeds (\$20-50 in herbicide). However, polymeric sand replacement requires proper joint preparation, precise application, and controlled water activation — mistakes create permanent hazing on paver surfaces that requires professional removal.

Hire professionals for comprehensive annual maintenance if your installation is over 500 square feet, includes natural stone, or has complex drainage features. Professional maintenance includes warranty coverage, proper equipment (commercial-grade surface cleaners, joint sand removal tools, plate compactors with protective pads), and experience with Metro Vancouver's specific challenges. Many contractors offer maintenance contracts at reduced rates for installations they originally built.

Annual paver maintenance in Vancouver isn't just about aesthetics — it's essential infrastructure care that protects a significant investment in your property's hardscaping and outdoor living space.

How much does it cost to have polymeric sand reapplied professionally?

Professional polymeric sand reapplication in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$3-\$8 per square foot, with most residential patios (300-500 sq ft) running \$1,200-\$3,500 for complete joint sand replacement.

The wide price range reflects the condition of your existing installation and the scope of work required. **Simple reapplication** over existing polymeric sand that's mostly intact but showing some erosion runs \$3-\$5 per sq ft. **Complete joint cleanout and replacement** — where old polymeric sand must be pressure washed or mechanically removed from joints, followed by new sand application — runs \$6-\$8 per sq ft due to the additional labour involved.

What's included in professional polymeric sand service:

- Pressure washing or mechanical removal of old joint sand
- Cleaning paver surfaces of moss, algae, and debris
- Sweeping new polymeric sand into all joints with proper overfill
- Compacting sand into joints using rubber mallets or vibrating equipment
- Removing excess sand from paver surfaces before activation
- Controlled water activation using misting technique (never flooding)
- Final cleanup and surface inspection

Metro Vancouver climate considerations make professional application particularly valuable. Our persistent rainfall and humidity mean polymeric sand must be activated perfectly — too little water and it won't harden, too much water causes hazing on paver surfaces that's extremely difficult to remove. Professional installers understand the precise misting technique required and can time the work around weather windows. They also know which polymeric sand brands (Techniseal, Alliance, Sakrete) perform best in our wet climate.

Additional costs that may apply:

- **Paver releveling:** If some pavers have settled or shifted, expect \$8-\$15 per sq ft to lift, re-level, and relay affected areas
- **Edge restraint repair:** Loose or damaged edge restraints add \$8-\$12 per linear foot
- **Weed treatment:** Pre-treating established weeds in joints adds \$0.50-\$1.50 per sq ft
- **Sealing:** Many homeowners combine polymeric sand replacement with sealing — add \$4-\$8 per sq ft for two-coat sealer application

When to hire a professional: Polymeric sand reapplication is one of the few interlock maintenance tasks

homeowners can reasonably DIY on small areas (under 200 sq ft), but professional application makes sense for larger patios, driveways, or when multiple pavers need releveling. The specialized equipment for proper activation and the experience to avoid costly mistakes (like surface hazing) often justify the professional cost, especially given that polymeric sand replacement is only needed every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver.

Need help finding an interlock maintenance contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals for a free estimate on your polymeric sand replacement project.

Q5

What's the cheapest way to remove moss from my interlock in Vancouver?

The cheapest way to remove moss from interlock in Vancouver is using a homemade iron sulphate solution, which costs about \$20-30 to treat 500 square feet and works exceptionally well in our marine climate.

Iron sulphate (ferrous sulphate) is the most cost-effective moss killer for Metro Vancouver's persistent moss problems. You can buy a 2kg bag at garden centers for \$15-25, which makes enough solution to treat large areas. Mix 2-3 tablespoons per gallon of water and spray directly on moss-covered pavers. The iron sulphate turns moss black within 24-48 hours, and it naturally washes away with Vancouver's frequent rainfall. This method costs roughly \$0.05-0.10 per square foot compared to \$0.50-1.00 per square foot for commercial moss killers.

Why moss thrives on Vancouver interlock is directly related to our climate — over 1,200mm of annual rainfall, 60-80% humidity levels, and mild temperatures create ideal moss-growing conditions year-round. North-facing installations and areas shaded by trees or buildings are particularly problematic. The moss isn't just unsightly; it creates genuinely slippery surfaces that become safety hazards during our October-to-March rainy season.

Application timing matters significantly in Vancouver's climate. Apply iron sulphate during dry periods (ideally May through September) when you can get 24-48 hours without rain for the solution to work effectively. Avoid applying just before heavy rainfall, as it dilutes the solution before it can kill the moss. After the moss turns black and dies, use a stiff brush or pressure washer to remove the dead material before it decomposes and provides nutrients for new moss growth.

Prevention is more cost-effective than repeated treatment. Once you've killed existing moss, improve air circulation around your pavers by trimming overhanging branches and removing debris that holds moisture. Ensure your polymeric sand joints are full — empty joints collect organic matter and provide perfect moss-growing conditions. If your polymeric sand has washed out (common in Vancouver), replenishing it costs \$1-2 per square foot but prevents moss from taking hold in the joints.

For severe moss infestations, you may need to combine iron sulphate treatment with pressure washing. Use a pressure washer at 1,500-2,000 PSI with a rotating surface cleaner attachment to avoid striping the pavers. This removes not just the moss but also the organic film that helps moss adhere to paver surfaces. The combination of iron sulphate treatment followed by pressure washing typically provides 6-12 months of moss-free surfaces.

When to hire a professional depends on the scope of your moss problem. If moss covers more than 200-300 square feet, or if you're dealing with moss in hard-to-reach areas like steep slopes or multi-level installations, professional cleaning services typically charge \$0.75-1.50 per square foot and include pressure washing, moss treatment, and joint sand replenishment. For smaller areas under 100 square feet, the DIY iron sulphate approach is definitely the most economical option.

The key to long-term moss control in Vancouver is understanding that it's an ongoing maintenance issue, not a one-time fix. Budget for annual moss treatment as part of your interlock maintenance, just like you would for lawn fertilizing or gutter cleaning.

Q6

How much does professional power washing cost for a paver driveway in Burnaby?

Professional power washing for a paver driveway in Burnaby typically costs \$300-\$800, depending on the driveway size, condition, and level of cleaning required.

For a standard residential driveway (400-600 square feet), most contractors charge \$0.75-\$1.50 per square foot for basic pressure washing. This includes pre-treatment of stains, pressure washing with appropriate PSI settings (1,500-2,500 PSI to avoid damaging pavers), and basic debris removal. If your driveway has significant moss buildup, oil stains, or requires joint sand removal and replacement, expect costs toward the higher end of this range.

Metro Vancouver's climate makes regular power washing particularly valuable for paver driveways. Burnaby's 1,200mm+ annual rainfall, combined with year-round humidity levels of 60-80%, creates ideal conditions for moss, algae, and organic staining on paver surfaces. North-facing driveways and those shaded by trees accumulate moss faster and may need more aggressive treatment. The wet season from October through March leaves driveways looking particularly grimy by spring, making April through June peak season for power washing services.

Additional services that affect pricing include:

- **Moss and algae treatment:** Adding \$100-\$200 to apply specialized cleaners before pressure washing

- **Oil stain removal:** \$50-\$150 extra for degreasing products and additional labor
- **Joint sand replacement:** \$200-\$500 if polymeric sand needs removal and replacement after washing
- **Sealer application:** \$400-\$800 additional if you want protective sealing after cleaning

The cleaning process typically takes 2-4 hours for a residential driveway, depending on size and condition. Professional contractors use surface cleaners (rotating spray heads) rather than wand tips to ensure even cleaning without striping. They'll also protect adjacent landscaping and properly manage runoff, which is important given Burnaby's stormwater management requirements.

Timing matters in Burnaby's climate. Schedule power washing for dry weather periods (ideally May through September) when you can get 24-48 hours without rain after cleaning. This allows pavers to dry completely before any sealer application and prevents immediate re-contamination. Many contractors offer spring cleaning packages that combine power washing with joint sand replenishment and sealing.

When to hire a professional: While homeowners can rent pressure washers, professional cleaning is recommended for driveways because contractors have commercial-grade surface cleaners that prevent striping, know the correct PSI settings to avoid paver damage, and can properly handle runoff and debris disposal. DIY pressure washing often results in uneven cleaning patterns and can damage paver surfaces if too much pressure is used.

Need help finding a power washing contractor? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals from the Vancouver Construction Network who specialize in paver maintenance and understand Burnaby's specific climate challenges.

How do I remove moss and algae from interlock pavers in Vancouver?

Moss and algae removal from interlock pavers in Vancouver requires a combination of mechanical cleaning, chemical treatment, and preventive measures — this is one of the most common maintenance challenges in Metro Vancouver's persistently moist climate.

The most effective approach starts with **pressure washing using a surface cleaner attachment** at 1,500-2,500 PSI. The rotating surface cleaner prevents striping and provides even cleaning across the paver surface. Work systematically across the entire area, overlapping passes slightly. This mechanical removal eliminates most of the visible moss and algae growth while avoiding the surface damage that can occur from using too high pressure or incorrect nozzle angles.

For stubborn moss that pressure washing doesn't fully remove, apply a **moss killer containing iron sulphate or zinc sulphate** after the initial cleaning. These products are specifically formulated for moss control and won't damage concrete pavers or surrounding vegetation when used according to label directions. Avoid chlorine bleach, which damages polymeric sand, kills nearby plants, and can discolour coloured pavers. Commercial paver cleaners like those from SealGreen, Techniseal, or Alliance are formulated specifically for interlock surfaces and work well on both moss and algae.

Metro Vancouver's climate makes moss and algae growth inevitable — especially on north-facing installations and areas shaded by trees, buildings, or fences. The combination of 1,200mm+ annual rainfall, 60-80% humidity levels, and mild temperatures creates ideal growing conditions year-round. Areas that stay damp longer (under roof drip lines, in tree shade, or where drainage is poor) will see faster regrowth. This isn't a sign of poor installation — it's simply the reality of hardscaping in a marine climate.

Prevention is more effective than repeated removal. After cleaning, replenish polymeric sand in the joints if it appears thin or washed out. Fresh polymeric sand creates a harder surface that resists moss penetration better than eroded joints. Consider applying a penetrating paver sealer designed for your specific paver type — sealers don't prevent moss growth entirely but make future cleaning significantly easier and reduce the rate of regrowth.

Timing matters for both treatment and prevention. The best time for moss treatment is during Vancouver's drier months (May through September) when you can ensure the treatment has time to work before being diluted by rain. Plan to clean and treat pavers every 1-2 years, or whenever moss growth becomes noticeable. Properties with heavy tree cover or poor drainage may need annual treatment.

For **severe moss infestations or recurring problems**, consider improving drainage around the affected area, trimming overhanging branches to increase sunlight and air circulation, or installing French drains to reduce

standing moisture. Sometimes the issue isn't the pavers themselves but water pooling due to inadequate slope or blocked drainage.

This is definitely a DIY-friendly maintenance task that most Vancouver homeowners can handle with a pressure washer rental and appropriate moss treatment products. However, if you're dealing with extensive moss growth across a large area, or if the moss keeps returning quickly despite treatment, it may indicate underlying drainage issues that require professional assessment and correction.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for drainage improvements or major cleaning projects? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced professionals familiar with Metro Vancouver's unique moss and maintenance challenges.

Q8

How often should I power wash my paver driveway in the Lower Mainland?

Power washing your paver driveway in the Lower Mainland should be done annually, ideally in late spring (May-June) after the heavy winter rains have ended and before summer entertaining season begins. This timing removes the accumulated moss, algae, dirt, and organic debris that builds up during Metro Vancouver's wet season while giving you maximum enjoyment of a clean surface through the drier summer months.

Metro Vancouver's marine climate makes annual cleaning essential for both appearance and safety. The region's 1,200mm+ of annual rainfall, combined with 60-80% humidity levels and mild temperatures, creates ideal conditions for moss and algae growth on paver surfaces. Unlike drier climates where dirt and dust are the main concerns, Lower Mainland driveways develop slippery biological growth that becomes a genuine safety hazard during the October-to-March rainy season. Moss-covered pavers are particularly dangerous when wet, creating slip risks for pedestrians and reduced traction for vehicles.

The optimal cleaning window is May through September when you have the best chance of dry weather for 24-48 hours after cleaning. This allows the surface to dry completely before the next rainfall. Cleaning during the rainy season (October-March) is less effective because the surface stays damp, promoting rapid regrowth of moss and algae. If you must clean during winter months due to severe moss buildup, choose a dry weather window and consider applying a moss prevention treatment afterward.

Use a pressure washer rated 1,500-2,500 PSI with a rotating surface cleaner attachment for best results. The surface cleaner prevents the striping pattern that occurs with a standard wand and provides more even cleaning. Never exceed 2,500 PSI on concrete pavers as higher pressure can damage the surface texture and accelerate

wear. Start with lower pressure and increase gradually until you achieve effective cleaning without surface damage.

Additional cleaning may be needed in specific situations. North-facing driveways and those shaded by large trees (common in older Vancouver, North Vancouver, and West Vancouver neighborhoods) may require cleaning twice per year due to reduced sun exposure and increased moisture retention. Oil stains from vehicles should be treated immediately with a degreasing paver cleaner rather than waiting for the annual wash. Properties near the ocean (West Vancouver waterfront, North Vancouver waterfront, Richmond, Delta, White Rock) may need more frequent cleaning due to salt spray and higher humidity levels.

After power washing, plan to replenish polymeric sand in the joints. The cleaning process inevitably removes some joint sand, and Metro Vancouver's heavy rains wash out standard sand quickly. Wait for the pavers to dry completely (24-48 hours), then sweep fresh polymeric sand into the joints and activate according to manufacturer instructions. This is also an ideal time to apply paver sealer if desired, though wait at least 48 hours after cleaning and ensure no rain is forecast for 24 hours after sealer application.

Consider professional cleaning for large driveways or if you notice uneven wear patterns. A typical 600 sq ft driveway takes 3-4 hours to clean properly with the right equipment. Professional cleaning services in Metro Vancouver typically charge \$0.50-\$1.50 per sq ft and include joint sand replenishment. They also have commercial-grade equipment and experience identifying potential issues like base settlement or drainage problems that homeowners might miss.

When to hire a pro: If your driveway shows signs of settling, has widespread joint sand loss, or develops persistent staining that doesn't respond to pressure washing, these indicate underlying issues that require professional assessment and potentially base repair or releveling.

Q9

What's the best polymeric sand for Vancouver's wet climate?

For Metro Vancouver's wet climate, Techniseal HP NextGel and Alliance Gator Maxx G2 are the top-performing polymeric sands, specifically engineered to resist washout in high-rainfall environments like ours.

Metro Vancouver's 1,200mm+ annual rainfall and persistent 60-80% humidity levels make polymeric sand selection critical for long-term interlock performance. Standard polymeric sands that work adequately in drier climates often fail within 1-2 years here, washing out during heavy October-to-March rain events and allowing weeds and moss to infiltrate joints.

Techniseal HP NextGel is specifically formulated for wet climates and performs exceptionally well in Metro Vancouver conditions. It contains advanced binding agents that create a more flexible, water-resistant joint that can handle our frequent wet-dry cycles without cracking or washing out. The "HP" (High Performance) designation means it's engineered for challenging climates exactly like ours. Expect to pay \$45-65 per 50lb bag, but the longevity justifies the premium cost.

Alliance Gator Maxx G2 is another excellent wet-climate choice, featuring their "No Haze" technology that reduces the risk of surface hazing during activation — a common problem when working in Vancouver's humid conditions. It bonds well even in cooler temperatures (important for fall and spring installations) and resists the moss and algae growth that plagues standard polymeric sands in our marine climate.

Sakrete PermaSand offers good performance at a more moderate price point (\$35-45 per bag) and is widely available at Metro Vancouver building supply stores. While not quite as advanced as the premium options, it significantly outperforms basic polymeric sands in wet conditions.

Application timing is crucial in Metro Vancouver. Install polymeric sand only during a guaranteed 24-48 hour dry window — challenging between October and March. The sand must be properly activated with controlled water application (light misting, not flooding) and allowed to cure without rainfall. Many installations fail because contractors rush the activation process or don't account for our unpredictable weather.

Expect to replenish polymeric sand every 3-5 years in Metro Vancouver, compared to 5-8 years in drier climates. This isn't a product failure — it's normal maintenance in our wet environment. Budget \$3-5 per square foot for professional re-sanding, or tackle it as a DIY project if you're comfortable with the activation process.

When to hire a professional: While re-sanding existing joints is a reasonable DIY project, initial polymeric sand installation during new interlock construction should be left to experienced contractors who understand proper activation techniques and have the tools to achieve consistent results in our challenging climate.

Need help finding an interlock contractor experienced with wet-climate installations? Vancouver Interlock can match you with professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique requirements.

How do I prevent weeds from growing between my interlock pavers?

Polymeric sand is your best defense against weeds in paver joints, especially in Metro Vancouver's moist climate where weed growth is a persistent challenge. Unlike regular sand that washes out and provides an ideal growing medium for weeds, polymeric sand hardens when activated with water, creating a semi-rigid barrier that prevents weed seeds from germinating in the joints.

Why Weeds Love Regular Sand Joints

Standard jointing sand creates perfect conditions for weed growth — it retains moisture, provides nutrients when organic matter accumulates, and offers no resistance to root penetration. In Metro Vancouver's climate with over 1,200mm of annual rainfall and 60-80% humidity levels, regular sand joints become mini greenhouses for dandelions, moss, grass, and other opportunistic plants. Once weeds establish in joints, their roots spread beneath pavers and can actually lift and displace them over time.

Polymeric Sand Installation

Quality polymeric sand from manufacturers like Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete costs \$25-40 per 50-pound bag (covering approximately 100-150 sq ft depending on paver size and joint width). Professional installation runs \$2-4 per sq ft, while DIY application is feasible for most homeowners. The process involves sweeping out old sand completely, cleaning joints with a pressure washer or shop vacuum, ensuring pavers are completely dry, spreading polymeric sand and sweeping it into joints until full, removing excess sand from paver surfaces, then activating with a fine water mist — never flooding, which causes the polymers to wash out before curing.

Additional Weed Prevention Strategies

Pre-emergent herbicide applied in early spring (March-April in Metro Vancouver) prevents weed seeds from germinating for 3-4 months. Products containing corn gluten meal or synthetic pre-emergents like pendimethalin work well on established paver installations. **Proper drainage is equally important** — standing water in low spots encourages both weed growth and moss establishment. Ensure your paver installation has minimum 2% slope away from buildings and functional drainage at low points.

Maintenance Schedule for Metro Vancouver

Even quality polymeric sand degrades over time in Vancouver's wet climate and typically requires replenishment every 3-5 years, compared to 5-8 years in drier regions. Signs it's time to re-sand include visible gaps in joints, moss growing through joints, or weeds establishing despite previous polymeric sand application. **Annual moss treatment in fall** using iron sulfate or zinc sulfate-based moss killers prevents the slippery, weed-harboring moss growth that's common on north-facing installations and shaded areas.

When to Hire a Professional

DIY polymeric sand application works well for small areas under 200 sq ft, but larger installations benefit from professional application. Contractors have commercial-grade equipment for thorough joint cleaning, proper sand compaction into joints, and controlled water activation that prevents surface hazing. Professional re-sanding typically runs \$3-5 per sq ft including joint cleaning, new polymeric sand, and activation — worthwhile for driveways and large patios where improper application can create expensive surface damage.

Need help finding an interlock maintenance professional? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges.

Q11

Can pressure washing damage interlock pavers?

Yes, pressure washing can damage interlock pavers if done incorrectly, but when used properly, it's an effective cleaning method that most Metro Vancouver homeowners can safely perform themselves.

The key is understanding the right pressure settings, techniques, and timing for Vancouver's climate conditions. Concrete pavers are durable (typically rated for 8,000+ PSI compressive strength), but improper pressure washing can cause surface damage, joint sand erosion, and long-term problems that are expensive to repair.

Pressure Settings and Equipment

Use 1,500-2,500 PSI maximum pressure for concrete pavers. This range effectively removes moss, algae, dirt, and organic staining without damaging the paver surface. Many homeowner-grade pressure washers fall within this range, making them suitable for paver cleaning. Avoid commercial-grade units that exceed 3,000 PSI unless you can adjust the pressure down.

Never exceed 2,500 PSI on pavers — higher pressure can etch the surface, create visible striping, chip edges, and remove the factory finish from textured or coloured pavers. Once surface damage occurs, it's permanent and affects both appearance and slip resistance. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate where moss and algae growth is persistent, homeowners often think more pressure equals better cleaning, but this leads to costly surface damage.

Use a rotating surface cleaner attachment rather than a standard wand tip. Surface cleaners distribute pressure evenly across a circular area and prevent the striping pattern that occurs when using a concentrated spray tip. They also contain the spray pattern, reducing mess and preventing damage to adjacent landscaping.

Joint Sand Considerations

Pressure washing will remove joint sand — this is unavoidable and actually beneficial if your polymeric sand is old, contaminated with moss, or breaking down. Plan to replenish polymeric sand after pressure washing. In Metro Vancouver's rainy climate, polymeric sand typically needs replacement every 3-5 years anyway, so pressure washing provides an opportunity to refresh the entire joint system.

Avoid high-pressure direct spray into joints — while some sand removal is expected, aggressively blasting joints can remove too much sand and destabilize pavers. Use overlapping passes with the surface cleaner rather than concentrating on problem areas with a direct spray.

Timing and Weather Considerations

Choose dry weather windows for pressure washing in Metro Vancouver. The ideal time is late spring through early fall when you can expect 2-3 consecutive dry days. This allows pavers to dry completely before applying new polymeric sand, which requires dry conditions for proper activation.

Never pressure wash during freezing conditions — though Metro Vancouver rarely experiences hard freezes, avoid cleaning when temperatures approach 0°C. Water in paver pores can freeze and cause spalling (surface flaking).

What Pressure Washing Removes Effectively

Pressure washing excels at removing **moss, algae, dirt, organic staining, and surface grime** that accumulates on pavers in Vancouver's humid climate. It's particularly effective on north-facing installations and shaded areas where moss growth is heaviest. The combination of pressure and water volume physically removes organic growth that chemical treatments alone cannot eliminate.

Efflorescence (white powdery residue on new pavers) also responds well to pressure washing, though it may require multiple treatments as it continues to leach from the concrete for 6-12 months after installation.

What Pressure Washing Cannot Fix

Structural issues like settled or shifted pavers, uneven surfaces, or failed edge restraints require physical releveling — pressure washing only cleans the surface. **Oil stains, rust stains, and paint** typically require chemical treatment before or after pressure washing. **Severely degraded polymeric sand** that has turned to concrete-like chunks may need mechanical removal with a joint scraper before pressure washing.

Professional vs. DIY

Most homeowners can safely pressure wash their own pavers following proper techniques. Rent or purchase a 1,500-2,500 PSI unit, use a surface cleaner attachment, work in overlapping passes, and plan to re-sand joints afterward.

Hire a professional for large areas (over 500 sq ft), heavily stained pavers requiring chemical pre-treatment, or if you're uncomfortable operating pressure washing equipment. Professional cleaning services in Metro Vancouver typically charge \$0.50-\$1.50 per sq ft for paver cleaning including joint sand replenishment.

Always follow pressure washing with proper joint sand replacement using high-quality polymeric sand suited to Vancouver's wet climate. This completes the maintenance cycle and ensures your pavers remain stable and weed-resistant for another 3-5 years.

Q12

How do you remove rust stains from interlock pavers?

Rust stains on interlock pavers can be effectively removed using oxalic acid-based rust removers, muriatic acid solutions, or commercial paver cleaners specifically designed for rust removal. The key is acting quickly before the rust penetrates deeply into the paver surface, and choosing the right removal method based on the stain severity and paver type.

Oxalic acid (wood bleach) is the safest and most effective first approach for rust stain removal on concrete pavers. Mix oxalic acid powder with water according to package directions (typically 1 part acid to 10 parts water), apply to the stained area, let it sit for 10-15 minutes, then scrub with a stiff brush and rinse thoroughly. Oxalic acid is available at hardware stores and is much safer than muriatic acid while being highly effective on iron oxide stains. Always wear gloves and eye protection, and test in an inconspicuous area first.

For stubborn rust stains, muriatic acid (hydrochloric acid) diluted to 10:1 with water can be more aggressive, but requires extreme caution. Never use muriatic acid on natural stone pavers like limestone or marble as it will etch and damage the surface permanently. Only use muriatic acid on concrete pavers, wear full protective equipment including respirator, and ensure excellent ventilation. Apply the diluted solution, let it work for 5-10 minutes maximum, scrub gently, and flush immediately with large amounts of water. The acid will bubble and foam as it dissolves the rust.

Commercial rust removers like CLR (Calcium, Lime & Rust), Evapo-Rust, or specialized paver cleaners from manufacturers like SealGreen or Alliance offer convenience and safety. These products are formulated specifically for masonry surfaces and include surfactants that help penetrate the stain. Follow manufacturer instructions

exactly, as application times and dilution ratios vary by product.

Metro Vancouver's persistent moisture creates ideal conditions for rust stains from metal furniture, planters, irrigation systems, and even iron-rich soil runoff during heavy rains. The combination of moisture and oxygen accelerates rust formation, and Vancouver's frequent rainfall can spread rust stains across paver surfaces if not addressed promptly. Rust stains are particularly common on north-facing patios and areas under roof overhangs where moisture lingers longer.

Prevention is always better than removal in Metro Vancouver's wet climate. Use stainless steel or powder-coated outdoor furniture, place rubber pads under metal planters and grills, and address any rusting metal fixtures immediately. Consider applying a penetrating paver sealer after rust removal to make future stains easier to clean and prevent deep penetration into the paver surface.

After removing rust stains, neutralize any acid residue by rinsing the area with a baking soda solution (1 cup baking soda per gallon of water), then flush thoroughly with clean water. This is especially important with muriatic acid, which can continue etching the surface if not properly neutralized. Allow the area to dry completely before applying any sealers or polymeric sand.

Professional cleaning may be necessary for extensive rust staining or when rust has penetrated deeply into the paver surface. Commercial pressure washing services have access to heated water systems, specialized cleaning chemicals, and surface restoration equipment that can remove stains that resist homeowner treatment methods.

Need help finding a professional paver cleaning service? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who specialize in interlock restoration and maintenance throughout Metro Vancouver.

What's the best way to clean oil stains off a paver driveway?

Oil stains on paver driveways require immediate action and the right cleaning approach — fresh stains come out much easier than old, set-in stains that have penetrated deep into the concrete paver surface.

The key to successful oil stain removal is acting quickly and using the proper degreasing agents rather than just water and soap. Oil penetrates into the porous surface of concrete pavers within hours, so the sooner you treat the stain, the better your results will be.

For Fresh Oil Stains (within 24 hours): Start by absorbing as much oil as possible with kitty litter, sand, or commercial oil absorbent. Let it sit for 15-20 minutes, then sweep it up. Never hose down fresh oil — this just spreads it around and drives it deeper into the pavers. After absorbing the surface oil, apply a commercial concrete degreaser like Purple Power, Simple Green Pro HD, or Krud Kutter Concrete Clean. These degreasers are specifically formulated to break down petroleum-based stains. Apply the degreaser full-strength, let it sit for 10-15 minutes, then scrub with a stiff brush and rinse thoroughly.

For Set-In Oil Stains (older than 24 hours): Older stains require more aggressive treatment. Make a paste using powdered laundry detergent (the kind with enzymes) and hot water, or use a commercial poultice like Oil-Dri or similar clay-based absorbent mixed with acetone or mineral spirits. Spread the paste over the stain, extending about an inch beyond the stain edges, and cover with plastic wrap taped down at the edges. Let this sit for 24 hours — the poultice draws the oil out of the concrete as it dries. Remove the plastic and let the paste dry completely, then scrape it off and rinse the area. You may need to repeat this process 2-3 times for stubborn stains.

Metro Vancouver Considerations: Our persistent moisture and frequent rainfall can actually help with oil stain removal by keeping cleaning products active longer, but it also means you need to time your cleaning for dry weather windows. Don't attempt oil stain removal during the rainy season (October through March) unless you can protect the area from rain for 24-48 hours. The high humidity in Metro Vancouver means cleaning products take longer to dry, which can actually improve their effectiveness if you're patient.

Professional-Grade Solutions: For severe staining or valuable driveways, consider renting a pressure washer with a surface cleaner attachment and using hot water if available. Hot water (160-180°F) breaks down oil much more effectively than cold water. Some tool rental shops in Metro Vancouver rent hot-water pressure washers specifically for concrete cleaning. Always test pressure washing on an inconspicuous area first — too much pressure (over 3,000 PSI) can damage paver surfaces and joint sand.

Prevention Tips: Place drip pans under vehicles with known leaks, and keep oil absorbent material handy in your garage. Consider sealing your paver driveway with a penetrating sealer that includes oil and stain resistance — this

makes future cleanup much easier. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, sealed pavers also resist moss growth and joint sand erosion better than unsealed surfaces.

When to Call a Professional: If the oil stain covers more than a few square feet, has been there for months or years, or if your initial cleaning attempts haven't worked, professional concrete restoration companies have access to stronger degreasers, hot-water extraction equipment, and can even replace individual stained pavers if necessary. Large or persistent stains may require grinding the paver surface and re-texturing, which is definitely professional work.

Need help finding a contractor experienced with paver restoration? Vancouver Interlock can match you with professionals who specialize in interlock maintenance and repair throughout Metro Vancouver.

Q14

Should I use vinegar or bleach to clean moss off pavers?

Neither vinegar nor bleach is the best choice for cleaning moss off pavers in Metro Vancouver. While both can kill moss, they each have significant drawbacks that make them less effective than purpose-made moss treatments for interlock surfaces.

Vinegar (acetic acid) can kill moss but requires multiple applications at high concentrations (20%+ horticultural vinegar, not household 5% vinegar) to be effective. The bigger issue is that vinegar is acidic and can etch or discolor certain types of pavers, particularly natural stone like limestone or travertine. It also doesn't prevent moss from returning and can damage polymeric sand in the joints over time.

Chlorine bleach should never be used on pavers. It damages polymeric sand by breaking down the binding polymers, kills surrounding vegetation and grass, can discolor colored concrete pavers, and creates runoff that harms plants and potentially violates municipal stormwater bylaws. In Metro Vancouver's environmentally conscious municipalities, using chlorine bleach on outdoor surfaces is increasingly discouraged.

The most effective approach for moss removal on Metro Vancouver pavers is iron sulphate (ferrous sulphate) or zinc sulphate-based moss killers. These products are specifically designed for hardscaping, kill moss and algae effectively, don't damage polymeric sand, and actually help prevent regrowth. Products like Bayer Moss & Algae Killer or similar iron-based treatments work within 24-48 hours and turn moss black before it dies off naturally. Apply during dry weather (challenging in Vancouver from October to March) and follow up with pressure washing once the moss has died.

For immediate removal combined with treatment, start with pressure washing at 1,500-2,000 PSI using a rotating surface cleaner attachment to avoid striping. This removes the bulk of moss growth mechanically. Follow immediately with an iron sulphate treatment to kill remaining spores and root systems. The combination approach works faster than chemical treatment alone.

Prevention is equally important in Metro Vancouver's moss-friendly climate. After cleaning, ensure proper drainage around the paver area, trim back vegetation that creates shade and traps moisture, and consider applying a preventive moss treatment annually in early spring. Areas that stay damp and shaded — common on north-facing patios and under tree canopies — will always be prone to moss regrowth.

Professional cleaning makes sense for large areas or persistent moss problems. Contractors have commercial-grade equipment and access to stronger treatments that aren't available to homeowners, plus they can address underlying drainage issues that contribute to moss growth.

Need help finding a contractor for extensive moss treatment or paver restoration? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced hardscape professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's unique moss and algae challenges.

Q15

How do you keep interlock looking new after 5 years in Vancouver?

Keeping interlock looking new after 5 years in Vancouver requires consistent maintenance focused on managing moisture, moss growth, and joint sand erosion — the three biggest challenges in our marine climate. With proper care, quality concrete pavers can look nearly new even after a decade in Metro Vancouver's wet conditions.

The key is understanding that Vancouver's persistent moisture and mild temperatures create ideal conditions for moss, algae, and weed growth that can make even high-quality pavers look neglected within 2-3 years without maintenance. Unlike drier climates where pavers primarily need occasional cleaning, Vancouver installations require proactive moisture management and organic growth control.

Annual cleaning is essential — pressure wash your interlock every spring (April-May) using a surface cleaner attachment to remove moss, algae, dirt, and organic staining that accumulates over Vancouver's wet winter months. Use 1,500-2,500 PSI maximum to avoid surface damage. For stubborn moss growth, apply an iron sulphate-based moss killer 2-3 weeks before pressure washing to kill the moss first, then wash away the dead material. This is particularly important for north-facing installations and areas shaded by trees or buildings where

moss thrives.

Joint sand replenishment every 3-5 years is the most critical maintenance task for Vancouver interlock. Our heavy rainfall gradually erodes even high-quality polymeric sand from paver joints. Empty joints allow pavers to shift laterally, permit weed and moss intrusion, and create an unkempt appearance. Sweep out deteriorated sand, clean joints thoroughly, apply fresh polymeric sand (Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete), and activate properly with controlled water application. Never skip this step — it's what keeps pavers locked in place and looking professional.

Sealing every 5-7 years enhances colour and provides stain protection, though it's optional for concrete pavers. Clean pavers thoroughly and ensure joints are properly sanded before sealing. Choose a penetrating sealer rather than a film-forming topical sealer for Vancouver's climate — penetrating sealers allow moisture vapor transmission while protecting against stains and enhancing colour depth. Apply sealer only during a guaranteed 24-hour dry window, which typically means May through September in Vancouver.

Immediate stain treatment prevents permanent discoloration. Oil stains from vehicles, rust stains from metal furniture, and organic stains from leaves or berries should be treated within days, not months. Use appropriate cleaners — degreaser for oil, oxalic acid for rust, oxygen bleach for organic stains. The longer stains sit, especially in Vancouver's moisture-retentive environment, the deeper they penetrate and the harder they become to remove.

Edge maintenance prevents the "spreading" look that makes interlock appear old and poorly maintained. Check edge restraints annually and re-spike any that have loosened. Pavers along unrestrained edges (like the far edge of a driveway) will gradually spread outward under traffic loads, creating gaps and an uneven appearance. Proper edge restraint maintenance keeps lines crisp and professional-looking.

Drainage maintenance is critical in Vancouver — keep surface drains clear of debris, ensure proper slope away from buildings is maintained (minimum 2% or 1/4 inch per foot), and address any areas where water pools on the surface. Standing water accelerates moss growth, stains pavers, and can indicate base settlement that needs professional attention.

When to hire professionals: Annual cleaning and joint sand replenishment are reasonable DIY tasks for most homeowners. However, hire a professional for sealing (proper surface prep and application technique are critical), major releveling work (indicates base issues), or if you notice widespread settling or shifting (requires base repair). Attempting to fix structural issues yourself often makes them worse and more expensive to repair properly.

Quality interlock properly maintained can look nearly new after 15-20 years in Vancouver. The investment in regular maintenance — roughly \$500-1,500 annually for a typical residential installation — preserves both the appearance and the substantial investment you made in professional hardscaping.

Does efflorescence go away on its own or do I need to treat it?

Efflorescence on concrete pavers typically fades away naturally within 6-12 months through normal weathering and rainfall — no treatment is usually necessary. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, the frequent rain actually helps wash away the white calcium carbonate deposits more quickly than in drier regions.

What efflorescence actually is: That white, chalky residue appearing on your new concrete pavers is calcium carbonate leaching from the cement in the pavers. It's a completely natural process that occurs as moisture moves through the concrete and brings dissolved minerals to the surface, where they crystallize when the water evaporates. Every concrete paver installation experiences some degree of efflorescence initially — it's not a defect or quality issue.

Metro Vancouver's climate advantage: Our region's high rainfall (over 1,200mm annually) and persistent humidity actually work in your favor for efflorescence removal. The frequent rain between October and March naturally washes the white deposits away faster than they can accumulate. Most homeowners in Metro Vancouver see significant improvement within 3-6 months, with complete disappearance by the one-year mark. This is much faster than homeowners experience in Calgary, Phoenix, or other dry climates where efflorescence can persist for years.

When you might want to speed the process: If you're planning to seal your pavers or have an important event coming up, you can gently accelerate efflorescence removal. Use a stiff brush with plain water to scrub the affected areas during a dry period, then rinse thoroughly. For stubborn deposits, a mild acidic cleaner specifically designed for efflorescence (available at Home Depot or masonry supply stores) can help. Never use muriatic acid or harsh chemicals — they can damage the paver surface and surrounding vegetation.

Critical timing for sealing: Never seal pavers until efflorescence has completely stopped appearing. Sealing over active efflorescence traps the white deposits beneath the sealer permanently, creating a hazy, blotchy appearance that's extremely difficult to fix. Wait at least 6-12 months after installation before considering sealer application, and only seal during a dry period when no new efflorescence has appeared for at least 30 days.

When to be concerned: Heavy, persistent efflorescence that continues beyond 18 months or returns after cleaning might indicate moisture issues in the base or subgrade. This is rare but can occur if the installation has drainage problems or if the base material contains too many fines. If efflorescence seems excessive or won't fade naturally, have your installer inspect the drainage and base conditions.

The key is patience — let Metro Vancouver's natural rainfall do the work for you while the pavers cure and stabilize during their first year.

Can I use a leaf blower on interlock pavers without disturbing the sand?

Yes, you can safely use a leaf blower on interlock pavers, but only if you have properly installed polymeric sand in the joints. Standard play sand or mason sand will blow out immediately, but cured polymeric sand creates a hardened surface that resists displacement from leaf blower air pressure.

Polymeric sand is essential for Metro Vancouver interlock installations because it hardens when activated with water, creating a semi-rigid joint that resists both rain washout and wind displacement. In Vancouver's wet climate with frequent fall storms, polymeric sand (brands like Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete) should be used in all paver installations rather than standard jointing sand, which washes out within the first few heavy rainfalls.

When using a leaf blower on pavers, **keep the nozzle at least 12 inches above the surface and use moderate air pressure** — most residential leaf blowers produce 150-200 mph air velocity, which is fine for removing leaves and debris without disturbing properly cured polymeric sand. Avoid concentrating the airflow directly into paver joints, especially at close range. The goal is to blow debris off the paver surfaces, not to blast air into the joint lines.

Check your joint sand condition before blowing — if you see loose sand in the joints, empty joints, or moss growing through the joints, your polymeric sand needs replenishment before using a leaf blower. Loose or deteriorated joint sand will blow out, leaving gaps that allow pavers to shift and weeds to establish. In Metro Vancouver's climate, polymeric sand typically needs replenishment every 3-5 years due to gradual degradation from persistent moisture and moss growth.

Fall maintenance timing is important in Metro Vancouver — October through December brings heavy leaf drop from maples, alders, and other deciduous trees, combined with frequent rain. Wet leaves left on pavers promote moss and algae growth, create slippery surfaces, and can stain lighter-colored pavers. Regular leaf blowing during dry periods prevents organic matter from accumulating in joints and reduces the moss pressure that's common on Vancouver interlock installations.

Signs that your joint sand needs attention include visible gaps between pavers, sand scattered on the paver surface after rain, weeds or moss growing in joints, or pavers that rock slightly when stepped on. If you notice any of these conditions, avoid using a leaf blower until you've swept out deteriorated sand, cleaned the joints, and applied fresh polymeric sand with proper water activation.

When to hire a professional — if more than 30% of your paver joints need sand replenishment, or if you're dealing with significant moss infiltration, consider having the joints professionally cleaned and re-sanded. Contractors have specialized joint cleaning tools and experience with proper polymeric sand activation techniques that ensure long-term performance in Vancouver's challenging climate.

How do you prepare interlock pavers for winter in Vancouver?

Preparing interlock pavers for Vancouver's winter is primarily about drainage management and surface safety, since our marine climate brings persistent moisture rather than harsh freeze-thaw cycles. The key tasks are ensuring proper drainage, addressing moss growth, and replenishing joint sand before the heavy rains arrive.

Drainage and Water Management

Vancouver's winter brings over 70% of our annual rainfall between October and March, making water management the critical preparation task. Walk your paver installation and identify any areas where water pools or drains slowly — these spots will become problematic during heavy winter rains. Check that surface drainage slopes away from your house at minimum 2% grade (1/4 inch per foot). Clear any debris from drainage channels, catch basins, or perforated drain pipes around retaining walls. Clogged drainage during Vancouver's winter storms can saturate the base material beneath your pavers, leading to settling and shifting that becomes apparent in spring.

Inspect the edges of your paver installation where runoff exits the paved area. Heavy winter rains can cause erosion at these transition points, undermining edge restraints and destabilizing border pavers. Consider adding splash blocks or extending drainage pipes to carry water further from the paved surface.

Joint Sand Replenishment

Replenish polymeric sand in paver joints before winter arrives — this is the most important maintenance task for Vancouver interlock. Empty or eroded joints allow water to penetrate beneath pavers, washing out bedding sand and destabilizing the installation. Vancouver's heavy winter rains will quickly exploit any gaps in joint sand, causing pavers to shift and creating uneven surfaces.

Remove old, degraded joint sand using a pressure washer or joint sand removal tool. Clean joints should be 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep from the paver surface. Apply new polymeric sand (Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete brands perform well in Vancouver's climate) when pavers are completely dry and no rain is forecast for 24 hours. Sweep sand into joints, compact lightly, and activate according to manufacturer instructions. Properly installed polymeric sand will resist washout through the winter and inhibit moss growth in joints.

Moss and Algae Prevention

Treat existing moss growth before winter intensifies the problem. Vancouver's mild, moist winters create ideal conditions for moss, liverwort, and algae growth on paver surfaces — especially in shaded areas and north-facing installations. Moss becomes slippery and dangerous when wet, creating safety hazards on walkways and steps during the rainy season.

Apply iron sulphate or zinc sulphate-based moss killer to affected areas in late fall when moss is actively growing but before heavy rains begin. These products blacken and kill moss within 2-3 weeks. Pressure wash dead moss from paver surfaces before it decomposes and stains the pavers. For severe moss problems, consider applying a preventive moss treatment in early spring as well.

Surface Cleaning and Sealing Considerations

Clean paver surfaces of leaves, organic debris, and dirt before winter. Decomposing organic matter creates staining and provides nutrients for moss and weed growth. A thorough pressure washing (1,500-2,500 PSI maximum) removes surface contaminants and opens paver pores for better drainage.

Do not apply paver sealer in fall or winter — sealing requires warm, dry conditions with no rain forecast for 24-48 hours after application. Vancouver's October-to-March weather rarely provides suitable sealing windows. Plan sealer application for late spring or early summer when you can guarantee dry curing conditions.

Safety Preparations

Ensure adequate lighting along paver walkways and steps, as Vancouver's winter brings extended periods of low light and frequent overcast conditions. Consider applying anti-slip treatments to smooth paver surfaces that become slippery when wet — textured pavers generally provide better traction than smooth surfaces during wet conditions.

When to Call a Professional

Contact an interlock contractor if you notice significant settling, shifting, or drainage problems that developed during the previous winter. These issues typically worsen each year and require professional base repair, releveling, or drainage improvements. Don't attempt major repairs during the wet season — plan professional work for the dry months between May and October when proper base compaction and polymeric sand installation are possible.

What de-icing products are safe to use on interlock pavers?

Most commercial de-icing salts can damage concrete pavers and polymeric sand over time, but safer alternatives exist for Metro Vancouver's mild winter conditions.

The key concern with de-icing products on interlock pavers isn't freeze-thaw damage (since Metro Vancouver experiences minimal freezing), but rather chemical erosion of the concrete surface, degradation of polymeric sand, and potential staining or discoloration. Standard rock salt (sodium chloride) and calcium chloride are the most damaging to concrete pavers because they accelerate the freeze-thaw process in the concrete matrix and break down polymeric sand bonds.

Safer De-Icing Options for Pavers

Magnesium chloride is the gentlest chemical de-icer for concrete pavers. It's effective down to -13°C (8°F) — well below Vancouver's typical winter lows — and causes minimal concrete surface damage compared to sodium chloride or calcium chloride. Products like SafeStep or Ice Gone contain magnesium chloride and work well on paver surfaces. Apply sparingly — a light, even application is more effective than heavy coverage.

Potassium chloride (muriate of potash) is another paver-safe option that's effective to -12°C (10°F). It's gentler on concrete than sodium-based products and won't harm surrounding vegetation when spring runoff occurs. However, it's more expensive than other chemical de-icers.

Sand or fine gravel provides traction without any chemical damage to pavers or polymeric sand. This is often the best choice for Metro Vancouver's brief icy periods — usually just a few days per winter. Coarse sand (not fine sand that clogs joints) can be swept off pavers easily once temperatures rise. Avoid using sand with high clay content that stains pavers.

Metro Vancouver Climate Considerations

Vancouver's marine climate means ice events are typically brief (12-48 hours) and temperatures rarely stay below freezing for extended periods. Often, simply waiting for natural melting is the most practical approach. When de-icing is necessary, focus on high-traffic areas like walkway steps, the main path to the front door, and the transition from driveway to street.

Moss and algae growth on north-facing or shaded paver surfaces creates more winter slip hazards than ice in Metro Vancouver. Regular moss treatment with iron sulfate-based moss killer in fall prevents slippery conditions during winter rains. This is often more important than de-icing preparation for local conditions.

Products to Avoid on Pavers

Never use **rock salt (sodium chloride)** on concrete pavers. It's the most damaging chemical de-icer, causing surface scaling, joint sand erosion, and potential white residue staining. **Calcium chloride** is also harsh on concrete and generates heat that can cause rapid temperature changes in the paver surface. **Ammonium sulfate and ammonium nitrate** fertilizer-based de-icers severely damage concrete and should never be used on pavers.

Application Best Practices

Apply de-icing products **before** ice forms when possible — this prevents ice bonding to the paver surface and makes removal easier. Use the minimum effective amount — over-application wastes product and increases chemical exposure to the pavers. **Remove residual de-icing chemicals** in spring with thorough water rinsing to prevent long-term concrete damage and polymeric sand degradation.

For paver installations with **polymeric sand joints**, be especially cautious with chemical de-icers. Repeated chemical exposure breaks down the polymer bonds that keep the sand stable, leading to joint sand loss and weed intrusion. If you must use chemical de-icers regularly, plan to replenish polymeric sand every 2-3 years instead of the typical 3-5 year interval.

When to Hire a Pro

Consider professional winter maintenance for large paver driveways or commercial interlock installations where liability is a concern. For residential walkways and patios, homeowner application of appropriate de-icing products is straightforward, but focus on gentle products and minimal application in Vancouver's mild winter climate.

Q20

How do you fix faded or discoloured pavers without replacing them?

Faded or discoloured concrete pavers can often be restored to near-original appearance using cleaning, colour enhancement sealers, or staining techniques — full replacement is rarely necessary unless the pavers are severely damaged or you want a completely different colour.

The restoration approach depends on what caused the discolouration. In Metro Vancouver's marine climate, the most common causes are efflorescence (white chalky residue), moss and algae growth, dirt accumulation, UV fading from sun exposure, and staining from organic matter like leaves, oil, or rust.

Start with thorough cleaning as the foundation of any restoration project. Pressure wash the pavers with a surface cleaner attachment at 1,500-2,500 PSI to remove surface dirt, moss, and algae. For stubborn staining, use a commercial paver cleaner or oxygen bleach solution — avoid chlorine bleach as it can damage polymeric sand

and discolour pavers further. For oil stains, apply a degreasing agent and let it sit for 15-20 minutes before scrubbing with a stiff brush. Efflorescence (the white powdery residue common on newer pavers) often requires an efflorescence cleaner containing mild acid to dissolve the calcium carbonate deposits.

Colour-enhancing sealers are the most effective solution for faded pavers. These sealers penetrate the paver surface and darken the colour while adding a subtle sheen that makes colours appear richer and more vibrant. Wet-look sealers provide the most dramatic colour enhancement, making faded pavers look almost new again. Natural-look enhancing sealers provide colour restoration with less sheen. Quality brands like SealMaster, Foundation Armor, or Techniseal offer excellent colour-enhancing products. Apply sealer only to clean, dry pavers (48 hours minimum without rain) and ensure polymeric sand joints are properly filled and cured.

For severely faded or discoloured pavers, concrete staining can change the colour entirely. Acid-based concrete stains penetrate the paver surface and create permanent colour changes through a chemical reaction. Water-based concrete stains provide more colour options and are easier to apply but may not penetrate as deeply. This is more labour-intensive than sealing but allows you to dramatically change the appearance — turning grey pavers brown, or adding colour variation for a more natural look.

Metro Vancouver considerations make restoration particularly valuable here. The persistent moisture and mild temperatures mean moss and algae discolouration is ongoing — restoration combined with annual cleaning and moss treatment extends the time between major maintenance. The marine climate also means UV fading happens more gradually than in sunnier, drier climates, so colour-enhancing sealers can restore pavers that have faded slowly over 10-15 years.

Professional restoration is recommended for large areas (over 500 sq ft), severely stained pavers, or when you want to change colours entirely. Professionals have commercial-grade cleaning equipment, experience with different stain types, and access to contractor-grade sealers and stains. A professional restoration of a 400 sq ft patio typically runs \$800-\$2,000 depending on the level of cleaning required and the type of sealer or stain applied.

DIY restoration works well for smaller areas and basic colour enhancement. Clean the pavers thoroughly, allow 48 hours of dry weather, replenish polymeric sand if needed, then apply colour-enhancing sealer with a pump sprayer and back-roll with a 3/8-inch nap roller for even coverage. Work in manageable sections and maintain a wet edge to avoid lap marks.

The key is realistic expectations — restoration can dramatically improve appearance and make 10-year-old pavers look nearly new, but it won't make damaged pavers structurally sound or completely eliminate all staining. However, for most fading and discolouration issues, restoration costs 20-30% of replacement while achieving 80-90% of the visual improvement.

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.