

VANCOUVER INTERLOCK

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# Paver Driveways

Interlocking paver driveway installation, patterns,  
and base preparation — engineered for Metro  
Vancouver's heavy rainfall and clay-heavy soils

20 Expert Answers from Interlock IQ

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## How much does a paver driveway cost in Vancouver?

**A paver driveway in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$10,000-\$24,000 installed for a standard 500-800 square foot residential driveway.** This includes excavation, proper base preparation, 80mm pavers rated for vehicular traffic, edge restraints, polymeric sand, and professional installation labour.

The wide cost range reflects significant variables in Metro Vancouver's market. **Basic concrete pavers** (Holland or rectangular styles in standard colours) run \$15-\$20 per square foot installed, while **premium pavers** (tumbled, textured, or large-format styles in designer colours) cost \$25-\$35 per square foot installed. **Natural stone driveways** using flagstone or granite can reach \$40-\$60 per square foot installed due to the labour-intensive cutting and fitting process.

### **Metro Vancouver's marine climate significantly impacts driveway construction requirements and costs.**

With over 1,200mm of annual rainfall, proper drainage is absolutely critical. Driveway installations require a minimum 10-12 inch compacted gravel base (compared to 6-8 inches for patios) to handle both vehicle loads and persistent moisture. The base must include perforated drainage pipe at low points and proper slope away from the house and garage. Clay-heavy soils prevalent in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley require geotextile fabric between the subgrade and base to prevent soil migration that would destroy drainage capacity.

**Removing existing concrete or asphalt adds \$2,000-\$5,000** to the project cost. Jackhammering, saw-cutting, and disposal at approved facilities requires heavy equipment and specialized labour. Many Metro Vancouver properties have steep driveways or limited access, which increases both removal and installation costs by 20-30% due to manual material handling requirements.

**Permeable paver driveways** cost \$20-\$30 per square foot installed but offer significant advantages in Vancouver's wet climate. They allow rainwater to infiltrate through the joints into a specially engineered open-graded base, reducing runoff and potentially qualifying for municipal stormwater fee reductions. Several Metro Vancouver municipalities offer incentives for permeable paving as part of green infrastructure initiatives.

### **Key cost factors specific to Metro Vancouver include:**

- **Slope work:** Many properties in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam require retaining walls or extensive grading, adding \$5,000-\$15,000
- **Access challenges:** Properties without direct truck access require manual material transport, adding \$1,000-\$5,000
- **Strata requirements:** Townhouse and condo projects need strata approval and often require specific materials or colours, potentially limiting options

- **Labour rates:** Metro Vancouver's high cost of living makes labour 15-25% more expensive than other Canadian markets

**Professional installation is essential for driveways.** The combination of vehicle loads, Metro Vancouver's persistent moisture, and clay soils makes proper excavation depth, base compaction, and drainage design critical. DIY driveway installations typically fail within 1-2 years due to inadequate base preparation, resulting in settling, shifting, and costly repairs that exceed the original professional installation cost.

**Maintenance costs** should be factored into your budget. Polymeric sand replenishment every 3-5 years costs \$300-\$800. Moss and weed treatment is ongoing in Vancouver's humid climate. Professional sealing every 5-7 years costs \$1,500-\$3,500 for a typical driveway but significantly extends paver life and maintains appearance.

Need help finding an interlock installer? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced driveway contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network for free estimates on your project.

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Q2

## What's the average price per square foot for an interlock driveway in Metro Vancouver?

**Interlock driveway installation in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$20-\$30 per square foot installed, with most homeowners paying \$10,000-\$24,000 for a standard 500-800 square foot driveway.** This includes all materials, labour, excavation, base preparation, and proper drainage — essential components that cannot be skipped in Vancouver's wet climate.

The price range reflects several key factors that significantly impact driveway costs in Metro Vancouver. **Base preparation is the largest cost component** and the most critical for long-term performance. Driveways require 10-12 inches of compacted granular base (compared to 6-8 inches for patios) to support vehicle loads without settling. In Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils — particularly common in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley — proper excavation depth and geotextile fabric between the clay subgrade and gravel base are essential to prevent base contamination and drainage failure.

**Material selection affects pricing significantly.** Standard 80mm concrete pavers (required thickness for vehicular traffic) range from \$3-\$8 per square foot for materials alone. Premium options like large-format slabs, tumbled pavers with aged textures, or permeable pavers push material costs to \$8-\$15 per square foot. Natural stone driveways using granite or basalt can reach \$35-\$50 per square foot installed due to the cutting and fitting labour required.

**Metro Vancouver's challenging conditions drive higher labour costs** compared to drier regions. Proper drainage design is critical — surface slope away from the house, perforated drain pipe at low points, and connection to storm drainage where required. The region's persistent rainfall means inadequate drainage destroys driveway installations from below, causing settling and shifting within 1-3 years. **Removing existing concrete or asphalt adds \$2,000-\$5,000** to the project for saw-cutting, jackhammering, and disposal.

**Site access and slope work significantly impact pricing.** Properties without direct truck access for material delivery (common in older Vancouver neighbourhoods) require manual transport that can add \$2,000-\$4,000. Sloped driveways — frequent in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam — require additional retaining structures, stepped installation, and complex drainage design that increases costs by 25-40%.

**Permeable paver driveways** are increasingly popular and sometimes required by municipalities for stormwater management. These systems cost \$25-\$40 per square foot installed but may qualify for municipal stormwater fee reductions. The specialized open-graded aggregate base and permeable jointing materials require ICPI-certified installation practices.

**Quality installation is essential for driveways** — this is not a DIY project. Inadequate base preparation, insufficient compaction, or poor drainage design causes expensive failures within 2-3 years. Professional installation includes proper excavation, base compaction in controlled lifts, precision screeding, edge restraints on all unconfined edges, and polymeric sand application — critical in Vancouver's wet climate where standard sand washes out immediately.

**Maintenance costs should be factored into your budget.** Driveway pavers in Metro Vancouver require polymeric sand replenishment every 3-5 years (\$500-\$1,500), periodic cleaning and moss treatment, and potential sealing every 5-8 years (\$1,500-\$3,500 for an average driveway).

Need help finding an interlock installer for your driveway project? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate challenges and municipal requirements.

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Q3

## Is a paver driveway worth it compared to asphalt in Vancouver?

**A paver driveway is absolutely worth the investment compared to asphalt in Metro Vancouver, despite the higher upfront cost.** The region's wet climate, mild winters, and premium property values make pavers an excellent long-term choice that offers superior durability, aesthetics, and return on investment.

**Cost Comparison and Value** Asphalt driveways in Metro Vancouver run \$8-\$15 per square foot installed, while paver driveways cost \$20-\$30 per square foot. For a typical 600 square foot driveway, you're looking at \$4,800-\$9,000 for asphalt versus \$12,000-\$18,000 for pavers. However, this upfront premium pays dividends over time through dramatically lower maintenance costs and significantly longer lifespan.

Asphalt in Vancouver's climate requires seal coating every 2-3 years (\$800-\$1,500 per application) and complete resurfacing every 8-12 years (\$3,000-\$6,000). Pavers require only periodic joint sand replenishment every 3-5 years (\$300-\$800) and occasional cleaning. Over a 25-year period, asphalt's total cost of ownership often exceeds pavers when you factor in maintenance, repairs, and eventual replacement.

**Performance in Metro Vancouver's Climate** Vancouver's marine climate strongly favors pavers over asphalt. The region receives over 1,200mm of annual rainfall, and asphalt's biggest weakness is water penetration through cracks. Once water gets beneath asphalt, it softens the base and creates potholes, edge cracking, and surface deterioration. Pavers are inherently permeable at the joints, allowing water to drain through rather than pooling on the surface or penetrating through cracks.

Metro Vancouver's minimal freeze-thaw cycles (only 5-15 per year) mean asphalt doesn't suffer the severe frost damage common in Eastern Canada, but the persistent moisture creates different problems. Asphalt becomes soft and pliable during warm weather, making it susceptible to tire marking, fuel stains, and deformation under heavy vehicles. Pavers maintain their structural integrity regardless of temperature and resist oil stains that permanently damage asphalt.

**Aesthetic and Property Value Benefits** Paver driveways significantly enhance curb appeal and property values in Metro Vancouver's competitive real estate market. While asphalt looks industrial and deteriorates visibly over time (fading from black to gray, developing cracks and patches), pavers maintain their appearance for decades and can be individually replaced if damaged. The design flexibility of pavers allows you to complement your home's architecture with patterns, borders, and color combinations that asphalt simply cannot match.

Real estate professionals consistently report that quality hardscaping, including paver driveways, adds 5-10% to property values in Metro Vancouver. On a \$1.5 million home (typical for much of the region), that's \$75,000-\$150,000 in added value for an investment of \$12,000-\$18,000.

**Maintenance and Longevity** A properly installed paver driveway in Metro Vancouver will last 25-30+ years with minimal maintenance, while asphalt typically requires replacement after 15-20 years. Paver maintenance involves replenishing polymeric sand in the joints every 3-5 years and occasional pressure washing to remove moss and algae growth. Individual pavers can be lifted and replaced if damaged, making repairs invisible and permanent.

Asphalt maintenance is more intensive and disruptive. Crack sealing, seal coating, and eventual resurfacing require keeping vehicles off the driveway for 24-48 hours. Oil stains, tire marks, and weather damage accumulate over

time, giving asphalt a progressively worn appearance that cannot be fully restored.

**When Asphalt Makes Sense** Asphalt may be the better choice if you're planning to sell within 5 years and need to minimize upfront costs, or if your driveway exceeds 1,000 square feet where the cost differential becomes substantial. Asphalt is also faster to install (1-2 days versus 3-5 days for pavers) if timing is critical.

**Professional Installation is Essential** Both materials require professional installation in Metro Vancouver's challenging conditions. Paver driveways need 10-12 inches of compacted base, proper edge restraints, and precise grading for drainage. Asphalt requires proper base preparation and must be installed during dry weather with adequate temperature for proper curing.

For most Metro Vancouver homeowners, pavers offer superior long-term value through enhanced aesthetics, minimal maintenance, exceptional durability, and significant property value enhancement that more than justifies the initial investment premium over asphalt.

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## How much more expensive is a herringbone pattern driveway vs running bond?

**Herringbone pattern driveways typically cost \$2-5 more per square foot than running bond**, adding roughly \$1,000-\$4,000 to a standard 500-800 sq ft driveway project in Metro Vancouver.

The price difference comes from three main factors: **increased material waste, significantly more labour time, and higher skill requirements**. Herringbone requires precise 90-degree cuts along all edges and borders, creating 15-20% material waste compared to just 5-10% for running bond. The cutting and fitting process is much more time-intensive, and the pattern requires experienced installers who understand proper joint alignment and can maintain the pattern's geometric precision.

**Labour time increases substantially** because herringbone cannot be installed quickly in large sections like running bond. Each paver must be individually placed and checked for alignment with the 45-degree pattern. Border cutting is particularly labour-intensive — every edge requires custom-cut pieces, and corners need precise mitered cuts. Running bond, by contrast, uses mostly full pavers with simple straight cuts only at the edges.

**Material costs are higher** due to waste from all the border cutting. A 600 sq ft herringbone driveway might require ordering materials for 720 sq ft to account for cuts and waste. Premium rectangular pavers (like 6"x12" or 4"x8" Holland pavers) work best for herringbone and cost more than basic square pavers often used for running bond.

**In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, herringbone offers superior structural performance** that can justify the extra cost. The interlocking 90-degree pattern distributes loads more effectively than running bond, making it more resistant to rutting and shifting under vehicle traffic. This is particularly valuable on sloped driveways common in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam, where lateral forces from braking and turning are higher.

**Expect total project costs** of \$12-16 per sq ft for running bond driveway installation versus \$14-21 per sq ft for herringbone, including materials and labour. For a 600 sq ft driveway, that's \$7,200-\$9,600 for running bond versus \$8,400-\$12,600 for herringbone.

**The visual impact justifies the cost for many homeowners** — herringbone creates a premium, traditional European appearance that significantly enhances curb appeal and property value. However, if budget is the primary concern, running bond still provides excellent durability and a clean, classic look at a lower cost.

Need help finding an interlock installer experienced with herringbone patterns? Vancouver Interlock can match you with contractors who specialize in complex paver patterns and understand the precision required for proper herringbone installation.

## What's the cheapest paver option for a driveway in Surrey?

**The cheapest paver option for a Surrey driveway is standard concrete pavers at \$15-20 per square foot installed, but cutting corners on base preparation in Surrey's clay-heavy soils will cost you far more in repairs within 2-3 years.**

For a typical 600 square foot driveway in Surrey, you're looking at \$9,000-12,000 for a properly installed concrete paver driveway using basic rectangular Holland pavers in standard grey. This includes the essential 10-12 inch compacted gravel base, 80mm thick pavers rated for vehicular traffic, polymeric sand, and edge restraints. While this might seem expensive compared to asphalt (\$4,000-6,000), concrete pavers last 25+ years with proper maintenance versus 10-15 years for asphalt in Metro Vancouver's wet climate.

**Surrey's clay soil makes proper base preparation absolutely critical.** Much of Surrey sits on clay-heavy soil that doesn't drain well and expands when wet. This clay subgrade will destroy any paver driveway that doesn't have adequate base depth and proper drainage. The 10-12 inch compacted gravel base isn't optional — it's what prevents your driveway from turning into a wavy, settled mess after the first few winter rainy seasons. Geotextile fabric between the clay and gravel base prevents clay migration that would clog the drainage capacity of your base material over time.

**What drives up costs and what you can control:** The biggest cost variables are excavation depth (don't skimp), disposal of existing concrete or asphalt (adds \$2,000-4,000), and site access. If trucks can't reach your driveway area directly, manual material transport can add \$1,500-3,000 to the project. Pattern complexity also affects pricing — a simple running bond or herringbone pattern costs less than intricate designs requiring cutting.

**Avoid these false economies:** Using 60mm pavers instead of 80mm saves \$1-2 per square foot but creates a driveway that will crack under vehicle loads. Reducing base depth from 10 inches to 6 inches might save \$1,000 upfront but guarantees settling and repair costs of \$3,000-6,000 within three years. Standard sand instead of polymeric sand saves \$200 but washes out completely during Surrey's heavy winter rains.

**When to hire a professional:** Driveway installations require professional equipment — plate compactors, laser levels for proper drainage slope, and experience with Surrey's challenging soil conditions. A poorly installed paver driveway is worse than asphalt because the repair costs are enormous. The base preparation, compaction in controlled lifts, and proper edge restraint installation aren't DIY-friendly for a project this size.

Need help finding an interlock contractor experienced with Surrey's soil conditions? Vancouver Interlock can match you with local professionals who understand the specific challenges of building driveways on clay subgrade and can provide free estimates for your project.

## How much does it cost to replace a concrete driveway with pavers in Burnaby?

**Replacing a concrete driveway with pavers in Burnaby typically costs \$12,000-\$28,000 for a standard 500-800 sq ft driveway.** This includes removing the existing concrete, proper excavation and base preparation, 80mm concrete pavers rated for vehicular traffic, and professional installation with polymeric sand and edge restraints.

The total cost breaks down into several components that are essential for a long-lasting installation in Metro Vancouver's wet climate. **Concrete removal and disposal** adds \$3,000-\$6,000 to your project — existing concrete must be saw-cut into manageable sections, jackhammered out, loaded onto trucks, and disposed of at approved facilities. This is heavy, labour-intensive work that requires professional equipment and disposal permits.

**Base preparation is critical in Burnaby's clay-heavy soils.** Your new paver driveway needs 10-12 inches of compacted granular base to handle vehicle loads and drain properly in Metro Vancouver's 1,200mm+ annual rainfall. The clay subgrade common in Burnaby doesn't drain well and can destabilize your driveway if not properly addressed. Professional installation includes geotextile fabric between the clay and gravel base to prevent soil migration, proper compaction in 2-inch lifts, and adequate drainage slope away from your home and garage.

**Material costs for driveway pavers** run \$8-\$15 per sq ft for quality 80mm concrete pavers in standard colours and patterns. Premium textured pavers, large-format slabs, or specialty colours can push material costs to \$12-\$20 per sq ft. Popular choices for Burnaby driveways include Holland pavers in charcoal or grey tones that complement the region's natural landscape and hide tire marks better than lighter colours.

**Labour for paver driveway installation** runs \$8-\$15 per sq ft in Burnaby, reflecting Metro Vancouver's higher construction costs and WorkSafeBC requirements. Complex layouts, curved edges, or difficult site access can increase labour costs significantly. Properties without direct truck access to the driveway area — common in older Burnaby neighbourhoods — require manual material transport that can add \$2,000-\$4,000 to the project.

**Drainage considerations are especially important** for driveway replacements in Burnaby. Your new paver driveway must maintain proper drainage away from your home's foundation while connecting to the municipal storm system if required. Burnaby's engineering department may require a drainage permit for significant changes to impervious surface area or runoff patterns. Permeable pavers are an excellent option for Burnaby driveways — they cost \$15-\$25 per sq ft installed but help manage stormwater runoff and may qualify for municipal incentives.

**Timeline for a typical driveway replacement** is 3-5 days in dry weather — one day for concrete removal, 1-2 days for excavation and base preparation, and 1-2 days for paver installation and finishing. Work during Burnaby's rainy season (October through March) takes longer and costs more because contractors must protect the work area and time concrete removal and base work between weather windows.

**Maintenance costs** should factor into your decision. Paver driveways require polymeric sand replenishment every 3-5 years (\$300-\$600), occasional power washing to remove moss and algae buildup, and potential sealing every 5-8 years (\$1,500-\$3,000) to maintain appearance and protect against staining.

**This is definitely a professional installation project.** Driveway pavers must withstand 4,000+ pound vehicle loads repeatedly without settling or shifting. Inadequate base preparation — the most common DIY mistake — causes expensive failures within 1-3 years that require complete reinstallation.

Need help finding an interlock contractor for your Burnaby driveway replacement? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced local professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's climate challenges and municipal requirements.

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## Are paver driveways good for Vancouver rain and weather?

**Paver driveways are excellent for Vancouver's rainy climate when properly installed with adequate drainage and base preparation.** In fact, concrete pavers handle Metro Vancouver's persistent moisture and minimal freeze-thaw cycles better than poured concrete or asphalt driveways in several key ways.

### Why Pavers Excel in Vancouver's Marine Climate

Concrete pavers are manufactured to withstand 8,000+ PSI compressive strength and handle Vancouver's 5-15 annual freeze-thaw cycles without the cracking problems that plague poured concrete driveways. Unlike a monolithic concrete slab that cracks from thermal expansion and settlement, individual pavers can move slightly without structural failure. The joints between pavers actually provide controlled expansion space that prevents the surface cracking common in concrete driveways after 5-10 years.

**Drainage advantages** are significant in a region receiving 1,200-2,000mm of annual rainfall. Standard paver installations shed water effectively when built with proper 2% slope away from the house and garage. Even better, **permeable paver driveways** allow rainwater to infiltrate through the joints into a specially engineered aggregate base, reducing runoff and helping meet municipal stormwater management requirements. Several Metro Vancouver municipalities offer incentives for permeable paving installations.

### The Critical Factor: Proper Base Preparation

The key to a successful paver driveway in Vancouver's wet climate is **deep, well-compacted base preparation**. Driveway pavers require 10-12 inches of compacted granular base (compared to 6-8 inches for patios) to handle vehicle loads and provide drainage beneath the surface. This base must be installed in 2-inch lifts with proper compaction at each layer. **Inadequate base depth is the number one cause of driveway paver failure** — pavers installed on insufficient base will settle, shift, and create an uneven, ponding surface within 1-2 years.

**Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils** in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley require geotextile separation fabric between the clay subgrade and gravel base to prevent clay migration that destroys drainage capacity over time. Professional installation includes proper edge restraints along all unconfined edges and connection to drainage infrastructure where needed.

### Material Specifications for Vancouver Driveways

Use **80mm (3-1/8 inch) thick pavers** rated for vehicular traffic — standard 60mm pavers used for patios are not adequate for driveways. **Polymeric sand is essential** for joint stability in Vancouver's wet climate. Standard jointing sand washes out during heavy rainfall, allowing pavers to shift laterally under vehicle loads. Quality polymeric sand from Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete hardens when activated and resists washout, though it

requires replenishment every 3-5 years in Vancouver's climate.

### Maintenance Considerations

Paver driveways require more maintenance than concrete but offer easier repairs. **Moss and algae growth** on north-facing or shaded driveways is common during Vancouver's October-to-March rainy season, creating slippery conditions. Annual pressure washing (1,500-2,500 PSI maximum) removes organic growth. Individual pavers can be lifted and relevelled if settling occurs, unlike concrete slabs that require expensive concrete cutting and patching.

### Cost Reality

A typical 500-800 sq ft paver driveway in Metro Vancouver runs **\$10,000-\$24,000 installed**, compared to \$8,000-\$15,000 for stamped concrete or \$6,000-\$12,000 for plain concrete. The premium reflects the labour-intensive installation and superior materials, but paver driveways typically last 25+ years with proper maintenance versus 15-20 years for concrete in Vancouver's climate.

### When to Hire a Professional

Driveway paver installation is not a DIY project. The excavation depth, base compaction requirements, precise grading for drainage, and edge restraint installation require professional equipment and experience. Removing existing concrete or asphalt adds \$2,000-\$5,000 to the project cost.

Need help finding an interlock installer? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced driveway specialists for free estimates on your project.

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Q8

## How long does a paver driveway last in the Vancouver climate?

**A properly installed paver driveway in Metro Vancouver typically lasts 25-30 years with routine maintenance, and can last 40+ years with excellent care.** The key factors are quality base preparation, proper drainage design, and staying on top of joint sand maintenance in our wet climate.

**Metro Vancouver's marine climate is actually favorable for paver longevity** compared to freeze-thaw heavy regions like Ontario or Alberta. We only experience 5-15 freeze-thaw cycles per year versus 40-80 cycles in Toronto or Calgary, which means significantly less frost heave and surface spalling damage. However, our persistent moisture and heavy rainfall create different challenges that directly impact driveway lifespan.

**The base preparation is absolutely critical for longevity in our climate.** A paver driveway requires a minimum 10-12 inch compacted granular base to handle vehicle loads, but in Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils (especially

in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley), proper drainage beneath that base determines whether your driveway lasts 5 years or 25+ years. Water that cannot drain away saturates the base material, softens the clay subgrade, and causes differential settling where some sections sink while others remain level. This creates an uneven surface, ponding water, and eventually requires complete reconstruction.

**Joint sand maintenance is the most important factor homeowners control.** Vancouver receives over 1,200mm of annual rainfall, with 70% falling between October and March. This persistent rain gradually erodes joint sand from between pavers, even high-quality polymeric sand. When joints become empty, pavers lose lateral support and begin shifting under vehicle loads. **Plan to replenish polymeric sand every 3-5 years** in Metro Vancouver's climate - this \$500-1,500 maintenance task can extend your driveway's life by decades.

**Moss and organic growth accelerate wear** on north-facing driveways or those shaded by trees. Moss doesn't just create slippery surfaces - it retains moisture against the paver surface and gradually breaks down the joint sand. Annual cleaning with oxygen bleach or commercial paver cleaner, followed by fresh polymeric sand application, prevents this deterioration.

**Quality of initial installation matters enormously.** A driveway installed with inadequate base depth (6-8 inches instead of the required 10-12 inches), poor compaction, or standard sand instead of polymeric sand will show settling and shifting within 1-3 years in our climate. Conversely, a driveway built with proper excavation, geotextile fabric over clay subgrade, 12+ inches of well-compacted base, 80mm pavers rated for vehicular traffic, and quality polymeric sand can easily last 30+ years.

**Signs your driveway is aging well:** Pavers remain level with minimal settling, joints stay filled with sand, minimal moss growth, and no standing water after rain. **Warning signs of premature aging:** Individual pavers rocking when stepped on, empty joints with weeds growing through, uneven surfaces that pond water, or widespread moss coverage.

**Professional maintenance every 5-7 years** - including releveling any settled areas, complete joint sand replacement, and sealing - can extend a quality installation well beyond 30 years. The investment in proper installation (\$15,000-25,000 for a typical 600 sq ft driveway) pays dividends in longevity compared to budget installations that require major repairs within a decade.

Need help finding an interlock installer who understands Metro Vancouver's climate requirements? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced local contractors for a free estimate on your driveway project.

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Q9

**What base depth do you need for a paver driveway in the Lower Mainland?**

**For paver driveways in Metro Vancouver, you need a minimum of 10-12 inches of compacted granular base** — significantly deeper than patios or walkways. This depth is critical because driveways must support vehicle loads (typically 4,000+ pounds per axle) while managing the Lower Mainland's heavy rainfall and clay-heavy soils.

The base depth breaks down into specific layers for optimal performance. Start with 10-12 inches of 3/4-inch crushed gravel (also called road base or crusher run) compacted in 2-inch lifts using a plate compactor. Each lift must achieve 95%+ compaction before adding the next layer. Over this compacted base, add 1 inch of concrete sand (bedding sand) that gets screeded perfectly level for paver placement. The pavers themselves must be 80mm (3-1/8 inches) thick for vehicular traffic — standard 60mm pavers used for patios will crack under car and truck loads.

**Metro Vancouver's climate makes proper base depth even more critical** than in drier regions. The Lower Mainland receives over 1,200mm of annual rainfall, with 70% falling between October and March. Clay soils prevalent in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley don't drain well and become unstable when saturated. A shallow base (6-8 inches) might work temporarily in summer, but Vancouver's winter rains will saturate inadequate base material, causing the subgrade clay to soften and the driveway pavers to settle unevenly, creating dangerous dips and trip hazards.

**Proper drainage design is equally important as base depth.** Install the driveway with a minimum 2% slope (1/4 inch per foot) to shed water away from the house and toward the street or a drainage system. For driveways longer than 50 feet or in areas where water cannot drain to daylight, install a perforated drain pipe at the low point, surrounded by clear drain rock, with an outlet to the municipal storm drain. Place geotextile fabric between the clay subgrade and gravel base to prevent clay migration that would clog the base and destroy drainage over time.

**Edge restraints are mandatory along all unconfined edges** — typically the sides and far end of the driveway where pavers meet lawn or landscaping. Use commercial-grade aluminum or steel edge restraint spiked into the compacted base every 12 inches. Without proper edge restraint, vehicle loads cause pavers to spread outward, creating gaps and an unstable driving surface.

**This is definitely a professional installation.** DIY driveway attempts typically fail within 1-2 years because homeowners underestimate the excavation depth, lack proper compaction equipment, or skip critical details like edge restraints and drainage. A properly installed 500-800 sq ft paver driveway in Metro Vancouver runs \$10,000-\$24,000, but it will last 25+ years with minimal maintenance. Removing and disposing of existing concrete or asphalt adds \$2,000-\$5,000 to the project cost.

Need help finding an interlock installer? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced driveway contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network who understand Lower Mainland soil conditions and drainage requirements.

## Can you install pavers over an existing concrete driveway?

**Yes, you can install pavers over an existing concrete driveway, but only if the concrete is in excellent structural condition with proper drainage and no significant cracking or settling.** This overlay method can save on demolition costs but requires careful evaluation and specific installation techniques to ensure long-term success.

### Evaluating Your Existing Concrete

The existing concrete must be structurally sound with minimal cracking, no significant settling or heaving, and proper drainage away from the house. Small hairline cracks are acceptable, but any cracks wider than 1/8 inch, areas where the concrete has settled or lifted, or sections that pond water indicate the concrete is not suitable for overlay. In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, any drainage issues with the existing concrete will only worsen when pavers are installed on top, as the overlay raises the surface and can redirect water toward foundations or neighboring properties.

The concrete surface must also be relatively level — variations greater than 1/4 inch over 10 feet require grinding or leveling compound before paver installation. Most concrete driveways in Metro Vancouver are 15-30 years old and show some degree of settling, cracking, or surface deterioration that makes overlay challenging.

### Installation Process for Concrete Overlay

Installing pavers over concrete requires a modified approach compared to traditional excavation and base installation. The concrete surface must be thoroughly cleaned and any loose material removed. A bonding agent or primer is often applied to improve adhesion between the concrete and the bedding layer. Instead of the typical 1-inch sand bedding layer, a thin mortar bed (1/2 to 3/4 inch) is usually recommended for better adhesion and stability.

The pavers are then laid in the mortar bed and joints are filled with polymeric sand. However, this creates a rigid installation that cannot flex like traditional pavers on a granular base. Any movement in the underlying concrete — from freeze-thaw cycles, soil settlement, or root intrusion — will transfer directly to the pavers above, potentially causing cracking or displacement.

### Metro Vancouver Considerations

Vancouver's marine climate creates specific challenges for concrete overlay installations. The high humidity and persistent moisture can cause differential expansion between the concrete base and the paver overlay, leading to delamination. Additionally, if the existing concrete doesn't have adequate slope (minimum 2% away from buildings), the overlay will inherit these drainage problems and potentially make them worse.

Many concrete driveways in Metro Vancouver were poured in the 1980s and 1990s without proper vapor barriers or adequate base preparation. These driveways often show signs of moisture-related deterioration that makes them poor candidates for overlay. The region's clay-heavy soils in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley can cause concrete slabs to settle unevenly over time, creating an unstable base for pavers.

### **Cost Comparison and Long-Term Performance**

While overlay installation costs \$12-18 per square foot compared to \$15-25 per square foot for complete removal and replacement, the long-term performance is often compromised. Overlay installations typically require more maintenance and have a shorter lifespan than properly installed pavers on a granular base. The rigid installation prevents individual paver replacement and makes future repairs more complex.

### **When to Choose Removal Instead**

Complete concrete removal and traditional paver installation is recommended when the existing concrete shows any cracking, settling, or drainage issues. This approach costs more upfront (\$2,000-5,000 additional for removal and disposal) but provides a proper granular base that can flex with soil movement, drain effectively, and allow individual paver replacement. In Metro Vancouver's challenging climate and soil conditions, the investment in proper base preparation typically pays off in reduced maintenance and longer lifespan.

### **Professional Assessment Required**

A qualified interlock contractor should evaluate your existing concrete before deciding on overlay versus removal. They can assess structural integrity, drainage adequacy, and whether the existing surface can support a successful overlay installation.

Need help finding an interlock installer to evaluate your concrete driveway? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors who understand the specific challenges of working with existing concrete in Metro Vancouver's climate.

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**Q11**

## **What's the best paver pattern for a driveway that gets heavy traffic?**

**For heavy traffic driveways in Metro Vancouver, herringbone pattern is the strongest choice, followed by running bond for a balance of strength and cost-effectiveness.** These patterns distribute vehicle loads across multiple pavers and resist the lateral forces that cause individual pavers to shift or settle under repeated traffic.

**Herringbone pattern offers maximum structural strength** because each paver is supported on all four sides by adjacent pavers laid at 90-degree angles. This interlocking creates a rigid surface that distributes point loads (like tire contact patches) across a wider area. The 90-degree pattern also resists the forward and backward forces from acceleration, braking, and turning that can gradually shift pavers in weaker patterns. Herringbone requires more cutting at edges and borders, which increases installation labour costs by 15-25%, but the superior performance justifies the investment for driveways that see daily use from multiple vehicles.

**Running bond (also called stretcher bond) provides excellent strength at lower cost** than herringbone. In this pattern, rectangular pavers are laid in straight rows with each row offset by half a paver length, similar to traditional brick construction. Running bond distributes loads effectively across multiple pavers while requiring minimal cutting and faster installation than herringbone. This makes it the most popular driveway pattern in Metro Vancouver, offering the best balance of structural performance and installation cost.

**Avoid weak patterns for driveways.** Stack bond (pavers aligned in a grid pattern) provides minimal load distribution and should never be used for vehicular traffic. Basket weave patterns, while attractive, create weak points at the pattern intersections where pavers can shift under load. Random patterns with mixed sizes may look appealing but create numerous weak points and are difficult to repair when individual pavers settle.

**Metro Vancouver considerations make pattern choice even more critical.** The region's clay-heavy soils in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley can shift seasonally, and persistent rainfall can saturate bases that aren't properly drained. A strong interlocking pattern helps the paver surface remain stable even if minor base movement occurs. The 80mm (3-1/8 inch) thick pavers required for driveways are heavy enough that pattern strength becomes crucial for preventing individual pavers from settling into soft spots in the base.

**Installation requirements remain the same regardless of pattern** — 10-12 inches of compacted granular base, geotextile fabric over clay subgrade, proper edge restraints, and polymeric sand joints. However, herringbone and running bond patterns are more forgiving of minor base imperfections because load distribution prevents localized failures from spreading across the surface.

**For curved driveways or complex shapes,** running bond adapts more easily than herringbone, which requires extensive cutting to follow curves. Consider using running bond for the main traffic areas and herringbone for high-stress zones like the approach to the garage or areas where vehicles turn frequently.

A typical 600 sq ft driveway in herringbone pattern runs \$12,000-\$20,000 installed, while the same driveway in running bond costs \$10,000-\$18,000 installed. The 15-20% cost premium for herringbone pays dividends in longevity and reduced maintenance over the 20+ year lifespan of a properly installed paver driveway.

Need help finding an interlock installer experienced with heavy-duty driveway patterns? Vancouver Interlock can match you with contractors who understand both pattern engineering and Metro Vancouver's challenging soil and

climate conditions.

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Q12

## How long does it take to install a paver driveway in Vancouver?

**A typical residential paver driveway installation in Metro Vancouver takes 5-10 working days**, depending on size, complexity, weather conditions, and whether existing concrete or asphalt needs removal. This timeline assumes a standard 500-800 sq ft driveway with proper base preparation and favourable weather.

The installation process breaks down into several distinct phases, each requiring specific weather conditions and curing time. **Excavation and base preparation typically consume 60-70% of the total timeline** — this is the most critical phase that determines long-term performance in Vancouver's wet climate.

**Day 1-2: Excavation and removal.** If removing existing concrete or asphalt, this adds 1-2 days involving jackhammering, saw-cutting, and disposal. Excavation depth for driveways is typically 12-14 inches total (10-12 inches of compacted gravel base plus 2-3 inches for bedding sand and 80mm pavers). Clay-heavy soils common in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley require careful handling — wet clay cannot be properly compacted and may need time to dry or require soil amendment.

**Day 3-5: Base installation and compaction.** This is the most weather-dependent phase. Granular base material must be placed in 2-inch lifts and compacted to 95%+ density using a plate compactor or jumping jack. Each lift must be at the proper moisture content — not too wet (won't compact properly) and not too dry (creates dust and poor particle interlock). In Metro Vancouver's rainy season (October-March), contractors often tent the work area or wait for dry windows. Geotextile fabric installation between the clay subgrade and gravel base is essential and adds half a day.

**Day 6-7: Bedding sand and edge restraints.** Bedding sand must be screeded to precise levels using screed rails, creating a smooth 1-inch thick layer. Edge restraints (snap-edge or aluminum L-channel) are installed around all unconfined edges and spiked into the compacted base. This phase requires dry conditions — rain washes bedding sand out of level and contaminates the surface.

**Day 8-9: Paver installation.** Laying 80mm driveway pavers requires precision cutting around obstacles, maintaining straight lines, and ensuring proper joint spacing (typically 2-3mm). Complex patterns like herringbone or basket weave take longer than running bond. A two-person crew can typically lay 200-300 sq ft of pavers per day, depending on cutting requirements and pattern complexity.

**Day 10: Compaction and joint sand.** Final compaction with a plate compactor (using a rubber pad to protect paver surfaces) seats the pavers into the bedding sand. Polymeric sand is then swept into joints and activated with controlled water application. **This final phase is highly weather-dependent** — polymeric sand cannot be applied if rain is forecast within 24 hours, as premature water exposure causes washout and hazing.

**Weather significantly impacts timelines in Metro Vancouver.** The optimal installation window is May through October when drier conditions allow consistent progress. Installing during the rainy season (November-March) can double the timeline due to weather delays, though experienced contractors can work through light rain with proper tenting and scheduling. **Smart contractors schedule the excavation and base work for drier periods and time the final paver laying and polymeric sand application for stable weather windows.**

**Site access affects timeline substantially.** Properties with direct truck access to the driveway area proceed faster than those requiring wheelbarrow transport of materials. Steep driveways common in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam add complexity and time for proper drainage design and installation.

**Permit requirements can add 2-6 weeks to the overall project timeline** if municipal permits are required for driveway widening, new curb cuts, or storm drain connections. Most driveway replacements within the existing footprint don't require permits, but check with your municipality's engineering department.

**Quality contractors never rush the base preparation phase** — this is where shortcuts create long-term problems. A driveway installed with proper 10-12 inch compacted base will last 25+ years, while one with inadequate base preparation may show settling and shifting within 2-3 years, especially in Vancouver's wet climate with clay soils.

Need help finding an experienced driveway installer? Vancouver Interlock can match you with contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network who understand Metro Vancouver's unique climate and soil conditions.

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## Do I need a permit for a paver driveway in the City of Vancouver?

**Most paver driveway installations in the City of Vancouver do not require a building permit if you're replacing an existing driveway with the same footprint and maintaining existing drainage patterns.**

However, you will likely need a **driveway crossing permit** from the City's engineering department if you're creating new access to the street or significantly widening your existing driveway.

The key distinction is between the **paving work itself** and **changes to street access**. Installing pavers over your existing driveway area is typically considered maintenance and repair rather than new construction. The City of Vancouver focuses permit requirements on structural work (like retaining walls over 4 feet), grading changes that affect drainage, and new infrastructure connections rather than surface paving materials.

### **When you DO need permits for driveway work in Vancouver:**

A **driveway crossing permit** is required when you're creating a new curb cut, widening an existing driveway entrance, or changing the location of your driveway access. This permit involves the City's engineering department reviewing the impact on municipal infrastructure, sidewalks, street drainage, and traffic safety. The process typically takes 2-4 weeks and costs \$200-500 depending on the scope. You'll need to submit a site plan showing the proposed driveway location, width, and connection to the street.

If your paver driveway installation involves **significant grading changes** that alter drainage patterns on your property or direct runoff toward neighboring properties, you may need a grading permit or development permit. This is more common on sloped lots in areas like Queen Elizabeth, Riley Park, or the hillside neighborhoods where improper drainage can affect multiple properties.

**Retaining walls** associated with your driveway project require a building permit if they exceed 4 feet in height. Many Vancouver properties require retaining structures to manage the grade change between the street and the house, especially in neighborhoods with steep terrain.

**Strata properties** have additional requirements. If you live in a townhouse or condo with strata governance, you'll need strata approval through an alteration agreement before beginning any driveway work. Many strata corporations have specific requirements for paver colors, patterns, and drainage that must be approved in advance.

### **Practical steps for your Vancouver paver driveway:**

Contact the City of Vancouver's building department at 311 or visit their website to confirm whether your specific project requires permits. Provide them with details about your existing driveway size, the proposed paver installation area, any grade changes, and whether you're modifying street access.

For the paver installation itself, focus on proper base preparation for Vancouver's wet climate. Your driveway will need 10-12 inches of compacted granular base, 80mm thick pavers rated for vehicular traffic, and excellent drainage design with minimum 2% slope away from your house. The persistent rainfall in Vancouver makes drainage the critical engineering consideration - water that pools beneath your driveway pavers will saturate the base and cause settling within 1-2 years.

**When to hire a professional:** Driveway installations require specialized equipment for deep excavation, proper base compaction, and precision grading. A typical Vancouver driveway (500-800 sq ft) runs \$10,000-24,000 installed, including removal of existing concrete or asphalt if needed. This is not a DIY project - inadequate base preparation is the leading cause of driveway paver failure.

Need help finding an interlock installer? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network who understand City of Vancouver requirements and Metro Vancouver's challenging drainage conditions.

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Q14

## What thickness of pavers should I use for my driveway?

**For driveways in Metro Vancouver, you need 80mm (3-1/8 inch) thick pavers minimum.** This is the industry standard thickness designed to handle vehicular traffic loads without cracking or chipping under the weight of cars, trucks, and delivery vehicles.

**Standard 60mm pavers used for patios and walkways are not suitable for driveways.** While they may initially appear to handle light vehicle traffic, the repeated loading and unloading cycles from cars parking, turning, and braking will cause 60mm pavers to crack along the edges and develop surface spalling within 1-2 years. This is especially problematic in Metro Vancouver where the persistent moisture from our 1,200mm+ annual rainfall can infiltrate hairline cracks and accelerate freeze-thaw damage during our 5-15 annual freeze-thaw cycles.

**The base preparation is equally critical as paver thickness for driveway installations.** Your 80mm pavers must be installed on a minimum 10-12 inch deep compacted granular base in Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils. This base depth increases to 14-16 inches in areas with poor drainage or high clay content like parts of Surrey, Richmond, and Delta. The base material should be 3/4-inch minus crushed rock compacted in 2-inch lifts using a plate compactor to achieve 95%+ compaction. Without this substantial base, even 80mm pavers will settle unevenly under vehicle loads, creating a wavy, unsafe driving surface.

**Permeable pavers for driveways also come in 80mm thickness** and are increasingly popular in Metro Vancouver as municipalities encourage stormwater management solutions. Permeable pavers allow rainwater to infiltrate through the joints into a specially designed open-graded aggregate base, reducing runoff to the municipal storm system. Some Metro Vancouver municipalities offer stormwater fee reductions for properties that install permeable paving systems.

**Edge restraints are mandatory for driveway installations** to prevent the pavers from spreading under vehicle loads. Heavy-duty aluminum or steel edge restraints must be installed along all unconfined edges and properly spiked into the compacted base. The transition where your paver driveway meets the municipal sidewalk or street requires careful attention to grade matching and proper edge support.

**This is definitively a professional installation project.** Driveway paver installation requires excavation equipment, proper base compaction with commercial-grade plate compactors, laser levels for precise grading, and experience with vehicular load calculations. A poorly installed paver driveway will develop ruts, settling, and drainage problems within the first year. Professional installation of a typical 500-800 sq ft driveway in Metro Vancouver runs \$10,000-\$24,000 including excavation, base preparation, 80mm pavers, edge restraints, and polymeric sand jointing.

**Need help finding an interlock installer?** Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced driveway specialists who understand Metro Vancouver's soil conditions and drainage requirements for a free estimate on your project.

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Q15

## **Will interlock pavers sink or shift on my sloped driveway in North Vancouver?**

**Properly installed interlock pavers on a sloped driveway will not sink or shift, but inadequate base preparation on North Vancouver's steep terrain is the leading cause of paver failure.** The key is engineering the installation to handle both the slope's gravitational forces and North Vancouver's heavy rainfall.

### **Slope Engineering Requirements**

North Vancouver's challenging topography requires specialized installation techniques that many contractors underestimate. Driveways on slopes over 8-10% grade need additional measures beyond standard flat installations. The pavers themselves don't fail — it's always the base preparation that determines long-term stability.

**Critical base depth is 12-14 inches minimum** for sloped driveways, compared to 10-12 inches for flat driveways. The steeper the slope, the deeper the base requirement. North Vancouver's clay-heavy soils in many areas

compound this challenge because clay becomes slippery when saturated, creating a sliding plane beneath the gravel base. Geotextile fabric between the clay subgrade and gravel base is mandatory to prevent clay migration and provide separation.

**Drainage design becomes exponentially more important** on slopes. Water running down the driveway surface concentrates at the bottom, and without proper collection and disposal, this water saturates the base material at the lowest point. Install a trench drain or catch basin at the bottom of sloped driveways, connected to the municipal storm drain or a dry well. North Vancouver receives 1,400-2,000mm of annual rainfall depending on elevation, so managing this water flow is not optional.

### **Metro Vancouver Climate Factors**

North Vancouver's marine climate creates unique challenges for sloped interlock. The persistent moisture (60-80% humidity year-round) keeps the subgrade soils consistently damp, reducing their bearing capacity. Unlike prairie provinces where freeze-thaw is the main concern, here it's the constant moisture that destabilizes inadequately prepared bases.

**Moss and algae growth on sloped surfaces becomes a safety hazard** during the October-to-March rainy season. North-facing slopes and areas shaded by North Vancouver's abundant evergreen trees stay damp longer, promoting slippery organic growth. Choose textured pavers with slip-resistant surfaces for sloped driveways, and plan for annual moss treatment with iron sulphate-based products.

### **Installation Specifications for Slopes**

**Use 80mm (3-1/8 inch) pavers minimum** for any driveway, with 100mm pavers preferred for steep slopes over 12% grade. The additional thickness provides more interlock between units and better resistance to lateral forces trying to push pavers downhill.

**Edge restraint becomes critical on slopes.** Install heavy-duty aluminum or steel edge restraints along both sides of the driveway, spiked every 12 inches into the compacted base. The bottom edge of the driveway needs a concrete curb or soldier course of pavers set in concrete to prevent the entire installation from sliding downhill over time.

**Polymeric sand is mandatory** for sloped installations in North Vancouver. Standard jointing sand washes out within weeks during heavy rainfall events. High-quality polymeric sand (Techniseal, Alliance, or Sakrete) hardens when activated and helps lock pavers together against gravitational forces. Expect to replenish polymeric sand every 3-4 years on slopes due to Vancouver's aggressive rainfall.

### **Cost Considerations**

Sloped driveway installations in North Vancouver typically run \$15,000-\$30,000 for 500-800 square feet, which is 25-40% higher than flat installations. The additional cost covers deeper excavation, more base material, specialized drainage, heavy-duty edge restraints, and the increased labor complexity of working on slopes.

### **When to Hire a Professional**

Any sloped driveway installation requires professional expertise. The engineering calculations for base depth, drainage design, and edge restraint specifications are beyond DIY capabilities. North Vancouver's steep lots often require retaining walls, stepped installations, or terraced approaches that need professional design and municipal permits.

**Professional contractors experienced with North Vancouver's terrain** understand the local soil conditions, drainage requirements, and the specific challenges of building on slopes ranging from Capilano to Deep Cove. They'll also handle the municipal driveway crossing permit required for any new or widened driveway access.

Need help finding an interlock installer experienced with sloped installations? Vancouver Interlock can match you with contractors who specialize in North Vancouver's challenging terrain.

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## What's the difference between concrete pavers and clay brick for driveways?

Concrete pavers are the clear winner for Metro Vancouver driveways, offering superior durability, design flexibility, and performance in our wet climate, while clay brick — though attractive — lacks the strength and weather resistance needed for vehicular traffic in this region.

### Concrete Pavers: The Driveway Standard

Concrete pavers are specifically engineered for driveway applications, with **80mm thickness pavers rated for 8,000+ PSI compressive strength** — more than adequate for residential vehicle loads. They're manufactured with precise dimensions that create tight, stable joints and come in dozens of colours, textures, and patterns. Popular driveway styles include Holland pavers, tumbled pavers for an aged look, and large-format slabs that mimic natural stone.

In Metro Vancouver's marine climate, concrete pavers excel because they're **designed to handle moisture without deterioration**. They resist our frequent freeze-thaw cycles (5-15 per year), don't absorb water like clay materials, and maintain their structural integrity through decades of wet winters. The precise manufacturing also means they can be laid with tight joints filled with polymeric sand, which is crucial for preventing the joint sand washout that's common during our heavy October-through-March rainfall.

**Concrete paver driveways in Metro Vancouver typically cost \$10,000-\$24,000 installed** for 500-800 square feet, including proper excavation, 10-12 inches of compacted gravel base, edge restraints, and polymeric sand joints.

### Clay Brick: Beautiful But Problematic

Traditional clay brick pavers offer undeniable charm and Old World character, but they're **poorly suited for Metro Vancouver driveways** for several critical reasons. Clay brick is significantly softer than concrete (typically 3,000-5,000 PSI compressive strength), making it prone to chipping, cracking, and surface wear under vehicle traffic. The porous nature of clay also means it absorbs moisture readily — a major problem in our climate where materials can stay damp for months.

**Clay brick's biggest weakness in Metro Vancouver is freeze-thaw damage.** When clay absorbs moisture and then freezes, it expands and cracks — a process called spalling. Even our relatively mild freeze-thaw cycles cause clay brick to deteriorate over time, with surface flaking and corner chipping that creates an increasingly rough, uneven surface. Clay brick also becomes extremely slippery when wet, which is a safety concern given our rainy season extends from October through March.

The irregular dimensions of many clay bricks also create wider joints that are harder to fill properly with polymeric sand, leading to increased weed growth and joint sand washout during heavy rains.

## Performance in Metro Vancouver Conditions

**Drainage and moisture management** — the number one concern for any driveway material in our region — strongly favours concrete pavers. Their dense, non-porous surface sheds water effectively, while clay brick's absorption creates ongoing moisture-related problems. Concrete pavers also maintain their structural integrity when the base becomes saturated during heavy rainfall, while clay materials can shift and settle more readily.

**Moss and algae growth** — common on all paved surfaces in our humid climate — is easier to clean from concrete pavers using standard pressure washing. Clay brick's rougher, more porous surface tends to hold organic growth more tenaciously, requiring more aggressive cleaning that can damage the brick surface.

## Cost and Longevity Comparison

While clay brick pavers may cost slightly less initially (\$8-\$15 per square foot for materials versus \$10-\$20 for concrete), the **total installed cost is often higher** due to the additional labour required for cutting and fitting irregular clay units. More importantly, clay brick driveways require more frequent maintenance and earlier replacement in Metro Vancouver's climate.

A properly installed concrete paver driveway with adequate base preparation should last 25-30+ years with minimal maintenance beyond periodic joint sand replenishment and cleaning. Clay brick driveways typically show significant deterioration within 10-15 years and may require partial or complete replacement much sooner.

## Professional Installation Essential

Regardless of material choice, **driveway installation is not a DIY project**. Proper excavation (typically 18-20 inches total depth), base compaction in controlled lifts, precise edge restraint installation, and correct bedding sand screeding require professional equipment and experience. Inadequate base preparation is the leading cause of driveway failure within 1-3 years, regardless of the paver material used.

For Metro Vancouver driveways, concrete pavers offer the best combination of durability, weather resistance, design flexibility, and long-term value. Clay brick should be reserved for decorative walkways and patios where its charm can be appreciated without the performance demands of vehicular traffic.

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Q17

## How much does it cost to widen an existing paver driveway in Vancouver?

**Widening an existing paver driveway in Metro Vancouver typically costs \$15-\$35 per square foot for the new section, with most homeowners spending \$8,000-\$20,000 to add 200-400 square feet of driveway width.** The total cost depends on the size of the expansion, whether your existing pavers can be matched, site access, and municipal permit requirements.

### **Cost Breakdown for Driveway Widening**

The new section requires the same robust construction as the original driveway — 10-12 inches of compacted granular base, 80mm thick pavers rated for vehicular traffic, and proper edge restraints. You're essentially building a new driveway section that must seamlessly integrate with the existing installation. Material costs run \$8-\$15 per square foot (pavers, base rock, bedding sand, polymeric sand), while labour adds another \$8-\$20 per square foot depending on complexity and site conditions.

### **Paver Matching Challenges**

The biggest variable in driveway widening projects is whether your existing pavers can be matched exactly. Paver manufacturers discontinue colours and styles regularly, and even the same product can vary in colour between production runs. If your driveway is more than 5-7 years old, exact matching becomes increasingly difficult. When pavers can't be matched, you have three options: replace the entire driveway for uniformity (\$18,000-\$35,000 for a typical 600-800 sq ft driveway), create a deliberate contrast pattern using complementary pavers, or accept a close-but-not-perfect match that will become less noticeable as both sections weather together.

### **Metro Vancouver Specific Considerations**

Driveway widening in Metro Vancouver often requires a municipal driveway crossing permit, especially if you're expanding toward the street or changing the curb cut width. Each municipality has different setback requirements from property lines — typically 1-3 feet depending on the specific bylaw. Clay-heavy soils in Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley require geotextile fabric between the subgrade and base material to prevent clay migration. The marine climate means drainage design is critical — the new section must slope properly away from buildings and connect to existing drainage without creating ponding areas.

### **When Professional Installation is Essential**

Driveway widening is always a professional project because it requires matching the elevation of the existing driveway precisely, ensuring proper tie-in to prevent differential settling, and maintaining structural integrity under vehicle loads. The excavation must be deep enough (typically 14-16 inches total depth), the base must be compacted in controlled lifts using professional plate compactors, and the transition between old and new sections must be engineered to prevent a visible seam or height difference. Poor execution creates a driveway that settles unevenly, develops trip hazards, or channels water toward your foundation.

## Additional Cost Factors

Slope work adds 20-40% to costs — common in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, and Coquitlam where driveways often sit on sloped lots requiring retaining structures or extensive grading. Difficult access properties without direct truck access for material delivery can add \$2,000-\$5,000 in manual transport costs. Removing existing landscaping, irrigation lines, or concrete borders adds \$1,000-\$3,000. If your existing driveway has settling or drainage issues, addressing those problems during the widening project is cost-effective timing but adds to the total investment.

Need help finding an interlock contractor experienced with driveway widening? Vancouver Interlock can match you with professionals who understand Metro Vancouver's soil conditions, permit requirements, and material matching challenges for a free project estimate.

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Q18

## How do paver driveways handle oil and car fluid stains?

**Paver driveways handle oil and car fluid stains much better than concrete or asphalt driveways because individual stained pavers can be removed and replaced, and the textured surface of most concrete pavers helps disguise minor staining.** However, prompt cleanup is still essential to prevent permanent staining, especially on lighter-colored pavers.

### Stain Resistance and Cleanup

Concrete pavers are naturally porous, which means fresh oil spills will penetrate the surface if not cleaned quickly. However, the manufacturing process creates a denser surface layer that provides some initial stain resistance. Oil stains on pavers appear as dark spots that darken over time if untreated. The key is addressing spills immediately — blot up excess oil with absorbent material (kitty litter, sawdust, or commercial oil absorbent), then clean the area with degreasing dish soap and hot water, scrubbing with a stiff brush.

For older, set-in stains, commercial concrete degreasers or specialized paver cleaners work well. Products containing citrus-based solvents or alkaline degreasers are effective on oil stains. Apply the cleaner, let it dwell for the recommended time, scrub with a stiff brush, and rinse thoroughly. Pressure washing at 1,500-2,000 PSI can help remove stubborn stains, but avoid exceeding 2,500 PSI as this can damage the paver surface.

### Metro Vancouver Climate Considerations

In Metro Vancouver's wet climate, oil stains on pavers actually weather and fade faster than in drier regions due to the frequent rainfall from October through March. The persistent moisture helps break down petroleum residues over time. However, the same moisture that helps fade stains also promotes moss and algae growth, which can make stained areas more noticeable by creating color contrast. Regular cleaning and moss prevention become more important for maintaining a uniform appearance.

### **Sealing for Stain Protection**

Applying a penetrating paver sealer significantly improves stain resistance by filling the pores in the concrete surface. Sealed pavers give you more time to clean up spills before they penetrate permanently. In Metro Vancouver, where driveways stay damp for extended periods, sealing also helps prevent moss and algae growth that can make stains more visible. Quality acrylic or polyurethane-based paver sealers should be reapplied every 3-5 years for optimal protection.

Wait 6-12 months after installation before sealing new pavers to allow efflorescence (white powdery residue) to stop naturally. Sealing too early traps efflorescence beneath the sealer permanently.

### **Individual Paver Replacement**

The biggest advantage of paver driveways over concrete for stain management is the ability to replace individual damaged or heavily stained pavers. If a section becomes permanently stained from a major oil leak or transmission fluid spill, you can remove the affected pavers, clean or replace them, and reinstall without any visible repair line. This is impossible with concrete or asphalt driveways, where stain removal often requires resurfacing entire sections.

To replace stained pavers, remove the polymeric sand from around the affected pavers using a joint scraper or oscillating tool, lift the pavers with flat pry bars or paver pullers, clean or replace them, relay on fresh bedding sand, and re-apply polymeric sand to the joints.

### **Preventing Future Stains**

For vehicles with known leaks, place absorbent mats or drip pans under the engine and transmission areas when parked. Regular maintenance of vehicles reduces the likelihood of major spills. Consider using darker-colored pavers (charcoal, brown, or variegated colors) in driveway installations if oil staining is a concern — these colors naturally camouflage minor stains better than light gray or tan pavers.

### **When to Hire a Professional**

While homeowners can handle routine stain cleanup and maintenance, hire a professional for major stain removal involving commercial-grade cleaners, extensive pressure washing, or paver replacement across large areas. Professional cleaning services have access to stronger degreasers and hot-water pressure washing systems that

are more effective on set-in stains.

Vancouver Interlock can match you with contractors experienced in paver maintenance and restoration if your driveway needs professional stain treatment or paver replacement.

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## What edge restraints work best for paver driveways in Vancouver?

**Aluminum L-channel edge restraints are the best choice for paver driveways in Metro Vancouver**, offering superior strength, corrosion resistance, and long-term performance in our wet coastal climate. Snap-edge plastic restraints work for patios and walkways but lack the structural strength needed for driveway applications where vehicle loads create significant lateral pressure on the paver edges.

**Aluminum L-channel restraints** (brands like Pave Edge, Pave Tech, or Brock PaverEdge) are specifically engineered for vehicular applications. The L-shaped profile sits against the edge pavers with the vertical leg providing lateral support and the horizontal leg extending under the pavers for additional stability. These restraints are typically 3-4 inches tall and made from heavy-gauge aluminum that won't rust or corrode in Vancouver's marine environment. They're secured with 10-inch galvanized spikes driven through pre-punched holes into the compacted base every 12-18 inches. Quality aluminum edge restraints cost \$8-12 per linear foot installed but are essential for preventing driveway edge failure.

**Steel edge restraints** are another professional-grade option, particularly hot-dipped galvanized steel L-channel. Steel is stronger than aluminum and costs slightly less (\$6-10 per linear foot), but galvanized coatings can eventually fail in coastal areas of West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Richmond, and White Rock where salt air accelerates corrosion. For inland Metro Vancouver locations, galvanized steel restraints perform well for 15-20 years before showing rust.

**Avoid plastic snap-edge restraints for driveways** - they're designed for foot traffic only and will flex, break, or pull out under vehicle loads. The repeated stress of cars driving over the driveway edge (especially during backing maneuvers) creates forces that plastic restraints simply cannot handle. Driveway edge failure typically shows up as pavers spreading outward, creating gaps at the joints and an uneven surface that gets progressively worse over time.

**Installation specifics for Vancouver conditions:** Edge restraints must be installed on the compacted gravel base, never on the bedding sand layer. In Metro Vancouver's clay-heavy soils (particularly Surrey, Richmond, Delta, and Langley), the restraint spikes need to penetrate at least 6 inches into the compacted base for adequate holding power. The restraint should sit flush with the final paver height - not above or below. For curved driveway edges, flexible aluminum restraints can be bent to follow the curve, or segmented restraints designed for curves should be used.

**Concrete curbing** is the ultimate edge restraint for high-end driveway installations. A poured concrete curb 6 inches wide and extending below the frost line provides permanent, immovable edge support. This is common for large estate driveways in West Vancouver, North Vancouver, and other upscale areas. Concrete curbing costs \$15-

25 per linear foot installed but eliminates any possibility of edge movement and creates a clean, finished appearance.

**Professional installation is essential** for driveway edge restraints. Improper installation - wrong spike depth, inadequate base compaction beneath the restraint, or gaps between restraint sections - leads to edge failure within 1-2 years. The edge restraint installation happens after base preparation but before laying pavers, and it's one of the most critical steps in the entire driveway construction process. A properly installed aluminum edge restraint system should last 20+ years in Metro Vancouver conditions.

Need help finding an interlock installer experienced with proper driveway edge restraint installation? Vancouver Interlock can match you with contractors who understand the structural requirements for vehicular applications.

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Q20

## Do paver driveways increase home value in the Vancouver housing market?

**Yes, a well-installed paver driveway typically increases home value in Metro Vancouver by \$8,000-\$15,000, representing roughly 60-75% of the installation cost.** However, the value increase depends heavily on the quality of installation, material choice, and how the driveway complements your home's style and neighbourhood standards.

### Curb Appeal Impact in Vancouver's Competitive Market

Metro Vancouver's red-hot real estate market places enormous emphasis on first impressions, and your driveway is literally the first thing potential buyers see. A premium paver driveway creates immediate curb appeal that distinguishes your property from neighbouring homes with standard concrete or asphalt driveways. Real estate agents consistently report that homes with attractive hardscaping — particularly paver driveways, walkways, and patios — generate more showing requests and often sell faster than comparable properties with basic concrete driveways.

The visual impact is especially pronounced in established neighbourhoods like Kerrisdale, Dunbar, Kitsilano, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, and Burnaby Heights, where many homes still have original 1960s-1980s concrete driveways that are cracked, stained, or settling. A new paver driveway immediately signals to buyers that the property has been well-maintained and upgraded thoughtfully.

### Material Choice Affects Value Return

**Premium concrete pavers** in neutral colours (charcoal, grey, sandstone) with clean lines and professional installation provide the best value return. Tumbled pavers that mimic natural stone offer timeless appeal that won't look dated in 10-15 years. **Natural stone driveways** (granite, basalt, flagstone) command the highest resale premiums but cost significantly more upfront — expect \$20,000-\$40,000 for a typical Metro Vancouver driveway versus \$10,000-\$24,000 for concrete pavers.

**Permeable pavers** are increasingly valued by environmentally conscious buyers and may qualify for municipal stormwater fee reductions. As Metro Vancouver municipalities implement stricter stormwater management requirements, permeable driveways could become a selling advantage, particularly for larger properties in Surrey, Langley, and Richmond where lot coverage bylaws are tightening.

### **Installation Quality Determines Long-Term Value**

A poorly installed paver driveway actually hurts property value because buyers recognize settling, shifting, weed growth, and drainage problems as expensive future repairs. Metro Vancouver's heavy rainfall and clay-heavy soils in many areas demand professional-grade base preparation — 10-12 inches of compacted granular base, proper drainage, geotextile fabric, and quality edge restraints. Buyers and home inspectors in this market are increasingly sophisticated about identifying cut-rate hardscaping that will require costly repairs within 2-3 years.

### **Neighbourhood Context Matters**

In upscale areas like West Vancouver, Shaughnessy, or South Surrey, paver driveways are expected rather than exceptional — a basic concrete driveway might actually hurt your resale value. In more modest neighbourhoods, a well-designed paver driveway can be a significant differentiator that justifies a higher asking price. The key is matching the quality and style to neighbourhood expectations while avoiding over-improving for your area.

### **Maintenance Considerations for Resale**

Buyers appreciate that paver driveways can be individually repaired if damaged, unlike concrete slabs that require complete replacement when they crack or settle. However, they also recognize that pavers require periodic maintenance — joint sand replenishment every 3-5 years, moss and weed control, and occasional releveling. A well-maintained paver driveway with clean joints and no settling demonstrates pride of ownership. A neglected paver driveway with weeds, moss, and sunken areas suggests deferred maintenance throughout the property.

### **When to Hire a Professional**

Given the investment involved and the importance of proper installation for both performance and resale value, paver driveways should always be professionally installed. The excavation depth, base compaction, drainage design, and edge restraint installation require specialized equipment and experience. A DIY paver driveway that fails within 2-3 years becomes a liability rather than an asset when selling your home.

Need help finding an interlock installer? Vancouver Interlock can match you with experienced contractors from the Vancouver Construction Network who understand Metro Vancouver's climate challenges and building standards.

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