

asphalt

applications

5



Choosing a surfacing contractor



Asphalt
Information
Service

Introduction

Property owners with existing asphalt* or as more commonly known macadam private drives or parking areas associated with their premises are likely, at some stage, to need to consider having these resurfaced to maintain them in good condition and appearance. Others will have a need for completely new construction of such facilities.

Selecting a contractor to undertake this type of work is not easy, in view of the considerable number of companies and individuals who claim to be specialists in the work. Some of these will be genuine, well-established companies who will wish to provide a high quality result in order to maintain and increase their reputation. Unfortunately, others will be less reputable, with their main aim being to relieve the property owner of his/her money with little regard for the end result.

The guidance given in this information sheet is offered to help property owners choose a reputable surfacing contractor and to avoid the unfortunate and often very costly consequences of a poor quality job.

** The term 'asphalt' is used in this publication and unless accompanied by a descriptor for example "Asphalt Concrete" (AC), 'Hot Rolled Asphalt' (HRA) or 'Stone Mastic Asphalt' (SMA), is applied in its generic sense to refer to the range of mixtures used in the UK.*

Points to remember

The following guidelines will be helpful:

- a The first step in selecting a reputable contractor is to check that they are members of a recognised trade association, such as the Mineral Products Association. While membership of a trade association cannot guarantee that every job will be perfect, such bodies do try to ensure that member companies are responsible and well-established companies and not 'fly-by-night' operators. If there is any doubt about the validity of a company's claims to membership of a trade association, confirmation is only a phone call away to the association in question.
- b Obtain written quotations detailing the work to be done and the total price to be charged from at least two, and preferably three, established surfacing contractors and compare them. Ensure that quotations are on company letterhead paper. If possible, check the address out and try and identify a company registration number and address for the added security of being able to contact the company if any problems occur - if on checking the telephone number or address turn out to be a local pub or cafe or other accommodation address, be very cautious.
- c Asphalt surfacing work should normally be undertaken in accordance with British Standard, BS 594987¹. Experienced surfacing contractors will usually refer to this standard in their quotations. If no such reference is included, ask the contractor which British Standard the work will be carried out to. A lack of knowledge on this might indicate a lack of experience or competence.
- d Do not be easily persuaded by contractors knocking on your door and offering a cheap job for immediate cash payment, even if they have an official looking vehicle with yellow flashing beacon and 'motorway maintenance' signs. The completed job could well turn out to be far from cheap in the long run.
- e You may be very tempted by the persuasive suggestions that "we have some material left over from a motorway job that we have been doing", but bear in mind that most of the asphalts used in motorway construction are stiff, heavy-duty materials that are manufactured hot and have to be laid within a few hours of manufacture while still hot, so they are not readily storable and are therefore unlikely to be "left over".
- f Ask where the company has recently undertaken similar work in your area and, if possible, check with the property owner that he/she was satisfied with the way the work was carried out and the end result. Be cautious when looking at a job that has only just been completed as whilst the superficial appearance may be good, the overall construction may be lacking and the proof of adequacy can only be confirmed after the driveway has been in use for a few weeks.





g Do not be afraid to ask questions on points that concern you - reputable contractors will do their best to answer them, to satisfy you of their competence and to ensure customer satisfaction to further their reputation. Request a leaflet/information on the do's and don't's of using the new surfacing and how to minimise the risk of damaging the surface when using power steering and particularly during periods of hot weather in the summer. High ambient temperatures and solar absorption will soften asphalt surfaces, particularly those very recently laid.

h Obtain a proper receipt for your payment, particularly if it is for cash, preferable make the payment using a credit card where you will have the additional protection afforded by the credit card company.

j Any guarantee offered covering the performance of the surfacing is only as good as the traceability and credibility of the company carrying out the work. If the work is not carried out by a Registered Company and/or a member company of the Mineral Products Association it could be extremely difficult to resolve any problems that arise.

The laying of asphalts requires specialist experience and skills if a finish of good appearance and durable performance is to be obtained. As with the majority of work, poor preparation leads to a less than adequate job. A surface might only perform for a few months rather than the 5/10 years plus that may be expected from an asphalt laid by a professional contractor using the appropriate construction, laying equipment and a surfacing asphalt that is appropriate for the application.

The Asphalt Product Group of the Mineral Products Association comprises the member companies of the Mineral Products Association who manufacture asphalt road construction materials and/or undertake the laying of these. Members of the group have considerable experience, in some cases gained over many decades.

There are member companies of the group specialising in surfacing work operating throughout the UK. A list of the depots of these is given in the attached pages by broad geographical region. In some cases, a depot will serve more than one of the regions shown, particularly if it borders on two or more regions.

References

Important: When referring to any of the documents listed it is essential to check that it is the latest/current edition of that document. This can be readily confirmed by checking the currency of the document on the appropriate website.

- 1 British Standard BS 594987 Asphalt for roads and other paved areas - **Specification for transport, laying and compaction and type testing protocols**, BSI, London
- 2 **BSI website for the purchase of European and British Standards and Public Documents.**
www.bsiglobal.com/upload/Standards%20&%20Publications/shop.html

Information sheets in this series

- 1 The construction and surfacing of car parking areas including private drives and permeable hardstandings
- 2 The construction and surfacing of parking areas for medium and heavyweight vehicles
- 3 Resurfacing of roads and other paved areas using asphalt
- 4 Decorative and coloured finishes for asphalt surfacings
- 5 Choosing a surfacing contractor
- 6 Asphalt surfacings for high stress areas
- 7 Use of asphalt in the construction of games and sports areas
- 8 Farming applications of asphalt
- 9 Miscellaneous uses of asphalt
- 10 Airfield uses of asphalt
- 11 Construction and surfacing of footways and cycleways using asphalt
- 12 European Asphalt Standards and their application in the UK.

Booklet

'What's in a Road?'

A general review of pavement construction and the different materials that are used for the construction and maintenance of asphalt roads.

Enquiries for orders for 'What's in a Road?' should be addressed to the Mineral Products Association, details on next page.

Topics in Asphalt

- Asphalt - Road materials with quality
- Roads are 'green' with asphalt

Publications

Apart from this and the other information sheets and booklet dealing with uses of asphalt and pavement construction, a range of other publications is available from the Mineral Products Association covering aggregate production and processing, lime, ready-mixed concrete, sand and gravel and slag. A full list of these publications may be obtained from the address shown on the next page.

Further advice

General advice on the use of asphalts may be obtained from the Mineral Products Association at the address given on this information sheet. For detailed guidance on any site-specific matter, advice should be sought from local specialist surfacing contractor members of the Mineral Products Association.



The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

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