

SQUEEGEE VS SPRAY SEALCOATING

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Is it better to use a sprayer or a squeegee to apply sealcoating? The debate began as soon as the first mechanical sprayer was invented. There is no definitive answer – an experienced, conscientious sealcoating professional can obtain quality results using either method or a combination of the two methods. Each has its own advantages and potential drawbacks.

SQUEEGEE VS SPRAY SEALCOATING - ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ Squeegee applications typically produce a better bond between the pavement's surface and the sealant. The pressure exerted by the squeegee forces the sealant into surface cracks and voids, creating a bond that is of higher quality while often yielding a smoother appearance.
- ▶ Sprayers provide better control of the amount of sealant used, making the application process more precise.
- ▶ Squeegee machines take a little longer than sprayers, but hand squeegees are the most time-consuming. On many jobs, it will take twice as long for workers to apply sealcoating by hand. Because weather conditions play a significant role in drying time, if the weather is cool, the crew may not have time to apply the second coat on the same day.
- ▶ Spray methods usually work better if the pavement is smooth and free from surface voids. As already noted, if there are voids, the sealant can be forced into them with a squeegee, but if there are no voids, the squeegee may glide too easily over the surface and leave too little sealant behind.
- ▶ Squeegees can leave behind too much sealant if the surface of the pavement is coarse. This can lead to patches that take longer to cure as well as a finished surface that is less attractive.

COMBINATION METHODS ARE OFTEN BETTER

Many contractors find that they obtain better results if they apply the first coat by hand around buildings and sidewalks, use a squeegee machine or hand tools to apply the balance of the first coat and then use the spray method for the second coat. The squeegee method creates the superior bond, but it can leave slight imperfections such as tiny holes. These minor flaws can be eliminated when the spray method is used for the second coat.

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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Many problems reported for the different methods are due to an inexperienced operator or unethical contractor rather than the result of the method chosen. For example, a novice worker might leave behind noticeable lines when using a hand squeegee, a disreputable contractor might order the sealant to be thinned excessively or an inexperienced operator might set the spray rate too low. Your best bet is to find a reputable, experienced sealcoating professional and then trust his judgment on the best method or methods to use for your project.

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