

OTTAWA DRIVEWAYS

Driveway Resurfacing

Asphalt overlay, concrete resurfacing, and interlock re-leveling to restore aging driveways without full replacement

30 Expert Answers from Driveway IQ

ottawadriveways.com/construction-brain

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My 30-year-old concrete driveway in Gloucester has deep heaves — is polyjacking worth trying at this age?

Polyjacking (polyurethane foam injection) can temporarily level heaved concrete sections, but on a 30-year-old driveway in Gloucester with deep heaves, you're likely looking at a short-term fix on a surface that's approaching replacement anyway.

Polyjacking works by drilling small holes through the concrete and injecting expanding polyurethane foam beneath the slab to lift and level settled or heaved sections. The process costs \$8 to \$15 per square foot in Ottawa and can restore a level surface within hours. However, **the underlying cause of your heaving — Ottawa's deep frost penetration and Gloucester's prevalent clay soils — remains unchanged.** The clay beneath your driveway will continue expanding and contracting with moisture changes, and frost will keep penetrating below the original base layer.

At 30 years old, your concrete driveway is also dealing with **accumulated freeze-thaw damage throughout the slab.** Three decades of Ottawa winters mean the concrete has endured over 1,500 freeze-thaw cycles, likely causing micro-cracking, surface scaling from road salt exposure, and general deterioration of the concrete matrix. Even if polyjacking levels the surface temporarily, the aged concrete may develop new cracks or spalling within 2 to 3 years.

Gloucester's clay soil conditions make heaving particularly problematic because the clay extends well below the frost line in many areas. Your 30-year-old driveway was likely built with minimal base preparation by today's standards — possibly just 100 to 150mm of granular base rather than the 450mm+ depth recommended for modern driveways on clay subgrade. Polyjacking can't address this fundamental base deficiency.

Consider polyjacking only if you need 2 to 3 years of additional service life while planning for full replacement, the heaved sections are isolated to small areas (under 20% of the total driveway), and the rest of the concrete is in good condition with minimal cracking or spalling. The cost should be weighed against putting that money toward a new driveway with proper base preparation for Ottawa's climate.

For a permanent solution, full removal and replacement with a properly designed base (300mm Granular B sub-base, 150mm Granular A base, geotextile fabric over clay subgrade) will cost \$10 to \$16 per square foot but provide 25 to 30 years of service life. Given your driveway's age and Gloucester's challenging soil conditions, replacement is likely the more cost-effective long-term investment.

Need help finding a concrete contractor to evaluate your options? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who understand Gloucester's soil conditions and can assess whether polyjacking makes sense for your specific situation.

How much does infrared asphalt patching cost compared to traditional resurfacing for an Ottawa driveway?

Infrared asphalt patching in Ottawa typically costs \$8 to \$15 per square foot for spot repairs, while traditional resurfacing runs \$3.50 to \$5.50 per square foot for the entire driveway surface. However, infrared patching is only suitable for localized repairs (potholes, small failed sections, utility cuts), not full driveway restoration.

How Infrared Asphalt Patching Works

Infrared patching uses specialized heating equipment to soften existing asphalt to 300-350°F, allowing contractors to remove damaged material, add fresh hot-mix asphalt, and blend the repair seamlessly with the surrounding surface. The heated asphalt becomes workable again, creating a molecular bond between old and new material that's stronger than traditional cold patches or overlays.

This process works exceptionally well for **isolated problem areas** — potholes from utility cuts, small sections damaged by heavy vehicles, or localized base failure affecting 10-50 square feet. The repair integrates completely with existing asphalt, eliminating the visible seams and height differences common with traditional patching methods.

Ottawa Climate Considerations

Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw cycling makes infrared patching particularly valuable because it creates a monolithic repair that moves as one unit with the surrounding asphalt. Traditional cold patches fail within one Ottawa winter because they don't bond properly and allow water infiltration around the edges. Infrared repairs, when done properly, last as long as the surrounding original asphalt.

However, infrared patching has limitations in Ottawa's climate. The existing asphalt must be in reasonably good condition — if the surrounding area is extensively cracked, oxidized, or approaching end-of-life, heating it may cause additional cracking. Asphalt older than 15-20 years often becomes too brittle for successful infrared heating.

Cost Comparison Scenarios

For an **average Ottawa driveway (500 square feet)** with isolated damage:

- **Infrared patching (50 sq ft of repairs):** \$400-\$750
- **Full traditional resurfacing:** \$1,750-\$2,750
- **Savings:** \$1,000-\$2,000

However, if your driveway has **widespread cracking, multiple potholes, or general deterioration affecting**

more than 20-25% of the surface, traditional resurfacing becomes more cost-effective. The break-even point is typically around 100-150 square feet of repairs on an average driveway.

When Infrared Patching Makes Sense

Infrared patching is ideal for Ottawa driveways with good overall condition but specific problem areas from utility cuts, tree root damage, or localized base settlement. It's particularly valuable for **matching existing asphalt color and texture** — important in heritage districts or high-visibility front driveways where appearance matters.

The process also works well for **emergency repairs** during Ottawa's short paving season when scheduling full resurfacing is difficult, or for addressing safety hazards like deep potholes that can't wait until the next paving season.

Professional Requirements

Infrared patching requires specialized equipment (infrared heaters, rakes, compaction tools) and expertise in temperature management. This is not DIY work — improper heating damages asphalt permanently, and inadequate compaction leads to premature failure. Always hire contractors experienced with infrared technology who can assess whether your specific asphalt condition is suitable for this repair method.

Need help finding a contractor experienced with infrared asphalt patching? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who offer this specialized service.

Q3

Can my driveway be resurfaced if it has a utility trench cut running through it from a recent repair?

A utility trench cut through your driveway significantly complicates resurfacing and may require full replacement depending on how the trench was backfilled and restored. The success of resurfacing over a utility cut depends entirely on whether the trench was properly compacted with granular material or simply backfilled with loose soil.

Proper utility trench restoration involves removing the damaged asphalt, excavating the trench to stable subgrade, backfilling in compacted lifts with Granular A material, and patching with hot-mix asphalt that's properly tied into the existing surface. If this was done correctly by the utility company or their contractor, resurfacing over the patch is possible once the repair has settled for 6 to 12 months. However, many utility companies in Ottawa use temporary cold patch initially, then return months later for permanent restoration — if they return at all.

The critical issue is settlement and base stability. Utility trenches are narrow excavations that are difficult to compact properly, especially in Ottawa's clay soils. Even with proper backfilling, some settlement is inevitable as the disturbed soil consolidates through freeze-thaw cycles. If you resurface too soon over a utility cut, the overlay will crack and sink along the trench line within the first winter. The new asphalt essentially becomes a bridge over a soft spot, concentrating stress and causing premature failure.

Signs the trench wasn't properly restored include visible settlement along the cut line, cracking parallel to the trench, water pooling over the repair area, or a noticeable depression where vehicles bounce or scrape. Cold patch repairs are particularly problematic — this temporary material loosens and fails in Ottawa's freeze-thaw conditions, creating a weak foundation for any overlay. If the utility company used cold patch and hasn't returned for permanent restoration, you'll need to excavate and properly repair the trench before any resurfacing work.

For Ottawa homeowners, the timing matters significantly. If the utility work was recent (within the past year), wait at least one full freeze-thaw season before resurfacing to allow maximum settlement. Spring inspection after snowmelt reveals how well the repair held up through winter. If there's any depression, cracking, or instability along the trench line, full-depth repair is necessary before resurfacing the entire driveway.

When to hire a professional: Any utility trench repair requires proper excavation, granular backfill, and compaction equipment. A qualified paving contractor can assess whether the existing repair is stable enough for overlay or needs to be redone. They'll also determine if the rest of your driveway base is suitable for resurfacing or if the utility disruption exposed other underlying issues that require full replacement.

Need help finding a driveway contractor to assess your utility cut situation? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who understand proper trench restoration and overlay requirements.

Can a resurfaced driveway handle the weight of an RV or camper parked on it in Ottawa?

Whether a resurfaced driveway can handle RV weight depends entirely on the condition of the existing base underneath and the weight of your specific RV. Most asphalt overlays are only 50mm thick and rely completely on the structural integrity of what's beneath.

Understanding RV Weight and Driveway Loading

A typical travel trailer weighs 3,000 to 8,000 pounds loaded, while Class A motorhomes can exceed 30,000 pounds. More critical than total weight is the **axle loading** — how that weight distributes through the tires to the driveway surface. A heavy RV concentrates enormous point loads through relatively small tire contact patches, creating far more stress per square foot than regular passenger vehicles.

In Ottawa's extreme climate, this concentrated loading becomes even more problematic. When asphalt softens during summer heat (35+ degrees Celsius), heavy RV loads can cause **rutting and deformation** that becomes permanent once the asphalt cools. During freeze-thaw cycles, any existing base weakness beneath the overlay will telegraph through as cracking or settling under the RV's weight.

When Resurfacing Can Handle RV Weight

An asphalt overlay can support RV parking if the existing base is structurally sound — meaning the original driveway had proper **Granular B sub-base (300mm+)** and **Granular A base (150mm+)** that remains stable and well-compacted. If your existing driveway shows no significant cracking, settling, or edge deterioration, and the overlay was applied as a maintenance measure rather than to hide structural problems, it may handle moderate RV weight.

However, most Ottawa driveways built before 2000 have minimal base preparation by today's standards. Builder-grade driveways from the 1970s-1990s often have only 150-200mm of total base depth, which is insufficient for heavy vehicle loading even when new.

Red Flags That Indicate Base Problems

Never park an RV on a resurfaced driveway if the original surface showed **alligator cracking, potholes, edge cracking, or settling**. These are signs of base failure, and a thin overlay cannot fix structural problems. The RV weight will accelerate the underlying failure, causing the new surface to crack and rut within one season.

Similarly, if your driveway was resurfaced to "make it look better" rather than as routine maintenance on a structurally sound surface, it's likely hiding problems that RV weight will expose.

Ottawa-Specific Considerations

Ottawa's **clay soils** in areas like Barrhaven, Orleans, and Gloucester create additional challenges. Clay expands and contracts dramatically with moisture changes, and RV weight can compress clay subgrade that wasn't properly stabilized during original construction. The **deep frost line (1.2-1.5 metres)** means any base deficiencies become more severe during freeze-thaw cycles.

Practical Assessment Steps

Walk your driveway and look for any **soft spots, minor cracking, or slight depressions** where the overlay meets the original surface. These indicate base movement that will worsen under RV loading. Check the driveway edges — if they're crumbling or unsupported, RV weight near the edges will cause edge failure.

Consider the RV's **wheelbase and turning radius**. Tight maneuvering concentrates loads and creates shear forces that stress the surface differently than straight-line parking.

When to Hire a Pro

Have a paving contractor assess your specific situation before parking a heavy RV. They can determine if the existing base is adequate and whether additional structural work is needed. For RVs over 15,000 pounds, consider having the driveway **cored** to verify actual base depth and condition.

If your resurfaced driveway cannot handle RV weight, options include building a separate **reinforced parking pad** with proper base depth for heavy vehicles, or full driveway reconstruction with adequate structural design.

Need help finding a paving contractor to assess your driveway's RV capacity? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who understand heavy vehicle loading requirements.

Q5

How much does it cost to add a stamped concrete overlay when resurfacing my Ottawa driveway?

Stamped concrete overlay for driveway resurfacing in Ottawa typically costs \$8 to \$14 per square foot installed, meaning \$3,200 to \$5,600 for an average 400 square foot driveway. This assumes your existing concrete base is structurally sound with only surface wear or minor cracking.

What's Included in Overlay Pricing

A stamped concrete overlay involves applying a 25mm to 40mm layer of polymer-modified concrete over your existing surface, then stamping decorative patterns and applying integral or surface colour. The process includes surface preparation (cleaning, crack repair, bonding agent application), overlay placement, stamping while plastic, colour application, and protective sealing. Higher-end overlays with complex patterns, multiple colours, or premium sealers push toward the upper price range.

Critical Considerations for Ottawa Climate

Stamped concrete overlays face unique challenges in Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw environment. The overlay must bond perfectly to the existing surface — any delamination allows water penetration that will cause catastrophic failure during freeze-thaw cycles. Your existing concrete must be structurally sound with minimal cracking and no heaving or settling. If the base concrete has significant cracks, spalling, or movement, those problems will telegraph through the overlay within one to two winters.

Ottawa's 50+ annual freeze-thaw cycles are particularly hard on decorative concrete surfaces. The stamped texture creates more surface area exposed to water penetration, and the colour hardeners used in stamping can make the surface more porous than standard concrete. Professional installation must include proper slope for drainage (minimum 2% away from the house) and high-quality penetrating sealer application.

When Overlay Works vs. Full Replacement

Overlay is viable when your existing concrete is level, stable, and has only surface wear, minor hairline cracks, or cosmetic issues. However, if your driveway has structural cracks wider than 3mm, areas of spalling deeper than 10mm, significant settling, or drainage problems, full removal and replacement is the better long-term investment. Overlaying over compromised concrete locks in the problems beneath a decorative surface that will fail prematurely.

Maintenance Requirements in Ottawa

Stamped concrete overlays require resealing every 2 to 3 years in Ottawa's harsh climate — more frequently than standard concrete due to the textured surface and colour treatments. Use calcium chloride or magnesium chloride instead of rock salt for winter deicing, as salt causes surface scaling on decorative concrete. Budget \$300 to \$600 every 2-3 years for professional resealing to maintain appearance and weather protection.

Alternative Considerations

If your existing concrete needs significant repair work before overlay application, compare the total cost against full replacement with stamped concrete (\$16 to \$28 per square foot). Full replacement provides a 25-30 year lifespan versus 10-15 years for overlay, and allows for proper base preparation and drainage improvements that overlay cannot address.

Need help finding a concrete contractor experienced with Ottawa's climate challenges? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who understand the specific requirements for decorative concrete in our freeze-thaw environment.

Q6

How much does polyurethane foam injection cost to level my Ottawa driveway before resurfacing?

Polyurethane foam injection (also called polyjacking or foam jacking) typically costs \$8 to \$15 per square foot in Ottawa for driveway leveling, making it significantly more expensive than mudjacking but faster and longer-lasting.

Polyurethane foam injection is an increasingly popular method for lifting and leveling settled concrete driveways, sunken asphalt sections, and interlock areas before resurfacing. The process involves drilling small holes (typically 16mm diameter) through the driveway surface and injecting expanding polyurethane foam beneath to lift settled areas back to grade. The foam cures within 15 to 30 minutes, allowing immediate use of the driveway.

Cost factors for Ottawa driveway foam injection include the total square footage requiring lifting, the severity of settlement (how much lift is needed), accessibility for equipment, and the specific foam product used. Minor settling of 25mm or less costs toward the lower end of the range, while severe settlement requiring 75mm+ of lift approaches the higher end. Most Ottawa residential driveway leveling projects range from \$1,200 to \$4,000 depending on the affected area.

Ottawa's clay soils and freeze-thaw cycles make foam injection particularly relevant here. The expansive clay soils prevalent in Barrhaven, Orleans, Gloucester, and Riverside South cause differential settling as moisture content changes seasonally. Additionally, Ottawa's 50+ freeze-thaw cycles per winter accelerate settlement in driveways with inadequate base preparation. Foam injection addresses the symptoms but not the underlying cause — if your driveway settled due to poor base preparation or clay soil movement, the problem may recur unless drainage and base issues are also addressed.

Advantages of foam injection over traditional mudjacking include faster curing time (30 minutes versus 24-48 hours), lighter weight that won't stress weak subgrade further, and better resistance to Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycling. The polyurethane foam remains flexible and won't crack like concrete slurry. However, foam injection costs roughly double what mudjacking costs (\$4 to \$8 per square foot for mudjacking in Ottawa).

When foam injection makes sense before resurfacing: If you're planning to overlay new asphalt over existing concrete or asphalt, leveling first prevents the overlay from following the settled contours beneath. This is particularly important for asphalt overlays, which are only 50mm thick and will telegraph any underlying irregularities. For interlock driveways, foam injection can lift settled sections before releveling and adding new bedding sand.

Limitations to consider: Foam injection works best on concrete slabs and stable asphalt. It's less effective on loose gravel, failed asphalt that's already breaking apart, or areas where the base has completely washed out. If your driveway has extensive cracking, spalling, or structural damage beyond just settlement, full replacement may be more cost-effective than injection plus resurfacing.

Professional assessment is essential — foam injection requires specialized equipment and expertise to determine proper injection points, foam volume, and lift rates. Overpressure can crack concrete or heave adjacent areas. Most Ottawa concrete lifting contractors offer free assessments to determine if foam injection is appropriate for your specific settlement issues.

Need help finding a concrete lifting specialist or driveway contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who offer foam injection services and can assess whether leveling before resurfacing makes sense for your specific project.

Is spray-on asphalt resurfacing a viable option for residential driveways in Ottawa?

Spray-on asphalt resurfacing (also called chip seal or surface treatment) is generally NOT recommended for residential driveways in Ottawa. While this technique works well for rural roads and parking lots, it's poorly suited to Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw cycles and residential driveway conditions.

What spray-on resurfacing involves: A thin layer of liquid asphalt emulsion is sprayed onto the existing surface, immediately followed by a layer of small aggregate chips. The chips are rolled into the emulsion and excess stone is swept away after curing. The result is a textured surface that's supposed to seal minor cracks and restore traction.

Why it fails in Ottawa residential applications: Ottawa's 50+ annual freeze-thaw cycles cause the thin emulsion layer to crack and separate from the underlying asphalt within 1-2 winters. The aggregate chips begin loosening and can damage vehicles, get tracked into garages, and create maintenance headaches. Unlike hot-mix asphalt that bonds chemically with the existing surface, spray-on treatments rely on mechanical adhesion that breaks down rapidly under freeze-thaw stress.

Specific Ottawa climate challenges: The temperature swings from -30°C to +35°C cause the thin treatment layer to expand and contract differently than the base asphalt beneath it. Snow plowing and shoveling catch loose aggregate and tear sections of the treatment away. Road salt penetrates the porous surface and accelerates deterioration of both the treatment and underlying asphalt.

Better alternatives for Ottawa driveways: If your existing asphalt has minor surface cracking but a stable base, **crack filling followed by sealcoating** provides better protection at similar cost (\$0.40-\$0.80 per square foot vs \$0.50-\$1.00 for spray treatment). For more extensive surface damage, a **50mm hot-mix asphalt overlay** (\$2.50-\$4.50 per square foot) creates a proper structural surface that will last 15-20 years with maintenance.

When spray treatments might work: Large rural driveways or farm lanes with minimal snow plowing and light traffic loads can sometimes benefit from chip seal as an economical maintenance treatment. However, most Ottawa residential driveways see heavy snow removal, regular vehicle traffic, and salt exposure that quickly destroys spray-on treatments.

The bottom line: Invest in proper hot-mix asphalt resurfacing or sealcoating rather than spray treatments that will need replacement within 2-3 Ottawa winters. Quality materials and application methods cost more upfront but provide dramatically better longevity in our harsh climate.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for proper resurfacing? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who understand Ottawa's climate challenges.

Q8

How much does resurfacing a stamped concrete driveway cost in Ottawa if the pattern is worn but the base is solid?

Resurfacing a stamped concrete driveway in Ottawa typically costs \$8 to \$16 per square foot when the base is solid but the surface pattern and colour have worn away. For an average Ottawa driveway (40-60 square metres), expect to budget \$3,200 to \$9,600 for professional resurfacing.

The cost depends on the resurfacing method you choose. **Concrete overlay resurfacing** involves applying a new 10-15mm layer of decorative concrete over the existing surface, then re-stamping the pattern and applying fresh colour. This is the most common approach and runs \$8 to \$12 per square foot in Ottawa. **Polymer-modified overlay systems** offer superior adhesion and flexibility for Ottawa's freeze-thaw conditions but cost \$12 to \$16 per square foot.

Ottawa's extreme climate makes proper surface preparation critical for overlay success. The existing concrete must be thoroughly cleaned, etched, and tested for soundness. Any loose, scaling, or spalling concrete must be repaired first. Cracks wider than 3mm need crack injection or routing and sealing before overlay application. The existing surface must also be checked for proper drainage slope — standing water will destroy any overlay within 2-3 winters.

Timing is crucial in Ottawa's short concrete season. Overlay work requires consistent temperatures above 10°C during application and curing, with no freezing for 72 hours after placement. This realistically limits the work window to May through October. The overlay must also cure for 28 days before exposure to deicing salts, so work completed after September risks salt damage during the first winter.

Consider the underlying concrete age and condition carefully. If your stamped concrete is more than 15-20 years old and showing signs of structural cracking, spalling, or settlement, resurfacing may only provide 5-8 years of additional life. In these cases, full replacement might offer better long-term value. However, if the base concrete is sound with only surface wear from Ottawa's UV exposure and salt damage, a quality overlay can provide 10-15 years of renewed service life.

Alternative approaches include concrete staining (\$4 to \$8 per square foot) if the existing stamped pattern is acceptable but colour has faded, or **decorative concrete coatings** (\$6 to \$12 per square foot) that can create new

textures over the worn surface.

When to Hire a Pro: Concrete resurfacing requires specialized materials, precise mixing ratios, proper surface preparation, and expert timing for Ottawa's climate conditions. The overlay must bond perfectly to the existing concrete and cure properly before winter exposure. This is definitely professional-grade work requiring experienced concrete contractors familiar with overlay systems and Ottawa's freeze-thaw environment.

Find local concrete and paving professionals through the Ottawa Construction Network to get multiple quotes and ensure your contractor has specific experience with decorative concrete overlays in Ottawa's challenging climate.

Q9

Is it cheaper to resurface my driveway in the fall off-season in Ottawa compared to peak summer months?

Fall is actually peak paving season in Ottawa, not off-season, so you won't find cheaper pricing in September and October. In fact, fall demand often drives prices higher as contractors rush to complete projects before winter weather shuts down asphalt work.

The real "off-season" pricing opportunity in Ottawa is mid-summer (July to early August) when demand typically dips slightly. Many homeowners assume spring is ideal for paving, creating a rush in May and June, while others wait for fall's cooler weather, making September extremely busy. This leaves a brief window in mid-summer when some contractors offer modest discounts to keep crews working.

However, the savings are usually minimal — perhaps 5 to 10 percent at most — because **Ottawa's short paving season (late May through early October) keeps contractors busy regardless.** Hot-mix asphalt must be placed when ambient temperatures are consistently above 10 degrees Celsius and rising, which realistically limits work to about 4.5 months in Ottawa. With such a compressed season, contractors rarely need to discount significantly to maintain steady work.

September is actually the most popular month for asphalt work in Ottawa because temperatures are ideal (warm days, cool nights), humidity is lower than summer, and homeowners want driveways completed before winter. Many contractors are booked solid in September and charge premium rates. October work is risky — early cold snaps can arrive unexpectedly, and asphalt placed below 10 degrees Celsius won't compact properly, leading to premature failure.

For the best combination of pricing and quality timing, book your resurfacing project for July or early August. Asphalt compacts beautifully in warm summer weather, contractors have slightly more availability, and

you'll have the full fall season for the new surface to cure before winter. Avoid booking for late October or November — the risk of weather delays and poor compaction conditions isn't worth any potential savings.

When getting quotes, focus more on contractor quality than seasonal pricing. A properly resurfaced driveway with adequate surface preparation and proper compaction will last 12 to 15 years in Ottawa with regular sealcoating. A rushed job with poor base repair or inadequate compaction will fail within 3 to 5 winters, requiring expensive tear-out and replacement. The difference in upfront cost between peak and off-peak pricing is minor compared to the cost of premature failure.

Need help finding a qualified paving contractor for your resurfacing project? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals for free estimates.

How much does it cost to resurface an asphalt driveway on a rental property in Ottawa?

Asphalt driveway resurfacing in Ottawa typically costs \$2,500 to \$5,500 for an average residential driveway (40-60 square metres), with rental property considerations potentially affecting both timing and material choices.

Resurfacing involves applying a new 40-50mm layer of hot-mix asphalt over your existing driveway surface, assuming the current base is stable and the surface damage is limited to the top layer. This is significantly less expensive than full removal and replacement, which would run \$5,000 to \$12,000 for the same driveway.

The key factor determining whether resurfacing is viable is the condition of your existing base and subgrade. If the current driveway has extensive alligator cracking, potholes deeper than 50mm, significant settling, or drainage issues, resurfacing will only provide a temporary fix. Ottawa's extreme freeze-thaw cycles (50+ per winter) and deep frost penetration will cause any underlying base problems to reflect through the new surface within 1-2 winters. A professional assessment is essential before deciding between resurfacing and full replacement.

For rental properties specifically, resurfacing offers several advantages. The work can typically be completed in one day, minimizing tenant disruption. The cost is often tax-deductible as a property maintenance expense (consult your accountant). However, consider that resurfacing typically extends driveway life by 8-12 years, while full replacement lasts 20-25 years with proper maintenance. If you're planning to hold the property long-term, full replacement may offer better value.

Ottawa's climate demands quality work even for resurfacing. The existing surface must be thoroughly cleaned, cracks wider than 5mm filled with hot-pour crack sealer, and any loose material removed. The new asphalt must be applied when ambient temperatures are consistently above 10°C and compacted with a steel drum roller while still hot. Work should be scheduled between late May and early October for optimal results.

Pricing variables include driveway size, accessibility for equipment, current surface condition, and seasonal demand. Spring (May-June) and early fall (September) are peak season with higher pricing. Mid-summer work sometimes offers modest savings. Always get three quotes from contractors with WSIB coverage, and verify they're using hot-mix asphalt, not cold patch material.

The resurfaced driveway should not be sealed for the first 6-12 months to allow proper curing. After that, regular sealcoating every 2-3 years is essential in Ottawa's climate to protect against salt damage, UV oxidation, and water penetration.

Need help finding a driveway contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals for free estimates on your rental property project.

Q11

What is the minimum asphalt thickness when resurfacing an existing driveway in Ottawa's climate?

For asphalt resurfacing in Ottawa, the minimum thickness is 40mm (1.5 inches) compacted, though 50mm (2 inches) is strongly recommended for durability in our extreme climate.

When overlaying existing asphalt in Ottawa, thickness becomes critical because the new surface must withstand our brutal freeze-thaw cycles, heavy snow loads, and salt exposure without the benefit of a full structural rebuild. A 40mm overlay is the absolute minimum that will compact properly and provide meaningful protection, but this thin layer offers limited life extension — typically 5 to 8 years before cracking reflects through from the base layer beneath.

The 50mm standard provides significantly better performance in Ottawa's climate. This thickness allows for proper compaction with a vibratory roller, creates sufficient mass to resist temperature cycling, and provides better protection against water infiltration that leads to freeze-thaw damage. Most reputable Ottawa paving contractors recommend 50mm as their standard overlay thickness, with some suggesting 60-75mm on driveways that see heavy truck traffic or have existing structural issues.

Critical considerations for Ottawa resurfacing projects include the condition of the existing surface and base. Overlaying only works if the existing driveway has a stable base and surface cracking limited to minor hairline cracks and surface oxidation. If your existing driveway has alligator cracking, potholes, edge cracking, or areas of settlement, these problems will reflect through any overlay within 1-2 Ottawa winters regardless of thickness. The freeze-thaw movement beneath will crack the new surface along the same failure lines.

Temperature and timing matter significantly for overlay thickness in Ottawa. Hot-mix asphalt must be placed and compacted while still at proper temperature — thin lifts cool rapidly in our climate, especially during shoulder seasons. A 40mm lift placed in cool October weather may not achieve full compaction before cooling below workable temperature, leading to a loose, raveling surface. This is why most Ottawa contractors prefer 50mm minimum and avoid overlay work after mid-September.

Cost implications are straightforward — each additional 10mm of thickness adds approximately \$0.75 to \$1.25 per square foot to your project cost. For an average Ottawa driveway (50 square metres), upgrading from 40mm to

50mm adds roughly \$400-600 to the total project. Given that proper thickness can double the overlay's lifespan, this represents excellent value.

When to hire a professional: All asphalt resurfacing requires professional equipment and expertise. The paving crew needs a dump truck for hot-mix delivery, a paving machine or lute for spreading, and a vibratory steel drum roller for compaction. Hand-spreading and compacting asphalt with hand tools produces an inferior surface that fails prematurely. Additionally, professionals can assess whether your existing driveway is suitable for overlay or requires full removal and replacement — a critical determination that affects long-term performance and cost-effectiveness.

Need help finding a driveway contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with experienced local paving professionals for a free estimate on your resurfacing project.

Q12

Can I change the colour of my Ottawa driveway when resurfacing with a new asphalt layer?

No, you cannot change the colour of your driveway with standard asphalt resurfacing. Regular hot-mix asphalt comes in only one colour — charcoal black when new, weathering to dark grey over time.

When you resurface an existing asphalt driveway in Ottawa, you're applying a new 40-50mm layer of standard HL3 surface course asphalt over the existing surface. This fresh asphalt will be the typical black colour regardless of what's underneath. The new layer completely covers the old surface, so you'll get that fresh black asphalt appearance, but you're limited to this single colour option with conventional paving.

Coloured asphalt options do exist but are rarely used for Ottawa residential driveways. Coloured asphalt involves adding pigments to the mix or using specialized binders, but it costs 3-4 times more than standard asphalt (\$12-18 per square foot versus \$3.50-5.50), has limited colour choices (typically red, green, or brown), and requires special ordering since most Ottawa paving contractors don't stock it. The colours also fade significantly under Ottawa's intense UV exposure and harsh winter conditions.

If you want colour options, consider these alternatives during your driveway project:

Interlock pavers offer the widest colour selection — grey, charcoal, red, brown, tan, and multi-colour blends. Premium pavers come in dozens of colours and can create patterns and borders. Interlock costs more upfront (\$12-22 per square foot) but gives you complete design flexibility and colours that won't fade like painted surfaces.

Stamped concrete can be coloured during mixing and stamped with patterns that mimic stone, brick, or tile. Popular colours include earth tones, greys, and brick reds. Costs \$16-28 per square foot but requires resealing every 2-3 years in Ottawa's climate to maintain colour vibrancy.

Exposed aggregate concrete incorporates decorative coloured stones into the surface, creating natural colour variation and excellent traction. The aggregate colours remain permanent since they're natural stone, not pigments that can fade.

For your resurfacing project specifically, if the existing asphalt base is stable and you're happy with the layout, a standard asphalt overlay gives you a fresh black surface at the most economical cost. If you want colour, you'd need to remove the existing asphalt and install one of the alternative materials mentioned above — essentially a full replacement rather than resurfacing.

Need help finding a paving contractor to discuss your resurfacing options? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who can assess whether your existing driveway is suitable for overlay or if full replacement would better meet your goals.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- Home Front Services
- Prime Property Works
- Jaiko Cleaning Services

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How does resurfacing affect the existing driveway height relative to my garage floor in Ottawa?

Resurfacing adds approximately 50mm (2 inches) to your existing driveway height, which can create a step up into your garage and potentially cause drainage issues if not properly managed.

When you resurface an asphalt driveway, the contractor applies a new layer of hot-mix asphalt directly over the existing surface. This overlay is typically 40-50mm thick after compaction — the minimum thickness needed to achieve proper compaction and durability in Ottawa's freeze-thaw climate. Thinner overlays don't compact properly and will ravel and crack within the first winter.

Height Impact on Garage Access If your current driveway sits flush with your garage floor, resurfacing will create a 2-inch step up into the garage. This step can be problematic for several reasons: it creates a tripping hazard, makes snow blower and lawn mower access difficult, and can direct water toward the garage during heavy rains. Many Ottawa homeowners are surprised by this height change and wish they had planned for it.

Drainage Considerations in Ottawa The height increase can also affect drainage patterns around your home's foundation. If the resurfaced driveway now slopes water toward your foundation instead of away from it, you'll face potential basement water issues during Ottawa's spring melt and summer storms. The driveway must maintain a minimum 2% slope away from the house — adding height near the garage can reverse this critical drainage pattern.

Solutions for Height Management Professional contractors can address the height issue in several ways. They can **feather the overlay** at the garage entrance, gradually tapering the new asphalt to minimize the step. They might also **mill (grind down) the existing surface** near the garage before applying the overlay, though this adds cost. For severe height conflicts, **full removal and replacement** may be more practical than resurfacing, especially if your existing driveway already has base or drainage problems.

When Resurfacing Isn't Appropriate If your driveway already has significant cracking, settling, or drainage issues, adding height through resurfacing can worsen these problems. Ottawa's clay soils and deep frost penetration mean that surface overlays over failed bases will simply reflect the underlying movement within 1-2 winters. A proper assessment should determine whether your existing base can support an overlay or if full replacement is needed.

Planning Your Project Before resurfacing, have your contractor evaluate the garage height relationship and drainage patterns. They should provide solutions for managing the height increase and ensuring proper water flow. Quality contractors will address these details upfront rather than leaving you with a step and drainage problems

after the work is complete.

Need help finding a driveway contractor who understands these height and drainage considerations? Ottawa Driveways can match you with experienced local paving professionals who properly plan resurfacing projects.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- The Next Reno
- Transitions Renovations
- Titley Construction

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Q14

How much does it cost to resurface and add a turnaround area to a long rural driveway in Kemptville?

Resurfacing and adding a turnaround to a long rural Kemptville driveway typically costs \$8,000 to \$18,000, depending on the driveway length, turnaround size, current condition, and material choice. Rural driveways in the Kemptville area often stretch 100 to 300 metres from the road to the house, making this a substantial project that requires careful planning and proper base preparation.

Resurfacing costs for rural driveways run \$3.50 to \$5.50 per square foot for asphalt overlay, assuming the existing base is stable. A typical rural driveway that's 4 metres wide and 150 metres long covers 600 square metres (6,500 square feet), putting resurfacing costs at \$22,000 to \$36,000 for the full length. However, many rural homeowners choose to resurface only the most deteriorated sections near the house and turnaround area, reducing costs to \$4,000 to \$8,000 for partial resurfacing.

Turnaround area construction adds \$3,000 to \$8,000 depending on size and design. A basic circular turnaround requires about 150 to 200 square metres of new paving, while a hammerhead (T-shaped) turnaround uses less space but requires more precise grading. Rural properties often have space for generous turnarounds that accommodate delivery trucks, snow plows, and emergency vehicles — plan for at least 6 metres diameter for cars

or 9 metres for larger vehicles.

Kemptville's rural conditions present specific challenges that affect costs. The area sits on mixed clay and sandy soils, with many properties on former agricultural land that may have drainage issues or soft spots. Long rural driveways experience different stresses than urban ones — less daily traffic but heavier loads from propane deliveries, heating oil trucks, septic pumping, and agricultural equipment. The remote location may increase material delivery costs, and contractors often prefer larger projects to justify mobilizing equipment to rural sites.

Base preparation is critical for rural driveway longevity. Soft spots from poor drainage or organic soil must be excavated and replaced with granular material. Rural driveways need robust drainage systems — culverts under the driveway, ditching along the sides, and proper crowning to shed water. Many rural Kemptville driveways were originally built as farm lanes with minimal base, requiring significant upgrades during resurfacing.

Practical considerations include timing the work during dry weather when soil conditions are stable, ensuring adequate access for paving equipment, and coordinating with any septic or well work. Rural driveways often cross wet areas or seasonal streams that require culvert installation or replacement, adding \$500 to \$2,000 per crossing.

Alternative approaches can reduce costs while improving functionality. Some rural homeowners choose to pave only the first 50 metres from the road and the turnaround area, leaving the middle section as well-maintained gravel. Others opt for a gravel turnaround with asphalt approaches, reducing costs while providing excellent functionality for rural use.

Need help finding a driveway contractor experienced with rural projects? Ottawa Driveways can match you with professionals familiar with Kemptville's rural conditions and the unique requirements of long country driveways.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- MAK Construction and Development Inc
- Prism Services
- Home Front Services

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What are the signs that my 15-year-old driveway base has failed and resurfacing alone won't fix it in Ottawa?

Base failure in a 15-year-old Ottawa driveway shows distinct warning signs that resurfacing cannot fix — you'll see alligator cracking, rutting deeper than 25mm, edge crumbling, and sections that move or feel spongy underfoot.

The most telling sign of base failure is **alligator cracking** — interconnected cracks that create a pattern resembling reptile skin, typically starting in wheel tracks where loads are heaviest. This indicates the granular base has lost structural integrity and can no longer distribute vehicle loads properly. In Ottawa's freeze-thaw climate, water penetrates these cracks, freezes, and accelerates the deterioration cycle. Overlaying new asphalt over alligator cracking simply creates a thin bandage that will reflect every crack within one winter.

Rutting and depressions deeper than 25mm signal that the base has compressed or shifted under load. This is especially common in Ottawa driveways built in the 1990s and early 2000s when many contractors used minimal base depths to cut costs. If you can feel your vehicle following ruts or see standing water pooling in depressions after rain, the base structure has failed. **Edge deterioration** where the driveway perimeter crumbles or drops away indicates the base material has migrated or washed out — a common problem when driveways were built without proper edge restraint or adequate base width.

The **bounce test** reveals hidden base problems: walk across your driveway and feel for sections that flex or feel spongy underfoot. Stable asphalt over a solid base feels firm and unyielding. Areas that give slightly under your weight indicate the base has lost compaction or the subgrade has become unstable — typical in Ottawa's clay soil areas like Barrhaven, Orleans, and Riverside South where clay expansion and contraction destabilizes inadequate base layers.

Drainage issues that weren't present when the driveway was new often signal base settlement. If water now pools where it used to drain, or if the driveway slope has changed, the base has likely settled unevenly. This is particularly problematic in Ottawa because standing water accelerates freeze-thaw damage and creates ice hazards that worsen each winter.

Frost heaving creates another unmistakable sign — sections of driveway that rise in winter and may or may not settle back down in spring. This happens when the granular base doesn't extend below Ottawa's 1.2 to 1.5-metre frost line, allowing frost to push upward through inadequate base material. Heaved sections crack the surface and create permanent elevation changes that resurfacing cannot correct.

When resurfacing makes sense: If your 15-year-old driveway has only surface-level oxidation, minor hairline cracks, and isolated small potholes while the overall structure remains stable and well-draining, a 50mm overlay can extend its life by 8 to 12 years. The existing base must be fundamentally sound with no structural movement.

When full replacement is necessary: Base failure requires complete removal, proper excavation to stable subgrade, installation of 300mm compacted Granular B sub-base plus 150mm Granular A base (more on clay soils), and fresh asphalt. This typically costs \$5,000 to \$12,000 for an average Ottawa driveway but provides a proper 20 to 25-year lifespan versus the 2 to 3 years you might get from overlaying a failed base.

A qualified paving contractor can assess your specific situation, but these warning signs indicate structural problems that resurfacing alone cannot address in Ottawa's demanding climate.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Titley Construction
- Best Hand2Hand moving company
- Jaiko Cleaning Services

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How much does it cost to overlay my asphalt driveway with a thin concrete topping in Ottawa?

Overlaying asphalt with concrete is not a recommended practice and is rarely done in Ottawa due to technical and durability issues. The cost would be \$8-12 per square foot if attempted, but this approach creates significant problems in Ottawa's freeze-thaw climate.

Why Concrete-Over-Asphalt Overlays Don't Work in Ottawa

The fundamental issue is **differential movement between materials**. Asphalt remains flexible and moves with temperature changes, while concrete is rigid. In Ottawa's extreme temperature swings (-30°C to +35°C), the asphalt base expands and contracts at different rates than the concrete topping. This creates **bond failure** where the concrete separates from the asphalt, leading to cracking, lifting, and complete overlay failure within 2-3 winters.

Freeze-thaw cycling makes this worse. Water penetrates any hairline cracks between the concrete and asphalt, freezes, expands, and progressively separates the layers. Ottawa's 50+ freeze-thaw cycles per winter will systematically destroy the bond between materials. Additionally, the **thin concrete layer** (typically 50-75mm) lacks the structural thickness to handle Ottawa's frost heaving and heavy snow loads independently.

Better Alternatives for Your Ottawa Driveway

If your existing asphalt is in good structural condition with only surface wear, consider **asphalt resurfacing** at \$2,500-5,500 for an average driveway. This involves milling or overlaying with a new 50mm asphalt surface course that bonds properly to the existing base.

For a complete material change to concrete, **full removal and replacement** is the only durable option. This costs \$6,000-14,000 but gives you a proper 150mm concrete driveway with appropriate base preparation, reinforcement, and control joints designed for Ottawa's climate. The concrete can be stamped or textured for enhanced appearance.

Interlock pavers over a properly prepared base (\$8,000-20,000) offer another premium alternative that handles freeze-thaw movement through individual unit flexibility rather than monolithic rigidity.

When to Hire a Professional

Any overlay or replacement work requires professional assessment of your existing driveway's structural condition, drainage, and base stability. A qualified contractor can determine whether your asphalt base is suitable for resurfacing or needs complete replacement for your desired end result.

Need help finding a driveway contractor? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who can assess your specific situation and recommend the most durable solution for Ottawa's climate.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- The Fixer
- Rrenovatios
- Chevrier Group - OttawaDrivewayExperts.com

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Q17

Should I resurface my driveway before selling my house in Ottawa to increase the property value?

Resurfacing your driveway before selling can increase property value and buyer appeal, but the return on investment depends on your current driveway's condition, your home's price range, and local market conditions. In Ottawa's competitive real estate market, a well-maintained driveway creates strong curb appeal and eliminates a potential buyer objection.

When Driveway Work Adds Value

If your current driveway has significant cracking, potholes, oil stains, or faded sealcoat, addressing these issues will likely provide a positive return. Buyers in Ottawa understand that driveways face harsh conditions — they see a deteriorated driveway as an immediate expense they'll need to handle after purchase. A fresh asphalt surface or newly sealed driveway signals that the home has been well-maintained and removes a \$3,000 to \$8,000 concern from buyers' minds.

For homes in the \$400,000 to \$800,000 range (typical Ottawa suburban market), driveway condition significantly impacts first impressions. Buyers often decide within the first 30 seconds of arriving whether they're interested, and the driveway is part of that initial assessment. A cracked, stained, or deteriorating driveway can make an otherwise well-maintained home appear neglected.

Cost-Effective Options for Sellers

Sealcoating is often the best value for sellers. At \$400 to \$800 professionally applied, sealcoating transforms the appearance of a structurally sound asphalt driveway, making it look nearly new. The dark, uniform finish hides minor cracks and stains while providing that "fresh" appearance buyers notice. Sealcoating works well if your asphalt is 5 to 15 years old with only surface-level wear.

Crack filling plus sealcoating costs \$600 to \$1,200 and addresses driveways with moderate cracking. Hot-pour crack filler followed by sealcoating creates a smooth, professional appearance that suggests the driveway has been properly maintained. This combination often provides the best return on investment for selling purposes.

Full resurfacing (asphalt overlay) at \$2,500 to \$5,500 makes sense if the existing surface is extensively cracked but the base remains stable. An overlay provides a completely fresh surface that looks like a new driveway to buyers.

Ottawa Market Considerations

Ottawa buyers are particularly sensitive to driveway condition because they understand the climate challenges. They know that a neglected driveway will require expensive repairs within 1 to 2 winters due to freeze-thaw damage and salt exposure. Conversely, they recognize and value recent driveway work because it eliminates a major maintenance concern.

Spring selling season (April to June) is ideal timing if you're planning driveway work. Fresh sealcoating or resurfacing done in late spring showcases beautifully during peak showing months and demonstrates that the work was done in proper weather conditions.

When NOT to Invest

Avoid major driveway investment if your home is priced below \$350,000 or if you're in a hot seller's market where homes sell quickly regardless of condition. In these situations, the cost may exceed the value added. Similarly, if your driveway has base failure (major settling, heaving, or structural cracking), don't attempt cosmetic fixes — buyers will recognize that full replacement is needed and may prefer to handle it themselves with their chosen contractor.

Practical Approach

Get quotes for sealcoating, crack filling, and resurfacing, then consult with your real estate agent about expected return. In most Ottawa markets, spending \$500 to \$1,500 on driveway appearance improvements returns \$2,000 to \$4,000 in perceived value and faster sale times. The key is matching the investment level to your home's price point and local buyer expectations.

Need help finding a driveway contractor for pre-sale improvements? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local professionals who understand the Ottawa market and can complete work on your selling timeline.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- ALTIOR CONSTRUCTION
- Pure Flow Water Solutions inc.
- Eastern Residential Solution

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Q18

Can I resurface my Ottawa driveway to add a gentler slope for elderly family members?

Yes, you can resurface your Ottawa driveway to create a gentler slope, but the approach depends on your current driveway material, existing grade, and how much slope reduction you need. For elderly family members, reducing the slope from Ottawa's typical 4-6% grade to a more manageable 2-3% can significantly improve safety and accessibility.

Asphalt driveways offer the most flexibility for slope modification through resurfacing. A skilled paving contractor can apply a **variable-thickness overlay** — thicker at the bottom, thinner at the top — to reduce the overall grade while maintaining proper drainage away from your home. This typically involves adding 25-50mm of new asphalt in a tapered application. The existing surface must be structurally sound with no major cracking or base failure, as any underlying problems will telegraph through the new surface within one Ottawa winter.

Concrete driveways can be resurfaced with a **concrete overlay** or **self-leveling compound** to adjust slope, but this is more complex and expensive than asphalt modification. The existing concrete must be properly prepared through grinding or acid etching to ensure good adhesion. Alternatively, **decorative concrete overlays** with stamped or textured finishes can provide both slope correction and improved traction for elderly users.

Interlock driveways offer excellent opportunities for slope modification since the pavers can be completely lifted, the base re-graded to the desired slope, and the same pavers relaid. This approach allows for precise grade control while maintaining the existing appearance.

Critical Ottawa considerations make proper drainage even more important when reducing slope. Your modified driveway must still direct water away from the foundation and prevent ice buildup during our 50+ annual freeze-thaw cycles. A minimum 2% slope toward the street is mandatory — going below this creates ponding that becomes dangerous ice sheets in winter. The **frost line depth** (1.2-1.5 metres) means any significant grade changes may require deeper excavation and additional granular base material.

Practical planning steps include measuring your current slope with a level and calculating how much material thickness you'll need. Most driveways can be safely modified within a 1-2% slope reduction without major drainage issues. Consider adding **textured surfaces** like broomed concrete or stamped asphalt for better traction, and ensure adequate lighting for winter safety.

Professional installation is essential for slope modification work. Improper grading leads to water pooling, ice formation, and accelerated deterioration in Ottawa's climate. The contractor needs to calculate precise grades, ensure proper tie-ins to existing surfaces, and maintain drainage to municipal storm systems.

Costs typically range from \$3,500-\$6,500 for asphalt overlay slope modification on an average Ottawa driveway, \$5,000-\$9,000 for concrete resurfacing, and \$4,000-\$8,000 for interlock re-grading and relay.

When permits are required: Significant grade changes that alter drainage patterns or affect the driveway apron (the section between sidewalk and road) may require a City of Ottawa permit. Call 3-1-1 to confirm requirements for your specific project.

Need help finding a driveway contractor experienced with accessibility modifications? Ottawa Driveways can match you with local paving professionals who understand both slope requirements and Ottawa's challenging climate conditions.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- JC Carpentry
- Prime Property Works
- Pure Flow Water Solutions inc.
- Speedy Pete's Inc

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Our rural property near Carp has a long driveway and someone suggested chip seal instead of full repaving — is that a good option?

Chip seal, also called tar-and-chip, is one of the most practical and cost-effective surfacing options for long rural driveways in the Ottawa area. If you're near Carp, Kinburn, Dunrobin, or anywhere in West Carleton, there's a good chance your neighbours have chip seal driveways already, and for good reason.

What Chip Seal Actually Is

Chip seal involves spraying a layer of hot liquid asphalt emulsion onto your existing driveway surface, then immediately spreading a layer of crushed stone chips on top. A roller presses the chips into the asphalt. The result is a textured, gravel-like surface that's bonded together. It's the same technique the City of Ottawa and Lanark County use on many rural roads.

Cost Advantages for Long Driveways

This is where chip seal really shines for rural Ottawa properties. A full hot-mix asphalt repaving costs \$4 to \$8 per square foot. Chip seal runs \$1.50 to \$3.50 per square foot. For a 200-metre driveway that's 3 metres wide (about 6,500 square feet), that's the difference between \$26,000 to \$52,000 for asphalt versus \$9,750 to \$22,750 for chip seal. That's a massive savings when you're dealing with the kind of long driveways common in Carp, Manotick, and Kemptville.

How It Handles Ottawa Winters

Chip seal is surprisingly resilient against freeze-thaw cycles. The flexible asphalt binder moves with the ground as frost heaves push and settle through winter and spring, whereas rigid asphalt can crack. The textured surface also provides excellent traction during icy conditions, which is a real benefit when your driveway has any slope. After a few Ottawa winters with 200cm of snow and regular plowing, you'll see some chip loss in high-traffic areas, but touch-ups are inexpensive.

Limitations to Know About

Chip seal isn't as smooth as asphalt, so it's not ideal if you want that clean, suburban look. Loose chips will scatter for the first few weeks until traffic embeds them fully. It's also not great for areas with sharp turning — like a tight turnaround circle — because tires can scuff and pull chips loose. The surface lasts 7 to 12 years before needing a fresh application, compared to 15 to 20 years for good asphalt.

Best Practices for Rural Ottawa

Have your base properly graded and compacted before chip seal is applied. On properties near Carp and Richmond where clay soils dominate, poor drainage underneath will undermine any surface treatment. Ideally, apply chip seal in July or August when Ottawa temperatures are consistently warm enough for proper curing. Avoid late-season applications — the emulsion needs heat to bond properly.

Get in touch through Ottawa Driveways to find contractors who specialize in chip seal applications for rural properties in the greater Ottawa area.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Floor-2-Wall Inc
- Steven Labelle - Your Complete Home Renovator
- ARTEXPRO Tile & Finishes

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Q20

How long should I wait after winter to resurface my asphalt driveway in Ottawa, and when's the best time to schedule it?

Timing your driveway resurfacing correctly in Ottawa is critical because our extreme winter-to-spring transition creates conditions that can ruin a resurfacing job if you move too quickly. The ground needs to fully stabilize before any asphalt work begins.

The Ground Must Settle First

Ottawa's frost penetrates 1.2 to 1.5 metres deep by late February. When spring arrives, the ground thaws from the top down over several weeks. During this period, the subbase under your driveway is saturated and unstable. If you resurface while the ground is still soft and waterlogged, the new asphalt will crack and shift as the remaining frost exits. In areas like Kanata, Orleans, and Barrhaven where clay soils hold moisture, this settling period takes even longer.

Earliest Safe Window

For most Ottawa driveways, the earliest you should schedule resurfacing is mid-May, and even that depends on the specific year's weather. The ground temperature needs to be consistently above 10°C, and overnight temperatures should stay above freezing. Asphalt plants in the Ottawa region typically open in late April or early May, but reputable contractors won't rush to book jobs until conditions are genuinely ready.

Ideal Timing: June Through September

The sweet spot for driveway resurfacing in Ottawa is June through early September. During these months, warm ambient temperatures help the hot-mix asphalt compact properly and cure fully. A resurfacing job done in July at 28°C will bond and compact significantly better than one done in early May at 12°C. The asphalt arrives at the plant around 150°C and loses heat quickly in cool air, reducing the working time your contractor has to achieve proper compaction.

Assessing Winter Damage Before Resurfacing

After Ottawa's 200cm of snowfall and dozens of freeze-thaw cycles, take stock of the damage in April. Small surface cracks under 6mm can often be sealed rather than resurfaced. Alligator cracking (interconnected cracks resembling scales) signals base failure and may need more than resurfacing — possibly full removal and replacement of a section. Potholes that appeared over winter should be temporarily patched with cold patch to prevent them from growing while you wait for proper resurfacing weather.

Booking Strategy

Here's a practical tip: contact contractors in March or early April, even though work won't start until May or June. Ottawa's paving season is short, and good contractors fill their schedules quickly. By mid-June, many are booked into August. Getting your assessment and quote done early locks in your spot. Expect to pay \$3 to \$6 per square foot for overlay resurfacing, or \$5 to \$9 per square foot if milling the old surface first.

What About Late Season?

Resurfacing can be done into October in Ottawa, but it's a risk. Cool nights slow curing, and an early frost before the asphalt fully hardens can cause premature surface failure. If your project gets pushed to late September or beyond, discuss timing carefully with your contractor.

Use Ottawa Driveways to connect with local paving contractors who understand the seasonal timing specific to our region and can schedule your resurfacing for the optimal window.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- JC Carpentry
- M.O.T. CONSTRUCTION INC.
- The Granite shop
- The Next Reno

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Q21

How much does an asphalt overlay cost compared to full driveway replacement in Ottawa?

An asphalt overlay is one of the most cost-effective ways to restore a worn driveway in Ottawa, and the savings compared to a full tear-out and replacement can be substantial.

Asphalt Overlay Costs in Ottawa

For a standard two-car driveway (roughly 40 to 50 square metres), an asphalt overlay typically runs between **\$3,500 and \$6,500** in Ottawa. This includes surface preparation, a tack coat or bonding agent, and a new layer of hot-mix asphalt. By contrast, a full removal and repave of the same driveway usually costs **\$7,000 to \$14,000** depending on the depth of excavation, granular base replacement, and disposal fees.

That means an overlay can save you **40% to 55%** compared to starting from scratch, which is a significant difference for homeowners in Barrhaven, Kanata, or Orleans working within a renovation budget.

When an Overlay Makes Sense

An overlay is viable when the existing asphalt base is still structurally sound. If you have surface cracking, minor ravelling, or oxidation but the sub-base has not shifted or failed, a new layer of asphalt bonded to the old surface can add another 12 to 18 years of life. Ottawa contractors will assess the driveway for signs of base failure such as large alligator cracking, deep settlement, or standing water, which would indicate that an overlay alone will not hold up through our freeze-thaw cycles.

Why Full Replacement Costs More

The bulk of the extra cost comes from labour-intensive removal. Contractors must saw-cut and break up the existing asphalt, haul it to a recycling facility, then re-grade and compact the granular base before paving. In Ottawa, disposal and trucking fees alone can add **\$1,500 to \$3,000** to a project, especially for properties in

Stittsville or Manotick where haul distances to recycling depots are longer.

Ottawa Climate Considerations

Our winters push temperatures to -25 to -30 degrees Celsius, and the repeated freeze-thaw cycling from November through April is brutal on asphalt. An overlay must be thick enough (typically 40 to 50 millimetres minimum) to resist frost heaving and surface cracking. A too-thin overlay will delaminate within a few seasons. Reputable Ottawa contractors factor in our 200 centimetres of average annual snowfall and the mechanical stress from plowing when recommending overlay thickness.

Getting the Best Value

Schedule your overlay for the summer paving season, ideally June through September, when hot-mix plants are running at full capacity and asphalt compacts properly in warmer temperatures. Ask your contractor whether the existing surface needs crack filling or levelling before the overlay, as these prep steps affect the final price.

Connect with experienced local contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** to get competitive quotes and find out whether an overlay or full replacement is the right call for your specific driveway condition.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- JC Carpentry
- MAK Construction and Development Inc
- Vanguard Environmental
- Diamond renovations

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What thickness of asphalt overlay do Ottawa contractors recommend for a resurfaced driveway?

The thickness of an asphalt overlay is one of the most important decisions in a resurfacing project, and Ottawa's harsh climate makes it even more critical to get right.

Minimum Recommended Thickness

Most Ottawa driveway contractors recommend a minimum overlay thickness of **40 millimetres (roughly 1.5 inches)** of compacted hot-mix asphalt. For driveways that see heavier traffic, such as those used by work trucks or trailers, a thickness of **50 to 65 millimetres (2 to 2.5 inches)** is more appropriate. Going below 40 millimetres risks premature cracking and delamination, especially given Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles that can shift the surface dozens of times between November and April.

Why Thickness Matters in Ottawa

Ottawa's frost penetration reaches depths of 1.2 to 1.5 metres, and surface temperatures can swing from -30 degrees Celsius in January to +35 degrees in July. A thin overlay simply cannot flex with these thermal movements without cracking. The asphalt needs enough mass to absorb expansion and contraction stresses while maintaining its bond with the existing surface below.

Homeowners in areas like Gloucester, Nepean, and Orleans who have driveways exposed to full sun may also see more thermal cycling than shaded properties, which further supports choosing the thicker end of the range.

The Role of Mix Design

Thickness alone does not tell the whole story. The type of hot-mix asphalt matters as well. Ottawa contractors typically use an HL-3 or SP 12.5 surface mix for overlays, which contains smaller aggregate suited to thin lifts. For thicker overlays, a base layer of HL-8 or SP 19.0 may be placed first, followed by the finer surface course. The finer mix provides a smoother finish and better compaction at thinner depths.

Height Considerations

Adding 40 to 65 millimetres of new asphalt raises the driveway surface relative to your garage floor, front walkway, and any drainage structures. A good contractor will taper or feather the overlay at transitions to prevent tripping hazards and water pooling. If your driveway meets a garage slab, the overlay should be carefully graded so water still flows away from the foundation rather than toward it.

Bonding for Longevity

Before placing the overlay, contractors apply a tack coat, which is a thin layer of asphalt emulsion that bonds the new surface to the old one. Without proper tack application, even a thick overlay can slide or delaminate. In Ottawa, where snowplows and ice scrapers put lateral stress on driveways, this bond layer is essential.

What to Ask Your Contractor

Request the compacted thickness in writing, along with the mix type. A reputable contractor will specify these details in the quote. If a quote only mentions "a layer of asphalt" without a thickness, ask for clarification before signing.

Reach out through **Ottawa Driveways** to connect with local contractors who understand the specific overlay requirements for our Ottawa climate and soil conditions.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- 613Bins
- JC Carpentry
- The Fixer
- Demontigny Carpentry
- The Granite shop

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Q23

Is infrared asphalt repair available in Ottawa and does it actually work in cold weather?

Infrared asphalt repair is available in Ottawa and has become increasingly popular for targeted driveway resurfacing, though its effectiveness depends on conditions and the scope of the damage.

How Infrared Repair Works

Infrared repair uses a large heating panel that radiates heat onto the existing asphalt, softening it to a workable temperature (typically around 150 to 175 degrees Celsius internally) without burning the surface. Once the asphalt is pliable, the contractor rakes and re-levels the softened material, adds fresh hot-mix asphalt if needed, and

compacts the area with a roller. The result is a seamless, bonded repair because the old and new asphalt fuse together while hot.

Advantages Over Traditional Patching

Conventional cold patching or cut-and-fill repairs create a joint between old and new material. In Ottawa, where freeze-thaw cycles occur repeatedly from late October through April, water infiltrates these joints, freezes, expands, and pops the patch loose within a season or two. Infrared repair eliminates the joint entirely, creating a monolithic surface that resists water penetration far better.

For homeowners in Kanata, Barrhaven, or Orleans dealing with localised depressions, small cracks, or utility cut repairs, infrared is often the most cost-effective approach. A typical spot repair costs **\$300 to \$800** depending on the area size, compared to the higher cost of saw-cutting and replacing an entire section.

Cold Weather Limitations

Here is where expectations need to be realistic. Infrared repair can technically be performed in colder temperatures because the heating panel generates its own heat, but there are practical limits. When ambient temperatures drop below -5 degrees Celsius, the heated asphalt loses temperature very quickly once the panel is removed, leaving a very short window for raking and compaction. Most Ottawa contractors will perform infrared work from **April through November** and avoid deep-winter months.

The ground temperature matters as much as the air temperature. If the sub-base is frozen solid, the repaired area can still heave and crack when the frost pushes upward. Spring and fall are ideal because the surface is accessible but the ground is not yet deeply frozen.

What Infrared Cannot Fix

Infrared repair is designed for surface-level issues. It will not fix base failure, deep alligator cracking caused by a compromised granular layer, or areas where the driveway has sunk due to poor compaction or Leda clay settlement. If the structural base is the problem, the contractor will need to excavate and rebuild that section before any surface treatment will last.

Ottawa-Specific Considerations

Ottawa's combination of heavy snowfall (averaging 200 centimetres per season), road salt runoff, and municipal snowplow damage to driveway aprons makes infrared an excellent option for maintaining driveways between full resurfacing jobs. Many Nepean and Gloucester homeowners use infrared to fix plow-damaged edges every few years rather than waiting for the entire driveway to deteriorate.

Browse local contractors on **Ottawa Driveways** to find companies offering infrared asphalt repair in your neighbourhood.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- The Granite shop
- Renovo Construction
- Demontigny Carpentry

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Q24

Do contractors need to mill my old driveway before resurfacing it in Ottawa?

Milling is not always required before resurfacing, but in many Ottawa situations it is the difference between an overlay that lasts and one that fails within a few years.

What Milling Is

Milling (also called cold planing or profiling) uses a machine with a rotating drum fitted with carbide teeth to grind away a specified depth of existing asphalt. The milled surface is rough and textured, which provides an excellent bonding surface for the new overlay. The removed material is typically recycled at an asphalt plant.

When Milling Is Necessary

Ottawa contractors will recommend milling when the existing driveway surface has significant issues that would compromise an overlay. These include: **extensive surface cracking** where water has been infiltrating the asphalt for multiple freeze-thaw seasons; **height restrictions** where adding a full overlay would raise the driveway above the garage floor, walkway, or drainage structures; and **surface irregularities** such as ruts, bumps, or areas that have heaved unevenly due to frost.

In neighbourhoods like Stittsville and Manotick built on Leda clay, differential settlement is common. Milling allows the contractor to remove high spots and create a more uniform surface before placing the overlay, resulting in a

smoother finished grade.

When Milling Is Not Needed

If your existing driveway is in relatively good structural condition with only surface oxidation, minor hairline cracks, and no height constraints, a contractor can clean the surface, apply a tack coat, and place the overlay directly. This is the most economical approach and works well for driveways that have been maintained with regular sealing and crack filling over the years.

Cost of Milling in Ottawa

Milling adds approximately **\$2.00 to \$4.50 per square foot** to the resurfacing project, depending on the depth of material removed and the size of the driveway. For a typical 400 to 500 square foot driveway, expect an additional **\$800 to \$2,250** for milling. The cost includes machine mobilisation, the milling itself, and removal of the milled material (called millings or RAP, which is often reused as granular fill).

Ottawa Climate Factor

One reason milling is more common in Ottawa than in milder climates is the cumulative damage from our winters. After 15 to 20 years of freeze-thaw cycling, road salt exposure, and snowplow contact, the top layer of an Ottawa driveway is often too deteriorated to accept an overlay with confidence. Milling removes that compromised layer and exposes sound asphalt underneath, giving the new surface a solid foundation.

What to Discuss with Your Contractor

Ask whether the milled depth will be uniform or variable (to correct grade issues), whether the millings will be left on-site or hauled away, and how the milling affects the total height of the finished driveway. A contractor who takes the time to assess your specific driveway rather than defaulting to one approach for every job is worth the consultation.

Find experienced resurfacing contractors in your area through **Ottawa Driveways** and get a proper assessment of whether milling is warranted for your specific driveway.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- JC Carpentry
- ALM Construction & Landscaping Inc.
- Dump n Dash Hauling

- Home Front Services

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How much does concrete driveway resurfacing cost in Nepean compared to pouring a new slab?

Concrete resurfacing offers Nepean homeowners a way to restore a worn driveway at a fraction of the cost of a full tear-out and pour, but the price depends on the condition of the existing slab and the type of resurfacing you choose.

Concrete Resurfacing Costs

A standard concrete resurfacing using a polymer-modified overlay on a typical Nepean driveway (40 to 50 square metres) ranges from **\$4,000 to \$8,000**. This covers surface preparation (pressure washing, crack repair, bonding agent application) and the new overlay material, which is typically 6 to 12 millimetres thick. If you want a decorative finish such as a stamped or stencilled pattern, the cost increases to **\$6,500 to \$11,000** depending on the complexity of the design.

Full Replacement Costs

By comparison, removing an existing concrete driveway and pouring a new one in Nepean typically costs **\$12,000 to \$22,000** for the same size. The major cost drivers include demolition and disposal of the old slab (concrete is heavy and expensive to haul), excavation and re-grading of the granular base, forming, pouring, and finishing the new concrete, plus the curing time required before the driveway can be used.

The Savings Are Significant

Resurfacing generally saves homeowners **50% to 65%** compared to full replacement. For many Nepean properties, particularly those in established subdivisions near Merivale Road or along Woodroffe Avenue where driveways were poured 20 to 30 years ago, the concrete base is still structurally sound even though the surface looks rough.

When Resurfacing Works

Concrete resurfacing is a good option when the existing slab has surface spalling, scaling from salt exposure, or cosmetic wear but remains structurally intact. The slab should be level (not significantly heaved or settled), free of large structural cracks that go through the full depth, and properly draining. If you can walk the driveway and it feels solid underfoot with no rocking sections, resurfacing is likely viable.

When It Does Not Work

If the slab has heaved due to frost or shifted on Leda clay (common in parts of Nepean near the Rideau River corridor), resurfacing will only mask the problem temporarily. A thin overlay cannot bridge a slab that moves seasonally. Similarly, if the concrete has extensive full-depth cracking from tree root damage or base failure, the

cracks will telegraph through the new surface within one or two Ottawa winters.

Ottawa Winter Performance

The bonding agent between the old slab and the new overlay is critical in our climate. Ottawa's freeze-thaw cycles, which can occur dozens of times between November and April, put enormous stress on the bond line. Contractors must use high-quality polymer-modified products rated for northern climates and ensure the existing surface is properly profiled (often by grinding or shot-blasting) to create mechanical adhesion.

Avoid having resurfacing done late in the season. The overlay needs adequate curing time before the first hard freeze, so most Ottawa contractors recommend completing the work by **mid-October** at the latest.

Get quotes from local concrete specialists through **Ottawa Driveways** to find out whether resurfacing or replacement is the right approach for your Nepean driveway.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- JC Carpentry
- Denys Builds Designs Renovations
- Capital City Drywall
- Joe Imerti Contracting

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Q26

Can I have my sunken interlock driveway pavers re-levelled instead of replacing them in Orleans?

In most cases, yes. Interlock paver re-levelling is one of the biggest advantages of a paver driveway, and it is a very common service in Orleans where many subdivisions were built on fill soil that continues to settle over time.

How Interlock Re-Levelling Works

The process involves lifting the affected pavers, adding or redistributing the bedding sand and granular base material underneath, compacting it properly, and reinstalling the same pavers. Because interlock pavers are

individual units and not bonded together, they can be removed and replaced without damage. Once re-levelled, the joints are swept with fresh polymeric sand and the surface is compacted with a plate tamper.

Cost of Re-Leveling in Orleans

For a localised area (5 to 15 square metres), expect to pay **\$800 to \$2,500** depending on the extent of the settlement and how much base material needs to be added. If the entire driveway needs re-leveling (common on driveways over 10 years old in Orleans subdivisions like Avalon, Chapel Hill, or Fallingbrook), the cost typically runs **\$3,500 to \$7,000** for a standard two-car driveway. This is still significantly less than replacing the driveway entirely, which could cost **\$12,000 to \$20,000** or more for new pavers, base, and installation.

Why Pavers Sink in Orleans

Orleans is located on the eastern edge of Ottawa where soil conditions vary considerably. Many newer subdivisions were built on fill material that compacts unevenly over time. Additionally, Ottawa's frost line extends 1.2 to 1.5 metres deep, and the repeated freeze-thaw cycles push moisture through the granular base, washing out fines and creating voids. Poor initial compaction during original construction is another common factor, particularly in developments where driveways were installed before the home's landscaping had fully settled.

When Re-Leveling Is Not Enough

If the base material has been severely compromised by water erosion or the pavers have sunk more than 75 to 100 millimetres in certain areas, simply adding bedding sand will not create a lasting repair. In these cases, the contractor may need to excavate the affected section, add and compact fresh granular A base material, and then reinstall the pavers. This is more involved than simple re-leveling but still far less expensive than a complete driveway replacement.

Drainage Must Be Addressed

Re-leveling without fixing the underlying drainage problem is a temporary solution at best. If water is pooling on or under the driveway and causing the settlement, the contractor should address grading, downspout discharge locations, or the addition of a French drain before putting the pavers back. Otherwise, the same settlement will recur within a few seasons.

WSIB and Contractor Qualifications

Interlock re-leveling involves manual labour with heavy equipment including plate compactors and possibly small excavators. Ensure any contractor you hire carries valid **WSIB** (Workplace Safety and Insurance Board) coverage. If a worker is injured on your property and the contractor lacks WSIB, you as the homeowner could be held liable.

Search for interlock specialists in Orleans through **Ottawa Driveways** to get an assessment of whether your sunken pavers can be re-levelled or need more extensive base repair.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Luxe Painting and Renovations
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Capital City Drywall
- Prime Property Works
- BFI Renovations

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Q27

What type of bonding agent do Ottawa contractors use between old and new asphalt layers?

The bonding agent between old and new asphalt is a critical but often overlooked component of any Ottawa driveway resurfacing job. Without proper bonding, the new overlay can delaminate and separate from the old surface, especially under the stress of our severe winters.

Tack Coat: The Standard Bonding Agent

The most common bonding agent used by Ottawa asphalt contractors is a **tack coat**, which is a thin application of asphalt emulsion sprayed or brushed onto the existing surface before the new hot-mix is placed. The two main types are:

- **SS-1** (slow-setting emulsion): A water-based asphalt emulsion that "breaks" (the water evaporates) and leaves a thin sticky film on the old surface. This is the most widely used tack coat for residential driveways in Ottawa.
- **CSS-1** (cationic slow-setting emulsion): Similar to SS-1 but with a positive electrical charge that helps it bond better to aggregate surfaces. Some contractors prefer this for older, more oxidised asphalt.

Both products are applied at a rate of approximately **0.2 to 0.7 litres per square metre**, depending on the porosity and condition of the existing surface.

Why the Bonding Agent Matters in Ottawa

Ottawa's climate creates conditions that actively work to separate asphalt layers. When water infiltrates the interface between old and new asphalt and freezes, it expands with tremendous force. Over a typical Ottawa winter with temperatures dropping to -25 or -30 degrees Celsius and dozens of freeze-thaw cycles, any weakness in the bond will be exploited. By spring, you can end up with sections of the new overlay lifting or cracking along the bond line.

The tack coat creates a waterproof, flexible bond that moves with the thermal expansion and contraction of both layers. Without it, the new asphalt simply sits on top of the old surface like a separate slab.

Surface Preparation Before Tack Application

The tack coat can only bond properly to a clean surface. Ottawa contractors should:

- **Power-sweep** the existing driveway to remove all loose debris, sand, and winter grit
- **Fill any cracks** wider than 6 millimetres with hot rubberised crack filler
- **Remove any oil stains** that would prevent adhesion (common in Gloucester and Kanata driveways with older vehicles)
- **Ensure the surface is dry** before applying the tack coat

If these steps are skipped, the tack coat bonds to dirt rather than asphalt, and the overlay will fail regardless of how thick it is.

How to Verify Proper Application

When the tack coat is first applied, it appears brown or dark amber. As the water evaporates (the "breaking" process), it turns black and becomes tacky to the touch. The new asphalt should be placed only after the tack has broken but while it is still sticky. If the tack has dried completely and is no longer tacky, it needs to be reapplied.

Ask your contractor what tack product they use and ensure it is applied before you see hot-mix being placed. A contractor who skips this step is cutting a corner that will cost you dearly within a few Ottawa winters.

Find experienced asphalt resurfacing contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** who follow proper bonding procedures for long-lasting overlay results.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- M.O.T. CONSTRUCTION INC.
- Humble Homes - property maintenance
- ALTIOR CONSTRUCTION

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How long will a resurfaced asphalt driveway last in Ottawa before it needs to be done again?

The lifespan of a resurfaced asphalt driveway in Ottawa depends on several factors, but homeowners can generally expect **12 to 20 years** from a properly done overlay before another resurfacing or full replacement is needed.

Factors That Determine Lifespan

Not all resurfacing jobs are equal, and the longevity of yours will depend on:

- **Overlay thickness:** A 50 millimetre overlay will outlast a 40 millimetre one, particularly in Ottawa where frost heaving puts constant stress on the surface. Thicker overlays have more material to absorb thermal movement.
- **Base condition:** If the existing driveway had a sound granular base when the overlay was placed, the new surface will perform well. If the base was already compromised, problems will migrate upward within 5 to 8 years.
- **Mix quality:** Hot-mix asphalt from a reputable Ottawa plant (there are several in the Carp, Vars, and south Ottawa area) using proper aggregate gradation will outperform bargain mixes.
- **Bonding:** Proper tack coat application between old and new layers prevents delamination, which is the most common early failure mode in Ottawa's freeze-thaw climate.

Ottawa Climate Impact

Our climate is one of the harshest in Canada for asphalt. The combination of deep frost penetration (1.2 to 1.5 metres), extreme cold (-25 to -30 degrees Celsius in January), intense summer heat (above 30 degrees Celsius), and approximately 200 centimetres of annual snowfall creates a punishing environment. Each freeze-thaw cycle causes micro-cracking, and the cumulative effect over 15 to 20 winters is significant.

Road salt tracked onto driveways from municipal streets accelerates oxidation of the asphalt binder, making the surface brittle faster. Homeowners in Barrhaven and Kanata who are on bus routes or near main arterial roads often see more salt damage than those on quiet crescents.

Maintenance That Extends Life

The single most impactful maintenance step is **sealcoating every 3 to 5 years** starting about 12 to 18 months after the overlay is placed. Sealer protects the asphalt binder from UV degradation and water infiltration, which are the two primary causes of surface deterioration. A driveway that is sealed regularly can last at the upper end of the range (18 to 20 years), while one that is never sealed may only make it 10 to 12 years.

Crack filling is the second most important maintenance task. Any crack wider than 3 to 5 millimetres should be filled with hot rubberised crack sealant before winter. Water entering cracks freezes and expands, turning small cracks into large ones within a single Ottawa winter.

When to Start Planning the Next Resurfacing

Watch for these signs that your resurfaced driveway is approaching end of life: widespread alligator cracking (interconnected cracks forming a pattern), soft or spongy areas that flex underfoot, significant fading and aggregate exposure that sealing no longer addresses, and drainage changes where water pools in new low spots.

When you notice these signs, it is time to get an assessment. Catching deterioration early gives you the option of another overlay rather than a more expensive full replacement.

Connect with local paving professionals through **Ottawa Driveways** to assess your resurfaced driveway's remaining life and plan your next steps.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Justyn Rook Contracting
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Elie The Carpet Guy Inc.
- Geerts Roofing Inc
- Vanguard Environmental

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Q29

My driveway in Kanata has alligator cracking everywhere — can it still be resurfaced or do I need a full rebuild?

Alligator cracking is one of the most telling signs of driveway distress, and whether your Kanata driveway can be resurfaced or needs a full rebuild depends on what is happening beneath the surface.

What Alligator Cracking Tells You

Alligator cracking (also called fatigue cracking) forms an interconnected pattern that resembles the skin of an alligator. Unlike simple linear cracks caused by thermal contraction, alligator cracking indicates that the **structural layers beneath the surface have failed**. The asphalt is flexing beyond its capacity because the granular base or subgrade underneath is no longer providing adequate support.

In Kanata specifically, this is a common issue in subdivisions built during the 1980s and 1990s growth periods (Beaverbrook, Katimavik, Bridlewood) where original driveway construction may not have included sufficient base depth for Ottawa's frost conditions.

When Resurfacing Can Still Work

If the alligator cracking is confined to **one section** of the driveway (such as where a vehicle's tyres consistently track) and the rest of the surface is in reasonable condition, a contractor can excavate and rebuild just the failed section, then overlay the entire driveway for a uniform appearance. This hybrid approach costs significantly less than a full rebuild while addressing the structural problem.

If the cracking is **surface-only** (very shallow, with the pavement still feeling firm when you walk on it), it may indicate that only the top layer has fatigued while the base remains sound. This can happen when the original asphalt was too thin or has oxidised severely after years without sealing. In this case, milling the top layer and placing a new overlay can be effective.

When a Full Rebuild Is Necessary

If you walk across the driveway and feel it flexing or bouncing underfoot, especially during spring when the frost is coming out of the ground, the base has failed and an overlay will not last. Water has likely been infiltrating through the cracks for years, washing out the granular fines and creating voids. In Ottawa's climate, this damage compounds every winter as water freezes and expands in those voids.

A full rebuild involves removing all the old asphalt, excavating the failed base material, installing and compacting new granular A and granular B in lifts, and paving with fresh hot-mix asphalt. For a standard Kanata driveway, expect **\$9,000 to \$16,000** depending on the depth of excavation required and whether clay subgrade improvement is needed.

Getting a Proper Assessment

A good contractor will do more than just look at the surface. They should check for base deflection by walking the driveway and pressing on cracked areas, examine the drainage pattern to understand where water has been entering, and may even cut a small test hole to inspect the base material condition and depth. This assessment takes 15 to 30 minutes and should be done before any quote is provided.

Ontario Building Code Considerations

While residential driveways do not require building permits in most Ottawa situations, any work that changes the grading or drainage pattern near your foundation should comply with the Ontario Building Code requirements for lot grading. If your driveway drains toward the house, a rebuild is an opportunity to correct the grade.

Get a professional assessment from contractors listed on **Ottawa Driveways** to determine whether your Kanata driveway can be saved with resurfacing or needs a complete rebuild.

Looking for experienced contractors? The Ottawa Construction Network connects Ottawa homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Homeupgraders
- RenoMotion Inc.
- Prime Property Works
- Callandgone
- Jaiko Cleaning Services

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Q30

What is the price per square foot to resurface different types of driveways in Ottawa right now?

Resurfacing costs in Ottawa vary significantly depending on the material, the condition of the existing surface, and the scope of preparation work required. Here is a breakdown of current pricing for the most common driveway types.

Asphalt Overlay

A standard asphalt overlay (40 to 50 millimetres of new hot-mix over the existing surface) currently costs **\$4.50 to \$8.00 per square foot** in Ottawa. The lower end applies to straightforward jobs where the existing surface is in decent condition and only needs cleaning and a tack coat. The higher end covers situations requiring crack filling, minor levelling, or transitions at the garage and walkway. If milling is needed before the overlay, add another **\$2.00 to \$4.50 per square foot** for the milling process.

Concrete Resurfacing

Polymer-modified concrete overlays run **\$8.00 to \$14.00 per square foot** for a standard finish. Decorative options such as stamped overlays, exposed aggregate resurfacing, or coloured concrete push the cost to **\$12.00 to \$20.00 per square foot**. Concrete resurfacing is more expensive per square foot than asphalt, but it also tends to last longer when done correctly, with many Ottawa installations going 20 to 25 years.

Interlock Paver Re-Levelling

Re-levelling sunken interlock pavers costs **\$6.00 to \$12.00 per square foot** depending on the severity of the settlement and how much base material needs to be added. If pavers are damaged and need individual replacement, add the cost of matching pavers, which ranges from **\$3.00 to \$8.00 per square foot** for the material alone. Full interlock restoration (re-levelling, replacing broken pavers, new polymeric sand, and resealing) runs **\$10.00 to \$18.00 per square foot**.

What Drives Price Variation Across Ottawa

Several factors cause prices to vary between neighbourhoods:

- **Access and logistics:** Properties in older Ottawa neighbourhoods like the Glebe or Old Ottawa South with narrow driveways or limited equipment access cost more due to the manual labour involved. Suburban driveways in Barrhaven or Orleans with wide-open access are typically at the lower end.
- **Soil conditions:** Areas built on Leda clay (common in parts of Gloucester and along the Ottawa River corridor) may require additional base work during resurfacing, increasing costs.
- **Season timing:** Early and late season work (April-May, October-November) can be slightly more expensive due to weather delays and shorter working days, though some contractors offer shoulder-season discounts to keep crews busy.
- **Driveway size:** Larger driveways benefit from economies of scale. A 600 square foot driveway will have a lower per-square-foot cost than a 250 square foot one because mobilisation and setup costs are spread over more area.

Getting Accurate Quotes

Prices in this range are based on 2025-2026 Ottawa market rates and will fluctuate with oil prices (which affect asphalt costs), labour availability, and demand. Always get at least two to three quotes, and ensure each quote specifies the material thickness, preparation steps included, and any exclusions.

Compare quotes from local resurfacing contractors through **Ottawa Driveways** to find competitive pricing for your specific driveway type and condition.

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- Joe Imerti Contracting
- BFI Renovations
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