

Surface dressing Frequently Asked Questions

What is road surface dressing?

Road surface dressing is a treatment applied to roads that improves the surface of the road particularly in terms of providing better skid resistance. As it seals the road surface and therefore stops water getting into any cracks, it also helps prevent potholes forming.

What is the process for surfacing dressing?

First the road surface is prepared for surface dressing treatment, this type of preparation work could include ensuring there are no existing potholes and that the surface is even.

The road is then treated with a bitumen binder and stone chippings, that are compacted into the surface by a roller. Any loose stone chippings are then swept away.

The effectiveness of the treatment relies on subsequent traffic further pressing the stone chippings into the bitumen. After a period of time, we return to the site and sweep away any remaining loose stone chippings that have not bedded down through the movement of vehicles over the surface.

On urban residential sites, an additional sealant treatment will be laid approximately 4 days later. This process will require a road closure for no longer one hour, while the materials cures.

What are the advantages of surface dressing?

Surface dressing offers many advantages:

- It improves skidding resistance which makes the roads safer.
- It helps to make a road waterproof.
- It protects the road against frost and water damage.
- It helps to reduce spray caused by vehicles travelling on wet road surfaces.
- Compared to re-laying hot mix asphalt, surface dressing provides a very low carbon footprint solution.
- It is relatively quick to lay, keeping disruption to a minimum.
- While efficient to lay, it is also durable - depending on traffic volumes surface dressing normally lasts between 6 to 12 years.

Why has this road been chosen for surface dressing? How do you determine which roads are to be surface dressed each year?

Roads are selected for surface dressing for a number of reasons, such as skid resistance and carriageway profile. Surface dressing is a preventative maintenance treatment which is designed to minimise future interventions on the network.

How long will the work take?

Surface dressing is a relatively quick process with bitumen and stone chippings being applied using a single specialist vehicle. As it is constantly moving, association road closures are relatively short durations - usually even larger sites being completed within the day. Periodic sweeping continues for approximately 7 days, followed by the replacement of any lining and road studs (cat's eyes). During this time a temporary reduced speed limit is put in place for the safety of road users.

- First sweep: Normally within 24 hours after completion of the works (weather depending)
- Second sweep: Normally within 48 hours after works are completed.
- Third sweep around 7 days of works being completed.

On urban residential sites, an additional sealant treatment will be laid approximately 4 days later. This process will require a road closure for no longer one hour, while the materials cures.

Why are loose stone chippings not immediately cleared after completion?

A surplus of chippings is required as part of the process to provide an even spread of aggregate over the finished road surface.

Will the road need to be closed?

Road closures allow the work to be done in a way that is quick and safe for our staff and other road users. The nature of the work is such that road closures are shorter than in other surfacing techniques as no removal of the old surface is required. We will ensure that emergency vehicles are always able to travel through work sites if required.

I require access to my property, are provisions in place for this eventuality?

Due to the nature of the work involved there will be short periods when access cannot be maintained. Where there is particular access requirements, please speak to Island Roads in advance via info@islandroads.com or 01983 822440.

How will I know if my road is due to be treated,

The work programme will be published under the Current Works section of www.islandroads.com. If your road is scheduled for treatment, you should also receive a letter explaining the work and how you will be affected. In addition, information boards will be put out at each location ahead of work.

When does the work take place?

The surface dressing season is from late April to the end of August. This is because warm, dry conditions are required. On the Isle of Wight, we limit our works in the summer period so as not to adversely impact on the tourism season. This means we are using the month of May – before the high summer.

Work will usually take place between 8am and 5 pm.

How can you help us deliver the surface dressing programme?

It would be much appreciated if you could ensure vehicles are not parked on the road during the day whilst the work is in progress. Should this cause any problems or concerns then please do not hesitate to contact us or alternatively speak to our construction crew on site to allow arrangements to be put in place.

We would ask that you do not park within the confines of the works or any areas that have had “no parking” cones put out before the start of the works and for the duration of the works. Failure to do so will result in your vehicle being moved.

Driving on surface dressing

The road is safe to drive on following application of the stone chippings, provided speeds remain below the reduced speed limit. Reduced speed restriction signs will be displayed where work is being carried out to warn motorists about the stone chippings. There may be some loose stone chippings on the surface after the works which could affect driving conditions and an advisory 20mph speed limit will remain in place until the loose chippings have been compacted into the new surface by the flow of traffic.

For your safety, the safety of others, and to prevent damage to vehicles, please keep to the speed limit, keep your distance from the vehicle in front, avoid turning or braking sharply and don't overtake. Bitumen can become fluid during warm weather. Walking or driving on the new surface before it has set may result in permanent marking on your driveway and internal floors or carpets.

Road Markings and Road Studs

Any lines will be replaced approximately three weeks after the surface has been dressed - this ensures that any excess chippings have been removed and that the lining is more likely to adhere to the surface. When we do this is dependent on weather conditions as lining in wet or damp weather can affect the quality of the work.

Road Studs will be replaced within 3 weeks.