



What's below the surface?

The many layers of road building: Spray Seal

1. Surface Layer/Spray Seal

This layer is exposed directly to traffic and is the last layer of road construction before line marking. It is a layer of bitumen that is sprayed as a hot liquid, followed by a layer of crushed aggregate.

Spray Seal is weather dependent to lay. The surface and air temperatures need to be constant to avoid damage to the Spray Seal through the expansion and contraction that happens with changes in temperature.

3. Base Layer

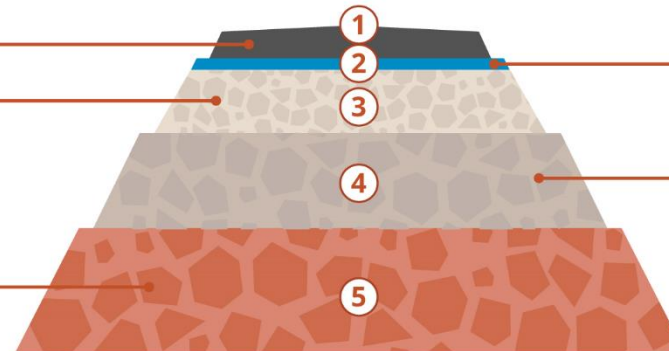
Each layer of this section has to achieve "dry-back" before the next layer can be placed. "Dry-back" is when surface layers can dry to the required consistency to accept the next layer. Any amount of rain can delay progress.

5. Sub-Grade/Foundation Layer

This is the first layer to be placed on natural ground. It is reached through a process of "cutting and filling" to establish a Foundation Layer. It must be very strong and compacted.

If any areas are unstable, they are repaired before the next layers are placed on top.

Building a road is like making a layered cake: Following a series of steps to add the right type and amount of ingredients, creating the right textures, and working with the right temperatures. Here is the Spray Seal method.



2. Prime Coat

This is a waterproofing layer. It stops water penetrating the layers below. Faults here can cause potholes.

This layer also helps attach the Spray Seal to the Base Layer and stop it peeling off. Prime Coat must be laid on a dry Base Layer.

4. Sub-Base Layer

It is constructed with hard and durable material, trucked in from a quarry, to fill up to the Base Layer. From here every layer is tested for quality.

Crumb rubber: a more sustainable alternative

Road construction projects sometimes use crumb rubber in the Spray Seal. This is an example of the circular economy where recycled tyres are used as part of the liquid binder in Spray Seal.



Opening to traffic

New seal pavements are often slippery due to loose stone fragments on the surface. Reduced speeds are put in place on new pavements until the new surface beds in and smooths out, ready for line marking.



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