

Facilitator — April/May 2014

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Don't Chase Your Pavements

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Many of us experienced a record-breaking winter. With higher-than-average snowfall and colder temperatures, the weather may have wreaked havoc on your pavement. And, pavement is bad enough, now restaurant facility managers must find funds to pay for maintenance. Many facility budgets have taken a large hit for snow removal, leaving less for repairs. But, with proper planning and careful budgeting, restaurant parking lots will not suffer through another season.

The following strategies and procedures will help restaurant facility managers tackle immediate pavement liabilities, as well as plan for long-term maintenance.

STRATEGIES

Inspection

Enlist the help of a pavement contractor who specializes in portfolio inventory management. He or she will walk your entire parking lot to assess and document the damage caused by heavy snowfall, freezing temperatures, excess salting or sanding and snowplow damage. Common problems include pavement cracking, heaving or rutting; potholes; curb and edge damage; oxidized pavement; and faded line striping or other markings. All of these, if left untreated, can lead to extensive and costly damage.

Consultation

Sit down with your contractor to review your parking lot portfolio. He or she can help you understand pavement failures and what is causing the deterioration, identify cost-effective treatments and schedule procedures. Keep in mind that a well-designed pavement management plan spans two to five years.

PROCEDURES

Removal and Replacement

Removal and replacement is the best long-term solution for potholes, pavement heaving, rutting and broken/damaged asphalt or concrete. Areas are saw-cut or milled, and the asphalt is removed to the approximate specified depth. The existing stone base is compacted, and tack coat is applied to the perimeter of patches to guarantee proper bonding. It is then compacted with a multi-ton vibratory roller and/or vibratory plate.

Crack Sealing

Paying attention to cracks and applying sealant approximately every two years is the most beneficial service that can be performed on a restaurant parking lot. The best time to seal cracks is when they measure ¼ inch to 1 inch wide. Sealing cracks prevents excess moisture from seeping into the pavement and softening or weakening the sub-base. If left untreated, water that enters the surface can widen cracks and even cause pavement heaving. This is especially common in sections of sidewalks. Note: If you have multiple restaurants in one region, your portfolio can benefit from a two-year program consisting of both crack sealing and lot marking. Scheduling crack sealing and lot marking at the same time conserves resources because the same crews can be used, often, to complete multiple sites in one day.

Seal Coating

Seal coating helps prevent pavement oxidation (fading of the surface), which occurs primarily in the spring and summer months, and helps minimize the rate at which water enters the pavement. It also permeates more freely, resulting in pavement expansion and contraction during next winter's freeze/thaw cycle. Air and pavement temperature should be at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit at the time of sealer application and for eight hours afterward.

Lot Marking

Restaurant parking lots require frequent re-striping. Set-fast acrylic waterborne is the best paint to use for this procedure. The hard, smooth finish of the acrylic waterborne provides a durable surface that holds minimal dirt and tire marks. It also ensures a clean and fresh-looking appearance over time. It must be applied, however, at temperatures above 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Before performing any lot marking, be sure to verify that your parking lots are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Lack of compliance is a liability that can result in personal injury, and is in direct violation of the law.

Catch Basins

During the long winter, pavement may have settled or deteriorated in and around catch basins. As a result, a catch basin may now be higher than the surrounding asphalt, causing standing water. Adjacent asphalt must be removed and the basin lowered by removing concrete rings to alter the height of the iron frame.

Sinkholes forming next to a catch basin are another common issue. Depending on the extent of the erosion, it may be possible to remove and replace the surrounding asphalt and fill the hole or you may need to replace the entire basin structure. Be sure to inspect the frame of each basin, too. If concrete rings supporting the iron frame have become unstable or completely shifted on an angle. This requires new rings, affixed with a proper bonding agent.

MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

With all parking lot maintenance procedures, your contractor should collect condition data on an annual basis to monitor and verify if rehabilitation strategies are producing predicted results during your pavement management plan, strategies can and should be adjusted to meet your specific needs.

Ultimately, when faced with shrinking budgets, it is especially important to prioritize and plan ahead. Being proactive with preventative parking lot maintenance is a much better solution than untimely emergencies or liability issues. Teaming up with an experienced parking lot management contractor and implementing a pavement management plan for your entire portfolio can save dollars and make the biggest impact over time.

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