

Winter-Proofing Your Driveway: Tips from NJ Paving Experts

New Jersey winters are notorious. We face blizzards, freezing rain, and temperatures that fluctuate wildly. This environment is harsh on everything, but especially on your driveway. If you have recently invested in [driveway paving NJ](#), protecting that investment through the winter months is critical. Here is what you need to know to ensure your asphalt survives the season intact.

The Science of Freeze-Thaw Damage Asphalt is a porous material. Over time, tiny cracks develop. When rain or snowmelt enters these cracks and the temperature drops below freezing, that water turns to ice. Water expands by about 9% when it freezes. This expansion exerts tremendous pressure on the asphalt, pushing the crack wider. When the ice melts, the water penetrates deeper. Repeat this cycle dozens of times over a winter, and you have the recipe for potholes. This is why professional [driveway paving NJ](#) emphasizes proper compaction and drainage—to minimize the amount of water that can enter and sit in the pavement.

Pre-Winter Maintenance: Sealcoating and Crack Filling The best defense is a good offense. Before the first flake falls, inspect your driveway. If you see cracks, they must be filled. Hot rubberized crack filler is the industry standard used by pros like Black Diamond Paving. It remains flexible in the cold, moving with the pavement rather than snapping. If your driveway is gray and dry, fall is the perfect time for sealcoating. Sealcoating acts as a waterproof barrier. It fills surface voids and prevents water from soaking into the porous asphalt. Think of it as waxing your car; it's a protective shell. However, sealcoating requires temperatures to be roughly 50°F and rising, so this is a job for late summer or early autumn, not December.

Snow Removal Dos and Don'ts How you remove snow affects the lifespan of your [driveway paving NJ](#) project.

- **Plow Blade Height:** If you hire a plow service, ensure they know to set the blade height correctly. A metal blade scraping directly against the asphalt can gouge the surface, leaving scratches and improving the chances of water infiltration. Rubber-tipped blades are safer for asphalt.
- **Shoveling:** Plastic shovels are preferred over metal ones. Chipping away at ice with a metal chopper can easily chip the driveway surface itself.
- **De-icing Chemicals:** Salt (sodium chloride) is effective but can be harsh. While asphalt is generally more resistant to salt damage than concrete, the freeze-thaw cycle accelerated by melting snow is the real danger. Calcium chloride is a better alternative as it works at lower temperatures and is generally less corrosive. Avoid using rock salt if the driveway was paved less than a year ago; use sand for traction instead.

Dealing with Heaving Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you might notice the driveway lifting in certain spots during a deep freeze. This is frost heave, caused by moisture in the soil below freezing and expanding. Do not try to hammer it down. In many cases, the ground will settle back into place once the thaw arrives in spring.

However, if the driveway does not settle, or if the asphalt cracks significantly due to the heave, you will need to call a **driveway paving NJ** specialist in the spring to excavate the bad sub-soil and patch the area.

Spring Inspection Once the snow melts, give your driveway a thorough check. The harsh chemicals and plows may have caused wear. Spring is the time to schedule maintenance with a company like Black Diamond Paving to address any new cracks that formed over the winter, ensuring your driveway is ready for the summer heat.