

How we select the resurfacing treatment for your street

When deciding which type of resurfacing to use, we carry out two surveys of the entire roading network. One survey assesses the condition of the existing surface and records things like cracking, potholes, broken edges and patching.

The other survey measures road 'roughness' - using a number of lasers attached to a vehicle. These surveys are entered into our road assessment and maintenance management system which helps to identify which sections of the network need waterproofing and which need reshaping. A benefit/cost analysis, which takes into account traffic volumes, pavement loadings, and the results of the 'roughness' survey, is an integral part of the system. Bearing in mind that the New Zealand Transport Agency provides nearly half of the funding for the city's road resurfacing programme each year, the Council has an obligation to ratepayers and taxpayers to ensure that the best engineering options and the most cost-effective solution is chosen in each case.

Most of our suburban streets have a flexible structure requiring periodic waterproofing - and chipseal is the best engineering solution for this. Chipseal provides a flexible, waterproof, highly skid-resistant surface. While it's true that chipseal in suburban streets can cause some inconvenience, if we were to use the smoother asphaltic concrete seal then the cost would be more than three to five times as much - none of which, in the present climate, would be likely to be subsidised by NZTA.

There's information on our website
Wellington.govt.nz

If you have other questions,
email info@wcc.govt.nz or phone 499 4444.

Our postal address is:
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Why we chipseal your road





Why we resurface roads

Keeping Wellington City's roads in good shape so we can all get where we want to go is a crucial part of the maintenance work Wellington City Council does every year to keep the city moving.

Road surfaces are not permanent - they deteriorate over time. Wear and tear from traffic, trenching work for underground services and oxidation of the surface from sunlight all take a toll. As a result, we have to periodically resurface roads to ensure the underlying foundations do not deteriorate and then need expensive and disruptive remedial work.

On average, we resurface about 68km of road every year - about 10 percent of the city's 690km of roads.

It mostly happens between November and March because warm air and ground temperatures are essential to get the best results.

Resurfacing treatments

Like other urban local authorities around the country, we use three main treatments for resurfacing roads:

- Chipseal - consists of a layer of sprayed bitumen followed by one or two layers of chip
- Asphaltic concrete (AC) - is a hot-applied mixture of chip and bitumen
- Slurry Seal - is a thin cold-applied mixture of bitumen and chip.

What's the difference?

Chipseals are primarily used to prevent water entering and damaging the underlying foundation layers and generally have a life of three to 10 years. Their use can be likened to painting your house on a regular basis to prevent the weatherboards rotting.

Asphaltic concrete is used to improve the smoothness of ride for people in vehicles and on bikes and also helps reduce vehicle maintenance costs. Asphaltic concrete is not as waterproof as chipseal unless it is used in thick layers - usually over 60mm.

There is usually some 'give' in the underlying layers or foundations of most of our roads. In other words they flex under heavy loads - so it is not wise to cover them in thick layers of seal in most situations - because the seal will crack and disintegrate. We use asphaltic concrete extensively in the inner city and in shopping centres because of traffic volumes and high pedestrian flows.

Slurry seal has been used in increasing quantities in residential streets over the last few years as the advantages include a smoother surface with fewer problems caused by loose chips. However slurry seals have limitations. They have a shorter life cycle than chipseals and are also very brittle, which makes them unsuitable for cracked or highly flexible roads.