



PAVER COSTS & CONSIDERATIONS

Paver patios, walks, and drives offer an upscale look that is extremely durable and requires minimal maintenance. As certified paver installers, we often field questions in regard to the durability, maintenance, and costs of pavers versus concrete, stamped or decorative concrete, and even wood decks. The following briefly addresses those questions; if you would like additional discussion or information about pavers please contact us at (513)821-9407.

DURABILITY:

Clearly concrete and pavers are more durable than wood decking, so we'll focus here on pavers versus concrete poured on site. The individual paver bricks, or stones as they are sometimes called, are significantly stronger than typical poured concrete. The proof lies in comparing PSI ratings (or pounds per square inch), however that is a lengthy discussion for this brief overview as paver strengths differ from one product to another and poured concrete strength varies with mix composition and reinforcement materials. It is more interesting to note where the strength discrepancy originates. The paver manufacturing process is the difference; the mixes used to manufacture pavers contain less water than their poured on-site counterparts and the paver mix is mechanically compressed to form the individual pavers. The end result is increased strength and durability.

Pavers are available in a variety of shapes, thicknesses, sizes, and even materials (concrete, clay, recycled rubber, etc.) but all are typically laid over a compacted gravel and sand base. While the depth and composition of the base varies with individual site conditions, the ability of these compressed but porous base materials to flex is the same from installation to installation. With the flexibility of the base and the many expansion joints the individual pavers provide, paver patios and walks are able to move with underlying ground shifts or "give" under other extreme pressures that would cause concrete or blacktop to break or crack. The segmental nature of pavers and the flexible base also allow for easy repairs, making them a popular choice over the poured concrete options which are typically patchy and unsightly when repaired.

MAINTENANCE:

Properly installed pavers require very little maintenance. While the brick patios of old required lots of hand pulling or herbicide applications to control the weeds and moss that would grow in the joints of pavers were installed over a gravel or sand base, those days are gone. Paver joints are now filled with polymeric sand that hardens to a semi-rigid joint filler that is hard enough to inhibit weed and moss growth but flexible enough to accommodate any subtle ground movements or shifts beneath the paver surfaces. The hardened joint sand also limits washout or

migration of the joint material, minimizing the need to add additional joint fillers over the life of the patio.

As with any pavement there is a need to clean the pavers from time to time. Pressure washing and the use of specialty cleaners are options for stubborn stains, but occasional push broom scrubbing and garden hose rinsing will largely handle your cleaning needs. The frequency of cleanings will dependent in some ways upon use and surrounding environment, but more so upon your level of desired cleanliness. Application of paver sealers can minimize cleaning frequency by protecting the surface from staining and wear. Depending upon the product selected, sealers can also have the added benefit of enhancing the natural paver color and increasing sheen.

COST:

While the appearance and durability of pavers appeal to most consumers, it is a common assumption that they are extremely expensive. The reality is that they are extremely labor intensive, but are not really expensive when compared to other alternatives.

Depending upon material selection, patterns, color, height (decks), etc. we have found pricing to generally fall in these ranges:

“Plain” concrete - \$7-8 per square foot

Stamped or decorative concrete - \$10-18 per square foot

Pavers - \$11-20 per square foot

Decks - \$17-30 per square foot plus an additional \$20-35 per linear foot of railing

While square foot pricing has been offered here for you to gauge the “ballpark” price of your project, we do not use a square foot pricing method and recommend you find a contractor that does not sell their services by square foot. A couple of the many reasons square foot pricing is not good for you or your contractor follow:

- no installation is ever the same and thus square foot pricing does not easily apply to your unique installation and site conditions; time and material pricing can address unique accessibility issues, lot slope, drainage concerns, etc.
- with additional square footage comes diminishing mobilization costs and difficulty; in other words, the “first” 300 square feet installed are more expensive than the “last” 300 square feet of a 1,200 square foot installation.