

THE USE OF SEALANTS ON URBANSTONE PRODUCTS

The question of sealing UrbanStone is often raised and usually relates to three issues, namely assisting in the cleanliness of the paving and the prevention of staining, the prevention of water penetration, particularly where there is a possibility of salt attack and as an aesthetic consideration to enhance the appearance of the product.

Whilst we at UrbanStone do not promote the use of sealants on our natural reconstituted products, we do however recognise that there are instances where they may be used to satisfy one of the above mentioned special needs.

SEALANT TYPES

Although there are numerous proprietary brands of sealants marketed by specialist companies, the products generally fall into three generic groups.

They are; sealers of acrylic emulsion or similar water-based composition, silicone-based water repellents and solvent-based penetrating sealers.

All of the above sealant types may be used on UrbanStone products but will however produce different effects in the various types of applications.

Caution must be exercised to ensure that the right sealant is selected for the proposed application. We recommend consultation with the supplier of the relevant sealant types to ensure a successful and aesthetically pleasing result is obtained.

Please note, products made from acrylic emulsions can create a thick, glossy barrier coating on the pavement which can be slippery and 'yellow' with age.

WHEN SHOULD A SEALANT BE CONSIDERED?

There are situations where the application of a sealant will enhance the aesthetic appeal of the pavement or offer some protection to the product from external influences and this should be given due consideration.

Again, these fall in to fundamental categories, which are:

1. Areas susceptible to heavy soiling.

Soiling of the surface around barbecue areas, outside fast food outlets, under motor vehicle parking areas and high density pedestrian mall precincts, are all examples of areas which can benefit from the application of a sealant.

However care must be taken when considering the sealing of these areas, as residual soiling on the surface of the sealed pavement, can lead to unnecessary accidents and public liability claims in areas that were previously considered hazard-free.

Note. Some sealants will change the surface texture, colour and slip resistance of UrbanStone paving.

2. Around salt-water swimming pools and salt splash zones.

Salt attack on concrete products can be unsightly and dangerous.

The use of an appropriate sealant can assist greatly in the reduction of salt attack in susceptible areas.

As a rule of thumb, always seal around the swimming pool bullnose edge and to a minimum of one metre away from all water surfaces. Additionally, seal the likely splash zone areas of the pool such as steps, display waterfalls etc. (Refer to the section on “Salt Attack on Concrete Masonry Segmental Paving” in the UrbanStone catalogue for more information).

3. When there is a requirement to prevent the migration of waterborn and airborne chloride ions from de-icing salts, chemicals and even acid, which may result in premature failure of concrete structures.

These specialised sealers are designed to become an integral component of the substrate and, when applied correctly, form a water-repellent seal which extends below the treated surface.

These sealers also provide good vapour transmission properties, thus allowing chloride ions, already present in the concrete and masonry, to be isolated from the water and immobilised.

4. When the aesthetic appeal, colour or sheen level of the pavement needs to be changed.

On occasions, there is a requirement to change the gloss level or deepen the colour of the pavement, and the application of the correct sealant type can produce the desired effect.

Again we request that caution be exercised to examine the residual effect this will have on the other performance factors of the product to ensure the desired result is obtained, without placing unnecessary risks in other areas.

CONSIDERATIONS

Please remember that all sealants are coatings and just like paint may need to be applied at some time in the future. We therefore recommend the following questions be considered carefully before making the decision to apply any sealant onto your UrbanStone selection.

1. Will the sealant provide protection against surface wear?
2. How will it look when it does wear?
3. Can it be cleaned easily?
4. What cleaning regime should be adopted to ensure a good result?
5. Can it be re-coated and, if so, what is the correct re-coating procedure?
6. Can it be stripped back if necessary without damaging the UrbanStone product and, if so, how?
7. Will there be any change to the surface characteristics, such as gloss level, and colour?
8. Will there be any change to UrbanStone paving surface performance characteristics such as slip-resistance and abrasion-resistance?
9. Will the selected sealant protect the UrbanStone surface against staining from grease and oil or organic soils and garden mulches?
10. Will the sealant selected react with the UrbanStone or any other product used in the vicinity, such as fibreglass swimming pools or mastic expansion jointing compounds?
11. Will the surface need to be re-coated in the future and, if so, how often and using which re-coating procedure?
12. Are there alternative products which are better than the product currently under consideration?
13. Is the product under consideration proven and tested and does it carry a guarantee?
14. Can you see a sample of the proposed product as applied and in service on UrbanStone paving?

IMPORTANT

Always follow the sealant manufacture recommendation.

Ensure the product is used in the correct application and applied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Sealants are a specialised technology and consultation with manufacturers and licensed applicators of these products is essential when considering their use.

Always request to view a sample of the sealant selected as applied on your UrbanStone paving. This will ensure that the resultant colour, gloss, slip-resistance, and other important qualities, are to your satisfaction. If in doubt do a small trial in an inconspicuous area to gain the full effect of the sealer as applied.