

# Coal-Tar Sealants

*Did you know up to 85 million gallons of coal tar sealant are applied to pavements each year?*



- Pavement sealant is a black liquid applied to pavement surface to beautify and extend its life. One type of sealant often used, but harmful to human health is coal tar.
- Coal tar is a byproduct from the coking of coal. The distillation of coal tar creates coal-tar pitch, which is **considered a human carcinogen** by the National Toxicology Program.
- Coal-tar-based sealant is comprised of 20 to 35 percent coaltar pitch.
- Coal-tar sealants contain a large concentration of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (**PAHs**), a **suspected human carcinogen**.
- Coal-tar-based sealants contain **1,000 times** the concentration of PAHs than asphalt-based sealants.
- Friction grinds pavement sealant, including coal-tar, into fine particles which can be tracked indoors by shoes, blown offsite by wind, washed off by rain, etc.
- Coal tar-based sealants are one of the **primary sources of contamination** in urban lake sediment.
- Studies show residences across parking lots with coal-tar sealants have **25 times** the concentration of PAHs in house dust compared to homes not near parking lots with coal-tar.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

- To determine if a product contains coal tar, look for the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) number **65996-93-2** on the product Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). “Coal tar,” “refined coal tar,” or similar terms may appear on the product container or MSDS.
- Educate municipalities, store managers and school officials about the dangers of coal-tar sealants, and provide them with **safer alternatives such as asphalt-based sealants**, which are comparably priced.
- Tell family members and guests to take off their shoes when entering the house, as shoes can track in PAHs.
- Leave windows closed for a few days after a fresh coal-tar sealant has been applied near your home, school or workplace.
- **Talk to your municipality about a coal-tar ban; many cities and states have passed a ban.**
- Coat coal-tar sealant with asphalt sealant to prevent leaching.

