

Common Myths About Asphalt

Myth: The production of asphalt causes cancer.

There is no scientific evidence that the very low levels of emissions from an asphalt facility pose any health risks to humans.

Myth: Asphalt plants are dirty and bad for the environment.

The asphalt industry works hard to be a good citizen. It has spent millions of dollars to develop the most advanced technology to keep the environment in their communities clean. Asphalt plants have adopted stringent emission standards that exceed those of the EPA. Emission control systems also trap and remove fine sand and dust particles. As a result, the EPA has deleted asphalt plants from its list of major sources of hazardous air pollutants.

Myth: Asphalt pavement doesn't last a long time.

On the contrary, well-designed, well-built asphalt pavements last many years. They can be maintained with only periodic replacement of the surface layer. And with the newer heavy-duty surface pavements, it is possible for overlays to last more than 15 to 20 years. That's why it's called the "perpetual pavement."

Case in point: The asphalt heavily traveled New Jersey Turnpike was built in 1951, but has never had a failure in the pavement structure. The chief engineer expects it to last another 50 years.

Myth: Asphalt is a costly way to pave roads.

Actually, asphalt is the most cost-effective way to build and pave roads, both in the actual material costs and the cost of traffic delays. Numerous studies have proven the initial cost of asphalt pavement is usually less than concrete. And when major thoroughfares are closed for weeks of repairs or construction, businesses and individuals stand to lose a lot of money – potentially millions of dollars. With asphalt paving, construction and rehabilitation can be performed at night so roads are open the next morning, saving time and money. And because asphalt can be recycled into new roads, it saves taxpayers more than \$300 million a year.

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If you invest 30 minutes six times a year to contact your legislators by letter, phone, e-mail or office visit, it will make you more active than 99.9% of all citizens, and you will be 99.9% more legislatively successful. Remember you and your legislators need each other. Get involved; you will be glad you did.

Pennsylvania Perpetual Pavement Update

Perpetual Pavements have become the talk of Pennsylvania thanks to a joint effort by the Pennsylvania Asphalt Pavement Association (PAPA), the Asphalt Institute, and a consultant. PAPA visited each of the 11 Engineering Districts to discuss Perpetual Pavements with their decision makers. AI made presentations at various meetings, including American Association of State Highway Engineers (AASHE) meetings and the annual Association of Pennsylvania Constructors fall conference.

Those combined efforts prompted Pa DOT to request a meeting to discuss the economic impact of Perpetual Pavements. At that meeting, without specific project data, PAPA and AI looked at comparing equal thickness pavement sections (14.5-inch & 16-inch) and estimated that while initial cost would increase only 2% to 3%, the DOT would realize a 40-year life cycle savings of approximately 8%. Those estimates were well received by the DOT.

Since the first of the year, Pa DOT's Engineering Dist. 2-0 requested the industry look at a specific project (5 miles, 4-lanes + shoulders, currently designed as 14.5-inches of HMA) in Bradford, PA with the possibility of converting it to a Perpetual Pavement.

As a follow up to that meeting, PAPA has agreed to assist the District in developing a Perpetual Pavement design.



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