

PAVERS: ARE THEY RIGHT FOR MY JOB?



When deciding on a material for your driveway, patio, deck, or walkways, it is best to first ask “what are you going to do in the space”. For example, in a driveway you might ask how long do you want it to last, or what impression do you want the entrance to your house to give. For a patio you would want to know if you are going to barbeque, sit at a table, or play for the kids. How much maintenance do you want to do?

Pavers are pressed concrete bricks that can be used to build or replace driveways, decks, patios and walk ways with a permanent surface of colored patterns and textures. Paver colors are throughout the paver not just stamped on the surface. Pavers are not subject to the cracking or spalling that asphalt and concrete are subject to due to freezing and ground movement. Pavers are warranted against these failures for life. Weeds and ants will not come up between pavers and the sand will not wash out with proper installation.

Paver installation is like building a house. If the foundation is bad the pavers will settle or move. Selecting a paver installer is very important. A good installer will be ICPI (Interconnecting Concrete Paver Institute) certified and follow ICPI installation standards. Paver installation should be their main business ***not a side line***.

Your installer should design complete projects including pavers and retaining walls. They should have experience with many elevation and drainage problems that can be resolved using walls and pavers. This type of work is called Hardscaping. As the project hardscaper, they should work with your landscapers and your other contractors to insure a structurally sound project that looks like your dream. By using color, textures, and patterns you can make an area open and welcoming or private and intimate. If you need to entertain, build a plaza that will be practical with seating walls and circles for tables or walkways through gardens. If you can imagine it, it can be built.

Pavers are generally priced competitively with stamped concrete and wood decks. Pavers can handle heavy loads such as motor homes, trash trucks and snow plows. Many commercial uses include loading docks, parking lots, and taxi ways at airports. Try driving a 747 on a concrete driveway or wood deck.

There is no maintenance required for pavers. You can periodically clean pavers by sweeping, power blowing, or power washing with any detergent or any non – acid cleaning solutions. If installed properly, pavers should be virtually maintenance free. Quality paver sealers will last 5 – 10 years. You can shovel snow, use a snow blower or have the pavers snow plowed. Good pavers are tough!

Remember, your installer like any contractor, should guide you to the design and cost you want. He should be certified by the manufacturer of the product he is installing. He should talk about what you want to do not what products are available. It is an installers job to help you understand what you are buying and guide you honestly to a successful project. Ask for references; ask to see jobs he has done in the past. Last ask who his suppliers are and check his credit; you don't want a lien on your house because your installer didn't pay his bill.



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