



KITSAP COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

614 DIVISION STREET (MS-26), PORT ORCHARD, WA 98366-4699 | KITSAP1: 360.337.5777 | KITSAPGOV.COM

Tis the Season

Chip Seal season runs from 4th of July to Labor Day.

We have great roads in Kitsap County. And much like your car, it is important to keep up with routine maintenance to avoid costly repairs down the road. The chip sealing process is just one activity in the hierarchy of pavement preservation practices used to maintain and preserve our road system. Other options include fog sealing, crack sealing, and paving.

The County uses an established pavement rating methodology (“rock science”) to rate all the roads in the system every two years. The survey considers the overall condition of the roadway along with other factors that indicate repairs are needed. Each road is rated from 100 (new road) to 0 (no pavement left) and they are prioritized as to which pavement preservation treatment is warranted.

Chip seal is a two-part process of applying oil and a layer of rock to an existing paved road. The primary function is to seal the existing paved surface from water intrusion into the asphalt structure and underlying subgrade material. The applied oil works its way into cracks and voids in the asphalt surface and slows further pavement deterioration. Rock is then applied on top of the oil to protect it and prolong the life of the roadway—often up to 10-12 years, depending on the original condition and use. Chip seal also adds strength and skid resistance to the roadway, a particular benefit during snow and ice events.

The average base cost of chip seal is approximately \$30,000 per mile. This is about the third the cost of a traditional paving project per mile, making chip seal a cost-effective method to preserve roadway. On average, 30 miles of roadway is chip sealed each year.

The County continues to search for innovative and cost-effective new technologies and practices. Like using reclaimed asphalt in the chip seal process which reduces the need for virgin materials and keeps waste from the landfill. Another practice that has expanded county-wide over the past three years is the use of “fog seal”—an asphalt emulsion—applied to roads that were recently chip sealed. A fog seal acts like an insulated blanket and has shown to have many benefits: It retains more of the chip seal aggregate (the rocks); it allows UV light to penetrate the pavement increasing ice melt during snow events; it provides more contrast for road striping; and, it looks similar to pavement making it more aesthetically pleasing.

Kitsap County draws on the expertise of our internal work forces for road maintenance and preservation. This work model saves taxpayer dollars. It is estimated that chip sealing would





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cost up to 60% more if outside contractors did the work. During this time of road funding uncertainty, having County forces doing the work reduces the strain on the road fund.

If your road is scheduled for chip sealing this is what you should know: It takes less than a day to chip seal each road (depending on length) and the loose gravel is swept within 2-3 days and again within 2 weeks of the application. Because the process needs time to cure, it is important to keep your speeds reduced until the chips have been swept away. And most important, on the day of the chip sealing, no cars are allowed on the roadway. Bicyclists and motorcyclist should use extra caution. To learn more about chip sealing and to see what roads are scheduled for chip seal this year, go to <http://kcowa.us/roadmaint>

