



School Parking Lot Sealants

- Coal-tar-based sealants are commonly used on driveways, parking lots, and even playgrounds. **They contain high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), a class of chemicals known to cause cancer.**
- Children and adults can be exposed to the PAHs in coal-tar sealants via skin contact, ingestion, or **inhalation**.
- Friction from vehicle tires, feet, and even wind grind the sealcoat into small particles, which are picked up by the air like dust. This dust can be transported by wind and rain into nearby soil, water, and indoor environments.
- **Coal-tar sealants contain 1,000 times the concentration of PAHs than do asphalt-based sealants.**
- Coal-tar sealant was found to be the **one of the largest sources of PAH contamination to urban lakes.**
- Up to 85 million gallons of coal tar sealant is applied to pavements each year.

Want to learn more?

Visit the U.S. Geologic Survey website to learn more about...

- *what PAHs, coal-tar, and coal-pitch are*
- *how sealcoating can get into our air, homes, and waterways*
- *the environmental and health risks of coal-tar based sealants.*
- *Alternatives of coal-tar based sealants*

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2011/3010/pdf/fs2011-3010.pdf>

What You Can Do:

- Find out if your school uses coal tar sealants for their facilities. Learn more about the consequences of coal-tar sealants and talk about the risks and alternatives with other parents and administration.
- Communicate with your Parent Teacher Association and school playground officials about the dangers of coal-tar sealants, and provide them with safer (and comparably priced) alternatives like asphalt-based products.
- Approach your municipality about a coal-tar ban. Many other cities and states have passed similar bans.
- Educate others in your community as well about ways to limit your exposure to the pollutants and byproducts of coal-tar sealants (including taking shoes off when entering homes and leaving windows closed around newly coal-tar sealed surfaces).



For more information please contact:

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