

COAL TAR SEALANT

HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT & HUMAN HEALTH

When rain falls and snow melts, the runoff produced picks up a variety of contaminants such as oil, metals, salts, pet waste, fertilizer, and grass clippings as it flows over roofs, roadways, sidewalks and lawns.

Stormwater runoff ultimately flows into storm drains.

Remember: storm drains lead directly to our local rivers and streams.

Coal tar sealant is applied to asphalt to seal the surface and prevent damage from everyday wear and tear. Coal tar sealant contains Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are known to be human carcinogens (cancer causing).

HOW DOES COAL TAR SEALANT GET INTO THE ENVIRONMENT?

Coal tar sealant particles containing PAHs can be spread in many ways. Particles can also be blown into the air by the wind, tracked indoors on the bottoms of shoes, and also stick to the bottoms of tires on cars and carried as we drive. Coal Tar enters local water sources through stormwater runoff. In warm weather, toxic PAH particles are released from the sealant into the air we breathe.



Original graphic courtesy of Aaron Hicks, City of Austin, Tex.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Avoid using coal tar sealant whenever possible!
- Seek alternatives such as asphalt-based materials which contain lower concentrations of PAHs. Some local companies are currently using these options.
- Be proactive when talking about coal tar sealant as an environmental and health issue. Some cities and townships within the Clinton River Watershed have already banned all sealants that have a PAH concentration above 0.1%.