

# Law Affects Coal Tar Sealants

Coal tar-based sealants are black liquids that are sprayed or painted on asphalt parking lots and driveways to enhance the surface. Coal tar is known to cause cancer. Studies [performed by the U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#) identified coal tar-based sealants as a potential source of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs have also been linked to reproductive problems and weakened immune systems.

Recent studies raised concerns that stormwater runoff from parking lots, roads, and other impervious surfaces may become contaminated with PAHs and pollute Washington's lakes, rivers, and marine waters. They also found PAHs at elevated levels in house dust in homes with parking lots sealed with coal tar pavement products.

A law passed in 2011 (RCW 70.295) prohibits the sale and application of coal tar pavement sealants in Washington State.



*Photo taken by Peter C. VanMetre*

Most evidence suggests that coal tar sealants are not widely used in Washington State. Some major retailers no longer sell coal tar sealants because of their negative impact on the environment. Asphalt-based sealants and other alternatives exist and are widely available in Washington.

### MORE INFORMATION

After **January 1, 2012**, no person may sell at wholesale or retail a coal tar pavement product that is labeled as containing coal tar.

After **July 1, 2013**, a person may not apply a coal tar pavement product on a driveway or parking area.

Ecology may issue a notice of corrective action to a person in violation of Washington's law.

For more information on PAHs:  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/program/s/hwtr/RTT/pbt/pah.html>

View RCW 70.295:  
<http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70.295>

### Contact information

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### Special accommodations

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