

# Guide to Laying Pavers

## You will need ...

- Pavers.
- Spade, rake (metal prongs), wheelbarrow, wooden stakes, string line, tape measure, pegs and spirit level.
- Mechanical plate compactor (available from plant hire store).
- Piece of carpet or rubber mat (to protect pavers when compacting).
- Bedding sand (recommend: coarse washed river sand).
- Base layer (generally: road base material, as found in you local sand and soil supply store, or well crushed rock).
- Screeding rails (eg: 2 pieces of timber, approximately 3m long and 20 – 40mm thick).
- Screeding board (eg: a flat straight piece of aluminium or timber, approximately 3m long).
- Spirit level (available from hardware stores).
- Jointing sand (available from hardware stores).
- Sand and cement for edge restraints.
- Rubber mullet and hardwood plank (for small jobs only).
- Paver cutting equipment (eg: brick saw available from plant hire store) or bolster.

## Safety Tips

1. Check your equipment.
2. Ensure that you read the operating manuals of all equipment including hired equipment such as plate compactors and cutting equipment.
3. Check the condition of hand tools such as hammers etc, to make sure that they are in safe working order before use.
4. If you intend to cut, drill, grind or sand these products, please follow these instructions:
  - Before you start, wear a dusk mask and eye protection.
  - On the work site, use brick and concrete cutting equipment that is fitted with water attachments.
  - Cleaning up, wear you dust mask, remove dust by wetting and sweeping or dry vacuuming.

## 1. Determine Materials Needed

The quantity of pavers needed will depend on the area to be paved, see figure 1 for tips on calculating the paving area.

- This can be determined from the measurements taken from the site. This area is simply calculated by:  
Length(m) x Width(m) = Area(m<sup>2</sup>)  
(m = metres)

**Tip:** If further work is required around the site, such as retaining walls, check that access will still be available after the paving has been completed.

**Tip:** Allow up to 10% extra pavers for wastage such as cuts and breakages etc

## 2. Preparing the Site

When determining your finished paved surface level remember to consider the following:

- Paving must slope away from the building
- Allow for a depth of the base layer, bedding sand, the paver thickness less 10m for settlement after compaction.
- Pavers should be flush with the lawn.
- Excavate the area to be paved.
- Ensure the ground level is even. Replace wet patches, loose or soft areas with a sand cement mix or compacted road base to create a stable base.

**Figure 1**  
**Calculate the Area**

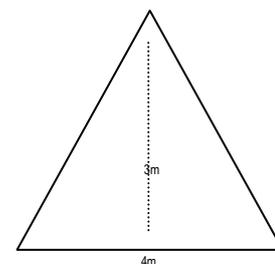
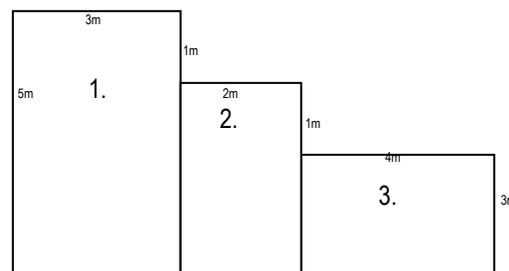
For odd shaped areas, break into sections.

1. 5m x 3m – 15 sq.metres
  2. 4m x 2m = 8 sq.metres
  3. 3m x 4m = 12 sq.metres
- Total = 35 sq.metres

For triangle areas:

$$\frac{1}{2} \times \text{base(m)} \times \text{height(m)} = \text{area(m}^2\text{)}$$

eg:  $\frac{1}{2} \times 4\text{m} \times 3\text{m} = 6 \text{ sq.metres}$



### How much road base will you need?

For a strong foundation, your paving may need road base. If you are paving a driveway or on an unstable site, it is recommended that you consult a suitably qualified engineer. Generally, road base is laid to a total depth of 100 - 150 mm (10 - 15 cm) around the entire area. For driveways, compact for every 50mm (5cm) layer and for pathways compact for every 60mm (6cm) layer.

For 10m<sup>2</sup> compacted to 100mm (10cm) you will need 1 cubic metre.

For 10m<sup>2</sup> compacted to 50mm (5cm) you will need 0.5 cubic metres.

\_\_\_\_\_ m<sup>2</sup> x (layer depth(mm) / 1000) =  
\_\_\_\_\_ m<sup>3</sup> road base

### How much bedding sand will you need?

After the road base you will need to lay bedding sand evenly to a depth of 30mm (3cm) over the entire area.

For 10m<sup>2</sup> compacted to a depth of 30mm (3cm) you will need 0.3 cubic metres.

\_\_\_\_\_ m<sup>2</sup> x (30mm / 1000) =  
\_\_\_\_\_ m<sup>3</sup> bedding sand

### How much paver joint filling sand will you need?

When laying pavers on the bedding sand it is recommended that a 2-3mm gap is left between pavers. Then joint fill sand can be swept into the gaps.

For 20 - 30 m<sup>2</sup> of paving, leaving 2-3mm gaps you will need approximately 1 bag. (10 - 20kg)

### How much sand cement mix will you need?

Sand cement edge restraints may be needed to keep the pavers from shifting. They can be easily made with a mixture of sand and cement.

For 200 lineal metres of restraint you will need approximately 1 cubic metre of sand and cement mix.

Refer to your local supplier (eg: hardware store) for pre-bagged sand and cement mixes.

## 3. Base Layer

Spread the base layer (generally: road base material or well graded crushed rock) evenly over the prepared ground.

- Rake to an even thickness before compaction.
- Compaction of road base is usually performed using a mechanical plate compactor. It is recommended that the road base is compacted in 2-3 layers, not in one single layer.

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**Tip:** It is essential that rain water flows off the paving and away from buildings. To ensure this paving must not be completely flat, it should slope about 20mm (2cm) per metre. If the paving is against the side of a building, the pavers need to be a minimum of 25mm (2.5cm) below the damp proof course to prevent rising damp problems in your home. The damp proof course and air vents should never be covered.

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**Tip:** An uneven base will give an uneven paver surface. Check with a spirit level.

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## 5. Laying the Pavers

Setting out – the best way to ensure your paving pattern stays in line is to use set out lines.

- Use two string lines at right angles to keep the paving joints straight. When setting up the grid remember to add 2-3mm to each paver width to allow for the gap between each unit.

When laying –

- Place the pavers gently on the sand bed leaving a gap of 2-3mm between each unit unless the pavers have nibs (this prevents chipping)
- Disturb the bed of sand as little as possible, you may stand on the centre of the pavers already laid but be careful not to stand on the leading row of pavers as they may tilt and shift the flat sand.
- Select the pavers down the side of the pallets and randomly from different pallets to ensure an all over blend.

Cutting pavers –

- After laying all full-size pavers, the part size pieces can be measured and cut.
- Cutting (splitting) can be done with a hammer and bolster. A scutch hammer will be required to trim away any projections in the split.
- For a neater cut, use a water-cooled diamond blade saw. After cutting the part-pavers must be washed clean of saw grindings. These grindings may be invisible while wet but if allowed to dry, will appear as pastel-coloured stains, cemented to the paver and be very difficult to remove.
- For final compaction, the restraints should be approximately 10mm (1cm) below the pavers before compaction.
- Edge restraints can be made of treated timber, concrete (essential for driveways) or paving unit on its side.

## 4. Bedding Layer

Spread and screed a coarse, well graded washed river sand.

- The easiest way to screed sand flat is to use two guides (screeding rails) and a screeding board.
- Place screeding rails in position to that they slope enough to shed water (check with a spirit level), then spread a layer of bedding sand over the rails.
- Pull the screeding board over the screeding rails to obtain a uniform depth of approximately 30 mm(3cm).
- When the sand is screeded remove the guides and fill in the tracks with bedding sand and smooth off.

**Tip:** Crusher dust and mixing sand with cement are not recommended

**Tip:** When paving driveways or unstable site, it is recommended that you consult a suitable qualified engineer.

## 6. Joint Filling

Once the pavers are laid, sweep dry fine graded sand over the paved area ensuring that all joints are fill.

**Tip:** Do not mix cement with the jointing sand or the pavers may be stained.

### Handy Paving Tips

- When paving against a house it is recommended that the top of the paving is a minimum of 25mm (2.5cm) below the damp proof course. It is also advisable to place a plastic membrane against the exposed concrete of the house footing.
- When paving a slope it is important to start at the bottom and pave up the slope.

## 7. Compacting the Pavers

To secure the paving in place, compact the pavers using a mechanical plate compactor **with a piece of carpet or rubber mat under the compactor** to prevent the pavers from being scratched or damaged.

- After each pass of the compactor sweep in more jointing sand and compact again before sweeping off excess sand.
- For small areas, pavers can be compacted by using a hammer and a hardwood plank.
- For driveways it is recommended that a minimum of 3 passes are carried out with a mechanical plate compactor.
- Bedding sand should generally compact approximately 10mm (1cm).

## Caring for your Pavers – Prevention is better than cure

- Sweep regularly with a stiff bristled broom to keep pavers free from debris.
- For maximum protection we suggest pavers are sealed after installation with a penetrating sealer (please check with a reputable sealing company for advice).
- During construction, cover the paved areas to protect against damage.
- Protect your pavers against possible staining from mortar, oxides, cement and rust.
- Do not use acid to clean pavers.
- Do not use high pressure cleaning apparatus to clean pavers.
- Attempt to clean a stain before it hardens or dries up in all cases.

If a stain occurs, follow some simple steps:

- Assess type of stain carefully before taking action (incorrect assessment of stain can cause the stain to be more difficult to remove).
- If stain cannot be accurately assessed, conduct a trial process on a small portion of stained area to determine most appropriate action.
- Do not use acid to remove stains under any circumstances.