

How to Remove an Oil Stain from a Driveway

Author – Matt Oden

Original Article located at <http://remove-stain.com/remove-oil-stain-from-driveway>

“When you first notice that little puddle forming underneath your car, your first thought is of your car and not removing that oil stain forming on your driveway. But that developing stain is not only unsightly, but it could actually be damaging your driveway. So take care of your car, yes, but make sure you remove oil stains from your driveway, too.

“Driveways are generally made from two materials: concrete or asphalt. Concrete is a porous surface. Depending on the finish or sealing, the concrete may absorb a large amount of oil, resulting in a dark stain. When oil spills on asphalt, the oils can actually break down this petroleum-based material, even if it is sealed.

“The key to removing oil stains from a driveway is to clean up the oil as soon as possible. The longer the oil stands on the surface, the harder the stain will be to remove.

“Removing Excess Oil from a Driveway

“The first step to removing oil stains from a driveway requires you to clean up the excess oil sitting on top of a fresh spill. You can use paper and rags to clean up the oil, but you run the risk of spreading the oil over a greater surface area. You will also be left with a pile of flammable paper or rags which will need proper disposal.

“The ideal way to clean up fresh oil is to apply a product that will absorb the oil. While there are commercial products available for use on oil spills, there are many household products that will work just as well.

“Some of the top oil-absorbing household products are:

- “Cat litter
- “Sand
- “Cornmeal
- “Cornstarch
- “Baking soda

“Simply sprinkle over the oil, creating a thick layer to absorb the oil. Allow to remain on the stain for several hours to overnight. Sweep up the litter by placing a dustpan right at the edge of the stain and sweeping the oil-absorbing material into the dustpan. Take care not to spread the material around the driveway. After you have removed the excess oil, you can then remove the remaining stain.”

Removing an Oil Stain from the Driveway

Author – Tim Carter

Original Article located at:

http://www.askthebuilder.com/B368_Oil_Spills_on_Pavement.shtml

“Tim Carter, nationally syndicated columnist of *Ask the Builder*, recommends a simple solution to cleaning oil stains from a driveway: dishwashing detergent. Dishwashing detergent removes oil and grease from plates and it removes oil stains from driveways. Dishwashing detergent can be used safely on both concrete and asphalt driveways, making it the first stop for removing both new and old oil stains.

“What You Will Need Before You Start:

- Dishwashing detergent
- “Stiff broom
- “Water hose

“For a fresh stain, apply the dishwashing detergent over the stained area in a thick layer. Old stains require that you wet down the stained area before applying the detergent. Allow it to penetrate the stain for five minutes. The time allows the detergent to start breaking down the oil. Add a small amount of water to the detergent. Use a stiff broom to scrub the surface of the stained driveway. Rinse with clear water. You will see rainbow colors shimmering on the wet surface if oil still remains. If it does, simply repeat the process until the oil is completely removed.

“Removing Difficult Oil Stains from Concrete

“The porous nature of concrete often allows it to deeply absorb oil. In fact, oil can penetrate up to ¼ inch deep into the concrete. While dishwashing detergent will remove a lot of the surface oil stain, it sometimes cannot reach deeper, old, stains in concrete. You will need a commercial solvent to successfully remove these stains.

“What You Will Need Before You Start:

- “Muriatic acid
- “Stiff broom
- “Water hose” (or pressure washer)
- “Protective eyewear, gloves and long-sleeved clothing

“Muriatic acid can be purchased at a home and garden store or can be found in the pool supply section of a department store. It is an extremely caustic chemical. You must wear protective gear when working with this cleaner. Work in a well-ventilated area and avoid mixing with any other chemicals.”

(Reproducer note: Muriatic acid should be diluted one part acid added to three parts water prior to the following steps. NEVER ADD WATER TO THE ACID, IT CAN CAUSE AN EXPLOSIVE REACTION!)

1. “Carefully pour a small amount of muriatic acid” and water mixture “on the oil stain. Start with ¼ cup and add more, if needed, until the stain is completely covered.
2. “Brush the acid into the stain using a stiff broom.
3. “Allow the muriatic acid to penetrate the stain for ten minutes.
4. “Rinse the driveway thoroughly with water.

“Preventative measures often result in less staining. Sealing your driveway” (with a clear waterproofing product) “on a regular basis can help prevent oil from penetrating deep into your driveway’s surface. Quickly cleaning up excess oil also reduces oil penetration and makes stain removal easier. Taking the time to remove an oil stain from a driveway not only improves the appearance of your home, it can also protect the structure of your driveway.”

Reproducer note: Other websites regarding cleaning oil stains from a driveway include using a carbonated cola product, i.e. Coke or Pepsi, to help lift the stain. Also using a poultice made by saturating an absorptive material such as cat litter, pool filter media (diatomaceous earth) or sawdust with a strong solvent such as acetone, xylene, lacquer thinner or MEK, and then smearing the material over the stain. Cover the poultice with a piece of plastic, and let the process of osmosis take over. The solvent will break down the oil, and the absorptive material will suck it out of the concrete. Sweep up the poultice and then thoroughly flush the driveway with a hose or pressure washer. This process may need to be repeated several times to remove the stain, and this process takes time and may not be cost-effective or practical for removing large stains.

Obviously when you see the start of an oil stain find out where the leak is coming from and fix it as soon as possible, or protect the driveway with a piece of plastic or cardboard until repairs can be made. This makes the stain removal process much easier.