Guide to Laying Pavers

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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, consult your supplier for weight requirements).
- 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 your local sand and soil supply store, or well crushed rock).
- Screeding rails (e.g. 2 pieces of timber, approximately 3m long and 30 - 40mm thick).
- Screeding board (e.g. a flat straight piece of aluminium or timber, approximately 3m long).
- Spirit level (available from hardware stores) Jointing sand (Recommend: fine washed sand).
- Sand and cement for edge restraints.
- Rubber mallet and hardwood plank (for small jobs only).
- Paver cutting equipment (e.g. brick saw available from plant hire store) or bolster.

1. Planning

Before starting any project around the home it is necessary to make careful plans.

A plan of the area to be paved should be drawn accurately, see Figure 1 for a sample site layout.


Tip: Don’t forget to provide for storm water run-off along with the required utilities that need to run under the paved area, such as storm water pipes, water pipes for a sprinkler system and electrical wiring for external power points needed for ponds, fountains and lighting.

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.

2. Determine Materials Needed

The quantity of pavers needed will depend on the area to be paved, see Figure 2 for tips on calculating the paving area.

This can be determined from the measurements taken from the site. This area is simply calculated by:

\[
\text{Length(m) \times width(m) = area(m}^2)\\
\]

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

Figure 1
Site layout & paving steps
Illustration courtesy of Cement & Concrete Association Australia

Figure 2
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 triangular areas:
\[
\frac{1}{2} \times \text{base (m)} \times \text{height (m)} = \text{area (m}^2)\\
\text{eg. } \frac{1}{2} \times 4m \times 3m = 6 \text{ sq. metre}
\]
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 to 150mm (10-15cm) around the entire area.

For driveways, compact for every 50mm (5cm) layer and for pathways compact for every 60mm (6cm) layer.

For 10\(m^2\) compacted to 100mm (10cm) you will need 1 cubic metres. For 10\(m^2\) compacted to 50mm (5cm) you will need 0.5 cubic metres.

\[ \frac{\text{Area} \times \text{Depth (mm)}}{1000} = \text{Cubic metres of Road Base} \]

(Paving Area)

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.

\[ \frac{\text{Area} \times 30\text{mm}}{1000} = \text{Cubic metres of Bedding Sand} \]

(Paving Area)

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\(m^2\) 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. Preparing the Site
When determining your finished paved surface level remember to consider the following:

- Paving must slope away from the building;
- Allow for the depth of the base layer, bedding sand, the paver thickness less 10mm for settlement after compaction (see Figure 3).
- Pavers should be flush with the lawn.

Figure 3

4. 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 (see Figure 5). It is recommended that the road base is compacted in 2 - 3 layers, not in one single layer.

Figure 5

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 a safe working order before use.
4. Always operate equipment according to the manufacturer’s instructions and wear the appropriate safety clothing listed by the manufacturer.
5. Bedding Layer
Spread and screed a coarse, well graded washed river sand.
- Place screeding rails in position so 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 30mm (3cm) (see Figure 6). When the sand is screeded remove the guides and fill in the tracks with bedding sand and smooth off.

Figure 6

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

6. 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.

Figure 7

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.

7. Jointing Filling
Once the pavers are laid, sweep dry fine graded sand over the paved area ensuring that all joints are full.

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

8. 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. (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

For small areas, pavers can be compacted by using a hammer and a hardwood plank. (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

For driveways it is recommended that a minimum of 3 passes are carried out with a mechanical compactor.

Bedding sand should generally compact approximately 10mm (1cm).
Handy Paving Tips

- Always remember to include a 2-3mm gap between each paver when laying.
- When paving against a house it is recommended that the top of 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.

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.

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.

Problem | Suggested Cleaning Method
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Efflorescence* (White powdery deposit) | Brush first with a stiff bristled broom. Broom slightly damp sand over affected areas to assist removal. Weathering will eventually stop this process from occurring.
Leaves, Bark, Algae, Food and Wine Stains | Use bleach diluted with water, then wash^ down.
Chewing Gum | Freeze with dry ice and remove with a spatula.
Ivy Suckers | Apply a heat gun to the suckers until they harden. Allow them to cool and dry, then scrub them off with a stiff brush.

* Efflorescence occurs naturally in cement based products.
^ Subject to water restrictions in your area.

For more information contact 1300 134 002 or visit www.boral.com.au/pavers