

**Coal-Tar-Based Sealcoat
Information Summary
January 2021**

Health and Environmental Impact

- Source of human carcinogens, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), that cause cancer, affect human development, and are toxic to aquatic life:
 - Increase risk of skin, lung, bladder, kidney, and digestive track cancers in humans
 - Diminished ability to swim in salamanders
 - Impaired growth and development of frogs
 - Liver damage in fish
- Dust created from sealcoat is blown by the wind, tracked indoors on the soles of shoes, inhaled, absorbed by the skin, and washed away by rain to storm drains and streams
- Cost of cleaning contaminated bodies of water is expensive
- Two-thirds of coal-tar-based sealcoat is imported
- Sealcoat applicators have alternative products for use: asphalt- and latex-based products
- PAHs in urban sources (concentrations in mg/kg):
 - Fresh asphalt 1.5
 - Weathered asphalt 3
 - Fresh motor oil 4
 - Brake particles 16
 - Road dust 24
 - Tire particles 86
 - Diesel engine 102
 - Gasoline engine 370
 - Used motor oil 440
 - Sealcoat
 - Asphalt based 50
 - Coal-tar based 70,000

Current Bans

- Maine, Minnesota, and Washington
- New York: state-wide ban in legislative process, local ban in Suffolk County (Long Island)
- Wisconsin: state-wide ban in legislative process, twenty-three local bans in effect
- District of Columbia
- Austin Texas
- San Antonio Texas
- Local Bans: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, and South Carolina
- Maryland: Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, and Anne Arundel County
- Pennsylvania: Fox Chapel Borough passed first ban in the Commonwealth in April 2020

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Code Enforcement

Survey of the details of seven ordinances reveals that enforcement is not an important consideration in banning coal-tar-based sealcoat. (See Sealcoat Code Survey.) Most ordinances do not specify how violations are identified.

Fox Chapel Borough (Pennsylvania) Experience

Council member's commentary:

- Coal-tar ban was well received by borough residents
- Residents were not aware of coal-tar-sealcoat's health risk
- Borough Council did not worry about enforcement
- Borough notified local sealcoat applicators of coal-tar ban and identified allowable products to help acceptance and compliance: use of asphalt- and latex-based products only
- Personal-interest story about the council member who championed the ban generated interest: article appeared in the area's largest newspaper, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (April 22, 2020)
- Surrounding boroughs are now interested in following Fox Chapel's lead upon hearing about ban

Implementation Ideas

- Letter from Solebury Township to the following:
 - Township homeowner associations
 - Property managers doing business in township
 - Sealcoat applicators doing business in township
 - Owners of commercial properties located in township
- Permit/registration requirement for sealcoat applicators
- Postcard to township residents through U.S Postal Service Every Door Direct Mail services (mass mailing by carrier route)
- Prominence of ban information on township website
- Information on Environmental Advisory Council Facebook page
- Bucks County Herald article
- Solebury Messenger article
- Shopping center information table (post pandemic)
- Incorporate into Earth Day celebration (post pandemic)