

## MASONRY & CONCRETE CARE GUIDE

**Purpose:** This guide explains how to care for new and existing masonry and concrete so it lasts longer, looks better, and performs well through NYC seasons.

### I. THE FIRST 24–72 HOURS AFTER NEW CONCRETE OR MORTAR

- Foot Traffic
  - Avoid walking on new concrete for at least 24 hours (or as advised).
  - Keep kids, pets, and heavy objects off the surface.
- Vehicles
  - Do not drive or park on new driveways or pads for at least 5–7 days, longer for heavy vehicles.
- Water & Curing
  - Light misting (if recommended) can help curing in hot or windy conditions.
  - Do not allow large puddles to sit on the surface for long periods.
- Do NOT
  - Do not use de-icing salts on fresh concrete in the first winter.
  - Do not drag heavy metal, dumpsters, or sharp edges over the surface.

---

### II. THE FIRST 28 DAYS (CURING PERIOD)

- Normal Color Changes
  - Concrete and mortar may change color as they cure.
  - Light hairline cracks are common and usually not structural.
- Protection
  - Avoid sealing very fresh concrete unless specifically advised.
  - Keep harsh chemicals, paints, and oils off the surface during curing.

---

### III. ROUTINE CLEANING & LONG-TERM CARE

- General Cleaning
  - Sweep or blow debris regularly from walks, patios, and steps.
  - Use a garden hose and mild detergent for most dirt and stains.
  - Avoid very aggressive power-washing on mortar joints or old brick.
- Stains
  - Address oil, rust, or leaf stains promptly.
  - Use masonry-safe cleaners only; always test a small area first.

- Sealing
    - Some concrete and pavers benefit from sealing.
  - Ask about:
    - Breathable penetrating sealers
    - Anti-slip additives for steps and sloped walks.
- 

#### IV. WINTER CARE & DE-ICING

- Snow & Ice
    - Use plastic shovels or rubber-edge shovels to clear snow.
    - Avoid chipping ice with metal tools that can damage the surface.
  - De-Icing Products
    - Avoid rock salt (sodium chloride) on concrete, especially newer slabs.
    - If you must use de-icer, choose products labeled as “concrete-safe” or “plant-safe” and follow directions.
    - Sand or grit can improve traction without harming the concrete.
- 

#### V. BRICK, STONE & MORTAR JOINTS

- Water Management
    - Keep gutters and downspouts clear so water doesn't dump on masonry or concrete.
    - Check that soil and paving slope away from foundations.
  - Efflorescence (White Powder)
    - A white, chalky deposit may appear on brick or block.
    - This is usually mineral salts from moisture movement.
    - Light deposits can often be brushed off when dry; persistent issues may indicate water intrusion.
  - Tuckpointing & Repairs
    - Mortar joints naturally wear over time.
    - If you see deep gaps, loose mortar, or cracked joints, schedule an evaluation.
    - Early repairs are cheaper and help prevent larger structural issues.
- 

#### VI. WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Hairline vs. Serious Cracks
  - Hairline surface cracks are common with concrete.
  - Contact us if you notice:
    - Wide cracks you can fit a coin into
    - Sudden movement or lifting
    - Uneven settling or trip hazards.
- Water & Drainage Issues
  - Standing water on or against masonry can shorten its life.
  - Look for:

- Puddles that don't drain
  - Water against the house foundation
  - Erosion along edges of walks or patios.
- 

## VII. WHEN TO CALL US

- New movement or large cracks
- Loose or spalling brick, block, or stone
- Trip hazards on steps or walkways
- Water penetration or dampness on interior masonry walls

We're happy to check issues early and recommend repair options before they become bigger problems.

---

Disclaimer: This guide provides general care tips and does not replace a site-specific inspection. Conditions, materials, and climate vary. Always follow project-specific instructions provided at the time of installation.

© 2025 Hammer Brick & Home LLC | Masonry & Concrete Care Guide