

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.
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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.
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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.
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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.

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