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SURFACE DRESSINGS

General

Definition

A surface dressing (SD) (chip seal in USA) is a thin wearing course consisting of superimposed layers of chippings and bituminous binder. The composition of the surface dressing, the quantity of materials per unit surface area and the desired qualities depend on the requirements for a particular situation. For example:

- laying a wearing course on a new pavement,
- rehabilitating the surface characteristics of an old pavement,
- waterproofing the pavement.

A number of different parameters must be taken into consideration for each specific pavement, for example the type of substrate, the traffic

level, etc. The optimum technical solution, in line with economical considerations, is selected from the possible binder-aggregate combinations.

Background

Asphalt compounds were first used for a few years, firstly in order to surface footways and then, later in the form of thin layers on roadways. The first asphalt compounds were used from 1840 on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. These initial «SDs» proved effective in combatting dust, mud and loss of stones, enabling the interval between maintenance operations to be extended from once a month to once a year. Not until the second half of the 19th century did coal tar based surface dressings appear and subsequently develop further. These surface dressings were indispensable

