Commonly known as “oil and chip,” this maintenance operation is used as a way to extend the life of low-traffic-volume roads for another three to five years.

This activity is performed when temps are greater than 60 degrees, generally in the months of April to October. Surface treatment requires a sweeper, oil distributor, a stone chipper, rollers, numerous dump trucks and a crew comprised of approximately 18 crew members.

The operation begins with the roadway being swept clean of all debris. Then, oil is sprayed to the roadway with a layer of fine stone immediately applied on top of the oil. It is then rolled in place with all loose aggregate swept from the roadway once cured.

Generally, it takes about two days for the stones to fully bond in the hardened asphalt. Motorists should reduce their speed on these roads until the stone and the asphalt fully adhere.

This maintenance treatment seals the road surface to keep water out and restores the friction of the surface to enhance traction.
PennDOT Maintenance First

Although Pennsylvanians see PennDOT crews on the roads year round, they may not always realize the scope or importance of all of the work we do.

More common maintenance activities such as Surface Treatment don’t receive as much public attention as building new bridges or highways, but they are integral to the maintenance of the state’s 40,000 roadway miles and 25,000 bridges.

For more information, or for additional copies of the Maintenance First cards, please contact PennDOT’s Press Office at 717-783-8800 or your local PennDOT District Press Office.

The Maintenance First Series was developed to help educate our customers about our more common maintenance operations.