

Winter in London, Ontario does not play nice with driveways. Meltwater refreezes overnight, drifting snow packs and polishes surfaces, and the freeze-thaw cycle tests every pore in the slab. When I meet a homeowner after their first icy season, the conversation almost always turns to traction. That is the right instinct. You can have a handsome driveway that lasts decades and still be on your back the first morning black ice shows up. Texture, mix design, slope, and maintenance all work together. Get them aligned, and a residential driveway in London, Ontario becomes a safe, low-stress piece of your property instead of a winter hazard.

What slip resistance really means on concrete

Slip resistance on exterior flatwork is mostly about three things: microtexture, macrotexture, and water management. Microtexture is the fine sandpaper feel under a shoe sole, the result of cement paste and tiny aggregates exposed just so. Macrotexture is the visible pattern or profile your eye picks up from a broom, stamp, or exposed aggregate. Water management covers slope and drainage, which decide how quickly meltwater leaves the surface instead of refreezing into a transparent film.

Standards for slip resistance on exterior concrete vary and are often written with tile in mind, not driveways. What matters on site is whether the surface provides predictable grip in the wet. Many contractors use field tests like the British Pendulum to gauge wet slip resistance, but most homeowners will never see a number. You feel it with your boots. If it feels secure in a light drizzle, you are in the right range. In practice that means a surface that is obviously textured to the eye and hand, paired with a mix design and sealer system that preserve that texture, not polish it away.

The London climate sets the rules

Our winters swing through dozens of freeze-thaw cycles, sometimes more than a hundred in a harsh season. That movement turns borderline finishing or marginal mixes into maintenance headaches. Air-entrained concrete is non-negotiable here. A 32 MPa to 35 MPa mix, with 5 to 8 percent entrained air and a water-cement ratio around 0.45 or lower, stands up far better to salt, slush, and refreezing. I specify synthetic fibres in many residential pours for extra crack control, and I have seen them pay for themselves on steep approaches and in shaded north-facing lanes.

De-icers matter too. New concrete is particularly vulnerable. On a fresh residential driveway in London, Ontario, avoid de-icing salts for the first winter if you can manage it, and rely on proper snow removal and traction sand. After that, use sodium chloride when temperatures hover just below zero, and step to calcium or magnesium chloride when it is colder. Stay away from ammonium-based products altogether because they can attack concrete. Whatever you choose, rinse off residue during a thaw. Chlorides that sit in pores pull in water and magnify freeze damage.

The finishes that work, and where they shine

Different textures deliver traction in different ways. The right choice depends on slope, sun exposure, how you clear snow, and the look you want with your house. If you have ever seen a glassy stamped driveway in July that turns into a skating ribbon in January, the culprit was not stamping itself. It was the combination of pattern, sealer, and care that polished the texture away. Done well, several finishes perform beautifully through London winters.

Broom finish, the quiet workhorse

Ask a crew what they would pour for their own parents on a sloped lot, and most will say a well-executed broom finish. The technique is simple, but it is also where I see the biggest spread in results. The broom should be clean and consistent, and the draw should be perpendicular to the direction of travel. On a drive that slopes toward the street, pull the broom across the width, not down the length, so tire treads and boots bite across micro ridges instead of running along them. On hot days, finishing can get rushed. Resist that urge. Overworked paste or a broom passed too early can smear and close the surface, robbing you of texture.



A medium broom is usually the sweet spot for traction without turning the surface into a dirt magnet. You can combine a broom finish with a contrasting float finish on borders, and that small design step keeps things from looking too commercial. If a client wants a little extra bite, I add a light micro-etch after curing to sharpen the sand and reopen the top paste a fraction.

Exposed aggregate, beauty with grip

Properly done, exposed aggregate offers remarkable traction because the cement paste is washed back to reveal small stones that stand proud. The trick is not to overexpose. Leave 2 to 3 millimetres of embedment and keep the stone size restrained, often pea gravel around 8 to 10 millimetres. Oversized or jagged stone can catch snow shovels and make plowing unpleasant. In London's climate, sealing exposed aggregate is important for two reasons. First, to protect the paste around the stone from chloride intrusion, and second, to lock in fines so they do not shed under snowblower paddles. Choose a breathable, penetrating or thin-film sealer with a matte or satin look and bake in traction by adding angular grit. I often use aluminum oxide around 60 to 90 mesh for durability. Rounded polymer beads feel gentler under bare feet, but they shear off faster under car tires.

Stamped concrete that stays honest in winter

Stamped driveways get a bad reputation for slipperiness, but you can build them for winter. It starts with pattern choice. Deeper, fractured-stone patterns like slate, fractured earth, or ashlar create macrotexture that still reads through a sealer. Shallow skins that look elegant in photos can go slick when wet. Release agents and curing also matter. Powders and antiquing can load the low spots and change traction. After thirty days or more of curing in moderate weather, I seal stamped work with a low-gloss product formulated for traction additives, then broadcast a fine angular grit evenly during

the first coat and lock it with a second. The goal is a surface that feels like fine sandpaper under a boot, not a showroom shine.

Expect more maintenance. Tire paths polish. Where a broom driveway might go three to five years between reseals, stamped often wants attention in two to three, especially on busy lanes.

Light sandblast or micro-etch, the retrofit hero

Sometimes the slab is already down, maybe even smooth troweled by a previous owner, and you are dealing with a slippery surface right now. A light sandblast or gel-based micro-etch can rescue grip without scarring the look. The process removes a whisper of paste to expose fine sand uniformly. It changes the way water films, so even a small pass can reduce the slip risk dramatically. After etching, I use a breathable sealer with traction grit, then check drainage. It is remarkable how often a little ponding shows up once the sheen drops and the surface stops hiding it.

Specialty finishes and overlays

Salt finish has fans in milder climates, but I avoid it here because the intentionally pitted surface can trap water and accelerate damage when combined with de-icers. If you inherited a slick surface, thin polymer-modified overlays with broadcast grit are an option, but they require careful prep and a contractor with overlay experience. Shot blasting, cleaning, priming, and controlling cure become the difference between a solution and a patch job.

Quick comparison, context you can use

- Broom finish: Best all-rounder for traction and snow removal. Clean lines, low maintenance, and cost efficient. Choose medium texture, pull perpendicular to travel, and seal lightly with optional grit.
- Exposed aggregate: Strong grip and a classic look. Control stone size and exposure depth. Needs sealing with added grit to avoid polishing and to protect the paste.
- Stamped concrete: Works if you pick deeper patterns and pair with matte sealers plus traction grit. Expect more frequent resealing and touchups along tire paths.
- Micro-etch or light sandblast: Great for retrofits or refining texture on new work. Evens out slick spots and pairs well with breathable sealers. Minimal visual change when done lightly.
- Overlays with broadcast grit: A targeted fix for problematic slabs, but surface prep and product choice are critical. Treat it like a system, not just a coating.

Design choices that boost safety without killing curb appeal

You do not need to shout safety to build safety. Subtle design decisions make a driveway safer in London weather while still fitting the house.

Borders and bands help people orient themselves in snow and slush. A slightly different texture or colour band along the edge gives depth cues when conditions flatten everything to grey. On slopes, I like to add a three- to four-foot landing at the top with extra texture, both as a traction zone when you step out of a car and as a staging area for snow shoveling.

Joints do more than control cracks. Well planned, they break up long runs that can shed water faster. Poorly planned, they collect meltwater right where you walk. I set contraction joints so they fall outside main footpaths from the front door to the garage. I also avoid joint sealants with a glossy finish on walking paths. Matte backer rod and neat tooling keep water out without adding a slippery strip.

For steep drives, a trench drain or a linear grate at the bottom protects the sidewalk and prevents refreeze sheets at the apron. On severe slopes, I have specified hydronic or electric snow-melt systems. They are not common, and they are not cheap, but for certain north-facing hills or curved approaches shaded by mature trees, the cost is easier to justify than a fall.

Drainage and slope, the quiet safety features

No amount of texture saves a driveway with poor drainage. A residential driveway in London, Ontario should shed water at about 1 to 2 percent slope away from the garage. Anything flatter invites ponding, and anything steeper becomes its own hazard. The surface needs a consistent plane. Settled patches around service trenches or at the apron create birdbaths that freeze clear as glass.

I check drainage during layout with a string line, then again during finishing with a long [residential driveway london ontario](#) straightedge. On stamped work with multiple elevations and borders, I have a finisher assigned to watch nothing but slope while the others stamp. That single choice has saved more callbacks than any sealer ever could.

Mix design and curing that stand up to winter

Most traction talk focuses on finishes, but the best finish fails on weak, poorly cured concrete. Air entrainment is essential in our climate because those microscopic bubbles give freezing water room to expand. If you see premature surface scaling after the first winter, salts might be part of it, but I would bet poor curing or a high water content during finishing also played a role.

I prefer wet curing for at least three days in moderate weather, often combined with an evaporation retarder during finishing on windy days. If schedules force a curing compound, choose one compatible with the sealer system you plan to use. On exposed aggregate, manage retarder timing so paste does not over soften. On broom finishes, keeping finishers off the slab until bleed water is gone avoids the creamier surface that loves to polish under tires.

Sealers that add traction instead of taking it away

A glossy film sealer looks great in a photo and sells jobs in July, then comes back to haunt you in January. In our market, penetrating sealers or low-gloss film formers with broadcast grit make more sense on driveways. Penetrants, often silane-siloxane blends, do an excellent job repelling water and chlorides without changing the surface profile. They do not directly add traction, but they preserve the texture you built. Film sealers can support traction additives and bring out colour, especially on stamped and exposed aggregate, but they need careful selection and application. Roll too heavy and you will level the microtexture you just created.

Grit choice is not trivial. Angular materials like aluminum oxide last far longer under hot tires than round plastic beads. Mesh size in the 60 to 100 range sits in a good middle ground. Too coarse and shovels catch, too fine and you feel no difference. Stir often while rolling because grit settles fast. Apply thin, uniform coats and avoid puddles along joints and in low spots.

Snow removal techniques that preserve grip

I get just as many calls from homeowners with perfect finishes who lose traction after a winter of the wrong snow removal tools. Plastic shovel blades are gentler than metal on stamped textures and on exposed aggregate peaks. If you run a snowblower, lift the skids a notch, then walk your lane slowly the first snowfall to memorize high points so you do not grind them down. Rubber squeegee plows are kinder to textured surfaces than bare steel. If a contractor plows your lane, ask them to fit a poly edge and to avoid spin turns on the slab. Tire polishing along those arcs is as common as it is avoidable.

For traction, sand still earns its keep. Broadcast sparingly and sweep it up during thaws so it does not migrate into joints and drains. Urea-based products often sold as pet-friendly are kind to paws but weak de-icers on driveways. If you need melting at lower temperatures, magnesium chloride is less aggressive to concrete than calcium chloride and leaves fewer flaky residues.

Retrofitting an existing slippery driveway

Plenty of London homes already have driveways that look good but scare people when wet. When I assess a slick slab, I look for three things: where water lingers, what finish lies under the sealer, and how the surface feels under a shoe once clean and dry.

Start with cleaning. Oil films, mower clippings, and even leaf tannins can make a decent texture feel greasy. A low-pressure wash with a degreaser and a rinse sometimes adds more grip than people expect. If it is still slick, I consider a light micro-etch or a uniform sandblast to restore microtexture. On stamped work, it is often enough to strip the glossy sealer, correct drainage issues, then reseal with grit and a matte finish. On smooth troweled surfaces, an overlay with broadcast grit can make sense, but only if the homeowner accepts that it is a system with a lifespan and will need planned maintenance.

What it costs to build for traction

Pricing shifts with cement costs, labour, and fuel, but rough patterns have held in Southwestern Ontario across recent seasons. A straightforward broom finish driveway is usually the most cost-effective, with many bids landing in the low to mid range per square foot compared to other decorative options. Exposed aggregate and stamped concrete typically add a noticeable premium for materials and skilled labour. Micro-etching is a modest add-on to a broom finish, while overlays or retrofits that include stripping and surface prep can rival the price of new work on a per square foot basis.

If you are comparing quotes for concrete driveways London Ontario wide, ask bidders to price the whole safety system, not just the pour. That means air-entrained mix design, proper curing, a traction-friendly sealer, and the first maintenance visit. A slightly higher bid that includes those items often costs less over five winters than a cheaper number that leaves you hunting for a fix after the first icy rain.

When to call in specialized concrete installation services

Most residential flatwork contractors can deliver a solid broom finish. When your project steps into steeper slopes, shaded microclimates, complex drainage, or decorative textures that must still perform in winter, bring in concrete installation services with a track record in our climate. Ask to see a stamped or exposed aggregate driveway after two winters, not the day after sealing. A reputable crew will have examples around the city and will be candid about upkeep. If you are after custom concrete work that integrates borders, bands, lighting, or a trench drain, the coordination alone is worth hiring a team used to that choreography.

Little field lessons that matter

A few small choices I have made, learned, or borrowed from other pros in London have saved real headaches.

I now require the broom operator to clean the tines in a bucket of water every two passes on hot, dry days. Cement paste caked in the broom softens ridges and creates a mottled surface that traps water in pockets. I also keep one crew member with a backpack blower chasing shade lines in fall. Leaves that land on curing sealer print tannins and create slick, shiny ovals that stay slippery long after you forget which maple they came from.

On exposed aggregate, I limit the first seal coat to a thin pass and add traction grit immediately after rolling, then come back a day later with a second thin coat to lock the grit without burying it. Heavy first coats bury grit and level microtexture, which is the opposite of what you want.

Finally, I time pours to avoid finishing under active snowfall. Snowflake meltwater makes it tempting to overwork the surface and close off the microtexture that delivers grip. Schedule drives for weather windows that allow a clean finish, then protect the slab from overnight frost with insulated blankets.

A seasonal checklist for safer, longer-lasting traction

- Late fall: Remove oil and leaf stains, rinse thoroughly, and inspect for ponding. Reseal, if due, with a traction-friendly product and grit before consistent freezing starts.
- Midwinter thaws: Rinse off heavy salt residue when temperatures rise above freezing to limit chloride loading in the surface.

- After ice events: Broadcast traction sand sparingly in footpaths and tire tracks, then sweep it back up during the next melt so it does not clog joints or drains.
- Early spring: Inspect for scaling, spalls, and joint damage. Plan spot repairs and evaluate whether an etch or reseal will restore texture before summer.
- Summer: Wash with a gentle cleaner, not a high-pressure lance that can open paste. Keep landscaping soils from washing onto the slab, which polishes under tires.

Bringing it together on your property

A safe, attractive residential driveway in London, Ontario is a system, not a single decision at the end of the pour. Start with the climate in mind, pick a finish that earns its keep under snow, and insist on a mix and cure that respect winter. Use slope and drainage as nonnegotiable design lines. Then pick a sealer and maintenance plan that preserve texture rather than gloss it away.

Homeowners sometimes apologize for prioritizing safety over a particular decorative look. They do not need to. The most satisfying projects I have built are the ones neighbours compliment in July and the mail carrier appreciates in January. If you are collecting estimates for concrete driveways London Ontario contractors can deliver, ask questions about broom direction, air entrainment, grit choice, and water runoff as readily as you ask about colour. A [residential driveway repair london](#) team comfortable discussing those details is the team that will keep you on your feet when the first black ice arrives. And if you already have a handsome but slick slab, there are honest fixes, from micro-etching to traction-focused sealing, that bring function up to the level of form without starting over.

In short, the non-slip concrete finishes that work here are not exotic. They are the ones that respect physics and weather, installed by people who pay attention when the clouds change. That mix of craft and judgment is the difference between a driveway you tiptoe across and one you trust.

NAP

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Ferrari Concrete is a family-owned concrete contractor serving London, Ontario with residential, commercial, and industrial concrete work.

Ferrari Concrete provides plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate concrete for driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors.

Ferrari Concrete operates from 5606 Westdel Bourne, London, ON N6P 1P3, Canada (Plus Code: VM9J+GF) and can be reached at 519-652-0483 for project consultations.

Ferrari Concrete serves the London area and nearby communities such as Lambeth, St. Thomas, and Strathroy for concrete installations and upgrades.

Ferrari Concrete offers commercial concrete services for parking lots, curbs, sidewalks, driveways, and other site concrete needs for facilities and workplaces.

Ferrari Concrete includes decorative concrete options that can help homeowners match finishes and patterns to the look of their property.

Ferrari Concrete provides HydroVac services (Ferrari HydroVac) for projects where hydrovac excavation support may be a fit.

Ferrari Concrete can be found on Google Maps here: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=Ferrari%20Concrete%2C%205606%20Westdel%20Bourne%2C%20London%2C%20ON%20N6P%201P3>

Popular Questions About Ferrari Concrete

What services does Ferrari Concrete offer in London, Ontario?

Ferrari Concrete provides a range of concrete services, including residential and commercial concrete work such as driveways, patios, porches, pool decks, sidewalks, curbing, and garage floors, with finish options like plain, coloured, stamped, and exposed aggregate.

Does Ferrari Concrete install stamped or coloured concrete?

Yes—Ferrari Concrete offers decorative finishes such as stamped and coloured concrete. Availability can depend on scheduling, season, and the specific pattern/colour selection, so it's best to confirm details during an estimate.

Do you handle both residential and commercial concrete projects?

Ferrari Concrete works on residential projects (like driveways and patios) as well as commercial/industrial concrete needs (such as curbs, sidewalks, and parking-area concrete). Project scope and site requirements typically determine the best approach.

What areas does Ferrari Concrete serve around London?

Ferrari Concrete serves London, ON and surrounding communities. If your project is outside the city core, it's a good idea to confirm travel/service availability when requesting a quote.

How does pricing usually work for a concrete project?

Concrete project costs typically depend on size, site access, base preparation, thickness/reinforcement needs, drainage considerations, and finish choices (for example stamped vs. plain). An on-site assessment is usually the fastest way to get an accurate estimate.

What are Ferrari Concrete's business hours?

Hours listed are Monday through Saturday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Sunday hours are not listed, so it's best to call ahead if you need a weekend appointment outside those times.

How do I contact Ferrari Concrete for an estimate?

Call [\(519\) 652-0483](tel:5196520483) or email info@ferrariconcrete.com to request an estimate. You can also connect on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#). Website: <https://www.ferrariconcrete.com/>

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