If you’re like most homeowners looking to upgrade to a paving stone driveway, you’ll want to hire a professional. Feel free to use these 7 tips to help you select the best contractor for your project, as well as a guide for the general steps to follow.

1. Consult Your City/Township Building Ordinances First

Over the last few decades, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and many municipalities have mandated guidelines to help manage stormwater runoff. Before starting your next project, you’ll need to check with your municipality about their ordinances for driveways.

Properties have a maximum area allowed for impervious surfaces. If you’re not expanding your driveway’s square footage, it’s unlikely that replacing it with a different material will be denied, but your municipality may still require you to file a permit for your project.

However, sometimes increasing driveway areas may not be permitted unless you use permeable pavers as an alternative. Traditional paving stone driveways are treated as impervious areas. There’s a common misconception that all pavers are permeable, but this isn’t the case. If your municipality requires permeable pavers, you’ll need to ask for these specific materials when working with a contractor.

If you live in a neighborhood with a homeowners association (HOA), you should also check with your board to see if there are any restrictions or guidelines regarding paver styles or colors. Always do this before construction, as not doing so could be costly later on.
2. Consider Sizing and the General Layout

How many cars does you need your driveway to hold? How many soon-to-be drivers do you have in your household? Will your driveway have any other uses – such as a place to play basketball? Will you be parking a mobile home or large boat on your driveway? These are some of the important questions to consider when determining the size of your driveway.

Also, there are many layout options to consider. Do you want a circular turn in the front so guests won't have to reverse out of your driveway? If not, what about turnaround areas or an expanded entrance for easier access? A paving contractor can help you determine the best layout for your property and can help you decide which will work best for your needs.

Here are two layouts for the same driveway and front walk:
3. Basic Drainage Considerations

Is there a way for water to drain from your driveway? If stormwater runoff isn’t allowed in your area, you’ll need to install permeable pavers that allow water to drain between them and into the water table below. If there’s a drainage problem with your current driveway, you’ll have an opportunity to fix it when installing your new paver driveway. There are several ways to do this including sloping the driveway at the correct angle, and installing drainage solutions underneath your driveway to divert groundwater or the flow from a downspout, without compromising the base foundation the surface sits on.

4. Construction of the Base

Before installing your driveway, it’s important that the ground beneath the pavers is properly prepared so it can provide a stable base. Otherwise, your driveway may shift after installation is complete.

The success of paved surfaces is greatly impacted by proper base installation. Make sure you compare the methods and amount of materials competing contractors will be using.

Before pavers are installed, the ground is excavated and a special stone base is carefully added. The subsoil and base are both compacted (make sure your paving company does both thoroughly) with special equipment to provide a firm foundation. Next, sand is added to provide a surface where pavers can be laid firmly so they won’t rock when pressure is applied. Lastly, sand (or pea gravel for permeable pavers) is added to lock the pavers together. Edge areas are built upon a small poured concrete foundation and the pavers are glued fast to prevent horizontal movement.

If your contractor doesn’t take these proper measures, you may face substantial repair or replacement costs in the future.
5. **Choose the Right Materials**

The possibilities are endless when it comes to paver materials, colors, textures and designs, but not all pavers are suitable for a driveway application. A professional paving contractor can guide you in the right direction toward choosing the best materials for your driveway.

Larger pavers or certain patterns may be great for patios and walkways, but may fail in driveway applications under the weight of vehicles. Ask your paving contractor how the materials they are selecting perform on these surfaces.

6. **Add a Decorative Edge or Border**

Many options also exist for paver edges. Some popular ideas include:

- A subtle paver edge in similar colors or stones to frame the area. Common border effects include random, sailor and soldier courses.
- An accenting paver edge that complements your property by pulling in contrasting colors from your house.

7. **Hire a Verified, Experienced Professional**

There are many different factors to consider when designing and building a concrete paver driveway. Your best option is to hire a professional paving contractor, ideally with these qualifications:

- In-house designer and installers
- Good online reputation
- Plenty of local references
- Longstanding track record for quality work and great service
- Detailed written estimate with timeline for work
- No shady incentives or high-pressure tactics
- Licenses, credentials, and proof of insurances in their company’s name

At Pacific Pavingstone, we can answer your questions and guide you through the process from design to construction. If you’re looking to upgrade your driveway to concrete pavers, we’d love to help you with your next project. Check out our [online gallery](#) and [contact us](#) today to learn more about how Pacific Pavingstone can help you transform your Southern California property.