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A Comprehensive Analysis of Moisture Damage in Hot and Warm Mix Asphalt and Associated Research Inquiries

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Keywords: ABSTRACT Asphalt Mixtures Moisture is considered a significant factor that affects the quality and performance of asphalt, as it Moisture Damage can cause deterioration of the binder and reduce its durability and resistance to cracking. The study Stripping examines various aspects related to moisture damage in asphalt. It begins by exploring the Rutting mechanisms of water penetration into the asphalt and how the water interacts with the asphalt Durability constituents. The effects of moisture on the properties of the asphalt binder and the overall asphalt mixture are then analyzed. The study also delves into the impacts of moisture on the mechanical strength of asphalt, including its resistance to stripping, rutting, and cracking. Furthermore, the study discusses treatment and prevention techniques for mitigating moisture damage in asphalt. Overall, this comprehensive study provides a thorough examination of the complex issue of moisture damage in asphalt, covering the underlying mechanisms, the resulting impacts on asphalt performance, and the strategies for addressing this critical challenge, such as using water treatment agents and adding moisture-resistant materials in the asphalt mixture. Current literature and related research are reviewed to benefit from recent advancements in this field and guide future research. The study concludes with potential research directions, including studying the effects of moisture in asphalt on the remaining service life of roads, developing non-destructive testing techniques to assess moisture content in asphalt, and improving the design and specifications of asphalt materials to enhance their moisture resistance. In summary, this study offers a comprehensive analysis of moisture damage in hot and warm mix asphalt. The study significantly contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms behind asphalt deterioration due to moisture exposure.

تحليل شامل لأضرار الرطوبة في الخلطات الإسفلتية الساخنة والدافئة والأسئلة البحثية المرتبطة بها

بشير أبوراوي

جامعة المرقب الخمس ليبيا

الملخص	الكلمات المفتاحية:
تعتبر الرطوبة عاملاً هاماً يؤثر على جودة وأداء الأسفلت، حيث يمكن أن تسبب تدهور المادة الرابطة وتقليل	الخلطات الأسفلتية.
متانتها ومقاومتها للتشقق. تدرس الدراسة جوانب مختلفة تتعلق بأضرار الرطوبة في الأسفلت. تبدأ باستكشاف	أضرار الرطوبة.
آليات تغلغل الماء في الأسفلت وكيف يتفاعل الماء مع مكونات الأسفلت. ثم يتم تحليل آثار الرطوبة على خصائص	التجريد.
المادة الرابطة للإسفلت وخليط الأسفلت الإجمالي. تتعمق الدراسة أيضًا في تأثيرات الرطوبة على القوة الميكانيكية	التخدد.
للإسفلت، بما في ذلك مقاومته للتجريد والتجعد والتشقق. علاوة على ذلك، تناقش الدراسة تقنيات العلاج	الديمومة.
والوقاية للتخفيف من أضرار الرطوبة في الأسفلت. بشكل عام، توفر هذه الدراسة الشاملة فحصًا شاملاً للقضية	
المعقدة المتمثلة في أضرار الرطوبة في الأسفلت، وتغطي الآليات الأساسية والتأثيرات الناتجة على أداء الأسفلت	
والاستراتيجيات اللازمة لمعالجة هذا التحدي الحاسم، مثل استخدام عوامل معالجة المياه وإضافة مواد مقاومة	
للرطوبة في خليط الأسفلت. تمت مراجعة الأدبيات الحالية والبحوث ذات الصلة للاستفادة من التطورات الأخيرة	
في هذا المجال وتوجيه البحوث المستقبلية. وتختتم الدراسة بتوجيهات بحثية محتملة، بما في ذلك دراسة آثار	
الرطوبة في الأسفلت على العمر الافتراضي المتبقي للطرق، وتطوير تقنيات الاختبار غير المدمرة لتقييم محتوى	
البطوية فيالأسفات بوتحسين تصويره ومواصفات وواد الأسفات لتعزيز وقاومتها البطوية باختصاب تقدو هذه	

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1. Introduction

Moisture damage in Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) and Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA) is a significant concern in the field of pavement engineering. When water infiltrates the asphalt mixture, it can lead to various forms of distress, such as rutting, stripping, raveling, and reduced durability [1]. To address the critical issue of moisture damage in asphalt, extensive research has been conducted to understand the underlying mechanisms and develop effective mitigation strategies.

One key area of investigation involves evaluating the moisture susceptibility of different types of asphalt mixtures, including Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) and Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA). Fig. 1 illustrates the various types of asphalt mixtures that have been studied to assess their vulnerability to moisture-induced damage. By examining the performance characteristics of these different asphalt mixtures under moisture exposure, researchers can gain valuable insights into the factors that contribute to moisture susceptibility.



Fig. 1: Different types of asphalt mixtures

Researchers have compared the moisture resistance of these mixtures and assessed their performance under wet conditions. This research has provided valuable insights into the differences in moisture sensitivity between HMA and WMA, helping to optimize their design and construction practices.

Studies have also focused on identifying the factors influencing moisture damage in asphalt mixtures. These factors include the asphalt binder properties, aggregate characteristics, moisture content, compaction methods, and environmental conditions [2]. By understanding the underlying mechanisms, researchers have worked towards developing more resilient mixtures that are less susceptible to moisture-induced distress.

Furthermore, investigations have been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of moisture-resistant additives and technologies. Various additives, such as anti-stripping agents, polymers, and rejuvenators, have been incorporated into asphalt mixtures to enhance their resistance to moisture damage [3-5]. Researchers have conducted extensive studies on the performance of various additives and their impact on the moisture sensitivity of asphalt mixtures. Fig. 2 illustrates the process of evaluating the performance of the asphalt pavement life cycle and the assessment of moisture-induced damage.

This comprehensive evaluation process encompasses various stages, from material selection and mixture design to construction and inservice performance monitoring. By systematically analyzing the behavior of asphalt mixtures under moisture exposure, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to moisture damage and develop effective strategies to mitigate its impact.

The insights gained from this research provide valuable information to engineers and industry professionals, enabling them to make informed decisions in the selection of asphalt mixture components, mixture design, and construction practices. This knowledge is crucial for enhancing the durability and longevity of asphalt pavements, ultimately leading to more resilient and sustainable infrastructure.



Fig. 2: Different aspects of moisture damage standardization [6] In addition to laboratory investigations, field studies and long-term monitoring have been conducted to assess the real-world performance of moisture-damaged asphalt pavements. These studies involve assessing distress levels, pavement condition, and performance under different traffic and environmental conditions. The data collected from these studies help validate laboratory findings and provide insights into the long-term behavior of moisture-damaged asphalt pavements. Overall, the research on moisture damage in hot and warm mix asphalt has contributed to a better understanding of the mechanisms involved and has led to the development of improved design methodologies, construction practices, and moisture-resistant additives. These advancements aim to minimize the negative effects of moisture on asphalt pavements and enhance their durability and performance over time [7].

Moisture is a critical factor that affects the composition and properties of asphalt mixtures, which are fundamental materials in road construction and maintenance. It directly influences their mechanical properties, stability, and resistance to cracking. Therefore, studying the impact of moisture on asphalt mixtures is essential for preserving the quality of paved roads and increasing their lifespan.

Studying the effect of moisture on asphalt mixtures is crucial to maintaining the quality of paved roads and extending their lifespan. Moisture has a direct impact on the properties of asphalt and its performance.

In the early 20th century, moisture damage was first recognized as a significant cause of asphalt deterioration [8]. The stress exerted by traffic weakens the internal strength of HMA, leading to premature cracking, deformations, and rutting in the asphalt layer [9]. The cohesion of asphalt mixtures largely depends on the cohesive and adhesive forces between the aggregate and binder. Moisture can infiltrate the asphalt layer through rainwater, high groundwater levels, or water vapor absorption [10, 11]. Fig. 3 shows fatigue cracks caused by low-adhesion in asphalt.



Fig. 3: Fatigue cracks caused by low-adhesion in asphalt

This infiltration reduces the expected lifespan of the asphalt, resulting in higher maintenance costs. Maintenance is essential for ensuring road functionality while minimizing expenses and inconvenience to road users. While inadequate maintenance can be detrimental, preventive maintenance is a wise addition to basic maintenance practices [12].

The presence of water in asphalt layers has a negative impact on road durability, causing complex damage patterns, stiffness reduction, and structural strength loss. Although water alone does not cause permanent cracking, deformations, and rutting, it exacerbates the severity and extent of these issues [13]. Fig. 4 shows Damage in road structure caused by water-susceptible base layer.



Fig. 4: Damage in road structure caused by water-susceptible base The focus has shifted from reactive repairs to preventive measures, as previous repairs result in high costs for road authorities and inconvenience for road users. Currently, the standard practice for mixture designers is to procure binder and aggregate based on individual specifications, but the interaction between these components remains insufficiently understood [14].

However, there was a lack of comparative developments for evaluating moisture sensitivity until the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) funded research to develop new test procedures aimed at preventing moisture penetration in asphalt.

The Western Research Institute (WRI) conducted extensive research on asphalt chemistry and its relationship to moisture damage. The origin of asphalt plays a crucial role in separating polar components from the aggregate. Currently, WRI is working on a rapid centrifugal separation method to assess the migration of polar components caused by moisture in asphalt binder materials. This concept is based on the observation that asphalt-aggregate mixtures that are more resistant to moisture damage form insoluble calcium salt. Surface energy parameters also show promise as tools for evaluating the adhesion between asphalt and aggregate [15]. However, while recent research has made significant contributions to the selection of asphaltaggregate mixtures, it has yet to consider the combined impact of traffic-induced stresses and moisture damage.

2. Importance of studying the effect of moisture on asphalt mixtures

Moisture is a primary factor that contributes to the development of cracks in asphalt pavements. By understanding how moisture interacts with the asphalt mixture, researchers and engineers can develop mix designs and additives that enhance the crack resistance of the asphalt [16].

Moisture is a significant threat to the durability of asphalt mixtures over time. It can lead to the stripping of the asphalt binder from the aggregates, a phenomenon that reduces the cohesive properties of the mixture [17, 18]. This loss of cohesion compromises the overall performance and serviceability of the asphalt pavement.

By studying the effects of moisture on asphalt mixtures, researchers can develop effective strategies to improve the durability and resilience of these materials. With a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind moisture-induced degradation, researchers can devise techniques to enhance the ability of asphalt mixtures to withstand environmental conditions and traffic loads [19]. Fig. 5 illustrates the stripping of the asphalt binder from the aggregates, a key contributor to the deterioration of asphalt pavement performance. This visual representation underscores the importance of addressing this critical issue and the need for innovative solutions to mitigate the impacts of moisture on asphalt mixtures.





Moisture affects the adhesion between asphalt binder and aggregates, which is crucial for the overall performance of the mixture [21]. Understanding the moisture-related changes in binder-aggregate interaction can help optimize the selection of aggregates and binder types to ensure better adhesion and overall performance [22]. Fig. 6 shows the cohesive versus adhesive dislodging of an aggregate from the asphalt mixture.



Fig. 6: Cohesive Versus Adhesive Dislodging of an Aggregate from the Asphalt Mixture [14] Studying the impact of moisture on asphalt mixtures is essential for maintaining the quality and longevity of paved roads. It allows for the development of improved mix designs, additives, and construction techniques that enhance the performance and resistance of asphalt pavements to moisture-related issues.

3. Impacts of moisture damage on warm mix and hot mix asphalt Moisture damage significantly affects both warm mix and hot mix asphalt, causing problems in road performance and service life.

The moisture affects the binder material in the asphalt mixture, leading to a decrease in bond strength between the aggregate and binder. This weakened bond increases the likelihood of cracking and failures in the asphalt layer. When the asphalt mixture is exposed to moisture, small voids and air pockets can form within the mixture. These voids and air pockets can accumulate water and lead to aggregate stripping. When the water freezes, it can cause further damage to the mixture.

According to Fig. 7, Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) exhibits higher dry and wet Indirect Tensile Strength (ITS) values compared to the corresponding Warm Mix Asphalt (WMA), regardless of the aggregate moisture content, filler type, and aging condition.

The data indicates that the number of freeze-thaw cycles has a notable influence on the ITS property of the asphalt mixtures, irrespective of the compaction temperature, filler type, and aging condition.

This observation suggests that the higher compaction temperature of HMA may contribute to its superior performance in terms of tensile strength, both in dry and wet conditions, compared to the lower compaction temperature of WMA. The increased resistance to freeze-thaw cycles also highlights the importance of considering environmental factors in the assessment of asphalt mixture durability.







Hydrated Lime filler

Fig. 7: ITS Results at Different Conditions of Unaged Mixtures [24] Moisture also affects the asphalt mixture in terms of elasticity loss. Moisture damages the binder material and reduces its ability to withstand repeated stresses and temperature changes, ultimately resulting in cracking and deterioration in the mixture. Moisture

damage can cause the layers in the asphalt mixture to separate, meaning that the different layers do not bond well together. This makes the road susceptible to increased wear and deterioration.

To prevent moisture damage, appropriate measures and precautions should be taken during the design and implementation of asphalt mixtures. Moisture-resistant interfaces and polymer-based binders can be used to minimize water absorption in the mixture [25]. Ensuring the dryness of raw materials and the final mixture during the construction process is also crucial. Controlling operating conditions and maintaining asphalt equipment in good condition can also help reduce the impact of moisture on asphalt mixtures.

4. Effect of moisture on the stability of the mixture

Moisture has a significant effect on the stability of asphalt mixtures. When an asphalt mixture is exposed to moisture, it can cause separation between the different components of the mixture. Water can interact with the asphalt binder, leading to its dispersion, causing the particles to separate from the binder and lose cohesion. This negatively affects the stability of the mixture, making it less durable and prone to deterioration.

Accumulated moisture in the asphalt mixture can increase its susceptibility to deterioration. When the mixture is repeatedly exposed to moisture, water can react with the particles and weaken the asphalt binder. This results in reduced resistance of the mixture to the wear caused by traffic and environmental factors [26]. Fig. 8 shows the accumulation of water on asphalt roads.



Fig. 8: Accumulation of water on asphalt roads

In regions with low temperatures, the water present in the asphalt mixture can freeze, negatively affecting its stability. Freezing of water causes expansion and distortion within the mixture, increasing the likelihood of disintegration and cracking. When the ice melts, it creates an uneven reaction within the mixture, leading to distortion that affects its stability [27]. Moisture can lead to drying shrinkage cracks in the asphalt mixture during the drying process. When the wet mixture undergoes drying, shrinkage occurs, resulting in internal stresses that lead to cracks. These cracks reduce the stability of the mixture, making it less durable and more susceptible to deterioration. In Physical Weathering asphalt mixture are broken down by water and wind. A main method of physical weathering is freeze and thaw. Freeze and thaw- when water freezes in a crack, its surface area will expand due to its new state. The crack will then become bigger as a result of this. When the water melts again, more water may enter the crack such as rain water etc. This is a continuous cycle, until the crack has split the rock into two. Fig. 9 explain the diagram of freeze and thaw.



Fig. 9: Diagram of freeze and thaw

When the asphalt mixture is exposed to moisture, swelling can occur in the particles and asphalt binder. Water can infiltrate between the particles and react with the asphalt binder, leading to an increase in the mixture's volume and swelling. This swelling leads to instability and can cause cracks and deterioration in the mixture.

When the asphalt mixture is subjected to varying levels of moisture, it can result in deformations and instability. Wet areas are prone to expansion and swelling, while dry areas may experience deformation and shrinkage. These moisture variations lead to cracks and separation in the mixture, reducing its stability [28].

To mitigate the impact of moisture on the stability of asphalt mixtures, appropriate measures and precautions need to be taken. These include drying the raw materials before use in the mixture, improving mixing and construction processes under dry conditions, and using moistureresistant binder materials. Attention should also be paid to proper drainage and avoiding excessive exposure of the mixture to moisture. Overall, providing dry conditions during construction is crucial for ensuring the long-term stability and strength of the asphalt mixture.

5. Effect of moisture on the production process

Moisture has a significant impact on the properties of the materials used in the production of asphalt mixtures, which can subsequently affect the overall production process and the performance of the final asphalt product. One key example is the impact of moisture on aggregates, which are a critical component of asphalt mixtures. If the aggregates (gravel and sand) used in the mixture are wet, the moisture can alter their chemical composition and physical characteristics.

This change in aggregate properties due to the presence of moisture can lead to significant variations in the final asphalt mixture's performance. For instance, wet aggregates may exhibit different strength, density, and workability characteristics compared to dry aggregates.

Furthermore, the moisture content of the aggregates can impact the chemical bonding between the aggregates and the asphalt binder, affecting the overall cohesion and adhesion within the asphalt mixture. This, in turn, can influence the strength, flexibility, and durability of the final asphalt pavement.

To mitigate the effects of moisture on the asphalt production process, manufacturers often implement strategies to ensure the proper drying and conditioning of aggregates before they are incorporated into the mixture. Additionally, the use of moisture-resistant additives or modifiers may be employed to enhance the moisture resistance of the asphalt mixture. The aggregate stockpiles may contain varying degrees of moisture during production. This depends on the general weather conditions in the area and stockpile management practices (for example, covered or not covered, paved or unpaved padding) as shown in Fig. 10.





(a) Covered Aggregate

(b) Un Covered Aggregate

Fig. 10: Aggregate Stockpiles

Moisture can affect the asphalt mixing process. If the hot asphalt materials are wet, moisture may evaporate during the mixing process. This evaporation can impact the final composition of the mixture and result in a change in the asphalt content used, thus affecting the mixture's properties. Moisture can influence the asphalt paving process. If the moisture is high in the air during paving, it can lead to faster evaporation of moisture from the mixture during its cooling. This can affect the cohesion of the asphalt and cause issues with bonding between different layers or surface cracking.

Moisture can impact the final quality of the asphalt. If moisture is not properly controlled during the production process, it can cause distortions in the mixture and accumulation of moisture in the produced asphalt. This can result in rapid deterioration of the asphalt and reduce the expected service life of the road.

Therefore, it is important to carefully control moisture during the production process of asphalt mixtures. Monitoring the moisture content of the materials used and controlling the environmental conditions surrounding the production process is necessary to ensure high-quality asphalt mixtures.

There are several common and effective methods to control moisture during the production process of asphalt mixtures. Ensuring that the aggregate materials (gravel and sand) used in the asphalt mixture are dry is crucial. This can be achieved by storing the materials in a closed and dry place away from moisture. Regular testing of the materials to verify their moisture levels before use is also recommended.

Hot asphalt can be dried before blending it with the aggregate materials. This can be done by heating the asphalt in special tanks and removing any possible moisture. It helps reduce residual moisture in the asphalt and maintains its stability. Moisture-resistant additives can be added to the asphalt to mitigate the effects of moisture. These additives work to disperse water and reduce its absorption by the asphalt. Careful selection of moisture-resistant additives according to project requirements and manufacturer recommendations is essential. Monitoring and regulating the environment surrounding the asphalt mixture production area is important. Air conditioning systems or ventilation equipment can be used to control temperature and moisture in the area. Providing a dry and stable environment helps preserve the quality of the produced asphalt.

Moisture levels should be monitored throughout all stages of the asphalt mixture production process. This can be done using appropriate moisture measuring devices, and the available data should be used to adjust parameters and equipment according to the current moisture level.

Controlling moisture in the production process of asphalt mixtures depends on various surrounding factors and the properties of the materials used. It is advisable to collaborate with specialized engineers in the asphalt industry to apply best practices and ensure the quality of the produced mixtures.

6. Measures and precautions to mitigate the impact of moisture on asphalt mixtures.

Store the raw materials used in asphalt production in a dry place and protect them from moisture. It is advisable to use closed and covered containers to store the materials and prevent water absorption. Employ polymer-based binders (such as modified rubber polymers) that are resistant to moisture. These materials help reduce water absorption in the mixture and improve bonding strength. Fig. 11 shows the rubber polymers.



Fig. 11: Rubber Polymers

Utilize a moisture-resistant interface layer between the asphalt and the underlying base. This interface acts as a barrier to prevent water from seeping from the base into the asphalt mixture. Ensure the final asphalt mixture is dry during the construction process [24]. Special drying equipment can be employed to remove moisture from the mixture before placement and compaction.

Ensure overall construction quality to minimize the impact of moisture. This includes monitoring the moisture content in the mixture, ensuring the use of clean and dry asphalt equipment, and achieving appropriate compaction and rolling pressures.

Pay attention to the maintenance of asphalt-paved roads and carry out necessary repairs in case of cracks or damages. This helps prevent water infiltration and protects the asphalt mixture from its detrimental effects. It is important to conduct soil analysis in the construction area to determine the soil moisture content. This helps in selecting suitable materials for the subgrade and asphalt layers that are compatible with the surrounding soil conditions.

A separate drainage layer can be used beneath the asphalt layer to control water flow and divert it away from the mixture. This helps reduce the impact of water on the asphalt mixture and helps maintain its dryness. It may be beneficial to use a transition layer between the existing asphalt and the new mixture to minimize the transfer of water and moisture from the existing layer to the new mixture. This enhances bonding and strength between the layers and reduces the impact of moisture [6].

Adequate attention should also be given to surface drainage design for asphalt-paved roads. Water should be directed away from the road, and the drainage system should be effective in minimizing water accumulation and penetration into the mixture.

Operate asphalt equipment correctly according to specifications and appropriate guidelines. The equipment should be clean and dry to minimize the possibility of water transfer into the asphalt mixture. Additionally, provide suitable pressures and temperatures to achieve optimal performance.

Emphasize sustainable maintenance of asphalt-paved roads to preserve the quality of the mixture in the long term. This includes timely repair of defects and cracks and performing preventive maintenance to avoid water seepage and exacerbation of damage.

These measures and precautions should be implemented appropriately based on local standards, specifications, and recognized technical guidelines in the construction and civil engineering field. Collaboration with specialized engineers and asphalt material experts is recommended to ensure the proper and effective implementation of these measures. Each project should be individually assessed to determine the appropriate measures based on local conditions and specific requirements. These measures provide the necessary prevention and protection for asphalt mixtures against moisture effects, helping to maintain construction quality and reduce future damage and maintenance needs.

7. Moisture-resistant additives

Waxes, greases, and hydrophobic oils. They are used to form a protective layer on the surface of the asphalt, preventing water absorption and reducing its impact on the asphalt properties. These materials work by dispersing moisture and forming a water-resistant barrier. There is a variety of additives that can be added to asphalt to improve its properties and moisture resistance. These materials include synthetic polymers such as polymer-modified asphalt and polymer-modified asphalt rubber. They enhance bonding properties in the asphalt and reduce water permeability.

Silica-modified materials, such as colloidal silica and nano-silica, are used as moisture-resistant additives in asphalt. These materials are added to the asphalt to form microstructures that prevent water absorption and improve asphalt stability. Various other additives can be used as moisture-resistant materials, such as organic materials and specific chemical additives. These materials vary in nature and mechanism of action, and their use depends on the specific conditions of each project and the desired performance requirements. Fig. 12 shows some of moisture-resistant materials.



Chemical Additive

Foaming Additive

Polymer Additive

Fig. 12: Moisture-Resistant Materials

It is important to note that the use of moisture-resistant additives should be done according to the manufacturer's recommendations and approved technical standards. It is advisable to collaborate with material suppliers and consult with specialized engineers in the asphalt industry to ensure the selection of appropriate materials and their proper application to achieve the desired results.

8. Conclusion

Effective drainage systems should be implemented to prevent water accumulation on the road surface and within pavement layers. Protective seal coatings and overlays can provide a barrier layer on the road surface, reducing moisture infiltration and enhancing pavement durability.

By using moisture-resistant binder materials, aggregate materials, and high-quality additives that promote good cohesion, the pavement's resistance to moisture damage can be improved. Adequate maintenance practices, including crack sealing and pothole repairs, can prevent moisture ingress into the pavement and minimize future deterioration. Pavement designs should take into account the specific climatic and environmental conditions of the area to ensure efficient moisture management. By implementing these measures, the harmful effects of moisture on the pavement can be reduced, extending the service life of the road infrastructure.

9. References

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