Installing a Paver Patio

1. The first step is to determine the size or area of the patio by square foot. This will figure into the estimate of materials needed later. Mark off the area with a can of white spray paint, slightly larger to allow for paver edge restraints and a footing base at the borders of the patio.

2. Estimate the materials needed and choose desired pavers, Most paver and concrete dealers will let you know how many per square feet for their products. Also estimate base material and sand, approximately 1 1/2 yards of gravel (3/4" quarry process)per 100 square feet, this will support a 4" compacted base. Sand - a fine mason sand, about 1/4 the amount of the gravel base should be plenty. Having more is always better than not having enough base material.

3. Digging and preparing for a good paver base is important and will be the most time consuming process. Excavate by loader using local digging laws to make sure to avoid any buried cable. Make base 6"-8" below desired height of patio, the pavers will take 2" of that so the gravel base under the pavers will be 4"- 6". If possible use a landscape fabric under gravel for better support and protect base from soil. Some areas may require a deeper base due to poor soil or recent disturbed soil from new house construction. Next - get the gravel base in by wheelbarrow, shovel, loader, and rake it out to approximate level.

4. Grade the patio base with a 2X4 to get an even and sloped base for water runoff. slope slightly to where desired water should run, use about a quarter bubble technique on a 4 foot level, make sure sloping the correct way. For larger patios, 2 2X4s may be needed so they would have to be nailed together. If your patio is next to a concrete driveway or bordering concrete or timbers, then use a modified 2X 4 to grade along that border(see picture on left). Take the time to get level, and re-grade after compaction is done (next step).

5. Use a plate compactor or like compaction device to get good a solid base for the pavers. If the gravel is too dry, wet it down some with a garden hose to make it pack better. Then grade additional times after each compaction until complete.

6. Fine grade with mason sand the same way grading was done earlier, this final grade evens out the rough gravel grade and allows for a nice even base for the pavers. This is only a quarter inch or less layer of sand to maintain the proper grade, not an inch of sand like you may have heard of, remember the proper grade and slope has already been done with an easy to work with gravel base.

7. Lay the pavers in the desired pattern, for pattern ideas see resource page, get the pavers tight as possible, start from a point or house foundation to allow for the best looking pattern. Keep in mind pavers will need to be cut with a saw and diamond paver blade if patio area has curves or obstacles. Simple square patios may not need any cutting. To cut pavers, use a measuring technique or measure with paver in place and mark.

8. Finally, use a plastic edge restraint and secure with spikes about 2' apart or less for more strength. Then sweep with the same mason sand, the finer the better, it will sweep into the cracks and be a dry mortar so to speak and secure the pavers. The dryer the sand, the easier it will be to

sweep in. Use the compactor to pack the patio and allow the sand to fall in the cracks better. I would suggest to put cardboard or fabric under the compactor to not damage pavers and stop the vibrating noise too. Sweep sand again until the paver joints will take no more sand. And the last thing would be to fill black dirt around the edge to support and landscape to your desire, seed grass or rock (this covers the plastic edging).