



Vehicular Highway Pothole Repair Policy

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Pothole Identification	Page 3
3. Defect Categories and Response	Page 4
4. Pothole Repairs	Page 4
5. Performance management	Page 5
6. Highway Network Hierarchy	Page 6

1. Introduction

The county council is responsible for the maintenance of more than 7,000km of vehicular highways in Lancashire. Part of that maintenance duty includes dealing with defects in the surface of the carriageways and footways alongside carriageways that are commonly referred to as potholes. Potholes can be a variety of sizes and could be anywhere in the surface. There are factors that influence the occurrence of potholes with the weather and general road surface condition being primary considerations. Wet weather increases the risk of the failure of a road surface and when that weather occurs during the winter, the deterioration speeds up due to both wet conditions and freezing temperatures.

In order to reduce the number of potholes occurring, road surface treatments are undertaken to seal road surfaces to stop water getting beneath the surface and causing deterioration. A programme of such works is implemented annually prioritising the roads in generally good structural condition but at the highest risk of surface failure.

Potholes are identified by public reports and through routine, cyclic inspections (see Section 6). Highway inspections are governed by the county council's Highway Safety Inspection Policy which was adopted in April 2015, which includes the details of the intervention levels at which repairs will be undertaken.

This document sets out how potholes will be repaired when intervention levels are reached and introduces revised response times in relation to carriageways, and footways and cycle tracks within vehicular highway extents.

2. Pothole Identification

A pothole is defined as loss of material from all or part or all of the surfacing layers creating a sharp edged hole or void. The resultant degree of deficiency in the surface and the revised criteria contained in this Policy will determine when and how repairs are undertaken.

- Highway Safety Inspection (HSI)

As indicated above, the county council's Highway Safety Inspection Policy provides the framework for the inspection of the county council's highway network. It describes the network hierarchy, frequency of inspection and the intervention level for defects that require repair along with timescales for those repairs to be undertaken. Inspectors will identify repairs that meet the intervention criteria set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Policy as revised.

- Report It

Customers are able to report any potholes that they identify through the county council's on-line reporting tool 'Report It'. This is a map based tool to allow an accurate location to be identified so that any necessary inspection and repair can be undertaken. It includes a function that provides stage updates so that the customer can be aware of progress. Reported defects are assessed and where they meet the intervention criteria set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Policy as revised then repairs will be undertaken.

- Customer Services

Customers are able to report potholes, or any other highway defect, through the county council's Customer Access Centre. This can be done either by telephone or email. Reported defects are assessed and where they meet the intervention criteria set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Policy as revised then repairs will be undertaken.

3. Revised Defect Categories and Response

1 Day: The defect must be made safe, or repaired within one working day, starting from close of work on the day following its identification. This applies to all potholes that are more than 300mm in width in any direction and 150mm or greater in depth.

5 day: The defect must be repaired within five working days starting from the day following its identification by the inspector. This applies to highways inspected monthly for defects that are more than 300mm in width in any direction and 40mm or greater in depth.

10 day: The defect must be repaired within 10 working days, starting from the day identified by the inspector. This applies to highways inspected quarterly for defects that are more than 300mm in width in any direction and 40mm or greater in depth.

20 day: The defect must be repaired within 20 working days, starting from the day identified by the inspector. This applies to highways inspected 6 monthly and annually for defects that are more than 300mm in width in any direction and 40mm or greater in depth.

Note: the response times referred to above are currently being reviewed and a revision will be proposed in due course as part of a revised Highway Safety Inspection Policy.

Section 6 of this policy sets out the hierarchy to which these categories and response times apply.

4. Pothole Repairs

- When potholes have been identified and a repair is needed then those repairs will be programmed and works carried out by a county council team or a contractor. Repairs will be done to as high a standard as possible given the circumstances of each particular repair reducing the need for repeat visits due to failures. Permanent repair method will be preferred but sometimes plug repairs will be a reasonable option
- Permanent repairs method
 - Saw cut the area around the defect to be repaired where necessary to provide neat, sound and vertical edges;
 - Sweep the defect so that it is clear of water and any loose debris;
 - Apply bondcoat to the bottom and sides of the area to be repaired, ensuring that all surfaces are covered in bondcoat
 - Apply hot material appropriate for the surface. If hot material is not available then a permanent cold lay material may be used.
 - Compact the material using a vibrating plate compactor.
- 'Plug' Repairs

Plug repairs will be undertaken where a defect meets intervention levels but road surface deterioration is such that no neat, sound edge is available or can be saw cut. There is a high risk that these repairs may require further intervention.

Plug repairs Technique and materials:

- Sweep the defect so that it is clear of water and any loose debris;
- Apply bondcoat to the bottom and sides of the area to be repaired, ensuring that all surfaces are covered in bondcoat
- Apply hot material appropriate for the surface. If hot material is not available then a permanent cold lay material may be used.
- Compact the material using a vibrating plate compactor.

5. Performance Management

Performance will be monitored and managed appropriately with the aim of achieving the following response times:

Response Times:	
Response Category	Target % repaired
1 Day	95
5 day	90
10 day	90
20 day	90

6. Highway Network Hierarchy

For the purposes of this policy Lancashire's highway network hierarchy is set out in the following tables:-

Note that on inspection of on carriageway footways and cycletracks within highway extent are also inspected

Carriageway Hierarchy		
Hierarchy Description	Description	Inspection Frequency
Motorway	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use	Monthly
Strategic route	Mainly principal roads (A Class).	Monthly
Main Distributor	Mainly principal roads, plus some important non-principal (B and C) roads and very limited number of unclassified roads.	Monthly
Secondary Distributor	Mainly B & C class roads but also roads adjacent to large schools/colleges.	3 Monthly
Link Road	Link Roads (unclassified roads linking main and secondary distributor network)	6 Monthly
Local Access Road	Mainly unclassified roads carrying local access traffic. Essentially all other roads not in the categories above.	Annually