



Doncaster  
Council

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# **DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **HIGHWAYS**

### **POTHOLE POLICY**

Economy and Environment  
Highway Asset Maintenance

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
01.01	Sept 2016	New Policy	D. Snell	Senior Engineer Highways Routine Maintenance
01.01	29/03/17	Approval of new policy	J. Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Environment
01.02	Sept 2018	2 year policy review	D. Snell	Senior Engineer Highways Routine Maintenance
01.02	11/03/19	Approval of reviewed policy	J. Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Environment
01.03	Oct 2020	Review deferred due to COVID	D.Snell	Senior Engineer Highways Routine Maintenance
01.04	Jan 2022	2 year policy review	A.Allen	Senior Engineer Highways Routine Maintenance
01.04	21/04/22	Approval of reviewed policy	J. Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways Infrastructure and Enforcement

**Reference Documents:**

Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP)

Well Maintained Highways July 2005 - A Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management (CoPHMM)

Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice (WMHI)

Doncaster Councils Highway Safety Inspection Policy (HSIP)

Associate of Directors, Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport Potholes and Repair Techniques for Local Highways (ADEPT)

Doncaster Councils Highway Maintenance Term Contract

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## Introduction

Doncaster Council has a statutory duty under Section 41 (1) of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain highways maintainable at public expense (carriageways, footways and cycleway's) within the Doncaster Borough.

This document only applies to Doncaster Councils adopted highways and will be reviewed within a two yearly cycle reflective of Highway Code of Practice revisions, legislative changes and advice, reviews and changes to the Council's position on its highway maintenance practices and policies and is aimed specifically at pothole-type defects.

The policy has been developed with the guidance of

- Well Maintained Highways July 2005 - A Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management (CoPHMM)
- Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice (WMHI)
- The Department for Transport - Highways Management Efficiency Programme (DfT- HMEP).

The CoPHMM and WMHI (A Code of Good Practice) are non-statutory documents and Doncaster Council work within the guidance of these and the HMEP and develops its Highway policies around them.

Courts of law will often use the guidance of the CoP's as a benchmark for good practice when considering their decisions on third party liability claims against the Council.

Doncaster Councils adopted highway network for maintenance comprises around 1750km roads, 1800km footways and 55km Cycleways and, valued at around £2bn, is the Councils most valuable asset.

The highway network is assigned a 'Hierarchy' reflective of usage, traffic volumes, environment and associated risks. Details can be found within Doncaster Councils '**Highway Safety Inspections Policy**'.

## Definition

Potholes are usually isolated failures in a bituminous surfaced road, footway or cycleway that have an abrupt difference in level and may impact the safety of the highway user.

HMEP 'Prevention and a Better Cure' Pothole Review Document identifies failure mechanisms that result in a pothole as either 'top down' or 'bottom up':

- A top down failure is essentially a localised fault that develops into fretting and becomes progressive.
- A bottom up failure results from a fault at depth, usually involving the presence of water, which causes cracking and leads to a block of material breaking away.

Potholes are generally defined as a defect within the highway surface which is surrounded by surfacing material on all sides. This differs from edge damage which usually occurs on un-kerbed or un-channelled rural roads caused by vehicles overrunning the edge of the carriageway.

Potholes can develop over short periods of time, particularly during periods of inclement weather such as prolonged wet conditions or winter freezing and thawing. Depending on the size, depth and location there may be a greater or lesser risk to the general public.

There is no nationally agreed measurement for a pothole.

The CoP does not include a definition of potholes either in terms of depth or lateral measurements but does state 'the degree of risk from a pothole depends not merely upon its depth but also its surface area and location'.

Doncaster Council uses a Risk Based Approach (RBA) as guided by the WMHI when assessing defects, (**Highway Safety Inspection Policy**), and its pothole definition is in line with the approach taken by National Highways and other comparable authorities (see notes below).

*National Highways (formerly Highways England) approach for their trunk roads and motorways defines potholes to be greater than or equal to; 150mm diameter; the thickness of the surface course; or 40mm depth. However, it should be noted that, as National Highways only manage and maintain trunk roads and motorways, a degree of 'localism' needs to be applied to the borough of Doncaster taking into account its own highway network.*

*As part of writing this policy, and to develop a similar approach, Doncaster Council contacted a number of comparable local authorities to determine what criteria they use when defining a pothole. Of the authorities that returned information, 75% worked to a definition of:*

- a depth of 40mm or greater and extending in any one direction >300mm' in the carriageway.
- a rapid change of profile >25mm and extending in plan dimension <600mm' in the footway.

The remaining 25% of authorities worked to:

- a 50mm depth in the carriageway and 20mm in the footway but did not specify any dimensions.

**Doncaster Council's definition of a pothole is set out below and should be used in conjunction with a RBA.**

- **Carriageway** - usually at least 40mm in depth and between 250mm and 600mm in any one direction with an abrupt difference in level .
- **Footway / Cycleways Type A and B and defined crossover points** – usually at least 20mm in depth and between 100mm and 300mm in any one direction with an abrupt difference in level.

	<p>Example of typical pothole in carriageway approximately 250mm diameter, abrupt difference in level , 40mm deep.</p>
	<p>Areas of carriageway exhibiting fretting/surface erosion are <b>NOT</b> defined as potholes. Exceeds 600mm in length</p>

## Prioritisation

Doncaster Council carries out regular Highway Safety Inspections in accordance with its Highway Safety Inspection Policy. In addition, potholes may also be reported from other sources e.g. public, police etc.

All reports are considered, to determine the appropriate level of response.

With reference to the Highway Safety Inspection Policy (HSIP) there are four defect category response times (ref Table below) for maintenance repairs depending on the RBA.

### Defect Category and Response Table

**HSIP Table 6 (abridged)**

Defect Category	Works Order/ Priority Code	Defect Response	Repair type
<b>Cat 1 Safety Critical</b>	1	2 hour response from time of identification	Temporary or Permanent
<b>Cat 2 High</b>	2	Within 5 working days from the date of identification (Mon-Fri excluding bank holidays)	Temporary or Permanent
<b>Cat 2 Medium</b>	3	Within 25 working days from the date of identification (Mon-Fri excluding bank holidays)	Permanent
<b>Cat 2 Low</b>	4	Planned programmed works	Permanent

It is anticipated that the majority of potholes as defined in this policy will fall into the Cat 2 High or Cat 2 Medium defect category subject to RBA.

## **Glossary of Terms**

ADEPT	Associate of Directors, Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport
CopHMM	Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management (CoPHMM)
WMHI	Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure (A Code of Practice)
DfT	Department for Transport
HMEP	Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme
HSIP	Highway Safety Inspection Policy
RBA	Risk Based Approach

## **Acknowledgements**

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Dawson & Burgess Solicitors Litigation Department – Doncaster,

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Parklane Plowden Chambers – Leeds

Doncaster Councils Highway Asset Maintenance Department

Doncaster Councils Insurance Team

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END OF POLICY

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