
STANDARDS ON CARRIAGEWAY/FOOTWAY & FOOTPATH SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Depute Chief Executive, Place under Delegate Powers

SMT - PLACE 14 JANUARY 2015

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report explains the background to carriageway, footway and footpath safety inspections and recommends a standard that should be applied when carrying out safety inspections in terms of frequency of inspections and defect categories that addresses insurance requirements.**
- 1.2 The Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (CoPHMM), 2011 gives recommendations on the approach to be taken in determining frequencies for safety inspection of carriageways and footways. These recommendations have been extended to cover footpaths. These inspections should be defined following an assessment of the relative risk associated with the potential circumstances of network condition.
- 1.3 All elements of the safety inspection and assessment regime should be applied systematically and consistently as information may be crucial in respect of legal proceedings. It is also important to recognise that, following the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all records are potentially available for public inspection and reference.
- 1.4 Officers are continuing to be asked by potential claimants under the Freedom of Information Act to provide records relating the Council's standards on carriageway and footway inspections frequencies and defect categories.
- 1.5 The Council should have clear standards on inspection frequencies and defect categorisation.

2 STATUS OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report is considered routine business.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **I recommend that the Depute Chief Executive - PLACE:**
 - a) **acknowledges the recommendations of Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance and,**
 - b) **agrees to the standards for inspection frequency set out in Appendix A.**

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (The Code), 2011 gives recommendations on the approach to be taken in determining frequencies for safety inspection of carriageways and footways. These recommendations have been extended to cover footpaths. These inspections should be defined following an assessment of the relative risk associated with the potential circumstances of network condition.

Safety inspections are designed to identify all defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community. Such defects should include those that will require urgent attention (within 24 hours) as well as those where the locations and sizes are such that longer periods of response would be acceptable.

4.2 Inspections are normally undertaken by slow moving vehicle, at frequencies that reflect the characteristics of the particular road and its use. In busy urban areas, particularly when inspecting footways and footpaths, it is difficult to obtain the necessary level of accuracy from vehicle-based inspections and surveys are conducted on foot.

4.3 Additional inspections are undertaken as necessary in the response to user or community concern, as a result of incidents or extreme weather conditions, or in the light of monitoring information.

4.4 A safety inspection regime forms a key aspect of an authority's strategy for managing liabilities and risks.

5 PROPOSED STANDARD

5.1 The parameters which need to be specified for a safety inspection regime are:

- frequency of inspection;
- items for inspection;
- degree of deficiency;
- nature of response.

5.2 The regime has been developed based on a risk assessment process and provides a practical and reasonable approach to the risks and potential consequences identified. The inspection regime should take account of potential risks to all road users, and in particular those most vulnerable. The following table illustrates the number of claims over the last four years, split by asset type:

Policy Year	Total no of claims	Surface Defect Footway	Surface Defect Carriageway	Others
2010/2011	190	15	163	12
2011/2012	118	23	87	8
2012/2013	316	13	272	31
2013/2014	164	10	145	9

5.3 Frequencies for safety inspections of individual network sections should be based upon consideration of:

- category within the network hierarchy;
 - traffic use, characteristics and trends;
 - incident and inspection history;
 - characteristics of adjoining network elements;
 - wider policy or operational considerations.
- 5.4 Although the frequencies of inspection for various features are consistent with the various categories of hierarchy, there are particular circumstances which, because of their very nature and importance, could result in increased risk of damage or injury to road users. These circumstances relate to special usage or vulnerable users, such as :
- access to schools, hospitals and medical centres;
 - vulnerable users or people with special needs – old peoples homes etc;
 - ceremonial routes and special events.

5.5 Categories of hierarchy will fall into the following either:

- Strategic Routes (cat 2)
- Main Distributor (cat 3a)
- Secondary Distributor (3b)
- Link & Local Access (cat 4a & cat 4b)

Each of the Neighbourhood Service areas will maintain a schedule of carriageways/footway/footpaths which fall into each of the categories above.

- 5.6 Items for inspection include, debris & spillage on surfaces, road, footway and footpath surface defects, standing water, dangerous ironwork, bridge damage, lighting defects and wall failures.
- 5.7 In terms of degree of deficiency, the Code defines defects in two categories:
- Category 1 - those that require prompt attention because they represent an immediate or imminent hazard or because there is a risk of short-term structural deterioration.
 - Category 2 - all other defects

Appendix A indicates the defect categories for carriageway and footway & footpaths.

- 5.8 Category 1 defects should be corrected or made safe at the time of the inspection, if reasonably practicable. In this context, making safe may constitute displaying warning notices, coning off or fencing off to protect the public from the defect. If it is not possible to correct or make safe the defect at the time of inspection, which will generally be the case, repairs of a permanent or temporary nature should be carried out as soon as possible, and in any case within a period of 24 hours. Specific recognition of defects on structures, bridges and lighting should be highlighted and noted, as an example, the recent fatal accident in Berwickshire where cranked parapet rails were missing from the bridge.

- 5.9 Category 2 defects are those which, following a risk assessment, are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent hazard or risk of short term structural deterioration. Such defects may have safety implications, although of a far lesser significance than Category 1 defects, but are more likely to have serviceability or sustainability implications. These defects are not required to be urgently rectified, and those for which repairs are required shall be undertaken within a planned programme of works, with

the priority as determined by risk assessment. These priorities together with access requirements, other works on the road network, traffic levels, and the need to minimise traffic management, should be considered as part of the overall asset management strategy.

- 5.10 Category 2 defects may be categorised according to priority, high (H) medium (M) and low (L). The Council has adopted a range of local target response times for Category 2 defects, and apply them in responding to various categories of defect, based on the risk probability and its likely impact.

Due to the rural nature of the region and the ability to cover a wide expansive area, officers have assessed the requirements of response times to defects and recommend that defects in category 2H are repaired within the 7 day period and 2M are repaired within 4 weeks.

- 5.11 The standards for safety inspection frequency and categories of defects are set out in Appendix A.

This contains, for both carriageways and footways:

- Inspection regime
- Risk assessment of rural routes
- Maintenance hierarchy
- Response times
- Category of defects

6 IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- (a) Without having an approved standard on inspections and defect categories, Council will have increased difficulties in defending third party claims and may be subjected to increased levels of payout and insurers premiums.

Risk and Mitigations

- (a) The system of inspection is aligned to the recommendations and principles of the Code, Section 9.5. The Council has adopted arrangements based on these principles.
- (b) Where defects with potentially serious consequences for network safety are made safe by means of temporary signing or repair, arrangements should be made for a special inspection regime to ensure the continued integrity of the signing or repair is maintained, until a permanent repair can be made.

Equalities

- (a) There are no significant equality implications arising from this Report.

Acting Sustainably

- (a) There are no sustainability implications arising from this Report.

Carbon Management

- (a) There are no carbon management implications arising from this Report.

Rural Proofing

- (a) Not applicable.

Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

(a) There are no changes to be made as a result of this report.

6 CONSULTATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Audit and Risk, have been consulted, and their comments incorporated into the Report.

The Council’s Insurers, Zurich Municipal and their legal advisors Simpson Marwick have been consulted on the report and their observations and recommendations have been incorporated into the Report.

Approved by

Depute Chief Executive - PLACE

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
	Infrastructure Manager, 01835 82 6635

Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference:

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APPENDIX A

The Table below indicates the proposed carriageway and footway inspection frequencies set against the Code of Practice recommendations

Road Hierarchy	Urban / Rural	Proposed Frequency Standard December 2013 CARRIAGEWAY	Proposed Frequency Standard December 2013 FOOTWAY		Frequency recommended in code of practice carriageway	Frequency recommended in code of practice footway
Strategic Route	Urban	Monthly (Cat 2)	Monthly (Cat 1a)		Monthly	Monthly
	Rural	Monthly (Cat 2)			Monthly	
Main Distributor	Urban	2 Monthly (Cat 3a)	2 Monthly (Cat 1)		Monthly	3 Monthly
	Rural	2 Monthly (Cat 3a)			Monthly	
Secondary Distributor	Urban	3 Monthly (Cat 3b)	3 Monthly (Cat 2)		Monthly	6 Monthly
	Rural	3 Monthly (Cat 3b)			Monthly	
Link & Local Access and footpaths	Urban	12 Monthly (Cat 4a & b)	12 Monthly (Cat 3 & 4) incl. parks and cemeteries		4a 3 Monthly	12 Monthly
	Rural	12 Monthly (Cat 4a & b)	12 Monthly (Rural footways and paths)		4b 12 Monthly	

DEFINITIONS: for definitions of carriageway and footway categories please refer to Well Maintained Highways, COPHM, Table 1, page 82 and Table 2, page 83.

Routine Maintenance - Carriageways

SBC has specific defect requirement intervention levels with documented reaction times.

It is proposed that reaction times should reflect the carriageway defect categories as detailed below:

Category 1: Defects presenting an immediate and critical hazard to road users; **immediate make safe and repair within 24 hours**

- Major debris & spillage
- Carriageway collapse or comparable severe surface defect
- Isolated standing water at depth likely to cause loss of control
- Missing or seriously defective ironwork
- Major collapse to others assets eg. walls, bridges & lighting

Category 2H: Defects presenting an urgent or imminent hazard or risk of rapid deterioration; **make safe or repair within 7 days**

- Seriously defective ironwork
- Pothole – exceeding 40mm in wheel track

Category 2M: Defects presenting a moderate level of hazard or risk; **repair within 4 weeks**

- Isolated standing water
- Pothole exceeding 40mm depth in all other locations
- Edge deterioration exceeding 100mm

Category 2L defects are those which following a risk assessment are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent danger. These would include items such as street furniture, utility apparatus, walls, fences, hedges and tress, signs, street lights and road markings. Repairs should be undertaken within a **planned programme of works.**

Routine Maintenance – Footways & Footpaths

SBC has specific defect requirement intervention levels with documented reaction times.

It is proposed that reaction times should reflect the carriageway defect categories as detailed below:

Category 1: Defects presenting an immediate and critical hazard to users;
immediate make safe and repair within 24 hours

- Major debris & spillage
- Footway collapse or comparable severe surface defect
- Missing or seriously defective ironwork

Category 2H: Defects presenting an urgent or imminent hazard or risk of rapid deterioration; **make safe or repair within 7 days**

- Seriously defective ironwork
- Pothole – exceeding 20mm in cycleway
- Trip exceeding 20mm in footway and kerb
- Gap in footway wider or deeper than 15mm on priority walking (Cat 1) footways

Category 2M: Defects presenting a moderate level of hazard or risk; **repair within 4 weeks**

- Isolated standing water
- Gap in footway wider or deeper than 15mm on other (Cat 2, 3 & 4) footways

Category 2L: defects are those which following a risk assessment are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent danger. These would include items such as street furniture, utility apparatus. Repairs should be undertaken within a **planned programme of works.**