

Potholes

Knowsley Council has responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the adopted roads and pavements within the borough, including potholes. The information on this page provides an overview on how potholes are identified and repaired.

What is a pothole and how are they caused?

A number of factors contribute to the deterioration of the road surface and lead to potholes.

Potholes occur as road surfaces age, become less flexible and more susceptible to cracking.

Deterioration is accelerated by water ingress, heavy traffic, utility trenches and extreme temperatures.

More potholes appear during and after the winter season and are caused by the freeze – thaw conditions at that time of year.



Water penetrates through cracks in the road surface and freezes when temperatures drop. The expansion and contraction process when water freezes and thaws undermines the stability of the road surface, causing damage to the surface.

Definition of a pothole

Knowsley Council considers that a pothole is a defect in the road surface 40mm or more deep.

If a section of the road deteriorates and is less than 40mm deep it is not considered to be a pothole.



A pothole is usually deeper than **40mm**

Identifying potholes

Roads in Knowsley are regularly inspected to ensure they remain in a safe condition. All defects are recorded and repaired in accordance with Knowsley's policy for Highway Safety Inspections. <http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/your-council/policies,-plans-and-strategies/place.aspx>

The frequency of inspections is based on the road type and the traffic using it.

Table 1: Carriageways

Category	Category Name	Short Description	Long Description	Frequency
1	Motorway	Limited access motorway regulations apply	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use.	Weekly
2	Strategic Route	Trunk and some Principal 'A' roads between Primary Destinations	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited.	1 month
3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary Links. Short - medium distance traffic	Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40 mph or less, parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety.	1 month
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified Road (B and C class) and unclassified urban bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the larger villages and HGV generators to the Strategic and Main Distributor Network. In built up areas these roads have 30 mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons	1 month
4a	Link Road	Roads linking between the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads. They are of varying width and not always capable of carrying two way traffic. In urban areas they are residential or industrial interconnecting roads with 30 mph speed limits random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking	3 monthly
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGVs. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or	12 monthly

			cul-de-sacs.	
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Table 2: Footways

Category	Category Name	Short Description	Long Description	Frequency
1(a)	Footway	Prestige Walking Zone	Very busy areas of towns and cities with high public space and street scene contribution	1 month
1	Footway	Primary Walking Route	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes.	1 month
2	Footway	Secondary Walking Route	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres etc.	3 monthly
3	Footway	Link Footway	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways	6 monthly
4	Footway	Local Access Footway	Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs.	12 monthly
A	Cycleway		Cycle lane forming part of the carriageway, commonly 1.5 metre strip adjacent to the nearside kerb. Cycle gaps at road closure point (no entries allowing cycle access).	As for Roads
B	Cycleway		Cycle track, a highway route for cyclists not contiguous with the public footway or carriageway. Shared cycle/pedestrian paths, either segregated by a white line or other physical segregation, or un-segregated.	6 monthly
C	Cycleway		Cycle trails, leisure routes through open spaces. These are not necessarily the responsibility of the highway authority, but may be maintained by an authority under other powers or duties.	12 monthly

Potholes and other defects may occur between these inspections - particularly following adverse weather conditions. This is why it is important that people reporting them.

What are the response times for repairing potholes?

The severity of the pothole and the urgency of repair is determined by the risk it poses to road users. Factors taken into account include location, size and depth of pothole; traffic type, speed and volume; road type, alignment and visibility and also the position in relation to road width.

Category 1 - defects that represent an immediate or imminent hazard, where not to provide an immediate response could significantly endanger the safety of road users will be made safe or repaired within **2 hours**.

Category 2 - defects that fall within the investigation levels below will be made safe or repaired within **24 hours**.

Category 3 - defects that fall within the investigation levels below will be made safe or repaired within **14 days**.

Category 4 - defects that fall within the investigation levels below will be made safe or repaired within **28 days**.

How are potholes repaired?

Repairs will be completed within the timescales above and carried out by the council's term maintenance contractor.

Permanent repairs will be carried out straight away. In some circumstances a temporary repair is carried out as a short term measure, with a permanent repair scheduled soon after.

Temporary repairs will also be considered when there is extensive patching or resurfacing works programmed.

A typical permanent repair would see the area of road around the pothole cut out to give a clean vertical edge. Any loose material is removed from the area being repaired and is then painted with liquid bituminous binder. The area is filled with a hot bitumen bound material which is raked and compacted to the level of the surrounding road.

Performance management

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

Response Times:	
Response Category	Target % repaired
Category 1 - 2 hours	98%
Category 2 – 24 hours	95%
Category 3 – 14 days	95%

Category 4 – 28 days	95%
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How are repairs paid for?

Pothole inspections and repairs are funded from Knowsley Council's highways maintenance budget, and from the government's Pothole Action Fund. More information on how and where the pothole action funding was invested in Knowsley <http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents/roads/report-road-or-street-problems/annual-progress-report>

How to report a pothole

Potholes and other defects can happen very fast and the council may not be aware of them so any reports are helpful.

Reported defects are assessed and where they meet the intervention criteria set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Policy then repairs will be undertaken.

You can report a problem with **potholes** quickly and easily here (<https://knowsleytransaction.mendixcloud.com/index.html>) or contact **0800 0232334**