

Road surface defects

Mini guide



Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Potholes**
- **Cracks and crazing**
- **Haunching - edge failure**

Introduction

Many of the roads in Milton Keynes are in good condition however many are now old having been originally built many years ago. Even the grid roads that we use everyday are over 40 years old and carry a high volume of traffic.

All roads have an eventual 'end of life'. This is when the structure finally deteriorates to a point where it must be replaced completely. This is an expensive process and as we have over 1300km to maintain, we look at all options to try and prolong the life of the road.

Road defects will occur on all types of road throughout the year as the road surface itself ages, the volume of traffic increases and the weather impact on the road network.

Continuous patching of road defects such as pothole repairs is not a long term solution. If potholes or other defects are appearing then the structure of the road is beginning to deteriorate. Potholes will continue to appear as the conditions will always be in place for them to do so i.e. cold, wet weather and volumes of traffic.

Investing in preventative surface treatments is the best way to preserve roads and offers value for money. For more information read our Road Surface Treatments Mini Guide.

Our highways budget is very limited so we use a process of inspection, analysis and asset management to keep the roads safe and maintain them as much as possible.

For more information about how we manage our assets including roads, redways and footways, visit our Highways section on the website, www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Potholes

Potholes form when water seeps into the road surface and gradually weakens it. In cold weather this water freezes and thaws causing existing holes and cracks to worsen. This is why potholes tend to appear mostly after and during the winter months which is also the worst time of year to carry out any repairs.

Once the pothole has started to appear, larger chunks of the road surface will break off as vehicles move over it.

All potholes reported to us will be checked by our highways inspectors if they are on the adopted highway. They will make a decision on whether it poses a safety hazard to road users or if it does not meet our intervention level.

Smaller potholes with a depth under 4cm do not generally pose a safety risk to road users. For this reason we will not repair these size defects but will monitor them as they are likely to worsen.

Larger potholes, over 4cm deep, will be assessed to see if they need an emergency repair (within a few hours) or they can be scheduled in for repair during the following 28 days. We may make a temporary repair to a pothole to make it safe and return to do a robust, permanent repair later.



Example of a 'deep pothole'. It has a sharp-edged hole in the top road surface layer.



Example of a 'shallow pothole'. It is much lower in depth.

Cracks and crazing

Potholes are the most widely known type of road defect however the road surface can also be damaged in other ways.

Cracks may appear in the road surface which could indicate part or total deterioration of the road surface layers. Cracks do not usually pose a safety risk however if left untreated, surface water could seep in and this could lead to potholes forming.

Crazing is also a sign that the road surface layers are either partially or completely failing. Crazing looks like a series of shapes in one section of the road surface, sometimes it is referred to as 'alligator cracking' as the shapes look like alligator skin patterns.



A crack in the road surface. This will allow water to seep in easily down to the other road surface layers and increase the chance of a pothole forming.



An example of crazing on a road surface. The cracking resembles 'alligator skin' and is in a geometric pattern in one section of the road surface.

Haunching

Haunching or edge failure tends to happen mainly on rural roads where there is no kerb. The edge of the road is right next to the verge and is called the haunch.

It is the weakest part of the road as it is unprotected by any kerb so if vehicles move across it, the surface can be damaged.

This can happen often on certain sections of the road where vehicles, especially large or heavy vehicles, may need to pass by each other and there is limited room.



A rural road with no kerb at either side. The area between the road and the verge is called the 'haunch'.



An example where the land has eroded at the edge and caused the road surface layers to break up.

Contact details

How to report problems with road defects

Please note: our resources are limited so we prioritise all work reported to us based on safety.

If you do need to report an issue to us, please provide the location including the street name and postcode and a description of the problem. Photos are great too if you can provide them.

Phone

01908 252353

Monday to Friday 9am to 5:15pm.

Email

customerservices@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Online

Use the Report It section on www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Emergencies

If you consider the road defect to be an emergency safety issue, please phone us on. 01908 252353
Monday to Friday between 9am - 5:15pm.

Outside these hours, call 01908 226699.

Any life threatening emergency should be reported to the Police immediately on 999.