

Highway Safety Inspections

Mini guide

Version 2

2024

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The Council's role

In each area the public highways come under the control of the local Highways Authority. In the Milton Keynes Borough this Highways Authority is Milton Keynes City Council and the legal responsibilities are set out in the Highways Act 1980 (Section 41).

Part of these legal duties include carrying out inspections as per our own Code of Practice for Highways Inspections. Our Codes of Practice are available to view in full on the [MKCC website](#).

The Codes of Practice were put together using national guidance and include minimum levels of service for inspections and timescales for reactive repairs.

What we do and don't look after

The Council is responsible for all public highways assets which includes:

- Carriageway including road markings and lines
- Redway
- Footway
- Streetlights*
- Road drains (gullies)**
- Directional signs and street name plates
- Structures including bridges, underpasses and retaining walls
- Bollards (lit/unlit)
- Safety barriers

*There is no legal requirement for MKCC to provide streetlighting but where we have decided to install it, we have a duty then to maintain it for safety.

**MKCC highways have responsibility for gullies and some ditches on the highway only, not carrier drains or ditches on private land.

The Council's highways service is NOT responsible for:

- Unadopted* roads e.g. on new estates or private roads
- Footways on unadopted* highway e.g. some local shopping centres, parks, rural areas.
- Streetlights on unadopted* land e.g. on Housing land, retail areas, privately managed car parks.
- Landscaping - this is with the Council's Environment team
- Flooding relating to ground water, run off from private land, Anglian Water owned pipes.
- The M1 and A5 - these are under National Highways
- Speed enforcement - this may only be carried out by the Police
- Green grit bins - these are managed by the local parish council
- Dog waste bins - these are managed by parish councils

*Unadopted roads or footways are not public highway and therefore the Highways Authority is not responsible for the maintained of them. By law, public money may not be spent on assets that are not owned by the authority.

Roads may only be adopted following a lengthy legal process where the landowner must offer up the road for adoption. The Council will only consider adopting a road if it is constructed to our standards, in good condition and there is a benefit to adopting it.



The M1 and A5 roads are under the control of National Highways. The A5 stretches through Milton Keynes from Kelly's Kitchen roundabout up to MK's northern border with Northamptonshire which starts at the bridge over the River Ouse at Stony Stratford.

Milton Keynes has a large number of development areas. Most of the roads in these areas are unadopted highway. This means they belong to the landowner, the developer, and any maintenance is for them to carry out including gritting. Only roads that are formally adopted by MKCC become part of the public highway.



What happens when you report a highways issue



1. Before you report an issue to us...

Check if it is public highway, you can do this using the [My MK Mapping](#) interactive tool on the MKCC website. Simply put in the postcode or address and select the 'Highways - Adopted Highways' category. Any public highway will be shown shaded in blue.

If it is highways, then you can report an issue using the Report It tab on the [MKCC website](#).

2. Reporting an issue

When reporting an issue to us, please select the right category and add the exact location. If we can't find the location you've reported we may have to contact you to find out more information or the problem cannot be found by our inspectors.

Some issues have already been reported to us, these will be shown on the map so please do not re-report using a nearby location, we are aware of the issue and will be responding to it. If you can, please include a photo of the issue. This helps us when triaging and to identify the location and problem more quickly.

3. Triage

We receive hundreds of enquiries each month covering a wider range of issues from potholes and faulty lights to requests for road safety audits and resurfacing sections of footways. Responses can take a few minutes to complete or a few weeks depending on the complexity.

For this reason we triage enquiries so that the customer is aware that more complicated investigations will take some time to look into properly.

Simple repairs may be carried out within a few days subject to any necessary permits being approved.

4. Inspections

Most enquiries are requests for repairs or maintenance. These are sent to one of our four highways inspectors so they can visit the location and check what the problem is.

If the issue is for another MKCC service or a different part of the highways team, the enquiry will be passed to them to carry out their own investigations.

5. Assessments and Actions

The inspectors will assess any defect using our Codes of Practice. The Codes of Practice set out all the criteria and timeframes for when repairs will be carried out by our service provider. We have to use this method to prioritise works so that any critical safety defects are picked up and dealt with quickly before non-safety issues.

The [Codes of Practice](#) may be viewed on the MKCC website under the Highways section.

Some defects may not present any safety issue to the public so they will be classed as a low priority. We have a set annual budget for highways maintenance so it is important we focus on the safety issues first. However we do plan large programmes of works each year that may include low-level defects e.g. resurfacing a large section of road that has several small potholes or cracks.

6. Responses

Depending on the enquiry, you will either receive an update to say the repair or request has been carried out, it has been passed to another MKCC service or third party, or that the assessment showed the defect did not meet the criteria set out in the Codes of Practice.

If your enquiry requires information about a highways topic, you should receive a response providing you with an answer or advising you where you can find out more information.

If we've told you that the defect does not meet our criteria yet, we may include the repair in future works (low priority) depending on available budget and other resources or we will keep a record of it and should the defect worsen, it may then meet the criteria for a repair.

Highways Inspections and Assessments

We have four highways inspectors who are out on the network each day, Monday to Friday, checking the major roads and responding to reported issues. They visit every estate at least once every year.

They will visit a location and log any defects they find. All defects are then assessed using the guidance in our Codes of Practice. Should a defect meet the criteria for repair, a job will be raised to carry out the works. The assessments are carried out on a 'risk-based' scale from 1 Very Low to 5 Very High.

If a road closure is required to do the works, a highways permit will need to be submitted and approved as well. All approved permits are listed on [One.Network](#) so you can see where and when all highways works for MK will be taking place.

Deciding where, when and if repairs should be done

We use our [Codes of Practice](#) to assess each defect to determine if a repair is required. It also provides guidance on when a repair should be carried out e.g., an emergency repair may be done within 2 hours or 24 hours depending on the severity.

For efficiency we may batch repairs under one road closure. This also means less disruption to the network and road users. Occasionally we may also be able to coordinate works with utility companies or developers who may be doing works on the highway around the same time.

The Streetworks team coordinate the permit requests to work on the highway. For more about Streetworks, read the Mini Guide on our website under [Roadworks and road maintenance](#).

We also use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to map out the road environment and pick up any defects. This data is used to identify areas where the road condition has deteriorated and we need to carry out a surface treatment to prolong the life of the asphalt.

Highways engineers carry out their own visual assessments too and use both the AI data and reports from the public to plan future works and devise programmes where resources can be used to maximum effect.



Utilities companies often need to dig up the highway to carry out emergency repairs, update their infrastructure or check for reported faults.

The Council's Streetworks team check and approve permit requests and where possible, MKCC highways works may be carried out under the same road closure to minimise disruption.

A road defect being marked for repair by a highways officer. The area is marked out for the repair crew so they know exactly where they will need to cut when they visit the location.



Contacts

How to report problems on the highway

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.