



**POTHOLES**

***Your questions answered***

Caerphilly Highway Operations

Contact: **01443 866511**

A greener place to live, work and visit



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.  
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

# What are potholes?

Potholes can be caused by a variety of reasons, whether it be surface or sub-surface failure.

Potholes pose a danger to road users and pedestrians alike, with increased risk of vehicle damage and injury.

If left untreated, potholes can deteriorate, increase in size and affect other parts of the road surface.

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a statutory responsibility to maintain its highways at reasonable public expense (Highways Act 1980 - S. 41) and almost all pothole claims made against the authority arise from the alleged breach of this section within the Highways Act.



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## How they form

There are a number of reasons why potholes form in roads and pavements.

Some are down to fatigue of the bituminous material (through ageing, and the increase of heavier vehicles on the highway), substandard works (such as unsupervised utility works), inclement weather or a combination of these elements in tandem with an ageing infrastructure.

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## Inclement Weather

Probably the most damaging process that creates and accelerates pothole formation is that of the 'freeze/thaw' process resulting from periods of ice or snow.

Micro-cracks in the pavement can let water through to the base course/ground underneath, this water then freezes and expands (similar action to water pipes freezing in winter weather), the surface then bends to accommodate this expansion until it fails and further larger cracks appear (the ice will then thaw back to its liquid state).

These larger cracks then allow more water in for further freeze/thaw actions to occur, until the surface fails and creates a pothole.

# What is the process of dealing with potholes and how we prioritise?

Safety is our principal priority, although there will be occasions during flooding and heavy snow etc where climatic conditions dictate that the routine approach is not possible.

A typical repair to a defect would begin with a Highway Inspector undertaking a visual check, as part of their routine safety inspections or as a result of a service request from the public.

If our intervention criteria is met (being an 'actionable' pothole – see photos), the inspector would then mark out around the defect and issue a ticket to the highway maintenance contractor.

A highway repair crew would then arrive on site and remove the surface and base layers, replacing it with the appropriate asphalt. The defect is then repaired within 28 days of the highways inspector's initial visit, and checked for quality and compliance by the highway inspector.

There will be occasions whereby several defects are found within one street, yet not all of those defects have been marked for repair. This is because not every pothole will meet Caerphilly Highways intervention criteria (i.e. it is 'non-actionable' - see photo), the assessment used to ensure the effective use of materials, with scarce resources and funding.

**Actionable pothole**



**Non-actionable pothole**



# **Our actionable potholes routinely fall into one of the following categories:**

## **2hr Emergency Defects**

**These are considered an immediate danger and are made safe within a 2hr period and arrangements made for a permanent repair at a later date if required.**

## **24hr Emergency Defects**

**These are not considered an immediate danger but show the potential to dramatically fail in the short term.**

## **Routine Repair**

**This is assigned to a pothole which is not deemed an immediate safety hazard, but is marked repair within the standard 28 days.**

There are occasions where temporary repairs are made to keep the road surface safe, with a permanent repair following at a later date. This usually forms part of a programme of similar work, thus ensuring cost effectiveness.

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## **What are the costs involved?**

National figures indicate that the average cost to repair a pothole is in the region of £50-£60. CCBC, via our Network Contracting Services (NCS), are currently paying £46 (correct to 2015 prices), which is an extremely competitive rate.

When you consider that the Council repairs on average in excess of 20,000 defects each year, with a maintenance budget in the region of £1.1 million; then this competitive rate presents real value for the Highway users of Caerphilly Borough.

# How do I report a pothole?

Any highway related issues can be logged via our internet portal by visiting:

[www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Roads-and-pavements/Report-an-issue](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Roads-and-pavements/Report-an-issue)

Alternatively for residents who do not have internet access, please telephone our

**Customer Contact Centre: 01443 866511**

## Postal address:

Caerphilly CBC  
Highway Operations Group  
Penmaen Industrial Estate  
Penmaen Rd  
NP12 2DY

So, if you see a pothole,  
please let us know,  
we will assess and take  
the appropriate action.

Councillors can either  
report their concerns  
via the dedicated portal  
or email Highway  
Operations Group  
officers direct.

