



Vale of Glamorgan Council

**Directorate of Visible Services
and Housing**

Highways and Engineering

**Highway Safety Inspection
Manual**

Guidance for Highway Safety Inspections

Directorate of Highways and Engineering Highways Safety Inspection Manual

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2.0. Introduction of the Policy

Section 58 of the Highways Act (1980) states:

(1). In an action against a highway authority in respect of damage resulting from their failure to maintain a highway maintainable at public expense it is a defence (without prejudice to any other defence or the application of the law relating to contributory negligence) to prove that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous to traffic.

- 2.1 The establishment of an effective regime of inspection, assessment and recording is the most crucial component of effective highway maintenance. The safety inspection regime provides the basic information for addressing the first core objective of highway maintenance and network safety.
- 2.2 This manual has been derived to encourage an efficient and consistent approach in the collection, processing and recording of highway inventory in line with the principles of 'Well Maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management 2005 (CoP)' (Updated 18th September 2013). This guidance for safety inspections has been modified in the light of particular local circumstances and the relative risks and consequences associated with these. The characteristics of the regime, including the frequency of inspections, items to be recorded and the nature of the response are defined within this Safety Inspection Manual, which is set in context of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's overall Policy and maintenance strategy.

3.0 Purpose of Safety Inspection

- 3.1 The main purposes of highway maintenance is to maintain the highway network for the safe and convenient movement of it's users. Safety inspections are designed to identify all defects that are likely to cause danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network. Such defects include those that require urgent attention as well as those where the locations and sizes are as such that longer periods of response and action are appropriate.
- 3.2 The safety inspections regime forms a key aspect of the Vale of Glamorgan Councils strategy for managing liability and risk.
- 3.3 The Vale of Glamorgan Council uses its Safety Inspection process, monitoring information and a regime of proactive maintenance to reduce risk and provide the public with a safer highway network. Further, if compliance with the Safety Inspection process permits, Section 58 of the Highways Act (1980) may be used in defence of claims against the Highway Authority. By virtue of the Highways Act 1980 the Vale of Glamorgan Council are able to repudiate a claim relating to alleged injury, loss or damage if it can prove that:
- It had in place adequate policies and procedures to maintain the Highway
 - The policies and procedures were being implemented effectively

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 Unless otherwise stated, terms used in this manual are as defined in the 'Well maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management 2005 (CoP).
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4.2 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

4.3 Detailed guidance about the level of response to defects is contained in Section 5.0 and Appendix * of this document, however, in general the following applies:

- Category 1 defects shall be made safe or repaired at the time of the inspection, if reasonably practicable. If it is not possible to correct or make safe the defect at the time of inspection, repairs of a permanent or temporary nature should be carried out as soon as possible and in any case by the end of the next working day. Permanent repairs should be completed within 28 days.
- Category 2 defects are those which, following a risk assessment are deemed not to represent an imminent or immediate danger or hazard or at risk of short term structural deterioration. Such defects may have safety implications, but are more likely to have a serviceability or sustainability implications.

5.0 Frequency and Methodology of Highway Safety Inspections

5.1 The Vale of Glamorgan Council has set out its own standards for the frequency of its Highway Safety Inspections and is determined in accordance with the categories within the network hierarchy and in conjunction with The CoP frequencies for Safety Inspections and is shown in table A on the following page:

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Feature	Category	Frequency
Carriageway	Strategic Route	12 x Annually
	Main Distributor	12 x Annually
	Secondary Distributor	4 x Annually
	Link Road	4 x Annually
	Local Access Road	2 x Annually
Footway	Prestige Walking Zones	12 x Annually
	Primary Walking Routes	12 x Annually
	Secondary Walking Routes	4 x Annually
	Link Footways	2 x Annually
	Local Access Footways	2 x Annually

Table A

- 5.2 Safety Inspections are designed to identify all defects likely to create a danger or serious inconvenience to the users of the network. The risk of the danger is assessed on site and the defect is then categorised as either Category 1 or 2 and the appropriate response time is then allocated based on the guidelines according to the CoP.
- 5.3 Defects that are reported by the Public will be inspected within 5 working days and the appropriate level of response will be determined using the guidelines set out within this document.
- 5.4 Section 81 of the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 places a duty on statutory undertakers (utilities) to maintain their apparatus to the reasonable satisfaction of the Highway Authority. When an inspection identifies a particular piece of apparatus that is deemed to be unsafe and requiring attention, notification will be sent to the appropriate party via the Eton Noticing System requiring them to carry out remedial action under Section 81 of this Act. This notification should detail the apparatus and its location complete with maps, postcode and USRN number.
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- 5.5 If remedial action is not carried out within a reasonable timescale the Highway Authority may carry out repairs themselves and recover all costs incurred.

6.0 Safety Inspections of Highway Trees

- 6.1 All trees within falling distance of the highway are deemed 'highway trees'. A basic inspection of all highway trees that can be seen from the carriageway is included in the routine Safety inspections. Any defect or feature likely to cause an obvious danger by encroachment, obstructive visibility, damage, ill health or trip hazard is recorded and the appropriate action taken. Under section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 the Vale of Glamorgan Council deals by means of Notice in relation to hedges, trees and shrubs growing on adjacent land which overhang the highway. Details of the Council's Tree inspection Policy is attached as Appendix 1

7.0 Degree of deficiency and nature of response

- 7.1 All defects are risk assessed based upon hierarchy, intervention level, response time, likelihood of predictable deterioration and whether the repair is to be of a temporary or permanent nature.
- 7.2 Defects that represent an immediate or imminent hazard/danger shall be repaired or made safe at the time of the inspection. If it is not possible to repair or make safe, repairs of a temporary or permanent nature shall be carried out by the end of the next working day.
- 7.3 All other defects which, following a risk assessment are deemed not to represent an imminent or immediate hazard/danger shall be repaired within the appropriate timescales.

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7.4 On site judgement will need to take into account particular circumstances such as the defects' location and where necessary the Inspector may increase the reaction time for a defect. If a defect is not listed the Inspector will carry out a risk assessment to determine the appropriate response, taking into account the location of the defect.

7.5 Table: Inspection and Repair standards:

Maintenance Category	Inspection Interval Months	Defect Type Intervention threshold (depth in Millimetres)	
		Potholes	Protrusions
Carriageway			
Strategic 'A' roads	12 x Annually	40mm	40mm
Main Distributor 'B' roads	12 x Annually	40mm	40mm
Secondary Distributor	4 x Annually	40mm	40mm
Link Road	4 x Annually	40mm	40mm
Local Access Roads	2 x Annually	40mm	40mm
Footways			
Prestige walking zones	12x Annually		20mm
Primary Walking route	12 x Annually		20mm
Secondary Walking route	4 x Annually		20mm
Link Footways	2 x Annually		20mm
Local Access Footways	2 x Annually		20mm

8.0 Recording and Monitoring of Information

- 8.1 All information obtained from safety inspections together with the nature of response including 'no defects found' shall be recorded and all such data shall be able to be reviewed in conjunction with all other survey information. This information shall be stored electronically. Service requests, complaints and reports from third parties shall also be recorded together with the nature of response including 'no defects found'.
- 8.2 All inspections shall record time of the inspection, weather conditions, any unusual circumstances and the person conducting the inspection.

9.0 Health, Safety and Training

- 9.1 Highway Safety inspections require concentration on the identification and recording of defects, but not at the expense of the safety of the inspector or road users.
- 9.2 Health and Safety risk assessments and safe systems of work must cover all inspection activities. These risk assessments and safe systems of work must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that new or amended legislation or defect repair methods are passed on to the appropriate personnel.