

It's pothole season

This winter's weather has been tough on Buckinghamshire's roads – while the heavy snowfall in December was the most remarkable weather event, the worst conditions for roads are actually when the ground temperature fluctuates constantly between just above and just below zero.

Pothole formation is accelerated by this 'freeze-thaw' effect, whereby moisture gets into small cracks in the the road surface and expands when it freezes, then thaws out when the temperature rises. This process repeats until the road surface begins to break up and potholes are formed.

County Councillor Mark Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transportation, urges road users in Buckinghamshire to report potholes when they see them:

"Transport for Buckinghamshire will investigate every pothole reported to them, and react on a risk based prioritisation process – put simply, that means the worst ones will be attended to first, as a matter of urgency. But we're not mind readers, and the road network is far too vast for us to possibly know where all the potholes are, so we need members of the public to report them to us either using the online form, which only takes a few minutes, or by calling if it's dangerous or an emergency. I would ask that everyone be patient while we deal with the fallout of a bad winter – potholes are as inevitable as weather, roads are made of a porous material so that they don't flood constantly in rain and so when water within the structure freezes, defects will form."

On average, when there are no severe weather issues, TfB repairs over 4,000 potholes every month.

Pothole FAQ:

- **You fixed one pothole, why didn't you fix the one next to it while you were here?**
Potholes are prioritised according to risk – if they are on very well used roads, they are more of a priority. Size and depth are also factors. Resources have to be used responsibly, and cannot be used up fixing a more minor road surface defect when there are more urgent defects needing attention just up the road.
- **Why can I only report one pothole online at a time?**
Our online reporting system works on an interactive map, so that each individual defect can be risk assessed and dealt with on a case by case basis. The map allows for accurate pinpointing, which saves time when it comes to inspections. There are drop-down menus to allow you to input as much detail, such as size and position, as possible.

- **Why do you make temporary repairs that don't last?**
Temporary repairs, where the pothole is filled in with hot material and made smooth, are often carried out as a safety measure when a permanent repair cannot be carried out at that moment, likely due to the location of the defect. That is to say, where a larger area of road needs to be cut away to make a full repair, likely requiring a road or lane closure, a temporary or 'make safe' repair is an effective way of keeping the road safe in the meantime.
- **How do I report a pothole?**

You can report potholes, as well as any other road issue, using the Report It forms on the county council website. In an emergency, for instance a severe road defect, a flooded road, or a tree in the road, you can always call Transport for Buckinghamshire on 01296 382416 or 486630 (out of hours). The online reporting tool is at www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole/