

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Road Skid Resistance Policy

September 2019



Purpose of this policy:

As a Highway Authority, we have a duty of care to maintain the safety and accessibility of highway infrastructure that is kept at public expense. As stewards and custodians of the highway infrastructure assets, in accordance with the Highways Act 1980, we must demonstrate that we have provided adequate provision for their upkeep and safety as can be reasonably expected.

This policy provides our documentary evidence of the Council's proactive approach to skid resistance management.

Control

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Author	Kully Boden Highway Asset Team Leader
Key stakeholders / contributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highway Asset Owners• XAIS Asset Management Ltd and Road Surface Treatment Association• Skid User Group• Internal Teams<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Traffic and Transportation○ Engineering Design
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Accountable Service Director	Richard Antcliff - Service Director for Public Protection and Streetpride

Supporting information

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Reviewing officer	Kully Boden Highway Asset Team Leader kully.boden@derby.gov.uk 01332 642013

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Foreword

Skid resistance is an important property relating to the safety of highway users, particularly in damp or wet conditions. Over the course of a road's life, the surface can lose some of its characteristics associated with grip. Effective maintenance of the highway network includes the requirement to systematically monitor the skid resistance of the road surface and to take a proactive approach, so that the skid resistance across the network is maintained to an appropriate standard.

The policy (Document AMF-20), is intended to represent industry best practice, but also reflects local needs and road characteristics. It provides documentary evidence of the Council's proactive approach to skid resistance management

An operational document has also been developed (Document AMF-21), which provides a step by step approach to identifying skid deficient sites and the process for deciding their subsequent treatment through a prioritisation process, in accordance with the requirements of the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice: October 2016.

1. Introduction

The Skid Resistance Policy takes an asset management approach to managing skidding resistance and puts a greater emphasis on engineering assessment. The objective of the Policy is to:

- enable the public to travel safely and easily
- enable the Council to robustly defend against claims
- reduce the number of killed or seriously injured due to collisions on the Council's road network
- ensure the Council adheres to its duty of care under the Highways Act 1980
- ensure the Council has adequate defence in a Corporate Manslaughter case as either the Authority or its Chief Officer.

To achieve this, the Council will:

- formalise processes for monitoring skid resistance across the Council's road network on an ongoing basis
- identify deficient sites using skid resistance survey methods for further investigation
- use accident data on sites identified for further investigation to determine whether inadequate skidding resistance could be a factor
- recommend appropriate actions to negate risks
- prioritise skid deficient sites for improvement work based on where the greatest risks lie
- ensure improvements to skid deficient sites are incorporated into the annual highway maintenance works programme.

The above principles will be applied on an ongoing basis so that skid resistance across the highway network is continually monitored and managed appropriately.

The term "skid resistance" used in this document refers to the frictional properties of a road surface, measured using a specified device, under standardised conditions.

The annual Skid Resistance survey will be procured through a specialist accredited contractor, using an accredited SCRIM vehicle. The skid resistance of a road surface varies with the time of the year and is influenced by seasonal variation and changes in traffic flow. Skid resistance testing is carried out on wet or damp surfaces, unless stated otherwise, as the skid resistance of a surface will be substantially lower than when the same surface is dry. An accepted practice is to measure skid resistance on alternating seasons (Spring, Summer and Autumn) and results are seasonally corrected to ensure consistency year on year.

Skid resistance measurements are used as an empirical assessment of a road surface's level of grip and as an indication of the potential need for further

investigation based on known acceptable limits. However, it should be noted it does not represent the definitive grip available to a road user making a particular manoeuvre at a particular time and at a particular speed.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Legal Responsibilities

Councils have a statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act to maintain highways that are maintainable at public expense. Although the formal management of highway skid resistance is not a legal requirement, it is considered good practice and it supports the aims and objectives set out in the Council's Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy.

Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 provides the ability to form a statutory defence to counter legal actions for negligence. The Council must be able to prove in a court of law that it has taken 'such care as is in all the circumstances reasonably required to secure that part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic.' When considering a third party legal action against the Council, the Court will consider such factors as:

- the character of the highway and the traffic which was reasonably to be expected to use it
- the standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic
- the state of repair in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the highway
- whether the Council knew, or could reasonably have been expected to know, that the condition of the part of the highway to which the action relates was likely to cause danger to users of the highway
- whether the Council could reasonably have been expected to repair that part of the highway before the cause of action arose.

Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 does not stipulate the standard of maintenance applicable to the highway.

It is accepted by the Courts that different standards of maintenance are applicable to the road network. This is related to vehicle and pedestrian usage as well as speeds of the vehicles using the highway. The Court therefore takes into account that it would be unrealistic for the Council to monitor and maintain adequate levels of skid resistance on the whole network as this would not be deemed "reasonably practicable".

The development of this policy is to ensure a suitably structured procedure is implemented for the highway under our care and adequate levels of skid resistance are maintained within reasonable expectations as outlined in the Highways Act 1980.

2.2 Roles, Responsibilities and Competencies

The Council's Highway Asset Management Team will have the relevant competencies, as set out in the UK Roads Liaison Group Asset Management Competency Framework. As a minimum, they will have completed the RSTA Skid Resistance training course, which prepares them for:

- management, development, implementation and regular review of the Skid Resistance Policy and Operational Document
- the procurement and subsequent management of skid resistance surveys with contractors
- assignment of site categories and investigatory levels on the road network subject to skid resistance surveys
- processing, analysis and review of skid resistance data received from survey contractor.
- review of the site categories and investigatory levels for the road network subject to skid resistance surveys. This review will be undertaken every three years
- maintaining the appropriate records of site visits and associated documents
- informing other Council departments of any issues affecting the site which may be contributory to skid resistance issues
- providing a prioritised list of sites that would benefit from improvement works and making informed decisions about how these are integrated into the annual highways forward works programme.

The Council's Highway Asset Management Team will ensure that the most appropriate remedial action is taken at sites identified as requiring action. Some examples of the options available are:

- monitor the site
- erection and removal of warning signs
- refresh of white lining markings on the carriageway
- retexturing of the road surface with the appropriate treatments available
- resurfacing of the carriageway with a material that will ensure that the road achieves the correct skid resistance for that road section.