

Potholes

Fact Sheet



Potholes

A pothole is generally a circular type depression defect in the road surface, where broken pieces of pavement have fallen away.



Causes of Potholes

As the road pavement naturally ages, cracks occur in the surface. Moisture and water seeps through these cracks into the base material beneath the road pavement. The vibration and/or the weight of the traffic causes this wet base material to settle or shift, forming a cavity. With nothing under the road surface to support it, the pavement will fall away creating a pothole.

In wet weather, a pothole can form very rapidly, and the deterioration of the pothole will accelerate.

Treating potholes

Pothole repairs, known as pothole patching, are undertaken to ensure the roadway remains safe and fit for purpose. Council carries out pothole patching proactively as part of routine maintenance, as well as reactively including during wet weather events.

During wet weather, a specially formulated cold mix is used to provide a longer lasting temporary repair. These types of repairs are designed to ensure it is kept safe for traffic until such time as a more permanent restoration or resurfacing can occur.

Council's Road Maintenance staff carry out proactive inspections of road pavement in a cyclic schedule every three months, resources permitting. As part of these inspections any defects, including potholes, are recorded with an appropriate action undertaken to schedule maintenance works. The timing for undertaking works to address these identified defects is assessed on a risk basis.

On average, Council repairs around 60,000 potholes per year

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Council uses a variety of industry standard techniques to repair potholes and minor road failures in the roadway. Techniques are selected having regards to the availability of materials, the response time, the severity of the pothole and accompanying risk, the weather, the volume and speed of traffic, and the number and location of the potholes within the traffic lanes.

A variety of materials are also used such as asphaltic concrete (hotmix), coldmix, bitumen emulsion, and aggregate spray (known as a Jetpatcher).



Reporting a Pothole to Council

Council manages over 2,000 km of road network. Whilst we proactively inspect the road pavement to identify any defects, we encourage our residents and visitors to report any potholes and other safety concerns to Council. You can easily and quickly lodge these at any time through Council's online [Customer](#)

[Service Centre](#) (which is also accessible through Council's website centralcoast.nsw.gov.au). Lodging this way provides you with a reference so you can track your request's progress or receive updates regarding your request.

Community reporting of potholes is particularly important during weather events where potholes can spontaneously appear, and the number of potholes can greatly increase.

The reporting of any issues directly to Council also assists in scheduling maintenance in a timely manner.

Pothole prevention

Works to prevent potholes can commence when cracking occurs in the road pavement. The pavement is sealed to keep moisture and water from seeping through the cracks into the base material to both keep potholes from forming, and also extend the asset life of the road surface.

Extreme weather events or persistent rain can cause more potholes to appear a lot more quickly than usual. Under these circumstances, it can be difficult for Council staff to prevent potholes from occurring. Approximately three times more potholes are formed during periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall.

Works are carried out under Council's Road Renewal Programs and treatments can include

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preservation sealing, heavy patch, resurfacing and reconstruction. There are limited renewal funds to undertake this type of work.

Renewal projects are identified based on detailed road condition data, traffic volumes and asset life costs through the use of a pavement management system. A pavement management system is used to model the road network and produce an optimised road renewal program with appropriate treatments based on available funds.

Related resources

- [Council's annual Capital Works online interactive map \(includes roads and drainage capital works program\) – centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](#)

Ask us a question

Please contact us through Council's online [Customer Service Centre](#) (which is also accessible through Council's website [centralcoast.nsw.gov.au](#)) or by calling Customer Service on 4306 7900.