



LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL

10. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Policy 10.17

FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Version 2

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- OBJECTIVES:**
1. To provide safe access for pedestrians and other users of Council's footpaths.
 2. To develop a priority for repairs.
 3. To develop procedures for the reporting of injuries caused by tripping on footpaths and requests for repairs to damaged footpath.
 4. To develop a system for recording and reporting on the condition of Council's footpaths and reported injuries.

POLICY:

Preamble

The main concern with lifting or damaged footpaths is the danger that it presents to the pedestrians. Footpaths may deviate from their original constructed level for a variety of reasons including tree roots, openings in the footpath caused by public utility authorities or tradespeople, vehicular movements and soil reactivity. In general terms, footpaths that are not subjected to any of the above conditions can remain in a serviceable condition for a significant period without the need for replacement.

Issues

There are a number of potential methods of bringing potentially dangerous footpath conditions to Council's notice to allow the implementation of remedial action. These include:

Inspections – upon adoption of an Asset Management system an inspection regime will be implemented in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Asset Management Plan.

Works requests from the public – when members of the public report trip hazards or injuries allegedly pertaining to raised sections of footpaths, the relevant Council Officer records the information on the appropriate form. These requests are treated promptly with action to be taken as soon as possible to make the area safe until repairs can be made.

Works orders from staff - when staff identify any potentially dangerous section of footpath they are required to notify the responsible officer to carry out repairs. The work is then to be completed by Operations staff as soon as practicable.

Authorised openings - both public utility authorities and tradespeople are required to carry out footpath and road openings from time to time when new cables are to be laid or connections are made to service mains. The person responsible is required to complete the appropriate forms and pay any required deposit/fees.

The authority or tradesperson will be required to reinstate the footpath to its original condition or pay Council to undertake the works. Should the restoration works not be undertaken by Council any bond shall not be refunded until such time as Council's appropriate officer is satisfied with the standard of repairs.

Evaluation

The evaluation process for footpaths relates to the risk management processes. The two main criteria for evaluation are severity of the damage and the frequency of use. There are three categories relating to the severity of the damage to a footpath and three categories relating to frequency of use.

The severity categories are based on the height of the trip hazard between consecutive footpath slabs.

The three categories are:

1. Displacements greater than 50mm.
2. Displacements between 20mm to 50mm.
3. Displacements less than 20mm.

Categories 1 and 2 would normally require removal and replacement techniques, whereas category 3 sites may be able to be ground down using a concrete grinding machine.

The frequency of use categories are based on pedestrian usage and consideration is also given to the type of users.

The three categories are:

- High pedestrian usage – eg. In the vicinity of shopping centres and railway stations (For example, Main Street Lithgow would be considered high pedestrian usage and Railway Parade, in the vicinity of the rail interchange).
- Medium pedestrian usage – eg. Around schools, nursing homes and aged care facilities.
- Low usage – general local residential streets without schools and nursing homes.

When evaluating trip hazards the following factors require consideration:

What is the size of the trip hazard?

What is the likely cause?

Is the footpath frequently used?

Where is the footpath problem located?

What is the lighting like?

Is the surface slippery and to what degree?

The table below is used when identifying the priority of the repair to the trip hazard site.

Trip Size	Frequency of Use			Lighting
	High	Medium	Low	
> 50mm	1	4	7	Poor
20mm – 50mm	2	5	8	Fair
< 20mm	3	6	9	Good

Priority 1 trip hazard sites are the ones likely to be of highest risk and require highest attention and action. Whereas, Priority 9 trip hazard sites are of lower priority and can be attended to at a later time after all other areas have been completed, subject to funds being available.

Controls

Following identification and evaluation of the trip hazard sites, it is necessary to establish control mechanisms for dealing with high to low risk trip hazard sites. Also, controls need to be established when dealing with complaints from the public, service requests from staff and authorised openings. These sites generally represent a potential danger and can be either made safe by the erection of barricades and lighting, or temporarily repaired until permanent repairs can be affected.

It is intended that with a pro-active approach to repairing surveyed trip hazard sites, the amount of complaints and service requests will reduce. However, there needs to be sufficient funds available each year to repair sites which have recorded complaints or service requests.

Authorised openings can be restored on a programmed basis and deposit funds are sufficient to cover the costs of restoration. Requirements for temporary restoration of authorised openings usually render the site safe until permanent repairs can be carried out.

With complaints from members of the public relating to notified trip hazards or falls, the matter is usually reported to Council's Customer Service Unit in the first instance and then forwarded to Council's Risk Management Co-ordinator. The Risk Management Co-ordinator is then required to notify the Maintenance Supervisor advising of the location of the site. Complaints or Service Requests relating to Priority 1 to 3 sites should be made temporarily safe within 24 hours by the erection of barricades until permanent repairs can be completed. Permanent repairs should be completed within three weeks of the notification.

Priority 4 to 5, sites should be made temporarily safe within 48 hours and permanently repaired within six weeks of the notification.

For Priority 6 to 9 sites consideration needs to be given whether action should be taken or as resources permit and temporary measures will only be put in place if considered necessary upon inspection by the Maintenance Supervisor.

A summary of response times for complaints or service requests relating to trip hazards or reported falls can be seen in the table below.

Site Priority	Notification to Maintenance Supervisor	Temporary Measures	Permanent Repairs
1 to 3	4 hours	24 hours	Three weeks
4 to 5	24 hours	48 hours	Six weeks
6 to 9	24 hours	72 hours (if deemed necessary)	As resources permit

Treatments

Tree Growth - as tree roots can cause major footpath problems, it is necessary when repairing sites to try and prevent a continuation of the trip hazard when the roots continue to grow. Consideration also needs to be given to not continue with any further tree planting schemes and just concentrate on removal and replacement programs.

Following excavation of a trip hazard site caused by tree roots pushing up the footpath, the Recreation Supervisor inspects the site to determine if the root can be removed without causing the tree to ultimately die or cause the tree to be unstable. If the tree root can be removed, the area is excavated to the level of the surrounding footpath and, if feasible, a root barrier installed.

If the tree root cannot be removed and the Recreation Supervisor is of the opinion that the tree is significant in its own right or as part of a theme, then consideration can be given to reconstructing the footpath to provide a "bridging action" as the tree root continues to grow. However, if the tree must be removed it will be replaced (if part of a theme) with a tree of identical species and a root barrier installed unless the General Manager or his delegate is satisfied that a replacement is impractical or unnecessary.

Footpath Slabs With Minor Displacements - where the displacement between footpath slabs is less than 20mm and the slabs are in good condition with no visible signs of cracking, it may be possible to grind the high slab using a concrete grinder until it matches the adjoining slab.

Footpath Slabs Associated With Openings - when utility openings in Council's footpath is required, it may be necessary for the contractors involved to sawcut the edges of the opening to allow for replacement of the concrete footpath or restoration.

Both temporary and permanent restoration should be in accordance with Council's specifications.

Maintained by Department:	Operations	Approved by:	Council		
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