



Highways Wet Spot Policy

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1. Wet spot Definition

Where water is running across the carriageway to a degree, which would result in the significant formation of ice, wash-off of salt, or where there is a substantial amount of water lying/standing on the carriageway that may cause a significant hazard to a road user travelling along the road.

Note:

1. Water running or present in a channel on the side of the road, is not defined as a wet spot.
2. Where there is a major severe weather event and/or significant saturation of surrounding topsoil, it will not be practicable to sign all wet areas of highway. In such circumstances, significant wet spots as identified by the police or reports from officers (including PEM reports that identify any significant issues, where inspected) will be signed as necessary.

2. Winter Service Gritting

When a call for precautionary gritting has been made:

- Ringway Depot Supervisors are to ensure that gritter drivers are aware of current wet spot locations and the need to treat all known wet spots on precautionary routes by applying additional salt at these locations.

Whilst this can have some effect on tracked moisture, it is relatively ineffective if flowing or standing water is present.

- Ice warning signs must, therefore, be placed and maintained during the winter Service period and only removed, if it is clear that the wet spot has been resolved and water no longer creates a hazard as detailed in this policy.
- In exceptional circumstances where no decision is taken to complete a gritting run, individual locations may be treated and signed by the Depots where deemed necessary.
- The Duty Winter Decision Maker may also instruct this action for Depot attention in the decision email distribution at around 13:00 of each day.

3. Wet spots Hierarchy

Where a potential wet spot on the highway is identified (via Highways Inspection, Service Request (e.g. PEM) or another third party, the following prioritised hierarchy of assessment and /or action should take place:

- All identified wet spot locations should be signed with appropriate road signs, as necessary, for ice/flood/slippery road, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Category 1 - Immediate danger and or other significant risk to the public and highways users:

- I. If there is a severe situation identified at a location e.g. burst water mains or significant amount of water running or pooling across the highway. An initial assessment of the reported potential wet spot should take place, as soon as reasonably practicable e.g. within one to three hours. This will include an assessment of risk and ice and / flood or slippery road warning signs should be displayed at appropriate locations to warn motorists of the hazard as a priority, and if required, consideration should be given to road closure if required and putting in place appropriate diversions. The risk assessment must take into account the volume and type of traffic, location and the alternatives for the diversion, for example, is the diversion route on a gritting route and if not, consideration should be given to gritting the diversion route whilst it is in use.
- II. Detailed investigations into the cause of the wet spot should then take place as soon as reasonably practicable to identify mitigation works to either reduce or remove the wet spot recurring in the future. These investigations and subsequent works should be completed, based upon and prioritised around the hierarchy detailed in this policy, and are subject to the level of available staffing and financial resource capacity.

This should be dealt with via the normal reporting process via the Worcestershire Hub, Highways and Transport Control Centre and /or the Highways Out of Hours system.

Category 2 - High speed A roads e.g. dual carriageway with 70 mph speed limit

(Where the wet spot is NOT a Category 1 immediate danger)

- I. An initial assessment of the reported potential wet spot should take place within five working days.
- II. Detailed investigations into the cause of the wet spot should then take place as soon as reasonably practicable to identify mitigation works to either reduce or remove the wet spot recurring in the future, where practicable. These investigations and subsequent works should be completed, based upon and

prioritised around the hierarchy detailed in this policy, and are subject to the level of available staffing and financial resource capacity.

This should be dealt with via the normal reporting process via the Worcestershire Hub, Highways Control Centre and /or the Highways Out of Hours system.

Category 3 - A roads

- I. An initial assessment of the reported potential wet spot should take place within ten working days.
- II. Detailed investigations into the cause of the wet spot should then take place as soon as reasonably practicable to identify mitigation works to either reduce or remove the wet spot recurring in the future where practicable. These investigations and subsequent works should be completed, based upon and prioritised around the hierarchy detailed in this policy, and are subject to the level of available staffing and financial resource capacity.

This should be dealt with via the normal reporting process via the Worcestershire Hub, Highways Control Centre and /or the Highways Out of Hours system.

Category 4 - B roads

- I. An initial assessment of the reported wet spot should take place within fifteen working days.
- II. Detailed investigations into the cause of the wet spot should then take place as soon as reasonably practicable to identify mitigation works to either reduce or remove the wet spot recurring in the future where practicable. These investigations and subsequent works should be completed, based upon and prioritised around the hierarchy detailed in this policy, and are subject to the level of available staffing and financial resource capacity.

This should be dealt with via the normal reporting process via the Worcestershire Hub, Highways Control Centre and /or the Highways Out of Hours system.

Category 5 - Other roads

- I. An initial assessment of the reported wet spot should take place within twenty working days.
- II. Detailed investigations into the cause of the wet spot should then take place as soon as reasonably practicable to identify mitigation works to either reduce or remove the wet spot recurring in the future where practicable. These investigations and subsequent works should be completed, based upon and prioritised around the hierarchy detailed in this policy, and are subject to the level of available staffing and financial resource capacity.

This should be dealt with via the normal reporting process via the Worcestershire Hub, Highways Control Centre and /or the Highways Out of Hours system.

4. Exceptional weather events

Where there has been one or more exceptional weather events such as flood or snow and /or where the surrounding topsoil is saturated, the following should be completed in terms of action taken:

- I. During a severe weather event, we will endeavour to check current identified wet spots to ensure that as appropriate flood/ice/slippy signs are in situ and correctly placed. Any new locations that are identified will be managed on a prioritised basis as detailed according to the above hierarchy. In a situation where the surrounding topsoil is saturated, it may not be practicable to identify and sign all wet spots. The main focus of activity will be managing the severe weather event itself, eg flood/snow and in light of this, the focus should be on current known wet spots and where reasonably practicable, new identified wet spots of significance only.
- II. Following the severe weather event, a countywide schedule of inspections should be organised based on the above hierarchy. These should be reviewed fortnightly to manage the possible large numbers of potential wet spots and the recovery period thereafter (which may extend to a number of months). This schedule of locations to visit and its completion will be subject to change in light of available resources in terms of staffing and the coordination of other priorities at the time, for example, flooding incidents and emergency management.
- III. Where a potential wet spot site has been identified and appears to be run off from adjacent land, an assessment of risk should still take place and Ice/flood and /or Slippery road warning signs should be erected at appropriate locations to warn motorists of the hazard as soon as practicable.
- IV. Once there has been an adequate period of dry weather (this may vary dependent upon the forecast, level of sunny days and wind strength etc). The run-off wet spot site should be re-visited. If the run-off is no longer evident, this should be recorded, two photos of the site taken and the signing removed.
- V. If the run-off is still present, then further investigation should take place to ascertain the cause of the run-off, with agreed actions identified within six weeks of the revisit.

5. Wet spots Register, recording and prioritisation

All wet spot data should be recorded in the relevant Toughbook by an Inspector/Officer and updated where current, into GIS. Once a wet spot is removed, the information should be archived with access to this archive being maintained for future reference.

- I. A Wet spots Register detailing all current wet spots and actions taken or in process, must be kept and reviewed each month outside the Winter Service season and on an ongoing basis during the Winter Service season. This Register should be managed and prioritised based around the categorisation hierarchy detailed in this Policy.

6. Wet spot Monitoring Procedure

Each depot will compile and maintain a detailed list of all wet spots throughout the year. This list shall be reviewed monthly during the non-winter period and weekly during the winter (mid Nov – mid April), at the depot meeting. All wet spots need recording and issuing to the correct team.

The purpose of the list is to identify each problem, give it ownership, find a solution and resolve/mitigate the issue, where practicable. For each identified wet spot, decisions need to be made following a detailed risk assessment. The investigating officer needs to indicate if under freezing conditions that gritting would be effective. The more difficult situations are where running water exists and, therefore, salt will have little or no effect. The options are to sign the hazard or to close the road and set up the appropriate diversion. The risk assessment must take into account the speed, volume, and type of traffic, (Category) the specific location and the alternatives for the diversion. (Is the diversion route on a gritting route?). There will be situations where appropriate signage will be adequate, but each must be risk assessed and all decisions recorded.

The following information will need to be recorded for each wet spot with accompanying photographs:

- Each wet spot should be given a reference number which should be prefixed by either N or S, indicating whether it is on part of the North or South depot network. i.e. S123 which is essential when plotting in GIS.
- Category type: Category 1 to 5 based on the wet spots hierarchy
- Road No If available i.e. A44.
- Location/initial: Written description as detailed as possible, i.e. O/S 108 London Road Worcester with a record initial action taken e.g. signs deployed, road gritted/road closure.

- Grid Ref: OS grid ref for location.
- Date Identified: Date the wet spot was identified by any source i.e. Worcestershire Hub / Highways Control centre / depots.
- Date investigated: Date of investigating officer's site visit.
- Investigated by: Full name of investigating officer.
- Action Log: This is a record of the mitigation works completed e.g. source identified, met with landowner and drainage works completed removing hazard from highway.
- Resolved: Date wet spot removed.