

North Somerset Council Surface Dressing

Surface dressing is undertaken by North Somerset Council as a major part of its on-going, low-cost annual maintenance programme.

It is carried out at this time of year because bitumen and loose chippings bond to the road surface more effectively in warmer weather.

FAQ's

What is surface dressing?

Surface dressing provides added protection to the carriageway surface as well as enhancing the skid resistance, making it safer to drive on.

This added protection extends the life of the carriageway surface by up to 10 years. The process entails spraying the road with bitumen and covering it with stone chippings, after which the road is then rolled, which along with the action of the slow moving traffic, embeds the chippings into the surface.

To complete the process, the excess chippings are then swept up. The first sweep takes place within 48 hours and at least two more sweepings take place within the following 2 weeks.

When will work take place?

Surface dressing is very much dependent on the weather and so our rolling programme needs to be highly flexible. This means that in periods of changeable weather the planned start dates can change several times. To keep people up to date, we will aim to add notices to our roadworks page and erect signs on site before work begins. In periods of good weather we will endeavor to give as much notice of works in advance if we can. You can also follow the works on our Social Media Pages, North Somerset Travel and Roads, where we will provide updates on how the works are progressing.

How long will the work take?

Surface dressing at each site is usually completed within the day, although larger sites may take longer to complete. Sweeping will be completed at given intervals for each site for approximately one week, followed by the replacement of any road markings and cat's eyes.

Will the road need to be closed?

Most of the sites within the programme will require a temporary road closure to complete. Due to the nature of the work there may also be short periods of time when access to properties cannot be maintained. Where there are particular access requirements please speak to the operatives on site who will usually be able to accommodate your needs.

Why is the road not being resurfaced?

Resurfacing is a more extensive maintenance treatment which involves removing layers of a worn out road surface and replacing this with new material. Resurfacing roads can cause increased traffic congestion and is much more expensive and time consuming. Surface dressing and similar treatments allow for roads to be maintained to a safe standard for longer before requiring resurfacing.

Why are there so many loose stone chips?

We purposely lay more chips than required to ensure that the whole surface is covered and we don't end up with bare patches. We leave the loose chips for a short period to be embedded by traffic, after which any surplus chips are swept clear. Advisory speed limit signs are left out for a few days until most of the loose chips have been removed. This is to maintain the safety of the highway user, protect the new dressing and to prevent damage to vehicles. Depending on the weather we may carry out additional sweeping or dusting to minimise the effect on traffic.

How is the damage risk to vehicles minimised?

To protect your vehicle it is important to adhere to the site signage and drive accordingly. Warning signs are erected along with 20mph advisory speed limit signs. As long as these are observed there should be no damage to vehicles. If you would like to make a claim, please make a note of all the details and contact us via the information at the bottom of this page.

Why have the cat's eyes been removed on a particular section of road?

The cat's eyes have been removed in preparation for surface dressing works in the future. Once the dressing has taken place, the road surface has settled and the section has been swept, the cat's eyes will be replaced along with the road markings.

How often is surface dressing required on roads?

This is dependent on a number of factors. Ideally, a new carriageway will be surface dressed around three times at intervals of between eight and 15 years.

How do you determine which roads are surface dressed each year?

A road is chosen for surface dressing following an extensive prioritisation process. The process uses the allocated budget and ranks the roads in order of priority using several different criteria including mechanical surveys, inspections, works records and network importance.

Warning!

- During the early life of the surface dressing;
- The bitumen used can become fluid during warm weather
- Bitumen and chippings could be picked up on footwear, wheelchairs, pushchairs, pets' paws and carried into houses. The removal of bitumen is difficult and may result in permanent marking on your driveway and internal floors or carpets
- Advisory speed restriction signs will be displayed where work is being carried out, to warn motorists about the chippings.
- Drivers are urged to keep to the advisory speed limit to prevent damage to their cars or to the road surface.

More information

Surface dressing is carried out by North Somerset Highways Operations.

If you need to gain access to your property at any time during the surface dressing process, please ask a member of staff on site for assistance.

Every effort will be made to minimise disruption during the surface dressing process. If you need more information or clarification on any of the points above, please call the Customer Service Centre, 01934 888802 or use our online reporting form.

If you would like to report a problem please call the Customer Service Centre, 01934 888802 or email us highwayops@n-somerset.gov.uk