

ANNEX B – Response time categories in detail

Updated 28/01/2026

Category 1E Emergency (4 Hours)

These are extremely hazardous defects that require emergency attention because they pose an immediate danger to highway users. Examples of this type of defect are missing inspection chamber covers; carriageway collapses and knocked down bollards across the footway or into the carriageway. In many instances the defect or hazard will be such that the inspector will need to remain at the location to warn highway users or place signs and cones until a repair team can attend to make safe or repair. The highway inspector should immediately notify via telephone the appropriate repairing team, record the defect on the HAMS system, and wait until emergency assistance arrives. If appropriate and practicable use a vehicle to cover or guard the defect ensuring that hazard lights and beacons are activated. The response time for a repair team to attend the defect and either make safe or repair is 4 hours from notification by the highway inspector. If reported by a member of the public (subject to the criteria in annex H) the response time for a repair team to attend the defect and either make safe or repair is 4 hours from notification to the customer access centre or the 101 service if out of hours.

Category 1U Urgent (2 Days)

These are defects that require urgent attention because they pose an imminent risk to highway users or because there is a risk of rapid deterioration that would cause the defect to become a Category 1E defect. The highway inspector should first record the defect on the HAMS system and then notify the repair team via telephone of the presence of the defect and request it to be made safe or repaired. A temporary action or permanent repair should be undertaken within 2 working days of being recorded by the inspector. Public reported defects (subject to the criteria in annex H) requiring urgent attention within working hours should be made safe or repaired within 2 working days of being reported. Urgent defects reported by the public out of hours will be made safe or repaired within 2 working days starting on the next working day.

Category 2C (5 Days)

Category 2C defects are those which are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent hazard. They are categorised according to their likely impact and risk probability. The inspector will record these defects on the HAMS system and the repair or making safe will take place within 5 working days of being recorded by the inspector or of being reported out of hours via the 101 service or recorded in the HAMS system via a report by a member of the public (subject to the validation criteria in annex H in the latter cases);

Category 2E (20 Days)

Category 2E defects are those which are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent hazard. They are categorised according to their likely impact and risk probability. The inspector will record these defects on the HAMS system and the repair will take place within 20 working days of being recorded by the inspector or if it has been reported out of hours via the 101 service or recorded in the HAMS system via a report by a member of the public (subject to the validation criteria in annex H in the latter cases);

Category NOTIFY

There is no response time set for this category. This is used for hazards or defects that will be dealt with either outside of the Highway Safety Inspection policy or actioned by a 3rd party.