

# **POLICY ON THE USE OF TEMPORARY TRENCH COVER SYSTEMS ON THE HIGHWAY IN HAMPSHIRE**

## **1 General**

Rapid permanent or temporary reinstatement in accordance with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in the Highway (SROH) is the preferred approach to utility works on the highway in Hampshire. It is accepted however that this may not be possible every time and it may be necessary to leave some excavations open for a limited period. Clearly, leaving traffic/pedestrian management arrangements in place is disruptive and with this in mind the appropriate use of proprietary trench cover systems is allowed (and indeed encouraged, where appropriate) to reduce delays to traffic and or pedestrians, subject to compliance with the policy set out below.

## **2 Risk Assessment**

This policy sets out the fundamental issues to be addressed when considering the use of proprietary trench cover systems as temporary cover to openings in the highway. However, addressing these fundamentals does not in itself guarantee that a trench cover system would be safe under any given circumstances and the use of such systems is entirely at the risk of the Works Promoter. Accordingly each use must be subject to a suitable and sufficient site specific risk assessment by the Works Promoter considering, at least, the factors set out below;

## **3 Specific requirements for use of Trench Cover Systems on carriageways.**

3.1 Only purpose-made proprietary trench cover systems designed for use in the carriageway and holding certification for the anticipated maximum wheel loads will be permitted. The use of Boiler Plate not designed specifically to cover road openings is not permitted on any carriageway in Hampshire.

3.2 The surface elements of trench cover systems used to cover openings in a carriageway shall have a minimum skid resistance value ( SRV ) as measured by the Stanley Pendulum portable skid resistance tester of 55 where laid perpendicular to the direction of traffic or 65 where laid at an angle.

3.3 The surface elements of trench cover systems shall be of a conspicuous colour ( preferably yellow ) so they are easily identifiable by road users

3.4 Trench cover systems may only be used to cover openings with a span less than the maximum span permitted for the specific system concerned.

## **4 Specific requirements for use of Trench Cover Systems on footways.**

4.1 Unless protected by some physical barrier, cover systems used on footways immediately adjacent to the carriageway shall be to the same specification as carriageway systems to accommodate potential over-riding.

4.2 Where footways are remote from the carriageway or protected from over-riding in some other way then purpose-made proprietary trench cover systems designed and certificated for use in the footway will be permitted. The use of Boiler Plate not designed specifically to cover utility openings is not permitted on any footway in Hampshire.

4.3 The surface elements of footway trench cover systems shall have a minimum skid resistance value ( SRV ) as measured by the Stanley Pendulum portable skid resistance tester of 45 on relatively level/little used sites or 55 on sites with a significant gradient/high footfall.

4.4 The surface elements of trench cover systems shall be of a conspicuous colour ( preferably yellow ) so they are easily identifiable by footway users

4.5 Trench cover systems may only be used to cover openings with a span less than the maximum span permitted for the specific system concerned.

4.6 Where footways cross private drives or other accesses then only cover systems appropriate to the crossing traffic shall be used.

4.7 The risk assessment for the use of cover systems on footways must consider the needs of people with disabilities and installations must incorporate specific features to address these needs e.g. wheelchair access ramps where appropriate.

## **5 Location / Fixing**

5.1 Temporary cover systems shall be physically restrained to prevent movement under vehicular or pedestrian traffic as appropriate. This may be by means of some inbuilt proprietary fixing or by pinning to the road/footway surface. Preference should be given to the use of cover systems with conformable edges to minimise traffic noise and the opportunity for trips. A fillet of deferred set material around the edge will not be permitted as a fixing method although this may be used as a supplement to the primary fixing system to smooth the transition as necessary where compound slopes are involved.

5.2 Where the sides of the opening are unbound and/or otherwise potentially subject to movement, the sides shall be adequately supported/ braced to prevent collapse under the anticipated traffic loading prior to installation of any cover system.

5.3 Where pins are used for fixing this operation shall be undertaken with pins of appropriate size giving due regard to the potential to hit buried services. All pin holes shall be reinstated to an appropriate standard on removal.

## **6 Limitations as to Use**

6.1 In carriageway situations the risk assessment shall consider the angle of approach with particular attention paid to the hazard posed to bicycles and powered two wheelers. The angle of approach may not vary by more than 30 degrees from the perpendicular to the direction of traffic which is likely to limit the use of temporary cover systems on bends.

6.2 Temporary cover systems shall not be used in areas of heavy braking or tight radii such as the approach to traffic signals or circulatory area of roundabouts or in the turning area of any junction.

6.3 Temporary cover systems may only be used where the speed of traffic is limited to a maximum of 30MPH. On sites not subject to a permanent 30MPH speed limit it may be possible to consider a temporary traffic order, although this would need to be planned well in advance.

6.4 The use of temporary cover systems is not permitted on strategic routes or designated Abnormal Load Routes.

6.5 Temporary cover systems shall not be used on footways where any slope arising would exceed a gradient of 1 in 12.

## **7 Requirements for signing and Guarding**

7.1 Where temporary cover systems are to be used, advanced warning signs, including "RAMP" shall be provided in accordance with the Code of Practice for Safety at Street Works and Road Works ( the Red Book ).

7.2 Where temporary cover systems are to be left in place overnight the risk assessment shall consider the lighting available and the potential need for additional lighting.

7.3 Temporary cover systems and any signing, guarding and lighting provided in association with their use shall be subject to regular ( at least daily ) inspection and maintenance for the whole period the cover system is in place ( including weekends and Bank Holidays ) to ensure site safety is not compromised.

September 2010.