



6 September 2023

Circular RW 16 of 2023

Road Opening Licence Requirements for Concrete Footway Reinstatement

Dear Director of Services

Following engagement by the Utilities and the Local Authorities at the Joint Utility and Local Authority (JULA) Forum the Department has agreed to issue a circular in relation to the Road Opening Licence requirements for Concrete Footway Reinstatements as clarification of what is set out in The Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Second Edition, Rev 1, April 2017).

1. Purpose:

The Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Second Edition, Rev 1, April 2017), 'The Purple Book' or 'The Guidelines', provides detailed reinstatement requirements for various location and surface type scenarios.

The purpose of this document is to build upon the guidance in the Purple Book by setting out a consistent approach for the reinstatement of concrete footways to support and ensure clarity for licence holders and authorities using the Guidelines.

2. Minimising Damage to footways:

Damage to footways can be minimised by:

- Use of trained staff, correct materials and equipment, quality and testing methods including those set out in the Guidelines.
- Ensuring the following in reinstatement of concrete footways:
 - Saw cutting of existing surfaces
 - Ensuring that the existing and reinstated footway is fully supported by correct location of saw cuts
 - Use of correct reinforcement where required
 - Jointing detail between existing and new concrete
 - Expansion / contraction joint details
 - Use of the correct concrete mix



- Suitable weather conditions
- Correct concrete finishing detail to match existing, including surface texture.
- Protection of the fresh concrete
- Locating road openings where they have minimum impact
- Using non-excavation methods where suitable and agreed with the Local Authority.

3. **Clarifications**

The following clarification is made in relation to the Guidelines:

In relation to note 18 of SD12,

- footways will generally not require reinforcement
- Commercial Entrances and locations where heavy wheel loads are evident will require reinforcement.
- Domestic entrances which are not subject to frequent heavy wheel loads will not require reinforcement except where the existing concrete is reinforced.

4. **Minimum Requirements**

The minimum requirements for reinstatement of concrete footways are set out below. Licence holders should consult with the Local Authority roads office in advance of the works to ensure that the proposed reinstatement is appropriate to the condition of the footway and whether or not it is in a protected period.

Utilities should note that licences granted through the MRL system do not normally have site specific conditions and therefore compliance with the Purple Book guidelines and this document is imperative.

The onus is on the licence holder to record details of the pre-works existing footway condition and to ensure that such records are uploaded on MRL prior to commencement of road opening works to ensure that the LA inspector and the approved certifier have the information available to them when they are on site during or post works.



4.1 Transverse openings:

Transverse openings are the most common trench type and the following minimum requirement apply to reinstatements:

- Typically, concrete bays are approximately 3.0m in length. Wherever possible new excavations should be located at one end of a concrete bay.
- Any sawcut shall have a minimum cut back (step detail) of 150mm as per Standard Drawing SD12 in the Guidelines.
- Concrete shall have a minimum reinstated width of 1 metre wide and shall extend across the entire footway.
- Where the distance to a bay joint is less than 1m the reinstatement shall extend to the bay joint.
- Where a concrete bay is less than 3.0m the reinstated area must extend as far as an existing concrete construction joint. This results in a maximum of one saw cut in the footway.
- Where a concrete bay is significantly longer than 3.0m and there is no existing joint, two saw cuts will be permitted and the length of footway reinstatement should be agreed with the Local Authority in advance. Details of the agreement should be recorded on MRL by the licence holder / LA to ensure that the LA inspector and Approved Certifier have the required information.
- The saw cut joint must be a minimum of 1 metre from existing joints, cracks, or ironmongery in the footway. This may require the width of the reinstated area to be extended beyond any existing crack, construction joint or existing road opening reinstatement.

4.2 Longitudinal openings:

Longitudinal openings regularly contribute to the failure of footways as they cause the footway to lose its raft effect. The minimum reinstatement requirements for longitudinal openings are:

- The trench reinstatement width and details must be a minimum of that set out in SD12 of the Guidelines.
- If the opening is carried out on the inside of the footway:
 - There must be a maximum of one straight longitudinal cut joint in the footway.



- The minimum cut back (step detail) of 150mm shall apply as per Standard Drawing SD12 in the Guidelines.
- There must be a minimum of 1 metre of existing intact concrete slab between the saw cut and the back of kerb or road edge where there is no kerb.
- Full bay reinstatement is required where the reinstated area is less than 1 metre from the road edge or back of kerb.

4.3 One-Off Small Openings:

This scenario is intended to facilitate utilities in addressing one-off situations arising and does not apply to projects or schemes which require multiple replacements or installations. Such instances will require consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Small openings are those typically required for installing or repairing Boundary Boxes, "Toby" Boxes, valve covers, service leaks or bar-holing for leak detection.

Such openings typically require an area of approximately 250x250mm and result in a reinstated dimension of 600mmx600mm and:

- Backfill material in small openings must be compacted using a hand tamper/rammer and licence holders should normally use cement bound backfill to prevent future settlement.
- The edges of the reinstated area must be parallel with the footway and the following dimensions apply:
 - Where the reinstatement surrounds a new or existing cover or frame there shall be a minimum dimension of 200mm between the frame and the reinstated edge. The maximum reinstated dimensions are therefore 650mm x 650mm.
 - The frame shall be placed centrally in the reinstatement and parallel to the reinstated edges.
 - The edges of the reinstated area should be aligned as follows:
 - The reinstated area should be at the inside edge of the footway which is normally adjacent to the curtilage of the private property.



- A minimum 1 metre from the outside edge of the concrete footway. For kerbed footways, this should be measured from the back of the kerb.
- A minimum of 1 metre from the concrete joint and the road or Footway/kerb interface
- The reinstatement must be carried out in accordance with the Guidelines.
- Appropriate measures should be put in place to ensure that undermining of any footpath, road, wall, or other such item does not take place.

4.4 Road openings in trafficked areas of concrete footways:

Due to the traffic loading on driveways/entrances to private, public and commercial properties the likelihood of failures is higher. Where road openings are unavoidable in these locations the following apply:

- Full Bay reinstatement is normally required as far as existing joints within 1.0m of the trafficked area (no new joint shall be within 1.0m of an existing joint).
- The required reinforcement for Commercial entrances should be agreed with the Local Authority in advance of works.
- Repairs / replacement may be carried out to existing ironmongery in the footway subject to the required areas of reinstatement being as set out in this document for transverse, longitudinal and small openings. Any new reinstatement should be tied into existing mesh reinforcement where present.
- Where the concrete bay is recently constructed (For example, less than 10 years), the full bay must be replaced.
- Where the concrete bay has no defects or requires no improvement action the full bay must be replaced.
- For all other footway conditions, the required areas of reinstatement are as set out in this document for transverse, longitudinal and small openings.
- A relaxation to the requirement for full bay reinstatement may be granted by the Local Authority in instances where a new entrance has been created across an existing unreinforced footway with resulting structural failure. The utility must agree the reinstatement details with the Local Authority in



advance of the reinstatement works and the agreement documented with the licence on MRL.

4.5 Road openings in footways in the protected period with no openings or defects:

(Photographs are provided in Appendix 1 to assist in assessment of footway condition)

- Full bay reinstatement must be carried out for footways that are either less than 10 years old or have no current defects.
- The age of footways or sections of footways must be verified by the licence applicant with the Local Authority in advance of reinstatement and should be determined during the licensing process where possible.
- Where there is existing surface damage, cracking, or settlement to footways in the protected period, the utility must discuss this with the Local Authority to agree on the final reinstatement area in advance of completion of reinstatement.
- The onus is on the licence holder to retain photographic evidence of the existing footway condition and to ensure that photographs are uploaded to MRL as proof of the pre-works condition. These photographs will be required by both the approved certifier and the Local Authority and should be uploaded to MRL prior to reinstatement.
- In the case of one-off openings for the repair or replacement of existing covers, frames or ironmongery in the footway, a relaxation to this requirement may be agreed by the Local Authority and the Utility. Utilities should engage with the Local Authority in advance of the works in such cases.

Any queries in relation to this circular should be addressed to the Roads Management Office (RMO) at contact@rmo.ie.

Yours sincerely

Higher Executive Officer
Compliance and Technical Section
Regional & Local Roads Division



Appendix 1

Sample photographs of footway condition

Examples of concrete footways in the protected period or those that have no current defects and require no Local Authority improvement action.

Road openings in these footways normally require full bay reinstatement.





Examples of concrete footways that have current defects
Road openings in these footways normally do not require full bay reinstatement.

