



What you **need** to **know** about...

Frost and the Road

maintaining our roads

There are approximately 5000 km of roads within the Southland District Council network: 2000 km sealed, 3000 km unsealed, including over 960 bridges, with 27 townships & a growing population (28,440 as per 2006 Census) who use these roads.

With an annual Roading Budget of over \$23M it is our aim to keep the roads maintained to an acceptable standard and are always looking at ways to improve the network as an asset for the community while keeping to an ever tightening budget.

As part of our Safety Management Plan it is one of our key objectives to ensure the safety of our roadusers by minimising the adverse effects of weather on road users, including Frost and Extreme Ice.

Problems that arise

Late winter and early spring see's many fine, crisp, beautiful days that are usually preceded by hearty frosts. Unfortunately excessive and consecutive frosts often result in some real damage and real potential for danger.

Consecutive frosts and low temperatures throughout the day cause what is commonly called a "perma frost", where the previous days frost is unable to thaw as temperatures during the day do not reach a point that begins the thawing process and then overnight plummeting temperatures result in another frost, compounding the issue.

Frost Heave and Soft Spots on Unsealed Roads - These frosts cause the material under the road surface to remain frozen and any rain or moisture sits on or near the surface becoming water logged, effectively turning the fine top layer of material into slush. When vehicles unwittingly drive over these soft spots it can literally 'heave' the road material out from under the wheels.

What can we all do?

Unfortunately extreme weather conditions are outside anyone's control and frosts are a part of life in the Southland region, but small steps can keep us safe and minimise the damage to the roads.



In some areas, because of the mountainous terrain that surrounds us, we will always be prone to frosts and ice and therefore unable to prevent any potential risks or hazards relating to it. We can however work to minimise those risks or hazards by:

- Council warning motorists of adverse and/or extreme weather conditions by informing radio, media, AA and emergency services.
- Permanent advanced warning signs installed at known isolated sections of road where ice occurs.
- Cutting back overhanging or oversized vegetation that is shading the road surface.
- Asking the public to notify Council if they come across or identify any problems.

**Contact our Customer Services
on 0800 732 732 if you have a concern about the
state of any of our roads, sealed or unsealed,
or if you come across a mess.**

top tips

Three simple tips for driving when there is frost and/or ice:

1. Stay alert and be aware that the frost will be a factor until completely thawed.
2. Caution when driving and where possible try to avoid any known risk areas.
3. Gritting does not make the road completely safe, it is only a temporary measure.



If you would like to learn more about Roadings other "Need to Know" sheets you can find them on our website: www.southlanddc.govt.nz

Frost and the Road...

