

DS.207 Tactile surfaces

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1 Introduction

1.1 Notes

- a. This standard explains requirements about the use and design of tactile surfaces within streets and spaces.
- b. See the SSDM webpages at www.southwark.gov.uk/ssdm about the design of streets and spaces.

1.2 Discussion

- a. Tactile surfaces are used to communicate information about the environment to blind and partially sighted pedestrians. This can be critical to their safety, confidence and independence. The most common use of tactile surfacing is to define the edge of the footway (or other safe space for pedestrians) at Formal Crossings where kerb steps are absent. However, tactile surfaces may also be needed in a range of other circumstances too.
- b. Whatever the type of tactile surface it will typically include two elements.
 - i. A tactile component consisting of a standardised raised patterned surface. This allows users to feel information through the soles of their shoes or with other aids. National guidance suggests different patterns for different purposes.
 - ii. A visual contrast element that distinguishes the surface from neighbouring surfaces. This allows users with residual sight to see information.
- c. It is important that tactile surfaces are provided in a consistent way so that they can be understood by users – no matter how far away they might be visiting a street or space from. To these ends national guidance has been produced.

2 Requirements

2.1 Requirements applicable to all types of tactile surface

2.1.1 Conformance with national guidance

- a. Areas of tactile surfacing should be provided and designed to accord with the national guidance in the current edition of the Department for Transport's 'Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces' except
 - i. the local requirements explained in sections 2.1.2–2.1.4. These are applicable to all types of tactile surface. They take precedence over the guidance in the above national document
 - ii. the further local requirements explained in section 2.2. These are specific to certain types of tactile surface. They take precedence over the guidance in the above document.

2.1.2 Special requirements for departure from this standard

- a. All the requirements of this design standard are considered to be Equalities Sensitive. Therefore, any departure from this standard requires EqS Departure.

2.1.3 Size of tactile units

- a. If slab or flag paving units are used to footways (or other non-carriageway areas) then tactile surfaces should be composed of paving flags or slabs with a plan form of 400 x 400mm or greater. To avoid laying complexity, the depth of units should not exceed ± 10 mm that of those used to the interfacing footway surface and should ideally be equal.
- b. Where small unit pavers (e.g. precast concrete blocks or clay pavers) are used to footways (or other non-carriageway areas) then smaller tactile units of a scale comparable to the paving unit should be used to reduce their visual impact. To avoid laying complexity the depth of units should not exceed ± 10 mm that of those

used to the interfacing footway surface and should ideally be equal.

2.1.4 Colour and material used for units

- a. Except where permitted as 'b' all tactile surfaces within a given SSDM/RP designation should be the same colour. This is irrespective of the feature they relate to and whether this is Controlled or Uncontrolled. However, they should contrast clearly with neighbouring footway surfaces in both wet and dry conditions. This may be through either colour or tone (see notes 1 and 2). Designers and approving officers should use their judgement in developing and assessing the suitability of proposals (see note 2). However, where any doubt exists this should be considered through an Accessibility Audit of the proposals (see note 3).

NOTE 1: This variation from the national guidance referenced in section 2.1.1 is considered to be reasonable since it achieves the same ends as the guidance. These are broadly to retain a visual distinction between tactile surfacing of any type and the surrounding surfacing and a further distinction between tactile surfacing for Controlled and Uncontrolled crossings. The first of these objectives is obviously achieved. The second will be achieved by the presence of a leg to the main tactile waiting area. As per the requirements of the national guidance this is required in all instances to controlled crossings but should not be provided to uncontrolled crossings. These leg requirements remain un-amended.

NOTE 2: This contrast should be achieved by making the neighbouring surfaces Visually Distinct from each another as defined in standard DS.219.

- b. As an exception from 'a', in World Centre and Heritage SSDM/RP designations, the appearance of any blister tactile surfacing used to Uncontrolled Formal Crossings should match that of the interfacing footway surface (see note 1). All other requirements in these designations remain the same as in 'a'.

NOTE 1: Whereas the national guidance referenced in section 2.1.1 advises that lack of contrast should only be acceptable within conservation areas (which form the basis of Heritage Specification Areas) it is considered that extending this principle to World Centre Specification Areas is reasonable. This is because the main reason for permitting this within the guidance is likely to be the concern to reduce the visual impact from contrasting paving in an area of special amenity value. World Centre Specification Areas are considered to be of similarly high amenity value. In addition, much of that Specification Area also consists of fragmented (though closely located) conservation area designations. In order to maintain consistency it is considered to be sensible to employ the same approach to use of tactile surfacing to all streets in the area.

- c. Where areas of tactile surfacing overlap service covers then these should be upgraded to recess tray covers and frames that can be inlaid with the tactile surface. See standard DS.122 for further information.

2.2 Requirements applicable to specific types of tactile surface

NOTE: Whilst tactile surfaces are otherwise required to be provided in accordance with the requirements of national guidance (see section) 2.1.1 the following local requirements for specific types of surfacing take precedence over any conflicting aspects. See also sections 2.1.2-2.1.4 for further local requirements that apply to all types of tactile surface.

2.2.1 Blister surfacing

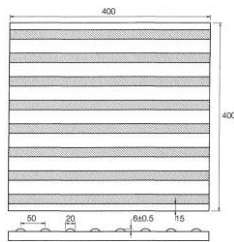
- a. Blister surfacing should be provided at all Formal Crossings for pedestrians, irrespective of whether these are Controlled or Uncontrolled. If those crossing routes pass through Traffic Islands then it should normally be provided to these also, though this may not always be the case (see standard DS.113 for further details).



- b. At Vehicle Crossings, blister surfacing should only be provided where these are 'frequent use' (as defined in standard DS.132).
- c. The overall length along the carriageway edge of the area of blister surfacing should be $\geq 1.2\text{m}$ but $\leq 4.4\text{m}$. Subject to level 1 departure this may be extended to a maximum of 5.6m. It must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of approving officers that this will not
 - i. pose a safety or legibility risk to blind or partially sighted pedestrians
 - ii. result in negative visual impact and clutter due to the increase in the area of colour contrast surfacing.
- d. See standard DS.206 about permitted set-backs from junction spaces of Controlled and Uncontrolled Formal Crossings. This will dictate whether the depth of blister tactile surfacing required for associated waiting areas will be 800mm or 1200mm.

2.2.2 Corduroy surfacing

- a. Corduroy paving should be provided
 - i. to the top or base of flights of steps or significant changes in level
 - ii. In association with sections of 'shared use' cycle track
 Application should be as described in the national guidance referenced in section 2.2.1.



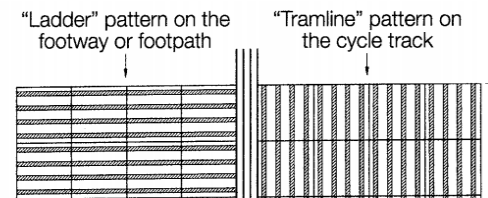
- b. In addition, corduroy surfacing should be provided to the base of potential stumbling or trip hazards where use is required within other design standards or instructed by approving officers.
- c. Corduroy surfacing should not be used to delineate the edge of the carriageway in the absence of an upstand kerb step.

NOTE: Whilst this has been piloted in some locations around the country (including some

places in Southwark) using the surface in this way has not yet been adopted within national guidance whilst there is not yet sufficient evidence or support from vulnerable user groups to confirm its suitability as a standard design measure. It is also problematic in other respects, such as its impact on drainage and the extent to which it discourages vehicle overrun of pavement surfaces.

2.2.3 Ladder and tramline surfacing

- a. Ladder and tramline surfacing should be provided only in association with sections of 'shared use' or 'adjacent use' Cycle Track. Application should be as described in the national guidance referenced in section 2.1.1 except that
 - i. the depth of tramline or ladder paving (measured along the cycle track or footway) should be 1200mm to terminal instances, and 800mm for repeater instances between these (see note)
 - ii. repeater instances are not required at any particular spacing but should be introduced at points of potential confusion for users (see note). Approving officers have discretion to instruct that repeaters are provided at specific locations.



NOTE: Whilst these depths are less than those recommend in the national guidance referenced in section 2.1.1, having considered these, the Highway Authority reasons that they are excessive and that the tactile message could be conveyed in a briefer length more in keeping with that recommended in the document for other types of surfaces. This will also help reduce adverse impact on arthritis sufferers who frequently find tactile surfaces painful to negotiate.

2.2.4 Other types of tactile surface

- a. No other type of tactile surfacing should be used unless instructed by approving officers.