



Media Release

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Thawing of Gravel Roads

While it's great to see the warmer sunny days, the thawing of gravel roads is causing headaches for residents in Central Otago.

This is known as freeze/thaw, and as the roads thaw the water and clay in the pavement rises and causes the thawed surface to become soft and slippery. The solution to this is to use cleaner gravel on our gravel roads, which in turn causes roads to become corrugated and have a loose surface for the remainder of the year.

Central Otago Roding Manager Julie Muir advises "The climate in Central Otago provides one of the most challenging environments for providing good gravel roads. The essential ingredients for a good road in dry conditions are the opposite to what is required for a good gravel road during wet or freeze/thaw periods. Generally our weather is consistently dry and we aim for good roads for 49 weeks of the year, and ask people to be patient during this relatively short period while the roads are thawing and drying out.

To stay safe during this period, people will need to take it easy on the gravel roads, and keep their speed down. Adjoining landowners can help speed the thawing process up by keeping trees cut back so they don't shade the roads."

Many of the roads where this is a problem will be re-gravelled before next winter. Where the freeze/thaw issue is causing accessibility problems then we can spread some clean gravel, but this is will only provide a very short term improvement and is a last resort. What we really need is a good warm wind to dry things out quickly"

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