

Grates, Plates, Trenches and Potholes



Utility covers are ground smooth over the years and become more slippery.

The streets of San Francisco are under nearly-constant repair. The resultant steel plates, open trenches, and asphalt patch-work add obstacles to the existing tapestry of metal utility covers, sewer drain grates, and BART/Muni ventilation grates. Potholes and broken pavement can also require your full attention. Metal utility covers can be also be slippery and often make for a rough ride. All of these potential obstacles require your attention and care in navigation.

Potholes and broken pavement should be reported to DPW Street Repair at 695-2100.



This drain grate is aligned to prevent trapping bicycle wheels.

DRAINAGE GRATES should be avoided if aligned incorrectly, so bicycle tires can fall between the bars. In the 1990's Peter Tannen, former Bicycle Program Manager, rode every street within the City limits and had every misaligned drain grate replaced or retrofitted. For this Herculean task Tannen was recognized by the California Bicycle Safety Network, and his efforts ensure that one less common obstacle plagues San Francisco bicyclists.



A misaligned drain grate can trap a bicycle wheel.



BART grates and Muni tracks present issues for bicyclists.

It requires skill and balance to safely ride across the **BART/MUNI VENTILATION GRATES**, and it is advisable to avoid them even in dry conditions. When wet they are especially slippery. After the construction of the Muni Metro and BART underground systems, the local bicycle messenger community dubbed these grates “The Cheese Graters” after witnessing cyclists crash on them. You will find these large grates on Market and Mission Streets. Be prepared.

The **HEAVY STEEL CONSTRUCTION PLATES** used to cover trenches and other roadway construction are required by City Code to have non-skid surfaces. Unfortunately, sometimes the non-skid coating wears off, or old smooth plates are used. Without a non-skid coating these plates are slippery and can be hard to negotiate. All street trenching work must be patched and/or ramped every day – no abrupt edges of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch or more may be left overnight. **Report any smooth plating or open trenches you encounter to the Department of Public Works’(DPW) Street Construction Coordination Center at 554-SCCC (7222).**



This construction plate lacks required non-skid coating.