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NO-GO ZONE. A sinkhole on Snake Valley Road in Valhalla, Centurion, this week. Picture: Neil McCartney

Another sinkhole in Centurion

SNAKE ROAD CLOSES: REHABILITATION IS LONG PROCESS

➤ **Extends across road affecting all four lanes, metro police say.**

Marizka Coetzer

Another sinkhole developed in Centurion this week, not far from where the massive sinkhole on the N1 South close to Botha Avenue formed earlier this year.

The sinkhole that developed on the side of the N1 highway in February caused multiple lanes to be closed.

Tshwane Metro Police Department spokesperson Senior Superintendent Isaac Mahamba warned that Snake Valley Road, where the sinkhole is, is unsafe for motorists and pedestrians.

"The city urges all members of the public around the Valhalla area to exercise caution in the area and map alternative routes during daily travels," he said.

Mahamba said motorists should avoid using the Snake Valley Road (M24) between Old Johannesburg (R101) and Fjord roads.

"The above-mentioned part of the road has been closed after large cracks were noticed on the road on 27 October.

"At first, only one lane of the road was affected but it later extended across the [highway] to affect all four lanes," he said.

Mahamba said by 29 October,

the affected area was classified as a sinkhole after it increased in size and depth.

"The sinkhole-affected area extends from inside the military property, across the road and up to the verge on the southern side," he said.

Ward councillor in the affected area Ina Strijdom said an investigation was under way to determine the size of the sinkhole.

"We suspect it's from a water leak inside the Tshwane military base.

"Because the sinkhole is on military grounds, it is up to the department of public works to repair the hole," she said.

"There are three sinkholes in Valhalla and the sinkhole in Thabane Tshwane on Stephanus Schoeman Road, which a car drove into a few years ago," Strijdom said.

Councillor Johan van Buuren said Centurion was full of dolomite which was the cause of the more than 30 sinkholes in the area.

Van Buuren said some of the sinkholes were on municipal

land, while others were on provincial or national land, meaning different departments were responsible for repairs.

He said the rehabilitation of a sinkhole was a long process considering the time needed for it to stabilise, evaluation of its size and what could be done to repair the sinkhole before putting out for tenders for the actual rehabilitation.

"There are currently five sinkholes in my ward of which one is about 90% repaired," he said.

Van Buuren said the rehabilitation of the sinkhole on Dan Pienaar Road started last year in February. "They are still busy with it," he said.

Other sinkholes that have appeared are on the corner of Clifton Avenue and Potgieter Street and on Kruger Avenue in Lyttelton Manor, in Irene, on the corner of Alexandra Road and Queen Street.

The SA National Roads Agency did not respond to questions about progress on the rehabilitation of the N1 sinkhole.

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info

What are sinkholes?

- ▶ Springs and other bodies of water can contribute to the forming of sinkholes. Sinkholes are nearly impossible to predict.
- ▶ They can form when rain and floodwaters brought by storms start to recede. Failure of pipes can cause depressions.

- ▶ The three major types of sinkholes known are: solution, cover collapse and cover subsidence.
- ▶ Solution sinkholes are most commonly seen in areas that have a very thin cover of soil on the surface, exposing the bedrock below to continual erosion by water.