

## INDOT Tackles Annual Pothole Problem

There are some things that you can always count on in Indiana: The roar of the crowd at a high school basketball game, the whine of Indy cars in May, and driver complaints about potholes on state highways.

INDOT this year is again taking a proactive approach in tackling the annual pothole scourge. This approach requires the attention of highway technicians and road crew members statewide, who are urged to be on the lookout for potholes that pose a danger to motorists and need to be repaired.

“Rather than waiting for motorists to complain about potholes, we should actively work to identify and fix them before they become a traffic hazard,” said Pavement Maintenance Engineer Clint Bryant. “Each of our road crew employees should keep an eye out for problems like potholes that are a major irritation for motorists. Nothing enhances our reputation more than fixing a problem with our roads before it becomes a problem for drivers.”

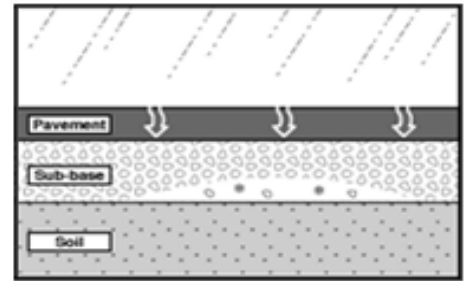
Potholes form when water seeps into cracks on the roadway, freezes and then thaws. This process, combined with normal highway traffic and snow removal operations, can loosen the pavement. The pounding of passing vehicles over the loosened pavement creates potholes.

As temperatures rise and fall through the winter season, creating freeze and thaw cycles, potholes are more likely to form.

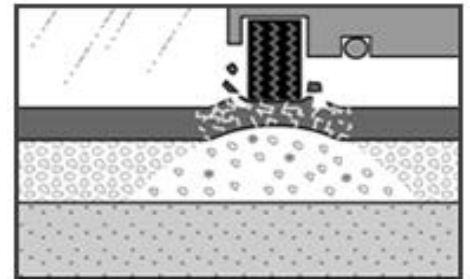
Hitting a pothole can lead to damaged tires, wheels and vehicle suspension components. A State Farm study shows that vehicle repairs from damage caused by a pothole can cost, on average, anywhere from \$300 to \$700. Striking a deep pothole can cause an impact similar to that of a 35-mph car accident.

INDOT recognizes that potholes are an inconvenience to motorists. Between Jan. 1 and Feb. 20, our Customer Service center received 766 complaints about potholes — or 17.6 percent of total inquiries during that time period. In 2016, our Customer Service center received 193 complaints about potholes between Jan. 1 and Feb. 20.

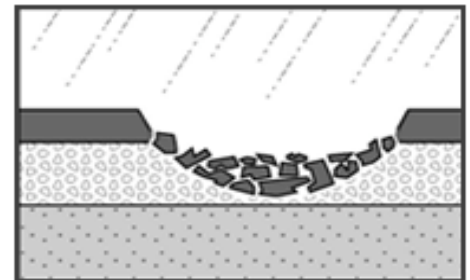
“Potholes are one of the INDOT issues that are most upsetting to motorists,” said Debbie Calder, Crawfordsville District communications director. “No matter how many potholes we repair or fill, they continue to be a byproduct of the Indiana winter — and we’ll continue to make their repair a priority.”



*Water seeps into cracks in the pavement, freezes and expands, straining the pavement on and below the surface.*



*When the ice melts, it leaves gaps inside the pavement. The asphalt cannot support the weight of passing vehicles and begins to break up.*



*As vehicles continue to pass over the weakened spot, pieces of roadway are kicked out, creating a pothole.*

Because winter weather conditions take a larger-than-normal toll on roads, INDOT is dedicated to filling potholes as soon as practicable, especially after snow and ice events.



*Elkhart Subdistrict Highway Technician Kayla Frick tackles a pothole.*

During the winter months, when asphalt plants are closed, a cold mixture is used to temporarily patch holes until a permanent patch can be made in the warmer months. Cold mix is a combination of small stone and liquid asphalt. Even after being filled with cold patch, the same pothole requires ongoing maintenance and can reopen several times throughout the winter.

Once the weather warms up and asphalt plants reopen, INDOT will switch to a more permanent hot mix to fill and fix potholes.

In Fiscal Year 2016, INDOT used more than 13,900 tons of material, dedicated more than 167,000 employee man hours, and spent more than \$6.1 million on pothole repairs.

Drivers can report a pothole on a numbered state route, interstate or U.S. highway by contacting INDOT at (800) 279-5758, or using the [Report a Pothole](#) INDOT website tool.

INDOT also has a video that provides viewers with basic information about how a pothole forms, the steps INDOT takes to fill potholes as soon as possible, and why potholes often require future treatment before being permanently repaired. The video is available on YouTube, the Report a Pothole page, and the [INDOT Video page](#).