



Protecting Your Vehicle against Potholes

- Maintain full air pressure in all tires to provide as much cushion as possible between the pothole and the rim of the tire. Consult the vehicle owner's manual for the correct pressure.
- Watch for potholes by leaving plenty of space between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Alert drivers have plenty of time to avoid potholes. Before swerving around a pothole be sure to check surrounding traffic.
- If a pothole can't be avoided, slow down. Hitting a pothole at high speed increases the chance of damage to tires, wheels, shocks, struts or springs. High speed also increases the chance of losing control of the vehicle, especially if a series of potholes occurs on a curved roadway.
- When driving over a pothole-filled road, hold the steering wheel firmly to avoid losing control.
- Don't brake when directly over a pothole. Applying the brakes causes the car's weight to shift to the front of the wheel and can increase damage from the impact.
- Beware of water that may be concealing a deep pothole.

Potential Dangers of Potholes

A vehicle's encounter with a pothole can be a jarring experience that comes with potential damage to vehicle suspension components and the possibility of costly repairs.

Hitting even one especially severe pothole could alter the alignment of a wheel and cause uneven tire wear. Uneven tire wear means the tire will need to be replaced sooner than necessary causing a needless expense.

A broken shock or strut from a pothole encounter could alter the steering and handling of a vehicle, and create dangers when driving at higher speeds or in tight corners. Broken suspension components should be remedied immediately.

What Causes Potholes?

- Potholes are formed primarily due to infiltration of water into pavements through cracks in the surface. Cold weather causes the water to freeze, creating a bulge in the pavement. When the temperature warms above freezing, the pavement surface returns to its original level. Subsequent freeze-thaw cycles weaken the pavement material and a pothole forms. The process repeats itself during subsequent freeze-thaw cycles and potholes become worse and more numerous (NYS DOT) .
- Heavy traffic also contributes to the creation of new potholes and the worsening of existing ones.

Pothole Damage

Motorists who suspect their vehicle may have been damaged by a pothole should take it to AAA Car Care Plus, a AAA Approved Auto Repair facility, or a certified mechanic where it can be carefully inspected, and serviced if necessary.