

## Harsh Winter Weather Increases Potholes

Roads all across the State not just in Warren have taken a hit from the constant freezing and thawing that the rough winter has brought. For the record potholes are not caused by some form of substandard road construction – and please don't begin to lecture our road crew on the need for better road maintenance. Potholes are nothing more than the abrupt change in ambient road temperature (freeze-thaw-freeze) coupled with the warming rays of the sun.

What causes a pothole?

Water can get under the pavement through cracks or from the side of the road. Over time, the water can cause the material under the pavement to erode, causing pavement to sink down and break. During the winter, the water under the pavement freezes, then thaws, (contracting and expanding). This freeze/ thaw cycle can cause the pavement to crack so that it deteriorates quickly under the weight of traffic, and then streets can seem to break out in potholes overnight. Crews can fill the pothole that day, but with the constant ambient temperature from the freeze-thaw-freeze, water from the frost or rain, causes water to get under the patch and with the excessive traffic, it can reappear the next day.

Winter driving isn't just about traveling safely on snow and ice. It's also about coping with mid-season thaws that cause the road to crumble beneath your tires. Making permanent repairs during the winter is both difficult and expensive; in winter months the Town fills potholes with both cold and hot patch and waits until spring to make permanent repairs with hot asphalt. These temporary repairs are intended to maintain safely and minimize damage to vehicles. Permanent repairs require waiting until the spring thaw.

Warren's highway crew has been out filling them as have other Towns and VTRANS on state highways around the state. With the difficult road conditions throughout this winter, our highway crew has been performing outstandingly through, snow, rain, ice, winter thaws, and soon to come mud season. Below are some tips that may help you through the present conditions.

- Stay a safe distance behind other cars.
- Travel at a safe speed for the road conditions.
- Avoid standing water.
- Pay special attention to your tire pressures. Keeping tire pressure consistently at the manufacturer's recommendation will help protect your vehicle's wheels and tires from being damage from pothole impacts.
- If safe, don't swerve to avoid potholes. Swerving can create a situation where the front wheel and tire on car can impact the edge of the pothole at an obtuse angle, which might do more damage than hitting it squarely.
- If safe, don't brake just because you see a pothole: heavy braking compresses the front suspension of the car and will have a tendency to force the tire and wheel down into the pothole, instead of gliding over.

As with VTRANS, the Town encourages people to drive at a safe speed for any condition that presents a hazard.

