

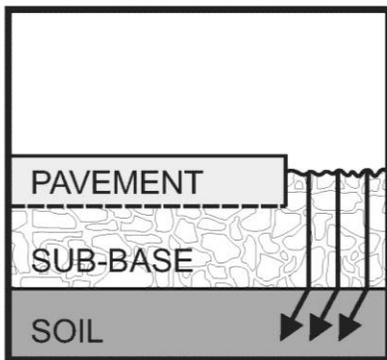


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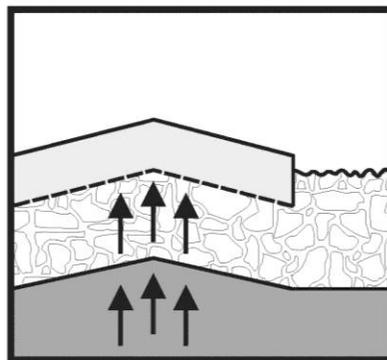
March 2017

Pothole Season

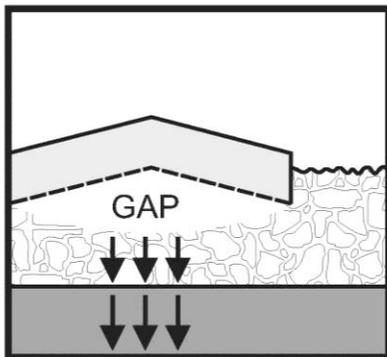
Winter is almost over, but as the warmer weather starts to develop, so do potholes. [So what is a pothole?](#)



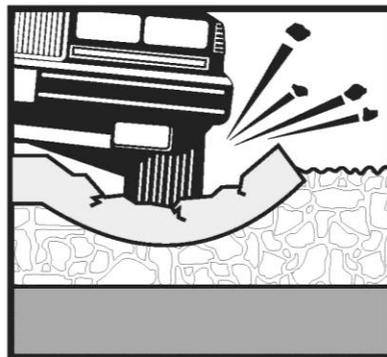
Potholes begin after snow or rain seeps into the soil below the road surface.



The moisture freezes when temperatures drop, causing the ground to expand and push the pavement up.



As temperatures rise, the ground returns to normal level but the pavement often remains raised. This creates a gap between the pavement and the ground below it.



When vehicles drive over this cavity, the pavement surface cracks and falls into the hollow space, leading to the birth of another pothole.

A pothole is a cavity in the road formed by moisture, freeze-thaw cycles, traffic, and time (see illustration). The number of potholes on the 1,362-plus miles of paved county roads and 522 lane miles of state highways maintained by the Road Commission grows larger every year.

Potholes are a major problem in Michigan. The older, deteriorated roads can no longer withstand the constant freeze-thaw climate. As a result, every year, road crews hand shovel millions of pounds of cold and hot patching material into potholes. Including labor, material, and vehicle usage, the annual cost for the Road Commission of repairing potholes is approximately \$500,000.

If you notice a pothole, please contact our office at 616-842-5400 to report the pothole location, or utilize our online service request form. The link to our website is www.ottawacorc.com. Please provide the street name, side of street, and nearest cross street for the pothole.

Taking the Path less Muddy

Springtime weather conditions can severely impact gravel road conditions. The impact from frost leaving the ground is compounded by large amounts of rain and/or snow melt. The fines (silt and clay) in the gravel that are needed to bind the sand and gravel together under normal conditions now become oversaturated and weak. The fines also hinder the excess moisture from draining through the gravel. What was once a frozen and solid road turns soft, unstable, and muddy. The best cure for these “muddy” gravel roads is warm, dry temperatures, and a good wind.

Attempts to grade and/or place gravel on top of this “muddy” condition can turn the road into a bigger mess. There is a saying, “*Adding a bucket of gravel to a bucket of mud just gets you a bigger bucket of mud*”. There is much truth to this quip, as adding sand or gravel with heavy equipment to a “muddy” road worsens conditions by disturbing the saturated soils even deeper, and thus taking longer for the road to dry out and stabilize. The Road Commission monitors the gravel roads, and once conditions warrant, we will grade and reshape them as necessary. Until then, motorists are advised to use caution while traversing on “muddy” gravel roads.

The Right Recipe for Gravel Roads

A good performing surface gravel for roads is produced with a mixture, called gradation, of three types of material: stone, sand, and fines (silt and clay). The stone provides the strength and load carrying ability, the sand stabilizes the mixture by filling the voids and providing contact between particles, and the fines provides the needed plasticity to bind these materials together to form a hard surface. A good blend of these three material types is vital to the long-lasting performance of gravel roads.

MDOT 22A and 23A are the most common and economical choices to use as surface gravel. Before any gravel is placed on a county roadway, a gradation test, also called **sieve analysis**, is performed to measure the distribution of aggregate particles, by size, within a given sample. This test determines whether the gravel is compliant with MDOT specifications. The test utilizes various sized sieves to pass the gravel sample through to determine the different particle size (see below). A scale is used to weigh the retained material in each sieve. Fines are determined by washing and drying the materials that passes through the smallest sieve to separate the sand and clay particles.



<u>MDOT Gradation Specifications</u>	<u>22A</u>	<u>23A</u>
Passing through a 1" Sieve -	100%	100%
Passing through a 3/4" Sieve -	90-100%	
Passing through a 3/8" Sieve -	65-85%	60-85%
Passing through a No. 8 Sieve -	30-50%	25-60%
Fines -	4-8%	9-16%

Gravel that is too sandy (less than 4% fines) will not be as durable or effectively retain dust control materials. Gravel that has too much clay (more than 16%) will be more susceptible to precipitation taking longer to dry out. There are other higher cost options, such as limestone, crushed concrete, or other blends, that can be considered for a gravel surface. These may improve durability of the roadway but typically do not effectively retain dust control materials.

Safe Roads for Everyone

Get Your Head Out of Your “Apps” and Drive to Arrive!

Road agencies across the state are joining together to remind motorists of the dangers of distracted driving.

Thousands of people were killed or seriously injured on Michigan roads last year, and most of these accidents could be avoided if drivers would eliminate distractions. One of the biggest driver distractions is texting.

Michigan has implemented an **Anti-Texting Law** where a driver shall not "*read, manually type, or send a text message on a wireless 2-way communication device that is located in the person's hand or in the person's lap, including a wireless telephone used in cellular telephone service or personal communication service, while operating a motor vehicle that is moving on a highway or street in this state.*" Under this law, it makes no difference if you are texting while stopped at a traffic light or if you are traveling on I-96. Both situations will land you a ticket.



Fines for texting are \$100 for a first offense and \$200 for subsequent offenses. Michigan's texting law is considered a "primary" law. A primary law means that an officer can pull you over for the offense without having to witness some other violation. That is, the officer sees you texting and issues a citation.

There are a few acceptations to the rule, meaning that there are some situations that it is okay to drive and text.

- **Traffic Accidents** - One of the exceptions is when you are reporting a traffic accident, serious road hazard or medical emergency.
- **Believing Your Life Is In Danger** - When you believe that your life is in danger.
- **Report a Criminal Act** - If you need to report that someone is or has committed a crime against you or someone else.
- **Law Enforcement** - A police officer, a member of a paid or volunteer the fire department, an emergency vehicle operator or a law enforcement official to carry out office duties.

Minimizing distracted driving is something all of us can – and should – be doing. The Road Commission would encourage the following actions that can help ensure the safety of yourself and those around you:

- Set an example for those around you, especially children and teenagers, and model safe driving behavior by keeping your attention on the road and away from blinking and ringing devices.
 - Pull over safely when you need to make a call or send a message.
 - Educate family members that distracted driving is extremely dangerous, just like drunk driving or driving without a seat belt.
 - Avoid calling or texting friends, colleagues and family who you know are driving.
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Important Dates

Thursday – March 2, 2017 | 9AM | Board Meeting

Thursday – March 16, 2017 | 9AM | Board Meeting



14110 Lakeshore Drive
PO Box 739
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417
616-842-5400
Office Hours: Monday-Friday; 7:30AM-4PM



STAY CONNECTED. SUBSCRIBE:

The Ottawa County Road Commissioners: Tom Bird | Tom Elhart | Betty Gajewski | Tim Grifhorst | Jim Miedema
Managing Director: Brett Laughlin

Who manages the roads and how are they funded? The Ottawa County Road Commission manages the roads--not the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners or County staff. The Ottawa County Road Commission is primarily funded by fuel taxes and vehicle registrations. Concerns about roads should be directed to the Ottawa County Road Commission. Questions? [Contact Us](#)

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