

Potholes can create a safety risk for everyone on or near the roadways. Maneuvering around many this time of year can be dangerous not only to drivers, but also pedestrians, and cyclists. The risk is high for tire or suspension damage.

Potholes are caused by the expansion and contraction of water after it has entered into the ground under the pavement. As the weight of cars and trucks pass over the weak spot in the road, pieces of the pavement weaken, which causes the material to break down from the weight, creating the pothole.



When the roads are not up to par, the most important thing you can do is clear yourself from all distractions and drive to the conditions of the road. Putting your phone on silent may be necessary to avoid a distraction that may take your eyes from the road. The speed limit postings are the limits to drive on ideal road conditions. Driving at a reduced speed may be more time consuming but it will reduce the risk of vehicle damage.

Know your surroundings and be aware of the traffic flow around you before you maneuver around a pothole. If there is a larger pothole that you need to drive around, you don't have the right of way to swerve into the lane beside you, or an oncoming traffic lane to avoid it. If there is traffic close to you, slow down and stop and wait for a time you can safely maneuver before you drive outside of your lane. Being aware of where others are driving is just as important. Others may not be as mindful and drive into your lane. Knowing how to drive defensively when someone swerves from their lane may help you prevent an incident.

Being aware of your surroundings and watching for others not traveling in a vehicle such as cyclists and motorcycle drivers is also equally important. They are also avoiding the potholes and while

they also can identify the risk should there be an incident their risk of injury may be higher than one of a vehicle driver's.

Should you encounter a time in which a tire needs to be changed remember to follow some important safety rules. Pull over somewhere safe. Turn on your hazard lights. Apply the parking brake. Place wheel wedges in front (or behind) before you start.

Part of being prepared to change a tire is making sure you have all the tools you need. A manual car jack designed to raise your vehicle high enough to remove the flat tire, a spare tire, a lug wrench or torque wrench, wheel wedges, a portable tire inflator, and a tire gauge to read the recommended tire pressure should all be part of the tools you carry in your vehicle.

Changing a tire on the side of the highway in the daylight with other vehicles driving at a high speed near you while you're trying to change a tire can already feel frightening. If this happens in the nighttime, it can feel even worse. Putting a reflective vest in you have a reflective vest in your kit is a great way of protecting yourself and making sure others see you whether it's day or night.

Reduce the risk of an incident summary- be fully focused on the road, drive to the conditions, be aware of your surroundings and follow the safety rules should you need to change a tire.

Do you need more information? RPM can help!

You may be interested in our *Hazard Identification and Risk Control* course, where we discuss how to recognize what could injure workers on the job, which is the first step to ensuring that they stay safe. A proactive approach to the mitigation of workplace hazards greatly increases the chance of less severe and lower rates of injury. You may also be interested in *Incident Reporting & Investigations*: A workplace must have a process to report workplace related injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences. Upon receipt of these reports, a process must also be in place to ensure investigations are completed to prevent re-occurrence. Both of these courses, including upcoming dates, can be found on our website.

Please contact RPM by emailing info@rpmsafety.ca or calling 204-632-6600, or by visiting our website www.rpmsafety.ca.



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