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Potholes New Concern As Temps Rise

2007/03/13 | CityNews.ca Staff

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They're baack!

Actually, to be technically correct, they never really went away.

City officials say Toronto's pothole season has begun in earnest, with this year's combination of mild then freezing winter weather wreaking its usual havoc on the condition of the city's roads.

But because we had a relatively milder winter - February excluded - it may not be as bad this year as in the past.

The city has only received reports of about 250 driver divots as opposed to more than 1,000 after the 2005-2006 season.

Still, all that repair money heads into a hole. It cost us \$2.5 million just to fix all of the road ruts last year.

Toronto's 100 pothole repair crews actually work full time year-round fixing the weather beaten streets.

But there are questions being raised about when their work will be done.

The [capital budget](#) passed earlier this month at Toronto City Hall gives the bulk of the money to the TTC, and critics are worried about a growing backlog of road improvement projects.

They believe it could take months or even years to get everything already on the list fixed. And that could include patching problem potholes.

Still, if you're game to report one of the gaping gaps or get compensation if one clips your car, there are ways to do it.

Here's an overview:

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An inspector will do a drive-by within 48-72 hours to assess the hole. If it poses a danger to cars, it will be patched right away. If not, it could take a little longer.

Potholes By The Numbers

Avg. number fixed per year: 55,000

Avg. fixed in a month: 500-1,000

Pothole repair staff: about 100

Annual city pothole repair budget: \$2.5-3 million

Total number of roads in Toronto: 9,500

Total kilometres: About 5,200

How long does a pothole patch last?: About 5 years plus.

Beyond Repairs

So you've been driving through Toronto's pothole ridden streets when your car hits one of those monsters head on.

Before you know it, your front end is out of alignment and your back end is in spasm.

And your car's not so good, either.

If one of those gigantic gaps damages your automobile, do you have any way of getting the city to repair it? Turns out you do, but like most things in government, you have to cut through some red tape to make it happen.

Here's how to stake your claim and undo the damage:

City of Toronto

First you have to prove it was the city's fault. Toronto's legal department never pays out a claim without a thorough investigation first.

Needless to say, the powers-that-be suggest you go through your insurance company first.

But if you decide to pursue the complaint, you have to submit it in writing. The claim has to include the time, date and location of the incident, a description of what happened, and a damage estimate.

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City Clerk's Office,
City Hall,
100 Queen Street West,
Toronto.
M5H 2N2

Fax: **(416) 392-1867**

Or you can email: clerk@toronto.ca

But even then you're not finished. Two weeks later, you'll get another letter in the mail acknowledging receipt of your complaint and if it's found valid, another form to fill out.

For more information, call **(416) 397-4212**.