For more information, call MoDOT at 888-275-6636

For Immediate Release: Feb. 22, 2021

**Brutal February weather leads to early pothole season**

JEFFERSON CITY – Missouri Department of Transportation crews are focusing on pothole repair through April. When you see a MoDOT crew making repairs, motorists should slow down and move over a lane to give them room to work. Crews started working to address the pesky potholes as soon as there was a break in the weather last week. MoDOT will have about 300 pothole patching crews statewide working to make roadways safer. In 2020, MoDOT patched approximately 760,000 potholes spending $18 million on pothole patching.

“While following COVID-19 social distancing procedures, MoDOT is working as hard as we can to fill the potholes quickly,” said Natalie Roark, MoDOT state maintenance director. “Brutally cold temperatures coupled with ice and snow throughout February have led to a high number of potholes blossoming on Missouri highways already. We ask motorists to please be patient with us as the repairs are being done.”

MoDOT maintains 34,000 miles of road including interstates, U.S. and Missouri routes and lettered routes.

Potholes form when temperatures warm up during the day but continue to be cold at night. The rain and snow from winter leave moisture that seeps into cracks and joints in the pavement. Frozen water in cracks and under the surface of the roadway causes the pavement to bulge and bend. Then when ice melts, the pavement contracts and leaves gaps or voids in the surface under the pavement. When cars and trucks drive over the bulging pavement, it weakens the roadway eventually causing chunks of pavement or asphalt to pop out, creating potholes.

Short-term repairs are made using a cold asphalt mix with a priority to fill the deepest potholes first. The long-term fix, a hot asphalt mix, isn’t effective until temperatures remain warm for a prolonged period.

Potholes are also a sign of an aging transportation system. Missouri’s budget for road repairs is largely financed by a 17-cent per gallon gas tax that has remained the same since 1996. Many roadways that would benefit from resurfacing can only be patched due to limited resources.

If you can't avoid a pothole, try to slow down before you hit it. Here are some other safety tips:

* Don't brake directly over a pothole as this can cause more damage.
* When driving over the pothole, hold the steering wheel firmly to avoid losing control.
* Use caution when driving over a puddle of water because it might be a pothole in hiding.
* Make sure your tires are properly inflated. Properly inflated ties hold up better against potholes than tires that have too much or too little air.
* You can watch a video about potholes by [clicking here](https://youtu.be/J_sZFLxKy7Y).

Motorists can report the location of potholes on state-maintained roads using the following tools:

* Call the 24/7 Customer Service Center at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (888-275-6636).
* Use the Report a Road Concern form on the web at [modot.org](http://modot.org/).
* Use a smart phone/tablet with a mobile friendly form at [modot.org/roadconcern](http://modot.org/roadconcern).
* Potholes on city streets or subdivisions should be reported to local city or county maintenance.

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For more information, call MoDOT at 888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636) or visit [www.modot.org](http://www.modot.org). To receive the latest statewide news and text alerts, signup for [e-updates](https://www6.modot.mo.gov/eMoDOTWeb/jsp/signon/signon.jsp).

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