

## WHAT IS RCOC?

The Road Commission for Oakland County maintains Michigan's largest county road system, with 2,700 miles of public roads (including more than 750 miles of gravel roads). Only the state highway system is larger.

RCOC also maintains:

- ◆ Approximately 90 bridges,
- ◆ Approximately 1,500 traffic signals,
- ◆ Approximately 150,000 traffic signs and
- ◆ More than 230 miles of state highway.

## SAFETY FIRST

As a matter of policy, major road improvement projects are conducted by the Road Commission based on a safety ranking system. At RCOC "Safety First" is more than a motto.



## RCOC:

- ▶ Is separate from county general government and receives no direct revenue from property taxes
- ▶ Receives the majority of its funding from the state-collected gas tax & vehicle-registration fee
- ▶ Has congested roads due to the tremendous growth in the county in past decades
- ▶ Receives no direct revenue from economic growth and development
- ▶ Pays \$2.5 million or more to pave a mile of gravel road
- ▶ Pays \$8 million or more to widen one mile of road from two lanes to five
- ▶ Is located in a state with a gas tax that was below the national average until 2017
- ▶ Is located in a state that ranks in the bottom nine states in per capita road funding

**ROAD COMMISSION**  
for OAKLAND COUNTY  
31001 Lahser Road · Beverly Hills · MI 48025

## BOARD OF ROAD COMMISSIONERS

**RONALD J. FOWKES**

**GREGORY C. JAMIAN**

**ANDREA LALONDE**

**Dennis G. Kolar, PE**  
*Managing Director*

**Gary Piotrowicz, PE, PTOE**  
*Deputy Managing Director/  
County Highway Engineer*

## RCOC MISSION STATEMENT

RCOC strives to provide the public with leadership in:

- Safe and convenient roads
- Sound financial management
- Responsive and dependable service
- Respect for the environment
- Sensitivity to community concerns

## HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE ROAD COMMISSION?

### CALL OR WRITE:

DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES  
2420 PONTIAC LAKE ROAD  
WATERFORD, MI 48328  
**(877) 858-4804**

TDD: (248) 858-8005

OR, visit RCOC online at

**[www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org)**

**ROAD COMMISSION**  
for OAKLAND COUNTY

# POTHOLES



- ▶ **WHY SO MANY?**
- ▶ **WHAT CAUSES THEM?**
- ▶ **WHAT'S BEING DONE?**

# POTHOLES: A NEVER-ENDING PROBLEM FOR THE ROAD COMMISSION FOR OAKLAND COUNTY

Potholes continue to be a problem on the nearly 1,800 miles of paved county roads and 230 miles of state highways maintained by the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC).

While potholes can occur on paved surfaces anywhere, they are a major problem in Southeast Michigan. Our older roads, many of them deteriorated, can no longer withstand the region's vicious freeze/thaw cycles or the heavy traffic volumes many carry.

Every year, RCOC workers hand shovel more than eight million pounds of patching material into potholes. Including labor, material and vehicle usage, the annual pothole repair price tag is more than \$5 million.

Patches are made with a high performance material and can last for a year or more. Whenever possible, workers back or drive over new patches to compress them.

Although potholes become plentiful when warm spells interrupt a long period of cold weather, such as the "January thaw," the largest number of potholes usually crops up in the spring as the ground thaws.



## HOW DO POTHOLES FORM?

Potholes form when water runs into cracks in the road surface, freezes and expands. When it does this, it creates a pocket of ice under the concrete or asphalt. When temperatures rise, the ice melts, leaving an unsupported gap. When cars, and especially trucks, pass over such an area, they cause the road surface to collapse into the gap, causing a pothole.

Potholes can cause severe damage to vehicles – even accidents when drivers lose control after hitting them. Studies have estimated the average Michigan driver pays more than \$300 annually for road-caused vehicle damage, primarily from potholes.

RCOC is constantly searching for new weapons in the endless fight against potholes. Over the years, the agency added a fleet of "hot patcher" trailer units. Holding up to four tons of patching material, the trailers' heaters warm the patching material, making better and easier-to-apply patches. That means we can patch more potholes, and the patches will last longer.

RCOC workers constantly patrol for – and repair – potholes. Citizens and law enforcement agencies also alert us to new potholes.

## HOW TO REPORT A LARGE POTHOLE

If you see a large pothole, please let us know about it. You can contact RCOC's Department of Customer Services at (877) 858-4804 or, if the pothole is not an emergency, report it through the Road Commission's website ([www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org) -- click on "Contact Us").

## PATCHING CREWS

Pothole repair crews do not typically operate during rush hours, but whenever they are on the roads, traffic tie-ups occur. For your safety and that of RCOC workers, please slow down and use caution when you see pothole crews.

## LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

The best long-term solution to potholes is to resurface the road. Following the state gas-tax increase in 2017, RCOC was able to increase the amount of resurfacing it does each year with the revenue from the increase. In fact, in 2018 alone, RCOC put new surfaces on more than 90 miles of roads.

However, RCOC continues to play catch up. In 2018 approximately 600 miles of its paved primary roads were rated in poor condition. So, even with the additional funding, it will take years to catch up with the deteriorated road system that is the result of decades of inadequate funding.

RCOC must also balance its funding between its many responsibilities, including maintaining its more than 700 miles of gravel roads, widening roads and intersections to improve safety and reduce congestion, plowing snow, maintaining 1,500 traffic signals and 150,000 traffic signs, maintaining and replacing salt trucks and other vehicles and much more.

This situation is compounded by the fact that Oakland's roads are more heavily traveled than roads in much of the rest of the state because of the county's economic development success over the last several decades. That traffic volume means the road surfaces do not last as long as in other places.

In other words, potholes are expected to be with us for years to come.

