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holiday. But early Tuesday, Gushman said, "we put everyone in the public works department out patching. But the fix up is not with asphalt, but what is cold patch that is put into a pothole. This is strictly a patching material," he said.

In Farmington Hills, attention has turned to potholes on I-275 where the surface below the road is visible in some spots.

"We are doing day-to-day maintenance. The crews are out there," said Craig Bryson, Oakland County Road Commission spokesman, who added that the commission has gotten a "fair amount" of complaints. While I-275 is under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation, Oakland County maintains the portion in Farmington Hills under contract.

Frankly, the state is not going to spend enormous amounts of money to patch when I-275 in Oakland County is resurfaced this year, Bryson said. "The real fix for potholes is a new road surface."

Farmington Hills roads are not suffering as badly as is I-275. Dan Rooney, Department of Public Works director, said he has had crews out every day patching potholes. "We really don't have any craters," he added.

Like Farmington, Farmington Hills and Oakland County have received a fair share of telephone calls complaining about the potholes. "We've gotten them, but it's been mostly about county roads," Rooney said.

Bryson acknowledged that the road commission has received complaints from motorists who have also threatened to sue because of damages to their vehicles.

"We have a process by which they can file a claim. It's a form and it's reviewed on a case-by-case basis," Bryson said. Though many motorists may associate the onslaught of potholes with cold, snowy weather, that's not the problem. "It isn't as much the snow melting. It's the freeze and thaw cycles. When it freezes, the road seems

fine. When it's warm, the road seems fine. But as the temperatures warm up and the frost starts to leave, the road pops up," Gushman said.

Rooney said road crews are ready for the continuing January thaw and fully expect to be ready to patch potholes again in March when yet another thaw comes. "We really can't do any permanent repairs now," he said.

Interestingly, Habermehl of Center Tire said most of the calls he got about repairs came in November and December. "Since New Year's, I've had only about a half-dozen calls," he said.

His advice to avoid expensive repair bills: Watch the road and by all means avoid driving over the potholes. If not, you could experience holes in tires, bent wheel rims — an expensive repair if you have aluminum wheels — and to a lesser extent, the need for a realignment.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DREXLER

Costly: Dan Ervans of the Firestone store on Farmington Road displays a \$400 cast aluminum wheel ruined by a pothole.

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over southeastern Michigan, not just in Farmington. But within the city, the most-blant problem area is the Grand River-to-Eight Mile Road stretch of Farmington Road.

"The road's in terrible condition," Lauhoff said. "We're out there on almost a daily basis doing pothole repairs." But, potholes "we fix today (are) back tomorrow."

In freeze-thaw cycles, Lauhoff explained, temporary cold patches fall apart. "Moisture gets in there, and it expands and forces the material out of there."

Lauhoff said Farmington Road is a county road, maintained by the Oakland County Road Commission. The city of Farmington, however, "does help out with maintenance of that road because we can respond quicker" to pothole problems.

Farmington city officials, Lauhoff added, still are receiving

"a lot of calls from angry people ... (they) don't care whose road it is."

Oakland County allocates about \$18,000 to the Farmington city coffers for such maintenance efforts.

"But we spend two or three times that amount down there," Lauhoff said.

That stretch of Farmington Road is scheduled to be replaced, but not until 2002.

Meanwhile, Lauhoff said Grand River, maintained by the state, is in much better overall shape. "We're looking to the future of Grand River, too ... That might need to be replaced in the next five-to-seven years."

The rest of Farmington is being monitored by the city DPS for new potholes on a regular basis, with Freedom Road between Orchard Lake-Farmington another bumpy ride for motorists; that portion of Free-

dom was repaired with cold patch last week.

Lauhoff said the city and county will work together to hopefully find a way to move the replacement of Farmington Road up in the schedule. He said new county commissioner Terry Sever, former Farmington Hills councilman, is receptive to solving the problem.

Residents, meanwhile, need to show some patience and call the city whenever they see new potholes appear.

"If they see something that's a hazard that we haven't seen, phone calls are welcome," Lauhoff said. "These holes can literally develop over several hours."

The city of Farmington DPS can be reached at (248) 473-7250.

There's a right way to shovel

Before you know it, the snow will fall again. So here is a list of important snow shoveling tips, as provided by the Farmington Public Safety Department. You might want to clip this list, and stick it up on the refrigerator for the next storm.

1. Lift snow with your legs when lifting and try to keep your back straight.
2. Don't pick up too much snow at one time. Remember not to over-exert yourself. Several shovels, with a small amount of snow, are easier to lift than one full shovel.
3. Persons 40 years of age and older need to be extra careful when shoveling snow, especially persons who are relatively inactive otherwise.
4. Keep yourself warm. Dress in layers and

remember to protect those areas of your skin that are exposed to the cold (face, nose, ears and hands).

5. If possible, push the snow out of the way then trying to lift it.

6. Persons with a history of heart problems should check with their doctor before working outdoors.

7. Take it slow and easy. Outdoor activities such as shoveling snow will cause your heart rate and blood pressure to increase. Whenever possible, warm-up and stretch your muscles indoors before working outdoors.

In cases where there is a lot of snow, residents are also reminded to dig snow from around post office boxes and any fire hydrants located on their property.

Ice and snow: Who you gonna call?

Farmington residents who need snow or ice removed from their roofs and gutters are being advised to directly contact roofing companies, or gain contractor referrals through their insurance companies.

But the volume of requests for such help is so heavy that there's another outlet, said Kevin Gushman, director of Farmington Public Services.

Livonia-based Service Connection is available to hook customers up with the help they need. Service Connection can be reached at 1-800-287-0883.

Gushman said Service Connection receives a 3 percent commission from contractors.

"Since (roofing and insurance companies) are so backed up with requests, this might be another source for them," Gushman said.

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