Potholes in warm weather

1. Potholes begin when water seeps into the soil under the road. One common way this can happen is when water gets into the pavement sub-base through a crack.

2. Extreme heat and sunlight worsens naturally occurring cracks.

3. Water can get into these cracks, washing out layers of stone and dirt supporting the surface layer, creating a void in the sub-base of the pavement.

4. As vehicles repeatedly drive over the uneven sub-base, the pavement experiences atypical stresses and develops additional cracks. Eventually the pavement breaks apart and a pothole forms.

5. WisDOT works in partnership with county highway maintenance departments to fix potholes on the state highway system. Drivers can report potholes directly to counties.

6. When you see workers out on the road, please keep them and yourself safe by slowing down and, when possible, moving over to provide space.
Potholes in cold weather

1. Potholes begin when water seeps into the soil under the road. One common way this can happen is when water gets into the pavement sub-base through a crack.

2. When water in the sub-base freezes, the ground expands. This expansion can cause the pavement to raise in area of the crack.

3. When the water thaws, the swelling in the sub-base reduces, but the pavement sometimes remains raised. This creates a void under the pavement.

4. As vehicles repeatedly drive over the uneven sub-base, the pavement experiences atypical stresses and develops additional cracks. Eventually the pavement breaks apart and a pothole forms.

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