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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Mother Nature Keeping MTA Bridges and Tunnels' Crews and RoadPatcher Truck Busy This Pothole Season

MTA Bridges and Tunnels' pothole repair crews are keeping busy; thanks to a rainy, snowy winter season that has included seven winter storms to date and the snowiest February on record in New York City. Maintenance crews, with help using the agency's RoadPatcher pothole repair truck, have filled more than 2,500 potholes since January, including 1,000 potholes in the first full week of March.

"There's no doubt that this we are in one of the busiest pothole repair seasons in recent memory thanks to the constant freezing and thawing that has occurred this winter," said Patrick Parisi, the Authority's Chief Maintenance Officer. "We know how important a smooth roadway is to our customers so we have crews out every day filling as many as we can."

The repair season usually starts in early March, but it began in January this year due to the December 18th blizzard that dumped mounds of snow on the City, followed by warmer temperatures in January. So far maintenance crews have used 3,200 gallons of liquid asphalt emulsion, 55 tons of stone aggregate, 8 tons of hot asphalt and 5 tons of cold patch mix to patch potholes at Bridges and Tunnels facilities.

Repairs are primarily done in off-peak hours to minimize the impact on traffic, and a backup truck is always used to ensure the safety of both motorists and Bridges and Tunnels employees, Parisi said.

Potholes occur when icy water and snow seeps into concrete and asphalt, solidifies and then expand. This causes cracks that continue to widen into potholes as vehicles travel over them. Each time a freeze-and-thaw cycle occurs, potholes are likely to form. Potholes are a nuisance on any road, but when they occur on bridges and tunnels, ramps and plaza areas there is less room for drivers to maneuver around them so agency workers must act swiftly.

More substantial potholes are dealt with by the Hot Box crews, named for the container where the 180-degree asphalt is kept. Using shovels and power tools, workers first clear loose debris from the potholes before filling it in with asphalt; a heavy roller vehicle then smoothes over the holes. If the pothole is very large, two lanes may have to be closed during the repair work to ensure the safety of the crews.

Another weapon in the seasonal war against potholes is Bridges and Tunnels' self-contained "RoadPatcher" truck, which can fill up to 100 potholes in a single shift. This self-contained pothole repair unit uses a method called spray-injection patching. In this method, the driver of the truck positions the RoadPatcher near the pothole and lowers the nozzle-and-boom attachment into the pothole. First, the nozzle sends a high-volume blast of air into the pothole to clean out loose debris and moisture. Next, using remote controls, the operator switches to a filling of hot emulsion, followed by a mixture of asphalt. After spraying a covering of dry stone aggregate over the filled in pothole, traffic can immediately begin driving on the patched surface.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels nine facilities, which serve more than 800,000 daily customers and link the boroughs of New York City, are the Bronx-Whitestone, Verrazano-Narrows, Throgs Neck, Henry Hudson, Robert F. Kennedy (formerly Triborough), Cross Bay Veterans Memorial and Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridges, and the Brooklyn-Battery and Queens Midtown Tunnels.



Photo: MTA Bridges and Tunnels' RoadPatcher truck, which can fill 100 potholes in a single shift, working at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.