

[Cite as *Jeanblanc v. Ohio Dept. of Transp.*, 2003-Ohio-111.]

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS OF OHIO

REV. DEAN B. JEANBLANC	:	
11 Middleton Road	:	
Savannah, Georgia 31411	:	Case No. 2002-07801-AD
Plaintiff	:	MEMORANDUM DECISION
v.	:	
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF	:	
TRANSPORTATION	:	
Defendant	:	

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : :

For Defendant: Gordon Proctor, Director
 Department of Transportation
 1980 West Broad Street
 Columbus, Ohio 43223

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : :

FINDINGS OF FACT

{¶1} 1) On August 5, 2002, plaintiff, Dean B. Jeanblanc, was traveling on the northbound exit ramp of Interstate 675 in Greene County when his automobile struck a pothole in the traveled portion of the roadway. The pothole caused tire and rim damage to plaintiff's vehicle.

{¶2} 2) Plaintiff filed this complaint seeking to recover \$476.64, the total cost for automotive repair. Plaintiff asserted he sustained these damages as a result of negligence on the part of defendant, Department of Transportation, in maintaining the roadway. Plaintiff has also filed a claim for filing fee reimbursement.

{¶3} 3) Defendant has denied liability based on the fact it had no knowledge the pothole existed prior to plaintiff's incident.

{¶4} 4) On November 8, 2002, plaintiff submitted a response to defendant's investigation report. However, plaintiff has not presented any evidence to indicate the length of time the pothole was on the roadway prior to his property-damage occurrence.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

{¶5} 1) Defendant has the duty to keep the roads in a safe, drivable condition. *Amica Mutual v. Dept. of Transportation* (1982), 81-02289-AD.

{¶6} 2) Defendant must exercise due diligence in the maintenance and repair of highways. *Hennessey v. State of Ohio Highway Department* (1985), 85-02071-AD.

{¶7} 3) In order to recover on a claim of this type, plaintiff must prove either: 1) defendant had actual or constructive notice of the defect (pothole) and failed to respond in a reasonable time or responded in a negligent manner, or 2) that defendant, in a general sense, maintains its highways negligently. *Denis v. Department of Transportation* (1976), 75-0287-AD.

{¶8} 4) There is no evidence defendant had actual notice of the damage-causing pothole.

{¶9} 5) The trier of fact is precluded from making an inference of defendant's constructive notice, unless evidence is presented in respect to the time the defective condition (pothole) developed. *Spires v. Highway Department* (1988), 61 Ohio Misc. 2d 262.

{¶10} 6) In order for there to be constructive notice, plaintiff must show sufficient time has elapsed after the dangerous condition (pothole) appears, so that under the circumstances, defendant should have acquired knowledge of its existence. *Guiher v. Jackson* (1978), 78-0126-AD.

{¶11} 7) No evidence has shown defendant had constructive notice of the damage-causing pothole.

{¶12} 8) Furthermore, plaintiff has failed to show defendant

negligently maintained the roadway.

{¶13} Having considered all the evidence in the claim file and adopting the memorandum decision concurrently herewith;

{¶14} IT IS ORDERED THAT:

{¶15} 1) Plaintiff's claim is DENIED and judgment is rendered in favor of defendant;

{¶16} 2) The court shall absorb the court costs of this case in excess of the filing fee.

DANIEL R. BORCHERT
Deputy Clerk

RDK/laa
12/13
Filed 1/7/03
Pg. Vol. 729, Pg. 117
Sent to S.C. reporter 1/14/03