

[Cite as *Hunter v. Ohio Dept. of Transp.*, 2005-Ohio-2909.]

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS OF OHIO

JASMINE HUNTER	:	
Plaintiff	:	
v.	:	CASE NO. 2005-01064-AD
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION	:	<u>MEMORANDUM DECISION</u>
Defendant	:	

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

{¶ 1} 1) On December 27, 2004, at approximately 10:30 a.m., plaintiff, Jasmine Hunter, was traveling north on Interstate 75 at milepost 15.40 in Hamilton County, when her automobile struck a pothole causing damage to the vehicle.

{¶ 2} 2) Plaintiff filed this complaint seeking to recover \$379.36, the cost of automotive repair which plaintiff contends she incurred as a result of negligence on the part of defendant, Department of Transportation, in maintaining the roadway. The \$25.00 filing fee was paid.

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

{¶ 4} 4) Plaintiff has not submitted any evidence to indicate the length of time the pothole existed prior to the incident forming the basis of this claim.

{¶ 5} 5) Defendant has asserted maintenance records show three pothole patching operations were needed in the general vicinity of plaintiff's incident during the six-month period preceding the

December 27, 2004, property damage event.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

{¶ 6} 1) Defendant has the duty to maintain its highway in a reasonably safe condition for the motoring public. *Knickel v. Ohio Department of Transportation* (1976), 49 Ohio App. 2d 335. However, defendant is not an insurer of the safety of its highways. See *Kniskern v. Township of Somerford* (1996), 112 Ohio App. 3d 189; *Rhodus v. Ohio Dept. of Transp.* (1990), 67 Ohio App. 3d 723 .

{¶ 7} 2) In order to recover in any suit involving injury proximately caused by roadway conditions plaintiff must prove either: 1) defendant had actual or constructive notice of the 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} 3) Defendant is only liable for roadway conditions of which it has notice, but fails to reasonably correct. *Bussard v. Dept. of Transp.* (1986), 31 Ohio Misc. 2d 1.

{¶ 9} 4) Size of the defect (pothole) is insufficient to show notice or duration of existence. *O'Neil v. Department of Transportation* (1988), 61 Ohio Misc. 2d 297.

{¶ 10} 5) Plaintiff has not produced any evidence to indicate the length of time the pothole was present on the roadway prior to the incident forming the basis of this claim. No evidence has been submitted to show defendant had actual notice of the pothole. Additionally, 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 pothole appeared on the roadway. *Spires v. Highway Department* (1988), 61 Ohio Misc. 2d 262. There is no indication defendant had constructive notice of

the pothole. Plaintiff has not produced any evidence to infer defendant, in a general sense, maintains its highways negligently. *Herlihy v. Ohio Department of Transportation* (1999), 99-07011-AD. Therefore, defendant is not liable for any damage plaintiff may have suffered from the pothole.

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS OF OHIO

JASMINE HUNTER	:	
Plaintiff	:	
v.	:	CASE NO. 2005-01064-AD
DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION	:	<u>ENTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE</u>
Defendant	:	<u>DETERMINATION</u>

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Having considered all the evidence in the claim file and, for the reasons set forth in the memorandum decision filed concurrently herewith, judgment is rendered in favor of defendant. Court costs are assessed against plaintiff. The clerk shall serve upon all parties notice of this judgment and its date of entry upon the journal.

DANIEL R. BORCHERT
Deputy Clerk

Entry cc:

Jasmine Hunter
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Plaintiff, Pro se

Gordon Proctor, Director
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Defendant

RDK/laa
4/26
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