

[Cite as *Schroeder v. Ohio Dept. of Transp.*, 2006-Ohio-7188.]

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS OF OHIO

DAVID J. SCHROEDER	:	
Plaintiff	:	
v.	:	CASE NO. 2006-02200-AD
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	:	<u>MEMORANDUM DECISION</u>
Defendant	:	

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

{¶ 1} 1) On December 26, 2005, at approximately 8:00 p.m., plaintiff, David J. Schroeder, was traveling north on State Route 15 near milepost 15.36 in Putnam County, when his automobile struck an uprooted road reflector laying on the traveled portion of the roadway. Plaintiff stated the rear bumper on his vehicle was damaged as the result of striking the reflector.

{¶ 2} 2) Plaintiff filed this complaint seeking to recover \$257.00, his expense incurred for repairing his vehicle. Plaintiff asserted he incurred these damages as a proximate cause of negligence on the part of defendant, Department of Transportation, in maintaining the roadway. Plaintiff paid the filing fee.

{¶ 3} 3) Defendant has denied liability based n the fact it had no knowledge the defective condition existed prior to plaintiff's incident. Defendant related its road crews were conducting snow removal operations on State Route 15 on December 22, 23, and 25, 2005, and did not discover any raised road

reflectors on the roadway. Defendant suggested the reflector plaintiff's car struck, "existed in that location for only a relatively short amount of time before plaintiff's incident."

{¶ 4} 4) Despite filing a response, plaintiff has not submitted any evidence to indicate the length of time the loosened road reflector was on the roadway surface prior to the December 26, 2005, 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 care and diligence in the proper maintenance and repair of highways. *Hennessy 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 (uprooted reflector) 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 reflector.

{¶ 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 (uprooted reflector) appeared on the roadway. *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 (loosened reflector) appears, so that under the circumstances, defendant should have acquired knowledge of its existence. *Guiher v. Department of Transportation* (1978), 78-0126-AD.

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

{¶ 12} 8) Plaintiff has not submitted any evidence to prove the roadway was negligently maintained.

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DAVID J. SCHROEDER :

Plaintiff :

v. :

CASE NO. 2006-02200-AD

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF :  
TRANSPORTATION :

ENTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE  
DETERMINATION

Defendant :

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

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.

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DANIEL R. BORCHERT  
Deputy Clerk

Entry cc:

David J. Schroeder  
14097 Rd. 14-L  
Columbus Grove, Ohio 45830

Plaintiff, Pro se

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

For Defendant

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