

Tired of dodging potholes like they're landmines? Follow these handy tips

Issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

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My fellow South Africans. Are you fed up with frequent swerving around potholes and praying that your car will make it to its destination in one piece? South Africa's roads are notorious for being in declining condition, with potholes being one of the most common road hazards that drivers face.



These nasty road cavities can cause punctures, blowouts, uneven tyre wear, tyre bulges, damaged sidewalls, bad wheel alignment and balancing issues. Not to mention cracked rims, damage to your undercarriage, or even accidents that could sadly cost the life of you, your passengers or other road users.

According to recent statistics from the national Department of Transport, South Africa has more than 750,000 kilometres of roads, with more than 80% now older than the 20-year design life. So, it's no surprise that potholes are part and parcel of our driving lives. They're caused by a combination of heavy traffic, poor maintenance, and harsh weather conditions, starting as small cracks in the road surface, and becoming bigger over time due to the weight of passing vehicles and exposure to rain, heat, and cold.

While urgent action is being taken by authorities to address our pothole problems, there are still some things that even ordinary South Africans can do to protect themselves.

[Sumitomo Rubber South Africa](#) (SRSA), proud manufacturer and distributor of the Dunlop, Sumitomo, and Falken tyre brands, and a member of the [South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference](#) (SATMC) and [Road Safety Partnership South Africa](#), shares these guidelines:

- **Stay alert.** Keep your eyes peeled while you're on the road, as even a small, insignificant pothole can have a serious knock-on effect on tyres, or can lead to a potential tyre failure at speed.
- **Slow down.** If you do spot a puddle or a pothole ahead of time, be sure to slow down as you navigate past it. Keep

enough space between you and the vehicle in front to ensure you have a clear view of the road surface ahead of you.

- **Maintain control.** If you're forced to drive over a pothole, keep a firm and steady grip on the steering wheel. Slow down before the pothole, rather than suddenly braking only when you drive over it, as this could cause even worse damage to your wheel.
- **Report pothole sightings.** The Department of Transport's Operation Vala Zonke campaign has set out to fix potholes, with a call for a joint effort by the nine provinces and all municipalities. Through the complementary Sanral Pothole App launched by the South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd, the public is able to report potholes easily, by taking a picture of the pothole and uploading it into the app, where the system automatically records the GPS location and sends the information to the relevant authority. Sumitomo Rubber SA also applauds local insurance companies Discovery Insure and Dialdirect Insurance, who have partnered with the City of Johannesburg on the 'Pothole Patrol' branding and repair initiative. This has resulted in more than 150,000 potholes being repaired and branded so far by the two companies. There is also a Pothole Patrol app which can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play through which users can report potholes. In 2022 Sumitomo Rubber launched its own 'Pothole FM' initiative, partnering with comedian Robbie Collins to produce the first ever radio insert recorded from inside a pothole – in a light-hearted effort to highlight our pothole problems.
- **Get tyre cover.** Potholes, uneven road surfaces, sharp objects and the like can cause irreparable damage to your tyres, and the average South African isn't easily able to invest in new tyres unexpectedly – especially within the first year of purchase, or where the irreparable damage affects more than one tyre. This makes comprehensive tyre protection a necessity. Unfortunately, at least one major insurance underwriter in South Africa has announced it has cancelled some of its tyre insurance offers, saying it cannot keep up with the volume of claims and is losing money because of the poor state of the country's roads. Sumitomo Rubber SA has stepped up with its own complimentary tyre cover and tyre insurance to make sure travellers are covered. [Dunlop Sure](#) is a complimentary package of tyre cover value-adds from Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, including a Product Life Warranty, Mileage Warranty and Tyre Insurance, the latter exclusively available from Dunlop Branded retail outlets such as Dunlop Zone, Dunlop Express, Dunlop Commercial and Dunlop Container stores in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland. Since its launch in December 2020, Dunlop Sure Tyre Insurance has replaced hundreds of irreparably damaged Dunlop tyres at no additional cost to the drivers. It's free for 12 months, provided tyres are purchased from Dunlop Branded outlets and the policy is registered within seven days of purchase. Dunlop Sure Tyre Insurance provides full replacement for irreparable damage caused to any Dunlop tyre by any road hazard within 12 months of purchase, including passenger, SUV/4x4 and light truck tyres. So, not only can you avoid the headache of dealing with pothole damage, but you can also save some money while you're at it.
- **Record evidence of damage.** If you do happen to hit a pothole, try not to panic. Get out of your vehicle if safe to do so, and record the evidence and any damage immediately with your smartphone.
- **Inspect your tyres regularly for damage, and replace them if necessary.** Check and adjust wheel alignment and balance, too. Dunlop Zone outlets often see vehicles with sidewall bulges and penetration cuts months down the line – all thanks to a pothole incident that could have occurred even a few months back.



AUTOMOTIVE

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Sumitomo Dunlop 10 Aug 2022



Potholes are certainly a nuisance, but we can still all do our part by being vigilant on the road and taking care of our vehicles and tyres. Whether you're a seasoned driver or a new one, it's important to stay alert, keep your tyres in good condition, and invest in reliable tyre cover value-adds like Dunlop Sure.

Visit <https://www.dunloptyres.co.za/dunlop-sure> for more info, follow Dunlop Tyres SA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#), and make sure *you* get that Mzansi confidence with [Dunlop Sure](#).

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