

CRACK FILLING/SEALING & POTHOLE PATCHING

During this time of year, the stresses and weaknesses in pavement surfaces are on full display. How do we combat these stresses to prolong and preserve the life and ride of our roadways? We fill and/or seal the cracks in the pavement and patch the potholes. While this may be a routine maintenance activity, these activities demand that we deploying the best safety measures possible. The major risks include: moving traffic and equipment, high pressure air, flying debris, hot materials, temperature extremes, and slip or fall hazards. Below are some ways to address these common hazards.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) (formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheets MSDS) before using filling, sealing and patching materials, workers should review the applicable SDS for the products being used. Section 8 of the SDS will identify the minimum PPE necessary for your product. SDS are available free-of-charge from the product manufacturer and supplier. Be sure to ask for a SDS for your products and have them displayed on or near the product container/storage.

Work Zone Safety: Maintenance activities on existing roadways and bridges require work zones similar to those for construction, but often of shorter duration. In fact, the time needed to complete the maintenance work and range from minutes to months. Moving traffic, workers, equipment, and pedestrians are all risk factors when performing these operations. Proper setup of traffic control is required to provide a safe environment for all involved. Workers should also identify an escape plan in the case of an emergency.

The NDLTAP office offers an extremely helpful pocket guide for traffic control requirements at no charge to our customers. The guide was developed by the ND Department of Transportation for their maintenance forces and offers guidance and layouts for the most common maintenance activities. **Contact the NDLTAP office for this handy guide.**



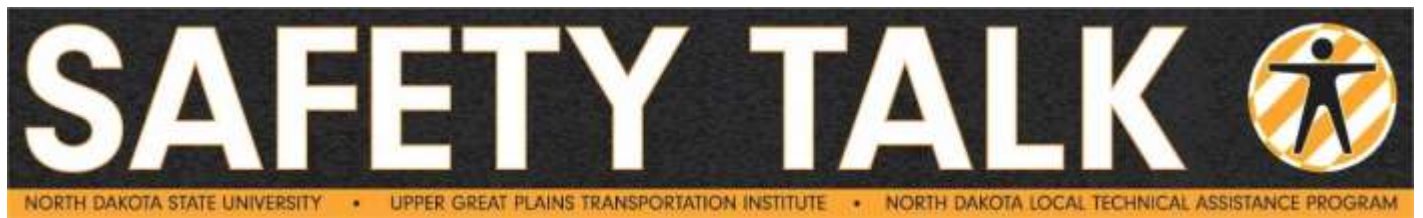
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times during these maintenance activities. PPE should be applicable to the hazards. Safety vests, eye protection, hearing protection, safety boots, gloves, and garments that cover the body completely all may be required. Some of the most common operations include using high pressure air to blow out the cracks before applying materials. Eye protection is critical to ensure that debris does not get into your eyes. Proper eye protection or face shields should be used.

The materials being applied may be extremely hot. Because of this, proper garments and gloves should be worn to ensure that hot materials do not get on the skin and cause severe burns. Workers should check sections 4 & 5 of the product Safety Data Sheets for the necessary first-aid and fire-fighting measures necessary for materials being used.

Equipment: Caution around moving equipment should be taken. Workers and operators should be aware of the blind spots on each piece of equipment and stay clear of these areas. Workers and operators should develop a communication plan in order to understand hazards during these types of mobile operations.

March 2017 by Chris Padilla, Training Manager, NDLTAP

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Workers should also inspect the application equipment for any possible safety violations. Check all hoses for cracks, tears or rips. Direct heat should never be applied to hoses. This fatigues the hoses causing premature failure and sometimes will cause the hose to burst. Check valves and gauges to ensure they are operational. Repair any deficiencies before using.

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