PennDOT Maintenance First

To maintain the effective flow of water around the state’s roadways, pipe replacement and pipe cleaning are essential. Controlling water flow is one of the most important aspects of maintaining pavements. Uncontrolled water flow will damage both the pavement surface as well as the area under the pavement, causing deterioration.

Pipe replacement is a year-round activity. Typically, pipe is installed prior to repaving or sealing the pavement surface. A standard pipe crew consists of a foreman, three equipment operators and four additional crew members. Equipment includes a crew cab, backhoe, two dump trucks, a compressor and compactor. Because of its durability and ease of handling, most pipe replacements are plastic, with the remainder split between metal and concrete.

Pipe replacement operations consist of cutting or sawing pavements, creating a trench in the sub-pavement, installing the pipe, filling the trench, compacting the fill material and replacing the pavement surface.

Pipe cleaning is mostly performed in the summer months by flushing them with water. Most pipes are cleaned with a high-velocity sewer cleaner. To ensure that water reaches the pipe, additional assemblies are needed such as; ditch cleaning, shoulder cutting and shoulder grading which keeps water flowing along its natural drainage course.
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Although Pennsylvanians see PennDOT crews on the roads year round, they may not always realize the scope or importance of all of the work we do.

More common maintenance activities such as Pipe Replacement & Cleaning don’t receive as much public attention as building new bridges or highways, but they are integral to the maintenance of the state’s 40,000 roadway miles and 25,000 bridges.

For more information, or for additional copies of the Maintenance First cards, please contact PennDOT’s Press Office at 717-783-8800 or your local PennDOT District Press Office.

The Maintenance First Series was developed to help educate our customers about our more common maintenance operations.