How does my auto insurance react to pothole damage?

If you have collision coverage, your auto insurance policy will cover damage caused by hitting a pothole. Potholes can impair alignment, ruin shocks and struts, puncture tires, bend wheel rims and damage other parts located under the auto. Since “collision means the upset of ‘your covered auto’ or a ‘non-owned auto’ or their impact with another vehicle or object,” then hitting a pothole (an object) is covered by collision insurance. However, this coverage excludes damage confined to road damage to tires. This means that pothole damage to tires only will be covered if there is other damage to the auto.

That is the good news. The bad news is that you will have a deductible for this claim, typically, from $250 to $1,000.

Also, since this claim is considered a collision loss with no one else to blame, it most likely will be chargeable as an accident for merit-rating or tier-rating purposes. In the end, it may not make sense to report a claim for little or no compensation that could possibly affect your premiums.

On the other hand, your decision may be different if the pothole turns out to be a sinkhole and the damage is much more severe.

You also may want to know that if hitting a pothole causes you to lose control of the auto and damage someone else’s property or injure someone, your auto insurance liability coverage will respond to claims made against you. Since your assets are at risk when incidents such as this happen, you should periodically review your coverages with our agency to ensure they are keeping up with your current needs.