

length of time the debris condition was on the roadway prior to her January 28, 2005, property damage event.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

{¶ 5} Defendant has the duty to maintain its highways in a reasonably safe condition for the motoring public. *Knickel v. Ohio Department of Transportation* (1976), 49 Ohio App. 2d 335. However, defendant is not an insurer of its highways. See *Kniskern v. Township of Somerford* (1996), 112 Ohio App. 3d 189; *Rhodus v. Ohio Dept. of Transp.* (1990), 67 Ohio App. 3d 723.

{¶ 6} In order to recover on a claim of this type, plaintiff must prove either: 1) defendant had actual or constructive notice of the defect (debris) 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. For constructive notice to be proven, plaintiff must show sufficient time has elapsed after the dangerous condition (debris) appears, so that under the circumstances, defendant should have acquired knowledge of its existence. *Guiher v. Jackson* (1978), 78-0126-AD. 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 (debris) appeared on the roadway. *Spires v. Highway Department* (1988), 61 Ohio Misc. 2d 262. Evidence has shown defendant did not have any notice, either actual or constructive, of the damage-causing debris.

{¶ 7} For plaintiff to prevail on a claim of negligence, she must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that defendant owed her a duty, that it breached that duty, and that the breach proximately caused her injuries. *Strother v. Hutchinson* (1981), 67 Ohio St. 2d 282, 285. Plaintiff has the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that she suffered a loss and that

this loss was proximately caused by defendant's negligence. *Barnum v. Ohio State University* (1977), 76-0368-AD. However, "[i]t is the duty of a party on whom the burden of proof rests to produce evidence which furnishes a basis for sustaining his claim. If the evidence so produced furnishes only a basis for a choice among different possibilities as to any issue in the case, he failed to sustain such burden." Paragraph three of the syllabus in *Steven v. Indus. Comm.* (1945), 145 Ohio St. 198, approved and followed.

{¶8} Plaintiff has not proven, by a preponderance of the evidence, that defendant failed to discharge a duty owed to her or that her injury was proximately caused by defendant's negligence. Plaintiff failed to show the damage-causing object was connected to any conduct under the control of defendant, or any negligence on the part of defendant. *Taylor v. Transportation Dept.* (1998), 97-10898-AD, *Weininger v. Department of Transportation* (1999), 99-10909-AD; *Witherell v. Ohio Dept. of Transportation* (2000), 2000-04758-AD. Consequently, plaintiff's case is denied.

IN THE COURT OF CLAIMS OF OHIO

GINA RADIO	:	
Plaintiff	:	
v.	:	CASE NO. 2005-03083-AD
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF	:	<u>ENTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE</u>
Defendant	:	<u>DETERMINATION</u>

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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.

DANIEL R. BORCHERT
Deputy Clerk

Entry cc:

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6/22
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