



Which states have the worst rural roads, bridges?

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WASHINGTON (MEDIA GENERAL) – A new study from TRIP, a nonprofit national transportation research group, lists the worst states when it comes to rural road and bridge safety.

[The study](#) released May 19 is based on rural areas with a population of 2,500 or more, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That's about 61 million people throughout the country. Road, bridge and safety data is based on areas with a population of 5,000 or more.

The analysis points out that the U.S. rural population is aging more quickly than the nation as a whole. It also says that 86 percent of trips taken to rural areas are for leisure and tourist reasons.

According to the study, rural roads have a traffic death rate nearly three times higher than other roads. Texas, California, North Carolina and Florida led the nation in the number of rural non-interstate traffic deaths in 2013.

Connecticut, South Carolina, Florida and Montana charted the highest rate of rural non-interstate traffic deaths per 100 million miles of travel in 2013.

According to TRIP's analysis, rural roads are more likely than urban areas to include narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves, pavement drop-offs, and steep slopes.

Fifteen percent of U.S. rural roads have pavements in poor condition, and more than one-fifth of the country's bridges need rehabilitation, repair or replacement. Michigan, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Idaho and Kansas all topped the list for the worst rural roads.

In 2014, 11 percent of the country's rural bridges were related structurally deficient. According to TRIP, a bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Iowa and South Dakota all ranked as having the most structurally deficient bridges.

The report goes on to note that federal funding for road repairs is set to expire on May 31, 2015. It advocates for a "significant boost in investment" for the nation's highways, roads and bridges.