



Report: RI leads nation in deficient rural roads, bridges

by: [Melanie DaSilva](#) | Tuesday, May 12, 2020



WASHINGTON (WPRI) — A report released Tuesday by [TRIP](#) — a national transportation research nonprofit — says the safety and condition of the nation’s rural roads and bridges are in need of immediate improvements.

“The importance of the rural transportation system as the backbone of the nation’s energy, food and fiber supply chain has been heightened during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” the nonprofit wrote in a news release.

According to TRIP, Rhode Island ranks first in the nation in the rate of rural roads in poor condition and rural bridges that are rated poor/structurally deficient, and sixth in fatality rates on non-interstate, rural roads.

RANK	STATE	Rural Pavements in Poor Condition	STATE	Rural Bridges Poor/Structurally Deficient	STATE	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT on Rural Non-Interstate Roads	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT on All Other Roads
1	Rhode Island	41%	Rhode Island	22%	South Carolina	3.44	1.12
2	Oklahoma	36%	West Virginia	21%	Oregon	2.92	0.76
3	Hawaii	32%	Iowa	20%	Kentucky	2.55	0.83
4	West Virginia	29%	South Dakota	18%	Tennessee	2.42	0.97
5	New Mexico	28%	Pennsylvania	17%	Arizona	2.36	1.39
6	Arkansas	26%	Louisiana	15%	Rhode Island	2.35	0.61
7	Mississippi	24%	Maine	13%	Kansas	2.31	0.66
8	Connecticut	24%	New York	12%	Oklahoma	2.29	0.95
9	Alaska	23%	Michigan	12%	North Carolina	2.28	0.75
10	Maine	21%	North Dakota	11%	Florida	2.27	1.30
11	California	21%	Oklahoma	11%	Texas	2.26	1.04
12	Washington	21%	North Carolina	11%	New York	2.24	0.49
13	Missouri	21%	Mississippi	9%	California	2.22	0.86
14	New Hampshire	20%	Missouri	9%	South Dakota	2.22	0.52
15	Louisiana	19%	Alaska	9%	Delaware	2.19	0.74
16	Pennsylvania	19%	Nebraska	9%	Alabama	2.16	0.97
17	Vermont	17%	Hawaii	9%	Indiana	2.15	0.65
18	Massachusetts	16%	New Hampshire	9%	West Virginia	2.10	1.15
19	Michigan	16%	South Carolina	9%	Louisiana	2.10	1.33
20	South Carolina	15%	California	9%	Nevada	2.10	1.04
US AVERAGE		13%	US AVERAGE	8%	US AVERAGE	2.00	0.88

TRIP’s report found 41% of Rhode Island’s rural roads are in poor condition and 29% are in mediocre condition while 22% percent of the state’s rural bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition.

The rate of traffic fatalities on rural roads is significantly higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state — 2.35 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel compared to 0.61.

There were 14 fatalities on Rhode Island’s rural roads in 2018.

Fixing the nation’s rural transportation challenges will require a significant increase in money, however, TRIP says the large decrease in travel due to COVID-19 is estimated to reduce state transportation revenues by at least 30% (approximately \$50 billion) over the next 18 months.

[Read the full report »](#)