



Report: Arizona has deadliest interstates in America

Spencer Blake | 07/20/2020



PHOENIX (3TV/CBS 5) - Arizona has the highest fatality rate on U.S. interstates. That's the finding in the [latest report from TRIP](#), a national transportation research nonprofit.

The report released last week says we have the deadliest interstates in the country with 1.09 deaths for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled. Mississippi was next with 1.00, and all other states were lower than 1 death per 100 million miles traveled.

"Traffic safety is a function of engineering, enforcement and education," TRIP's director of policy and research Rocky Moretti said. "When we

see numbers, like in Arizona, where the traffic fatality rate is higher than the national average – in this case the highest on all interstates in the country – obviously, the transportation department has to look at all of those."

We know, for example, that Arizona has been plagued with wrong-way drivers and crashes in recent years. But [ADOT](#) says that [engineering isn't the problem](#). In a statement, the department pointed to driver behaviors:

"[A]s with any highway, safety is dependent upon drivers making smart decisions. From 2015 to 2019, 642 people were killed in crashes on interstates in Arizona. At least 43% of those killed were in crashes where speeding was a factor; at least 36% were killed in crashes where impairment was a factor and at least 41% of those killed weren't wearing a safety device (seat belt or a child safety seat). These are preventable deaths and everyone needs to make better decisions behind the wheel.

Arizona's interstates are designed and built to meet exacting safety standards and this report reflects ADOT's dedication toward that goal."

ADOT also points out that traffic fatalities last year reached a 3-year low.

"Arizona also saw decreases in other key measurements: Pedestrian fatalities, alcohol-related fatalities; fatalities of those not wearing seat belts and distracted drivers involved in crashes," the statement reads.

In other categories in the [TRIP](#) report, Arizona did quite well. Just 2% of our interstate pavement was in poor condition, and only 1% of our bridges were structurally deficient.

"According to this report, funded in part by the highway-building industry, the conditions of pavement and bridges on Arizona's interstate freeways rank among the nation's best," ADOT's Public Information Office wrote.

Our interstates are also getting more use. Travel on them has gone up 15% in Arizona since 2000.

"The amount of travel on the interstate far outpaces the amount of capacity that's been added," TRIP Director of Communications Carolyn Kelly said.

That's why TRIP is urging Congress to come up with a new funding program for the entire interstate system nationwide, which is now 64 years old.

"The current program expires at the end of September," Moretti said. "It's also very critical that the new program provides adequate flexibility to state and local governments so that they can make the investments that are best suited for their transportation needs."