

Maine's rural roads and bridges among most deteriorated in U.S., report finds

by Ariana St Pierre, WGME | Thursday, October 13th 2022

Maine's rural roads and bridges have significant deficiencies, [according to TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit.](#)

According to TRIP's report, 15 percent of Maine's rural bridges are rated in poor and structurally deficient condition, the sixth highest rate in the nation.

Bridges rated poor and structurally deficient have significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge and are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting, or redirecting large vehicles, including agricultural equipment, commercial trucks, school buses and emergency services vehicles.



Roads in the Roque Bluffs area in Washington County were washed out in July 2021. (Jonesboro/Roque Bluffs Volunteer Fire Department)

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	Arkansas	33%	Iowa	21%	South Carolina	4.13	0.99
2	Rhode Island	32%	West Virginia	20%	Oregon	3.12	1.00
3	New Mexico	32%	South Dakota	18%	Arizona	2.78	1.42
4	West Virginia	31%	Pennsylvania	15%	Georgia	2.74	1.13
5	Hawaii	30%	Rhode Island	15%	Louisiana	2.72	1.36
6	Mississippi	24%	Maine	15%	Tennessee	2.64	1.30
7	Connecticut	22%	Louisiana	14%	California	2.62	1.08
8	Washington	22%	Michigan	12%	Montana	2.58	0.96
9	Missouri	20%	North Dakota	11%	Kentucky	2.56	1.15
10	Maine	20%	New York	10%	West Virginia	2.54	1.09
11	Alaska	19%	Oklahoma	10%	North Carolina	2.52	1.01
12	Vermont	19%	Missouri	10%	Florida	2.51	1.48
13	Pennsylvania	18%	Hawaii	9%	Texas	2.48	1.23
14	Louisiana	17%	Illinois	9%	Mississippi	2.45	1.40
15	Louisiana	15%	New Jersey	8%	Virginia	2.32	0.74
16	Colorado	15%	Nebraska	8%	Nevada	2.30	1.11
17	Michigan	13%	North Carolina	8%	Kansas	2.29	1.08
18	New Hampshire	13%	Alaska	8%	Delaware	2.28	1.11
19	Indiana	13%	New Hampshire	8%	Indiana	2.23	0.77
20	Massachusetts	12%	California	7%	Alabama	2.19	0.99
US AVERAGE		12%	US AVERAGE	8%	US AVERAGE	2.17	1.09

The chart ranks states based on their rate of rural pavements in poor condition, share of rural bridges that are rated poor/structurally deficient, and fatality rates on non-Interstate, rural roads. (TRIP)

According to TRIP's report, 20 percent of Maine's rural roads are rated in poor condition – the 10th highest rate in the nation – and 23 percent are in mediocre condition.

TRIP reports the rate of traffic fatalities on Maine's non-interstate, rural roads is more than double the fatality rate on all other roads in the state – 1.67 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 0.71.

There were 123 fatalities on Maine's non-interstate, rural roads in 2020. Rural roads are more likely to have narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves, exposed hazards, pavement drop-offs, steep slopes and limited clear zones along roadsides.

experience fatal traffic crashes at a rate far higher than all other roads and highways.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is expected to provide a boost in federal investment in roads, bridges and transit. The IIJA will provide \$454 billion over the five-year period from 2022 to 2026 for investment in highways and transit.

America's rural transportation system needs repairs and modernization to support economic growth and improve traffic safety, but the US faces a \$180 billion backlog in funding for needed repairs and improvements to the rural transportation system, according to TRIP.

TRIP says roads, highways, rails and bridges in the nation's rural areas face a number of significant challenges: they lack adequate capacity; they fail to provide needed levels of connectivity to many communities; and they cannot adequately support growing freight travel in many corridors. Rural roads and bridges have significant deficiencies and deterioration, they lack many desirable safety features, and rural non-Interstate roads