

Study finds S.C., Ga. rural traffic deaths among highest in U.S.



Rural roads are where many traffic accidents occur in South Carolina.(WRDW)

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WASHINGTON (WRDW/WAGT) - South Carolina and Georgia are in the top five states for traffic deaths per miles traveled on rural roads, according to a new report.

The report from TRIP, a national transportation nonprofit, ranks South Carolina as No. 1 and Georgia as No. 4 in deaths on non-interstate, rural roads.

South Carolina's fatality rate is 4.13 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, while Georgia's is 2.74, according to the report, [Rural Connections: Examining the Safety, Connectivity, Condition and Funding Needs of America's Rural Roads & Bridges](#).

In evaluating the safety and condition of the nation's rural roads and bridges, the study found there were 594 fatalities on Georgia's non-interstate, rural roads in 2020.

It found 4 percent of Georgia's rural roads are rated in poor condition and 15 percent are in mediocre condition. Three percent of Georgia's rural bridges are rated in poor and structurally deficient condition.

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.

What can be done about the problem?

"Roadway safety countermeasures like median cable barriers, rumble strips and guardrails are among the most cost-effective ways to prevent traffic crashes and to save lives when they do happen," said Jake Nelson, AAA traffic safety advocacy and research director. "At a time when our nation is recording record high traffic deaths, transportation investments ought to prioritize curbing traffic injuries where we can make the greatest impact—rural roads."