

# Study details costs, challenges of poor road conditions in Montana

By: [Kiana Wilson](#) | Thursday, January 19, 2023

KALISPELL - A new report shows poor conditions on roads in Montana are costing drivers millions of dollars each year.

The details were released on Wednesday during a virtual news conference held by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), the [Montana Infrastructure Coalition](#), and [TRIP](#), a national nonprofit.

The study looked at road and bridge conditions, safety, reliability, and funding.

A big focus on improving road conditions is making Montana's highways safer and in order to do that, state officials are adopting the [U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe System Approach](#).

That plan follows five tiers.

1. Encouraging better driving in Montana.
2. Safer roads. For example, making sure Montana's highways are designed to reduce driver errors.
3. Safer vehicles or expanding the availability of vehicle "systems and features" to help prevent crashes.
4. Promoting safer speeds on Montana roads.
5. Post-crash care, which involves everything from access to emergency medical care after a crash to making sure first responders have a safe working environment when called out.



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The report also went over the MDT's top 20 challenges, which include roads in Western Montana such as Interstate 90 between Missoula and St. Regis, U.S. Highway 2 from Kalispell to Glacier and US Highway 93 from Florence to the Idaho border.



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The plan isn't going to happen in a day though.



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*"But at the end of the day, we've got some pretty big issues to solve. There's 2000 off-system bridges and what that means is cities and counties. They're bridges that aren't on the federal highway system that Mack and his crew direct. So those are farm-to-market type roads. Those are our agricultural suppliers are trying to get across those small bridges and because they are now load posted and can't handle more weight, we've got a lot of inventory that has to be dealt with in the form of 70 or 80 year old bridges that are made of wooden timbers." - Montana Infrastructure Coalition President David Smith*