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New report shows rising traffic crash fatality rate, as state officials work to make roads safer

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Trucks drive on Interstate 81 at the Hollins exit near Roanoke.

Virginia roads are becoming increasingly dangerous, and state officials are hoping to make them safer.

Over the last decade, traffic fatalities in Virginia have spiked 11%. That grim statistic is from [a new report from the transportation research group TRIP](#), where Rocky Moretti is director of policy and research.

"What the research showed is after the pandemic, that driver behavior worsened," Moretti says. "We saw in polling of drivers; they were driving at faster speeds and they were driving more aggressively."

Virginia transportation officials say the fatality numbers are way too high, and drivers need to pay attention.

"Put down your phone, wear your seatbelt, don't speed and please, please, please do not drive while under the influence."

That's Virginia Transportation Secretary Nick Donohue, who says the Commonwealth Transportation Board is considering a number of strategies to make the roads safer, like high-friction surface treatment to make roads stickier to help cars navigate tight curves, rumble strips to help alert drivers when they're running off the road and something called dynamic all-red extension.

"And this is just something where instead of when the one light turns to red, the other automatically goes green, having all lights be red first for a short period of time, so that if someone again makes that unfortunate decision to, intentionally or unintentionally, go through a light right as it turns red, there's nobody else coming straight out when it turns green," Donohue explains.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board is expected to vote on the highway safety improvement program next month.