

States With the Worst (and Best) Road Conditions (2026)

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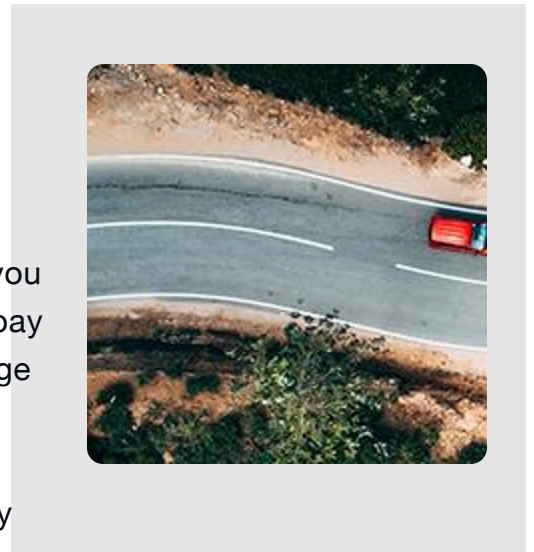


By: [Emma K. Shibley](#) +1 more

Hit any potholes lately? You're not alone. On the latest infrastructure report card from the American Society of Civil Engineers, the nation's roads earned a D-plus grade. That's a far cry from passing with flying colors.

Rough roads are about more than just a bumpy ride. Even if you swerve to miss a pothole or other road hazard, you may still pay the price for subpar infrastructure. Poor roads cost the average American driver more than \$1,400 a year in vehicle operating costs and lost time, according to the ASCE. They also accelerate wear and tear on your car, which can lead to costly repairs that an [extended auto warranty](#) may not cover.

Depending on where you live, cracks and dips in the road might be an occasional inconvenience — or a daily headache. The ConsumerAffairs Research Team analyzed the latest government data on road roughness to identify which states have the best and worst road conditions. Read on for our full report.



KEY INSIGHTS

New Mexico has the worst roads for the second consecutive year. Nearly a third of its extensive rural road network is in poor condition.

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Rhode Island jumped to No. 3 for poor road conditions this year. Over 60% of its urban roads are considered poor — the highest share in the nation.

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Oklahoma's roads deteriorated dramatically. After ranking No. 34 in our 2025 analysis, it now has the fifth-worst roads in the nation. Conditions worsened considerably across both urban and rural roads.

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Indiana maintained its spot as the state with the best roads. Just 4.8% of its urban roads and 1.6% of its rural roads are in poor condition — the lowest rates nationwide.

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States with the worst road conditions

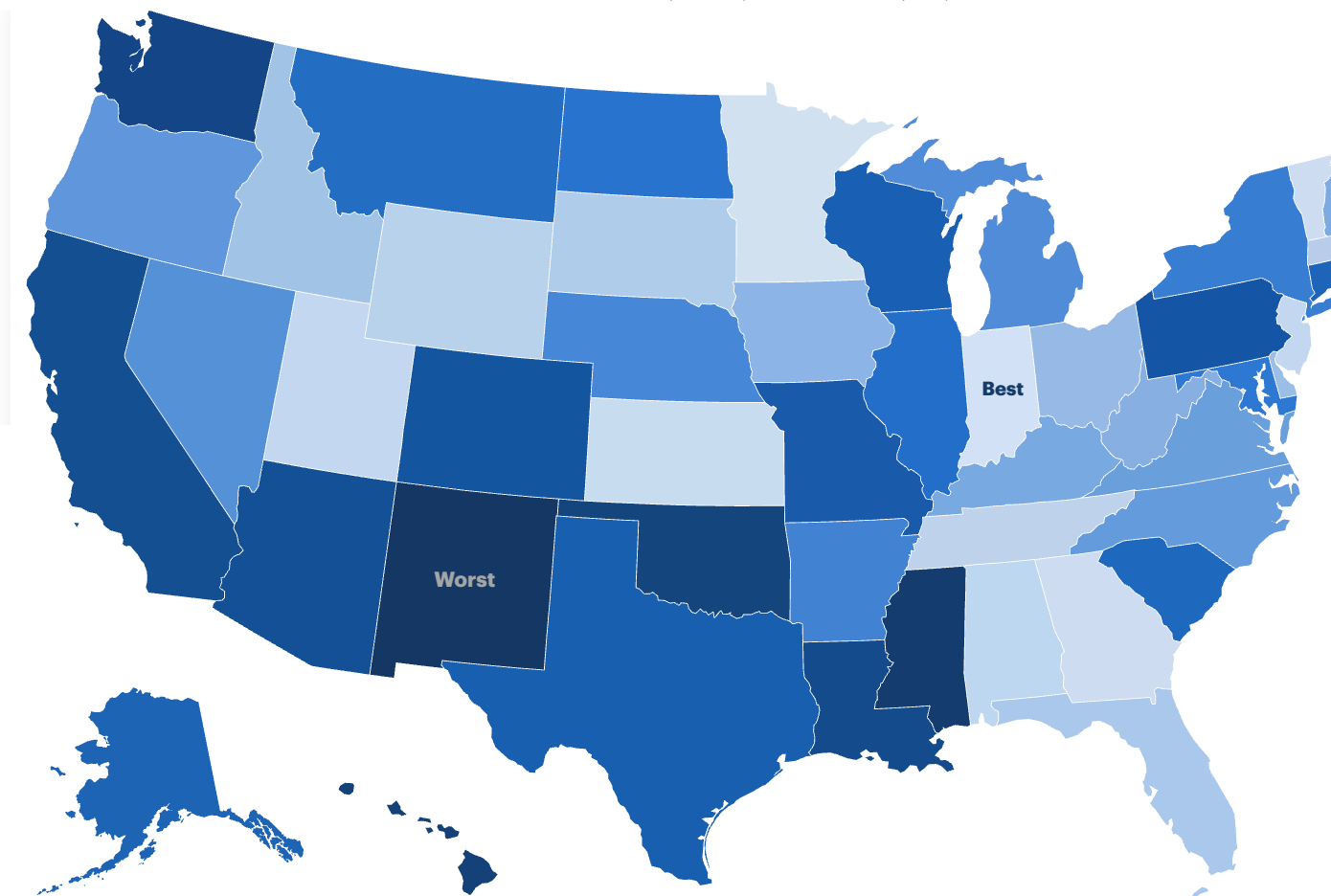
As the map below shows, poor-quality roads aren't limited to a single part of the US. While Western and Southern states are more represented at the top of the list, the states with the worst roads are spread across the country.

There isn't a strong correlation between a state's road network size and its road conditions, either. The five worst-ranked states include the two with the smallest road networks in the U.S. (Hawaii, Rhode Island) and a state with one of the 15 largest (Oklahoma).

States with the worst (and best) roads

Click on or hover over a state for more information on its ranking.





Source: Federal Highway Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • [Download image](#)



However, the states with the worst roads are united by some key factors, including climate and weather patterns. “Freeze-thaw cycles plague cold areas with potholes, and salt air degrades (the roads in) coastal communities,” said Ryan Salata, a director at Specialty Auto Parts USA.

Commercial traffic volume also plays a role. In states like New Mexico (No. 1) and Oklahoma (No. 5), heavy truck traffic puts increased wear and tear on roadways, Salata said.

Read on for a closer look at the top five states with the worst roads.

1. New Mexico

For the second year in a row, New Mexico takes home the title of “worst roads in the country.” Nearly half of New Mexico’s urban roads and a third of its rural roads are in poor condition, and it’s among the 10 worst states for rate of traffic fatalities.

The crumbling conditions facing New Mexico’s roads didn’t happen overnight. The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) reported in August 2025 that the state needs \$5.6 billion for unfunded transportation projects. Meanwhile, New Mexico has the third-

lowest gas tax rate in the country — largely because it hasn't raised its gas tax in more than 30 years, which has severely constricted the flow of revenue for road maintenance projects.

But rough roads aren't just about the state's coffers; they also impact drivers' wallets. Recent analysis from the national transportation research group TRIP found that deteriorating roads cost the average New Mexico resident \$1,075 a year in additional vehicle operating costs.

The silver lining? After years of poor performance, legislative leaders in the Land of Enchantment are redoubling their efforts to tackle the issue. In September 2025, NMDOT announced it had awarded \$100.4 million to more than 70 projects across the state. That's more than double the investment of the previous fiscal year.

Key metrics:

- **Percentage of urban roads in poor condition:** 49.8% (sixth worst)
- **Percentage of rural roads in poor condition:** 31.2% (second worst)
- **Traffic fatalities per 100M miles traveled:** 1.55 (ninth worst)

2. Mississippi

Mississippi has the second-worst roads overall, ranking just behind New Mexico for the second year in a row. Almost half of Mississippi's urban roads and more than a quarter of all rural roads are in poor condition.

Mississippi scores the worst in America for traffic fatalities, with a rate that's 42% higher than the national average. This is particularly notable because Mississippi motorists aren't known for aggressive or careless driving behaviors (the state ranks in the bottom three for road rage).

State spending doesn't provide a simple explanation for Mississippi's poor road quality, either. In most cases, "(the) top states with the best (road) conditions are the ones that invest heavily and are always allocating their funds strategically before deterioration happens," said Bruce Shields, founder and president of ABS Tag & Title, which assists fleets and dealers nationwide. But Mississippi is one of just a handful of states that is not anticipating a gap in roadway funding, so its poor road conditions can't necessarily be blamed on a budget shortfall.

Key metrics:

- **Percentage of urban roads in poor condition:** 49.3% (eighth worst)
- **Percentage of rural roads in poor condition:** 28.2% (fourth worst)
- **Traffic fatalities per 100M miles traveled:** 1.79 (worst)