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Report: Hawaii's rural roads deteriorating



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Hawaii's rural roads are deteriorating and that makes them more deadly.

That's according to a new national report.

Of the 109 traffic fatalities that occurred statewide in 2009, 41 of them were on rural roads. That's according to a report released by TRIP, a national non-profit transportation research group based in Washington D.C. It points out that the traffic fatality rate on Hawaii's rural roads is nearly double than all other roads. And it cites inadequate roadway safety design, longer emergency vehicle response times, and higher speeds traveled in rural roads as contributing factors.

The report also points out that in 2008, 29 percent of the state's major rural roads were rated in poor condition, making it the fifth worst in the nation. Oahu drivers point out that they've become all too familiar with potholes.

"The pothole sizes are getting bigger, some of them are swimmable during the rain, it seems like they do a lot of roadwork for naught," said Isaac Buchanan, taxi driver.

The State Department of Transportation has released a statement in response to the report saying, "We feel this report is not an accurate measure of the quality of DOT roads in rural areas. With that said, we know we have a lot of work to do and are committed to properly maintaining all of the roadways across the state." The state also points out that a majority of rural roads, especially on the neighbor islands are county roads.

Westley Chun, director of the city's Department of Facility Maintenance said, "We have identified the major rural roads owned by the City in need of repair and we are currently balancing the distribution of the repair work throughout the island."