

The Cost of Operations

How Much Does It Cost to Operate the Transportation System?

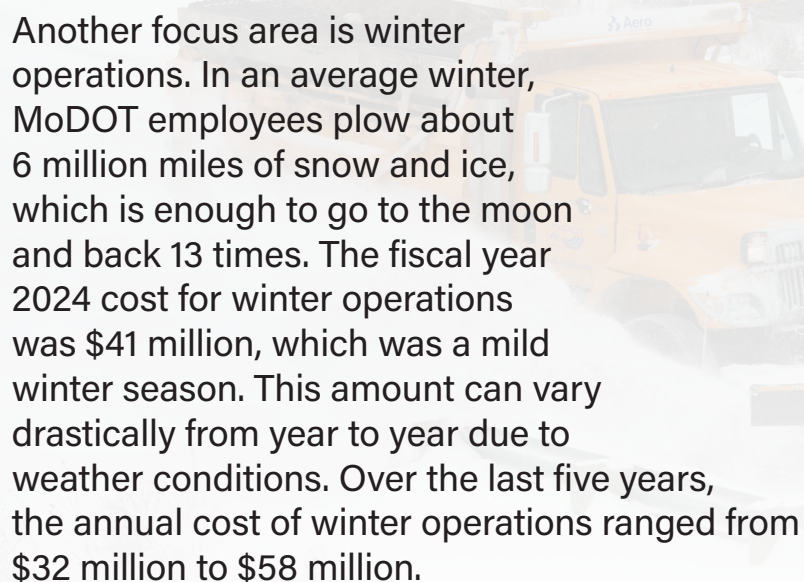
MoDOT employs 3,000+ field employees throughout the state to operate and maintain the transportation system. In fiscal year 2024, MoDOT invested \$690 million, or about \$13.40 per month from Missouri drivers, to provide services, including:

- Pavement repairs and sealing
- Winter operations
- Bridge maintenance
- Striping
- Traffic signs and signals
- Mowing
- Flood/road closures
- Ditches/Drainage
- Litter and debris removal
- Unsheltered area cleanup
- Incident response
- Customer calls
- Dead animal removal
- Driveway maintenance
- Permits
- Vegetation control

The most significant cost of operations is roadway maintenance. In fiscal year 2024, \$261 million of MoDOT's operating budget was spent on roadways for repairs, sealing and striping. Each year, MoDOT crews place enough asphalt to do a 1-inch overlay and sealing from Los Angeles to Washington D.C. – about 2,300 miles.

The repair work from MoDOT operations is focused on roads that do not carry a lot of traffic. Funding from the construction program pays for pavement improvements for heavily traveled roads, like interstates and U.S. highways.





Another focus area is winter operations. In an average winter, MoDOT employees plow about 6 million miles of snow and ice, which is enough to go to the moon and back 13 times. The fiscal year 2024 cost for winter operations was \$41 million, which was a mild winter season. This amount can vary drastically from year to year due to weather conditions. Over the last five years, the annual cost of winter operations ranged from \$32 million to \$58 million.

Maintaining roadsides costs about \$57 million each year for crews to mow grass and remove litter, debris and dead animals. MoDOT mows about 400,000 acres of grass each year, which is equivalent to 300,000 football fields.

High levels of turnover in the past few years have resulted in Maintenance crews focusing their limited staffing resources on Priority 1 tasks, which are deemed an immediate hazard to the public. This is also the case during winter weather, where winter operations vacancies have the department nearly 30% below the staffing needed to cover more than one shift in a statewide storm. If a widespread storm lasted more than one 12-hour shift, it would take longer to clear the roads. Supply chain delays have also led to longer times to replace signs or stripe roads.



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Operating funds do more than just maintain the system. They also provide funds to operate the system so people get where they want to go. MoDOT manages more than 2,600 traffic signals, 250 dynamic message signs, 1,100 traffic cameras and has traffic management centers in Kansas City, St. Louis and Springfield. The average annual cost for these operations is \$14 million.

In addition, MoDOT crews are able to respond quickly to incidents ranging from traffic crashes to flooding to make sure Missourians arrive safely at their destination. One of the department's primary customer concerns is trash along the roadsides and debris from unsheltered areas on state right of way, yet another symptom of high staff turnover and vacancy.

With paid labor in these areas down millions of hours, customer service is not meeting customer expectations. The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission instructed MoDOT to increase labor hours to improve service.

