

UAE traffic woes: what do motorists think?

- 86% of respondents typically experience traffic congestion when on the roads
- 80% witness more traffic congestion this year than last year
- Top 3 types of trips where congestion is observed: afternoon work commute, morning work commute and morning school runs
- Top 3 reasons for congestion: too many vehicles on the roads, office start times, school start times
- Top 3 solutions: public transportation, working from home, expand road capacity
- Study conducted by an international on-line research agency with UAE representative sample of n=1,021 in June 2025

Dubai, 1st July 2025; Much is talked and written about the UAE traffic woes and the view of the public must be added to the ongoing process of understanding the reasons, addressing the issues and improving the situation.

“We wanted to elevate the discussion related to road traffic congestion from anecdotal evidence to a fact-based and well researched approach. We are a very analytical and numbers-based organization and we saw it within our corporate DNA to team up with RoadSafetyUAE to jointly work on this highly debated area, as road traffic and road traffic congestion is of big relevance of everyone in the UAE, on a daily basis.”, said Muralikrishnan Raman, Chief Financial Officer, Al Wathba Insurance.

Thomas Edelmann, Founder and Managing Director of RoadSafetyUAE adds: “We have a track record of adding valuable research data to the discussion of road safety in the UAE over the years. In this latest study which we commissioned jointly with our CSR-Partner Al Wathba National Insurance, we want to provide input to the concerned authorities and stakeholders to understand the public perception about traffic congestion, how they see the reasons for it and on which areas they would focus to improve the situation. We have witnessed amazing efforts from the public stakeholders over time, and we want to do from our side what we can to support the process.”

How big is the problem?

The study shows, that 86% of respondents state they typically experience traffic congestion. The highest values we see in Dubai with 91% and Sharjah with 90%.

80% of respondents witness more traffic congestion this year than last year, with Dubai topping the list with 85%.

On which types of trips?

When probed about which types of trips traffic congestion was observed, the afternoon work commute tops the list, followed by the morning work commute and the morning school drop-offs. The list gets completed by weekend activities, afternoon school pick-ups and errands. Abu Dhabi scores highest in 3

dimensions and Dubai in 2.

What are the reasons?

The list of reasons for traffic congestion is dominated by ‘too many vehicles on the road’ and ‘all offices start at the same time’, with 65% and 54%, respectively. The top 4 get completed by ‘all schools start around the same time’ and ‘heavy dependency on private cars’ with 48% and 45% respectively. Poor driving behavior, low vehicle occupancy, not enough working from home, road design, lack of public transportation and lack of infrastructure for alternative modes of transportation follow with levels in the 20’s% range.

What’s the solution?

We believe that understanding the public perception of a) the reasons for traffic congestion, and taking into consideration the 2nd question we asked in this regard, namely b) where the public sees improvement potentials, will certainly help the concerned authorities and stakeholders to focus on the critical areas.

Respondents see these improvement potentials, with the top 4 mentions being to promote working from home, improve the public rail (metro, train) transportation offering, expanding the road network and improving the public bus service. Important to note, that the combined value for improving public transportation stands tall with 83% (metro, train, bus)!

The fieldwork of this research project was conducted in June 2025. It was commissioned by Al Wathba Insurance jointly with RoadSafetyUAE, and conducted by an international on-line research agency (representative UAE sample n=1,021).

The details of this survey can be found in the ‘featured’ section on:
<http://www.roadsafetyuae.com/statistics>

Q8. What measures do you think would help reduce traffic congestion?					
	Total	UAE EMIRATES			
		Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	Other Emirates
Promote remote working (work-from-home)	46%	41%	48%	48%	46%
Expand and improve public rail services (e.g., metro, trains)	45%	44%	46%	46%	43%
Expand road capacity and improve road design and intersections	40%	39%	38%	45%	46%
Enhance public bus transportation	38%	40%	37%	33%	39%
Encourage better driving behavior to reduce accidents and improve traffic flow	36%	38%	39%	28%	25%
Improve infrastructure for alternative transportation (e.g., walking, biking, scooters)	36%	36%	37%	32%	33%
Introduce staggered office start times	33%	31%	36%	33%	30%
Introduce staggered school start times	31%	27%	31%	38%	31%
Increase car occupancy, for example through carpooling or ride-sharing	28%	29%	28%	29%	22%
Reduce the number of trips by planning better and combining necessary errands	25%	28%	25%	17%	25%
Others (please specify)	1%	1%	*	1%	1%



Q3. During which types of trips do you typically experience traffic congestion?

	TOTAL	UAE EMIRATES			
		Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	Other Emirates
Afternoon/evening commute from work	58%	50%	65%	57%	46%
Morning commute to work	52%	48%	55%	56%	39%
Morning school drop-off	47%	50%	46%	46%	38%
Weekend leisure activities (e.g., restaurants, beach, entertainment)	39%	38%	39%	42%	30%
Afternoon school pick-up	26%	29%	22%	28%	25%
Errands (e.g., supermarket, shopping mall, etc.)	23%	27%	22%	20%	16%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%

Q4. What do you think are the reasons for traffic congestion?

	Total	UAE EMIRATES			
		Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Sharjah	Other Emirates
Too many vehicles on the road	65%	65%	65%	69%	55%
All offices start around the same time	54%	57%	52%	52%	55%
All schools start around the same time	48%	47%	47%	52%	48%
Heavy dependence on private cars	45%	43%	47%	43%	46%
Poor driving behavior often leads to accidents and delays	28%	28%	27%	30%	21%
Not enough people sharing rides or cars	23%	23%	25%	20%	19%
Not enough people working from home	23%	21%	26%	23%	18%
Roads and intersections are not designed or built to handle current traffic volumes	22%	18%	23%	24%	24%
Limited availability of public transportation	21%	20%	23%	18%	21%
Lack of infrastructure for alternative transportation (e.g., walking, biking, scooters)	19%	19%	20%	16%	21%