

## Notes and Definitions: Freight



This section provides notes and definitions for the Freight statistics tables in Transport Statistics Great Britain published in November 2011.

### Notes and Definitions Include:

- Information on sources.
- Information on accuracy of the statistics.
- Definitions.
- General information for the tables including links to background information.

## Domestic Freight

### Freight transport by mode: TSGB0401 to TSGB0403

The lines on the tables TSGB0401 and TSGB0403 refer to discontinuities in the series since 1953. Details on these discontinuities are given below.

#### Road:

**2004:** Figures for 2004 onwards are not fully comparable with those prior to 2004. Detailed comparisons should be made with caution between these years.

#### Rail:

**1984/85:** The figure for rail is low because the amount of coal lifted was significantly reduced due to the UK miner's strike in 1984/85.

**1996/97:** Exact rail comparisons pre and post privatisation are not possible.

**1999/00:** Change in the source data from 1999/00.

**2003/04:** Break in the rail goods lifted series. The increase was largely due to changes in data collection methods.

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**2005/06:** Break in the rail goods lifted series. Figures from 2005/06 onwards include some of the tonnes lifted by GB Railfreight.

**2007/08:** Break in the rail goods lifted series. Coal data was not supplied by GB Railfreight prior to 2007/08.

**Water:**

**1972:** Figures from 1972 onwards are not comparable with earlier years. From 1972, water includes all UK coastwise and one-port freight movements by sea, and inland waterway traffic. Earlier years include only GB coastwise traffic and internal traffic on BWB waterways.

**Pipeline:**

**1989:** The increase in pipeline data compared to the corresponding figure for 1989 is largely due to changes in coverage.

**2009:** Some pipeline data based on estimates - this survey is currently under review by DECC to improve data quality in the series.

**Further information**

**Road:** These figures include the activity of British-registered goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight and light goods vehicles up to that weight. The estimates for heavy goods vehicles are derived from the Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport Great Britain (CSRGT GB) and, for light goods vehicles, from surveys carried out in 1976, 1987, 1992/93, and from 2003 to 2005 with data being interpolated for the intervening years. The light goods vehicle component of Table TSGB0402 has been allocated to the appropriate commodity group from data received in the 2005 van survey. In previous years it had been assumed that it should all be in the 'miscellaneous' category.

Users should also note that the figures for 2006 to 2009 have been revised in 2011. For further information on the revision, please refer to the Notes and Definitions for Road Freight Statistics 2010 at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-freight-statistics-2010>.

**Rail:** Figures up to 1962 include non-revenue earning traffic carried by British Rail for its own purposes. Figures for rail are for each financial year. Data for goods moved and goods lifted come from different sources and caution should be exercised if making comparisons between the two series.

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**Pipeline:** Pipeline estimates are for oil pipelines only (excluding offshore pipelines); data differ from those in the International Comparisons section as the latter exclude pipelines less than 50 kilometres long.

**Air:** Domestic air cargo (freight and mail) within the United Kingdom, while sometimes important in terms of speed of delivery, is insignificant in volume compared with other modes and is not presented in tables in this chapter. More information on the volume of air freight carried is in Chapter 2.

## Freight transport by road

**Domestic road freight transport by goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross weight:** TSGB0404 to TSGB0410

The data in these tables are derived from the Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport Great Britain. Users should note that the figures for 2006 to 2009 have been revised in 2011. For further information on the revision, please refer to the Notes and Definitions for *Road Freight Statistics 2010* at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-freight-statistics-2010>.

Estimates are of domestic freight activity by GB-registered heavy goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight. These vehicles pay the goods vehicle rates of Vehicle Excise Duty, are subject to goods vehicle 'plating' and annual testing, and require a goods operator's license. They currently account for over 90 per cent of road freight activity, with the rest being carried by light goods vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight.

In these tables, freight activity is either measured in terms of the weight of goods (tonnes) handled taking no account of the distance they are carried (termed 'goods lifted') or as 'goods moved' (tonne kilometres) which does take account of distance. 'Goods moved', for each loaded journey, is the weight of the load multiplied by the distance it is carried. 'Goods moved' is therefore a better measure of the work done by heavy goods vehicles.

In TSGB0408, TSGB0409 and TSGB0410 'Crude minerals' comprises sand, gravel and clay and other crude minerals. 'Building materials' comprises cement and other building materials.

The vehicle weight groups reflect some of the operating controls on goods vehicles. For rigid vehicles the maximum allowed gross vehicle weights are:

- 18 tonnes on 2 axles
- 26 tonnes on 3 axles
- 32 tonnes on 4 axles

For articulated vehicles the general limits are:

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- 38 tonnes on 4 axles
  - 40 tonnes on 5 axles
  - 44 tonnes on 6 axles

'Mode of working' relates to whether goods are being carried on either a hire or reward or own account basis. The former relates to the carriage of goods owned by people other than the operator. The latter covers goods carried by operators in the course of their own trade or business.

The tonnes lifted and tonne kilometres estimates shown in these tables are not directly comparable to those of heavy goods vehicle kilometres derived from the traffic census. For more information on the differences between the two sources, please refer to section 4.6 in *Road Freight Statistics 2009* available here:

<http://tna.europarchive.org/20110503185748/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2009>

The estimates of road freight for 2010 derived from the Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport (CSRGT) were based on average returned sample of some 360 heavy goods vehicles per week. The samples are drawn from the vehicle licence records held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Questionnaires are sent to the registered keepers of the sampled vehicles asking for details of its activity during the survey week. The estimates are grossed to the vehicle population and at the overall national level have a three per cent margin of error (at 95 per cent confidence level). Further details and latest results are published in *Road Freight Statistics 2010*.

### **Methodological changes**

A key component of National Statistics outputs is a programme of quality reviews carried out at least every five years to ensure that such statistics are fit for purpose and that their quality and value continue to improve. A quality review of the Department for Transport's road freight surveys, including the CSRGT, was carried out in 2003. A copy of the report can be accessed at

[www.statistics.gov.uk/nsbase/methods\\_quality/quality\\_review/downloads/NSQR30FinalReport.doc](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/nsbase/methods_quality/quality_review/downloads/NSQR30FinalReport.doc)

The quality review made a number of recommendations about the CSRGT. The main methodological recommendation was that, to improve the accuracy of survey estimates, the sample strata should be amended to reflect current trends in vehicle type, weight and legislative groups. These new strata are described more fully in the survey report. For practical and administrative reasons, changes were also made to the sample selection methodology. These changes have resulted in figures from 2004 onwards not being fully comparable with those for 2003 and earlier years. Detailed comparisons should therefore be made with caution.

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## United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) Assessment of 'Statistics on Road Freight'

In July 2009, the UK Statistics Authority confirmed that the statistics published in Road Goods Vehicles Travelling to Mainland Europe (quarterly series and annual bulletin), the Survey of Foreign Vehicle Activity in Great Britain, and Road Freight Statistics are designated as National Statistics, subject to the implementation of certain enhancements. The assessment report is published at:

[www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-6---road-freight-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-6---road-freight-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf)

### International Road Haulage

#### International Roads Goods Transport: TSGB0411 to TSGB0416

These tables show the international activity of UK-registered vehicles. The statistics for GB-registered vehicles are derived from the International Road Haulage Survey (IRHS), which has been conducted by the Department for Transport (and its predecessors) since 1979 in order to comply with EC Regulation 1172/98 (which replaced EC Directive 78/546 and 89/462). The Regulation requires each member state to compile statistics of the international road haulage carried out by its own goods vehicles as well as domestic haulage.

The IRHS is carried out by asking hauliers who undertake international work to report the details of recently completed international trips travelling to mainland Europe or the Republic of Ireland via roll-on/roll-off ferry services or through the Channel Tunnel. The sample is weighted to the total of British powered vehicles on all ferry routes and the Channel Tunnel from the Roll-on/Roll-off survey (TSGB0421 and TSGB0423).

Statistics derived from the IRHS for 2004 onwards were revised in 2010 following a methodological review of grossing procedures by the Office for National Statistics under a Quality Improvement Fund (QIF) Project.

The Department took the opportunity to review more thoroughly the grossing procedures through the QIF project which was commissioned by the DfT in response to the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) assessment of Road Freight statistics described above.

For full details on the revisions, and a copy of the final QIF methodology report, please refer to Section 7 in Road Freight Statistics 2009 at

<http://tna.europarchive.org/20110503185748/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublicati ons/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2009>

Vehicles registered to hauliers operating in Northern Ireland are covered by the CSRG (NI) and

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activity by NI-registered vehicles is included in these tables, except where the journey is solely confined to the island of Ireland.

A substantial amount of traffic goes by unaccompanied trailers (as well as in the foreign powered vehicles) for which statistics are not obtained in this survey. In particular, trade across the North Sea is mainly carried on unaccompanied trailers. Freight carried in foreign vehicles is not included in the IRHS (or CSRGT) tables. Other EU countries, being subject to the same Regulation, obtain comparable statistics which are published by Eurostat and are shown in Tables TSGB0417 to TSGB0421.

The goods classification, Nomenclature Statistiques de Transport (NST), the classification of commodities for transport statistics used in the European Union, is a hierarchical structure which divides the 176 headings of the classification into 10 chapters and 52 main groups. At present it is only practicable to disaggregate the IRHS data by 'chapter' apart from showing separately the two main components of chapter 9.

#### **International Roads Goods Transport by Foreign-Registered Vehicles: TSGB0417 to TSGB0421**

TSGB0417 to TSGB0420 show road freight information for goods loaded and unloaded in the UK by foreign-registered HGVs. TSGB0421 shows levels of cabotage in the UK by vehicles registered to different countries. The term 'cabotage' refers to road haulage within one country by a vehicle registered in another country.

This information is collected by EU member states (and some non-EU states such as Norway, Switzerland and Croatia) under EC Regulation 1172/98. These are data that are routinely published on the Eurostat website at:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/themes>

### **Rail Freight**

#### **National Railways Freight Traffic: TSGB0422 to TSGB0423**

These tables summarise the performance of the freight business in terms of freight 'lifted' (measured in tonnes) and freight 'moved' (measured in tonne kilometres).

In February 1996, British Rail's (BR) bulk freight operations were sold to North and South Railways, subsequently called English, Welsh and Scottish Railway (EWS). In 2007, EWS was bought by Deutsche Bahn and in January 2009 was re-named DB Schenker. The other major companies in the rail freight sector are Freightliner Ltd (formerly the BR container business), Direct Rail Services (DRS) and First GB Railfreight.

Freight moved is measured in net tonne kilometres (NTKm). This takes into account the net weight

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(excluding the weight of the locomotive and wagons) of the goods carried (the freight lifted, measured in tonnes) and the distance carried. Although it is not included in the total NTKm, we have included a separate series on infrastructure traffic (goods used for railway engineering work). International comprises trains travelling through the Channel Tunnel; Domestic intermodal includes goods that have arrived by sea at ports.

Following the move of BR's bulk freight operations to the private sector there have been some changes in the way estimates of freight traffic have been compiled. In particular, the method of estimating tonne kilometres is different, with the result that recent estimates are not consistent with those for earlier periods.

Freight lifted is the mass of goods carried on the network. It excludes the weight of the locomotives and wagons. Unlike freight moved it takes no account of the distance travelled. Data pre and post-privatisation are not directly comparable. Further details can be found in the Office of Rail Regulation's National Rail Trends publication, which is updated on a quarterly basis.

### **National Railways freight train movements, impacts on road haulage and Freight Performance Measure: TSGB0424**

This table shows the total number of train movements (including infrastructure trains) on the network and the equivalent distance that road vehicles would need to have travelled to move the amounts of freight carried on rail. It also shows the equivalent number of road vehicle trips necessary to move this freight. These measures provide an alternative to the traditional deadweight-based approach. These data are only available up to the 2009/10 financial year, due to the unavailability of more up-to-date road freight data.

**Freight Performance Measure** is the percentage of freight trains arriving at their final destination on time, each train being 'on time' if it arrives within 10 minutes of its scheduled arrival time. Further details can be found in ORR's National Rail Trends:

[www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2026](http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.2026)

### **Roll-on Roll-off statistics**

#### **Roll-on/roll-off: TSGB0425 to TSGB0426**

Statistics on the number of lorries and unaccompanied trailers travelling from Great Britain to mainland Europe and Ireland are compiled from quarterly returns provided by roll-on/roll-off ferry operators and from monthly information supplied by Eurotunnel. (Unaccompanied trailers are not carried by Eurotunnel.) Disaggregation by the country of registration of powered vehicles is provided by most of the ferry operators and by Eurotunnel. On some routes the operators can extract the nationality directly from the manifests or waybills, while on others each one is identified from the registration number pattern. The results are broken down by country of vehicle

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registration, by country of disembarkation and by GB port group. Separate figures are given for powered vehicles and unaccompanied trailers. Powered vehicles comprise rigid vehicles, lorries with semi-trailers (articulated units) and lorries with drawbar trailers. (Some vehicles under 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight are also included). Unaccompanied trailers are trailers and semi-trailers not accompanied on the ferry by a powered unit. Up to 1978 inward traffic was also recorded, but because it was similar to outward traffic the data requirement was discontinued to save respondent effort; consequently the statistics in these tables are for outward traffic only.

Revised estimates for 2004 to 2007 were published in May 2008 following a data quality review. This resulted in a break in the series between 2003 and 2004 and comparisons by country of registration should therefore be treated with caution.

Further details of the review are available in the Technical Note which accompanies the Ro-Ro publication. Both this note and more detailed analyses are provided in the quarterly bulletins of this publication; both the quarterly and annual bulletins are available on the Department's website:

[www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/roll-on-roll-off-international-freight/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/roll-on-roll-off-international-freight/)

<p>These notes and definitions relate to the detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “freight” that can be found on the Transport Statistics Great Britain freight web page, table numbers TSGB0401 to TSGB0428.</p>
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