

## **Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: notes, definitions, symbols and conventions**

### **Notes**

The statistics refer to personal injury accidents on public roads (including footways) which become known to the police within 30 days. In particular, damage-only accidents, with no human casualties or accidents on private roads or car parks are not included. The data are collected by police at the scene of an accident or in some cases reported by a member of the public at a police station. Some 50 data items are collected for each accident, including the time and location of the accident, the types of vehicles involved and what they were doing at the time of the accident, and some information on the drivers and casualties involved. The data are processed and then passed by the police (or their agent) to the Department for final checking and analysis.

The form (STATS19) used to collect the statistics and instructions (STATS20) which give more detail on the definitions used for completion) are published by the Department for Transport, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government, on the DfT website at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/>

As noted above, statistics on road safety in Great Britain are mostly based on accidents reported to the police via the STATS19 system. Comparisons with death registration statistics show that very few, if any, road accident fatalities are not reported to the police. However, it has long been known that a considerable proportion of non-fatal casualties are not known to the police, as hospital, survey and compensation claims data all indicate a higher number of casualties than are reported.

The Department produces an annual 'best estimate' of the total number of road casualties in Great Britain each year, including those not reported to police. This is derived primarily from National Travel Survey (NTS) data. The latest such estimates, along with a description of how they have been derived and their limitations, are set out in an annual article published in the *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain* annual report.

The STATS19 data are therefore not a complete record of all injury accidents and this should be borne in mind when using and analysing the data. However, they remain the most detailed, complete and reliable single source of information on road casualties covering the whole of Great Britain, in particular for monitoring trends over time.

## Definitions

*Accident:* Involves personal injury occurring on the public highway (including footways) in which at least one road *vehicle* or a *vehicle* in collision with a *pedestrian* is involved and which becomes known to the police within 30 days of its occurrence. One accident may give rise to several *casualties*. "Damage-only" accidents are not included in this publication.

*Adults:* Persons aged 16 years and over (except where otherwise stated).

*Agricultural vehicles:* Mainly comprises agricultural tractors (whether or not towing) but also includes mobile excavators and front dumpers.

*Built-up roads:* *Accidents* on "built-up roads" are those which occur on roads with *speed limits* (ignoring temporary limits) of 40 mph or less. "Non built-up roads" refer to speed limits over 40 mph. *Motorway accidents* are shown separately and are excluded from the totals for built-up and non built-up roads.

*Buses and coaches:* Buses or coaches equipped to carry 17 or more passengers, regardless of use.

*Cars:* Includes *taxis*, estate cars, three and four wheel cars and minibuses except where otherwise stated. Also includes motor caravans prior to 1999.

*Casualty:* A person *killed* or *injured* in an *accident*. Casualties are sub-divided into *killed*, *seriously injured* and *slightly injured*.

*Children:* Persons under 16 years of age (except where otherwise stated).

*Darkness:* From half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise, i.e. "lighting-up time".

*Daylight:* All times other than *darkness*.

*DfT:* Department for Transport

*Drivers:* Persons in control of *vehicles* other than *pedal cycles*, *motorcycles* and ridden animals (see *riders*). Other occupants of *vehicles* are *passengers*.

*Failed breath test:* *Drivers* or *riders* who were tested with a positive result, or who failed or refused to provide a specimen of breath (see note on Table RAS51002 in "Notes to individual tables" for the coverage of breath test data).

*Fatal accident:* An accident in which at least one person is *killed*.

*Goods vehicles:* These are divided into two groups according to vehicle weight. They include tankers, tractor units without their semi-trailers, trailers, articulated vehicles and pick-up trucks.

*Heavy goods vehicles (HGV):* Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes maximum permissible gross vehicle weight (gvw).

*Light goods vehicles:* Goods vehicles, mainly vans (including car derived vans), not over 3.5 tonnes maximum permissible gross vehicle weight.

*Injury accident:* An *accident* involving human injury or death.

*Killed:* Human casualties who sustained injuries which caused death less than 30 days (before 1954, about two months) after the *accident*. Confirmed suicides are excluded.

*KSI:* Killed or seriously injured.

*Light Goods Vehicle:* see *Goods vehicles*

*Motorcycles:* Two-wheel motor vehicles, including mopeds, motor scooters and motor cycle combinations.

*Motorways:* Motorway and A(M) roads.

*Mobility scooter:* A powered wheelchair or scooter with a maximum unladen weight of 150kg and a maximum speed of 8mph.

*Other roads:* All B, C and unclassified roads, unless otherwise noted (i.e. Table RAS30009).

*Other vehicles:* Other *vehicles* include ambulances, fire engines, trams, refuse *vehicles*, road rollers, *agricultural vehicles*, excavators, mobile cranes, *mobility scooters* and motorised wheelchairs etc, except where otherwise stated. Also included are non motorised *vehicles* include those drawn by an animal, ridden horse, wheelchairs without a motor, street barrows etc, except where otherwise stated. In certain tables "*other vehicles*" may also include *buses and coaches* and/or *goods vehicles*, as indicated in a footnote.

*Passengers:* Occupants of *vehicles*, other than the person in control (the *driver* or *rider*). Includes pillion passengers.

*Pedal cycles:* Includes tandems, tricycles and toy cycles ridden on the carriageway. From 1983 the definition includes a small number of cycles and tricycles with battery assistance with a maximum speed of 15 mph.

*Pedal cyclists:* *Riders* of *pedal cycles*, including any *passengers*.

*Pedestrians:* Includes children riding toy cycles on the footway, persons pushing bicycles, pushing or pulling other *vehicles* or operating pedestrian-controlled *vehicles*, those leading or herding animals, children in prams or buggies, and people who alight safely from *vehicles* and are subsequently injured.

*Riders:* Persons in control of *pedal cycles*, *motorcycles* or ridden animals. Other occupants of these *vehicles* are *passengers*.

*Road users:* Pedestrians and vehicle riders, drivers and passengers.

*Rural Roads:* Major roads and minor roads outside urban areas and having a population of less than 10 thousand.

*Serious accident:* One in which at least one person is seriously injured but no person (other than a confirmed suicide) is *killed*.

*Serious injury:* An injury for which a person is detained in hospital as an “in-patient”, or any of the following injuries whether or not they are detained in hospital: fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushings, burns (excluding friction burns), severe cuts, severe general shock requiring medical treatment and injuries causing death 30 or more days after the *accident*. An injured *casualty* is recorded as *seriously* or *slightly injured* by the police on the basis of information available within a short time of the *accident*. This generally will not reflect the results of a medical examination, but may be influenced according to whether the casualty is hospitalised or not. Hospitalisation procedures will vary regionally.

*Severity:* Of an *accident*, the severity of the most severely injured *casualty* (either *fatal*, *serious* or *slight*). Of a *casualty*; *killed*, *seriously injured* or *slightly injured*.

*Slight accident:* One in which at least one person is *slightly injured* but no person is *killed* or *seriously injured*.

*Slight injury:* An injury of a minor character such as a sprain (including neck whiplash injury), bruise or cut which are not judged to be severe, or slight shock requiring roadside attention. This definition includes injuries not requiring medical treatment.

*Speed limits:* Permanent speed limits applicable to the roadway.

*Taxi:* Any vehicle operating as a hackney carriage, regardless of construction, and bearing the appropriate district council or local authority hackney carriage plates. Also includes private hire cars.

*Users of a vehicle:* All occupants, i.e. *driver* (or *rider*) and *passengers*, including persons injured while boarding or alighting from the *vehicle*.

*Urban Roads:* Major and minor roads within an urban area with a population of 10 thousand or more. The definition is based on the 1991 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister definition of urban settlements. The urban areas used for this bulletin are based on 2001 census data.

*Vehicles:* Vehicles (except *taxis*) are classified according to their structural type and not according to their employment or category of licence at the time of an *accident*.

*Vehicles involved in accidents:* *Vehicles* whose *drivers* or *passengers* are injured, which hit and injure a *pedestrian* or another *vehicle* whose *driver* or *passengers* are injured, or which contributes to the *accident*. *Vehicles* which collide, after the initial *accident* which caused injury, are not included unless they aggravate the degree of injury or lead to further *casualties*. Includes *pedal cycles* ridden on the footway.

## **Symbols and conventions used**

*Rounding of figures:* In tables where figures have been rounded, there may be an apparent slight discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total as shown.

*Symbols:* The following symbols have been used throughout:

0 = nil or negligible (less than half the final digit shown).

.. = not available/applicable.

*Conversion factor:* 1 mile = 1.6093 kilometres.

*Billion* = One thousand million = 1000,000,000 =  $10^9$