

# Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2013 Annual Report



Department  
for Transport

## Key findings

The key findings from the RRCGB 2013 report include:

- ▶ **Road deaths** in 2013 decreased by 2 per cent compared to 2012, to 1,713. This is the lowest figure since national records began in 1926.
- ▶ The number of people **seriously injured** decreased by 6 per cent to 21,657 in 2013, compared to 2012.
- ▶ The **total number of casualties** in road accidents reported to the police in 2013 was 183,670, down 6 per cent from the 2012 total.
- ▶ **Vehicle traffic levels** have remained broadly stable with a small increase of 0.4 per cent between 2012 and 2013.
- ▶ **Pedal cyclist deaths** decreased by 8 per cent to 109 in 2013, compared to 118 in 2012.
- ▶ **Pedal cyclist deaths** have seen a long-term fall, but have fluctuated between roughly 100 and 120 over the last six years. Since records began in the 1920s, the highest annual figure seen for cyclist deaths was 1,536 in 1934. The lowest annual figure for pedal cyclist deaths was 104 in 2009, 93 per cent lower than the 1934 high.
- ▶ Our best current estimate, derived from the NTS data, is that the **total number of road casualties in Great Britain** annually, including those not reported to the police, is within the range 630 to 800 thousand with a central estimate of 720 thousand.
- ▶ The latest estimates of **drink drive casualties** are for 2012 and show that there were 230 drink drive deaths in 2012, not significantly different to the previous two years.

## About this report

The Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain (RRCGB) Annual Report: 2013 presents detailed statistics (headline figures were first published in June 2014) about the circumstances of personal injury accidents, including the types of vehicles involved, the resulting casualties and factors which may contribute to accidents. In addition to detailed tables there are three articles containing further analysis on specific road safety topics.

Most of the statistics in the report are based on information about accidents reported to the police. However, other sources such as mortality, survey and hospital data are also used as well as population and traffic data to provide a wider context.

## Introduction

**The Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2013 Annual Report** presents detailed statistics about the circumstances of personal injury accidents, including the types of vehicles involved, the resulting casualties, and factors which may contribute to accidents occurring. Most of the statistics in the publication are based on information about accidents reported to the police (using 'STATS 19' forms). However, other sources such as mortality, survey and hospital data are also used as well as population and traffic data to provide a wider context.

In addition to detailed tables there are **three articles** containing further analysis on specific road safety topics.

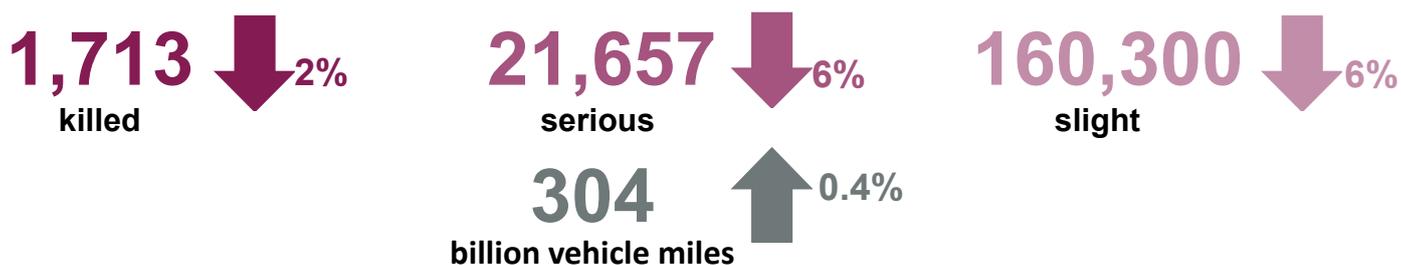
- **an overview and trends in reported road casualties**
- **an overview of cycling casualty trends and circumstances**
- **an overview of the impact of weather patterns on casualty trends**

This publication summarises key points from each article.

## Overview and trends in reported road casualties

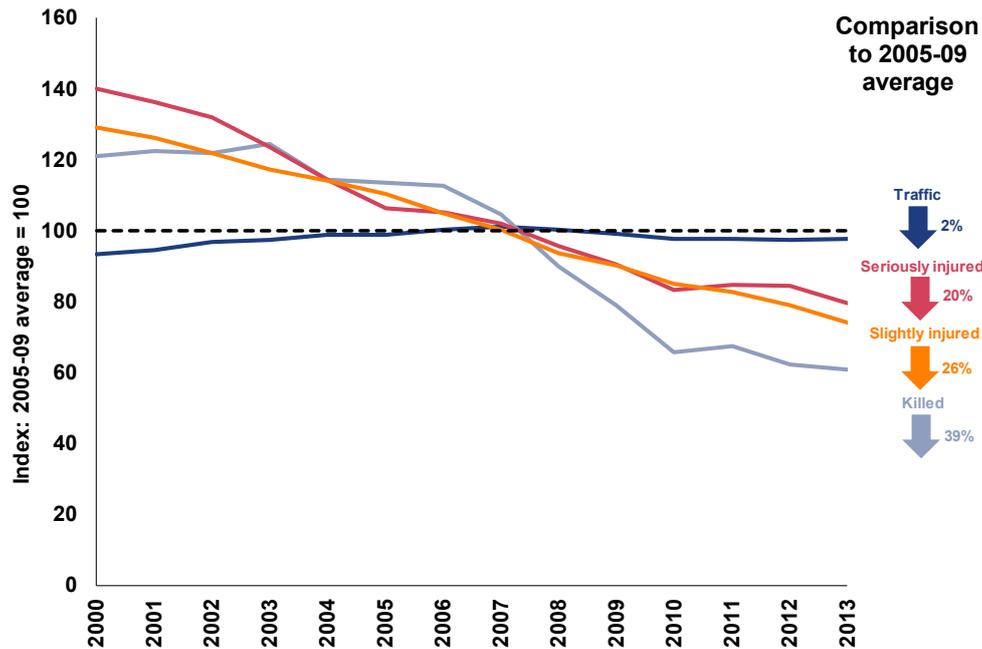
- In 2013, 1,713 people were **killed** in road accidents reported to the police, the lowest number on record, and half as many as in 2000.
- In 2013, 21,657 people were **seriously injured** in road accidents. This total is 43 per cent lower than in 2000. Seriously injured casualties have decreased steadily since 2000, with 2010-2011 being the only year-on-year increase.
- The total number of **casualties** of all severities in 2013 was 183,670. Total reported casualties have also decreased steadily since 2000.
- A total of 138,660 personal-injury road **accidents of all severities** were reported to the police in 2013. This total is the fewest reported accidents in a single year apart from 1926 and 1927, the first two years national records were kept.

**Casualties fell between 2012 and 2013 for all severities despite a small increase in traffic ...**



*\*2013 figures shown*

## Traffic and reported casualties by severity, GB: 2000-2013



## Definitions

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

A full list of the definitions used in this release can be found [here](#).

## 2005-2009 average

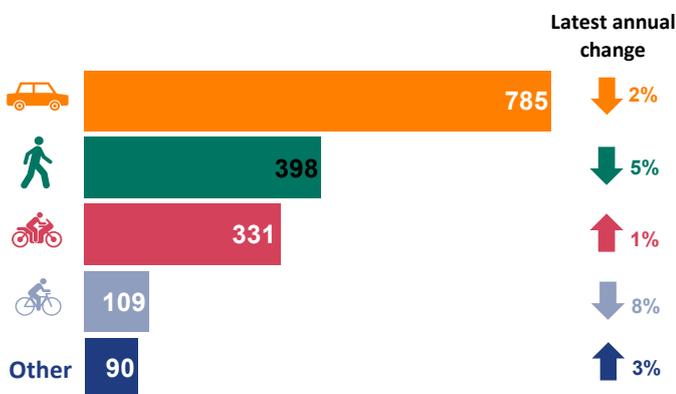
2005 -2009 average is the baseline for the SFRS ([Strategic Framework for Road Safety Outcomes](#)).

**All road users** casualties compared to the 2005-2009 average:

Killed	39%
Serious	20%
KSI	22%
All casualties	25%
Accidents	23%

- **Vehicle traffic levels** have remained broadly stable with a small increase of 0.4 per cent between 2012 and 2013.

**In 2013, 785 fatalities were car occupants (46 per cent of all fatalities) ...**



\*Other consists mainly of goods vehicle and bus and coach occupants

## Further information...

The article **Overview and trends in reported road casualties** can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2013)

Related statistics (tables and charts) can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics)

Tables [RAS30059-RAS30068](#), [RAS40006](#). SFRS outcome indicators - Table [RAS41001](#).

## Focus on cycling

- **Pedal cyclist deaths** have seen a long-term fall, but have fluctuated between roughly 100 and 120 over the last six years. Since records began in the 1920s, the highest annual figure seen for cyclist deaths was 1,536 in 1934. The lowest annual figure for pedal cyclist deaths was 104 in 2009, 93 per cent lower than the 1934 high.
- **Pedal cyclist deaths** decreased by 8 per cent to 109 in 2013, compared to 118 in 2012.
- Pedal cyclists accounted for 11 per cent of all road **casualties** in 2013: 6 per cent of all road accident **fatalities**, 15 per cent of all **serious injuries** and 10 per cent of all **slight injuries**.
- **Pedal cycle traffic** has also been on a general increase. Road traffic estimates have shown a gradual increase in the distance cycled in Great Britain, with a 1 per cent rise between 2012 and 2013. This figure is 13 per cent higher than the 2005-09 average.

### Further information...

The article **Focus on cycling** can be found [here](#).

Related statistics (tables and charts) can be found [here](#).

## Understanding short term casualty trends; the impact of the weather

- As the number of road casualties gets smaller, understanding the reasons behind **year-on-year changes** becomes more important. Weather patterns provide useful context to explain year-on-year changes in road casualty statistics.
- **Significant and extended snowfall throughout Britain at the start and end of 2010** is likely to have suppressed the number of users on the road leading to a reduction in traffic, accidents and casualties in these periods. This is likely to have reduced the number of fatalities in 2010 and as a result an increase in fatalities was seen in 2011. The return to the long term downward trend in fatalities in 2012 and 2013 after the increase between 2010 and 2011 reinforces the hypothesis that the 2010 figures were affected by the weather.
- **2012 was the second wettest year on record**. The likely result of this additional rainfall in 2012 would have been to reduce the number of vulnerable road users, particularly pedal cyclists and motorcyclists on Britain's roads, especially during the spring and summer months. This may have had the effect of reducing the number of accidents and casualties from these user groups. Both 2011 and 2013 were drier than 2012 so some caution is needed in interpreting changes in casualties between years over the period 2011-2013.

### Further information...

The article **Understanding short term casualty trends; the impact of the weather** can be found [here](#).

Related statistics (tables and charts) can be found [here](#).

## Changes in article coverage from 2012

There have been some changes in the articles included in the annual report this year from the 2012 annual report.

- The articles on **survey data** and the **valuation of road accidents and casualties** have not been included as the methodology and broad trends are similar to previous years. The tables associated with these articles have been updated (survey data: [RAS54](#), accident and casualty costs: [RAS60](#)). For more information on the methodology and data sources for the published tables, please see the articles published as part of [RRCGB 2012](#).
- The article using **hospital episode statistics (HES)** has been delayed due to personnel changes. We intend to update the analysis during 2014 or 2015.
- As the proportions of accidents with each **contributory factor** do not change much from year to year, we have decided to remove this article this year. Our current expectation is to produce the article every two or three years allowing us to highlight what has changed. We seek any views users have on this proposal. Despite not including the article, we have continued to maintain and update the contributory factor tables (tables [RAS50001 to RAS50015](#)).
- A new chapter focussing on more detailed analysis of a particular road user group has been introduced – this year on **cyclists**.
- As the number of road casualties gets smaller, understanding the reasons behind **year-on-year changes** becomes more important. Over the last few years, one such effect has been **weather patterns**. This new chapter presents an overview of the impact of different weather types over the past few years.

## Additional sections

This section summarises topics which have not been included as an article.

### International comparisons

- In comparison with other countries, the **UK remains one of the world leaders in terms of road safety**, and its rate for child fatalities is well below the European average.

### Casualty valuations

- The **total value of prevention of reported road accidents** in 2013 was estimated to be £14.7 billion - this includes an estimate of the cost of damage only accidents but does not allow for unreported injury accidents.

### Detailed statistics...

Detailed tables on international comparisons can be found in [RAS52001](#).

Detailed tables on accident and casualty costs can be found in [RAS60001-RAS6004](#).

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This represents a decrease of 3 per cent compared with the same estimate made in 2012.

- Since the early 1990s, the casualty valuation has been based on a consistent **willingness to pay** (WTP) approach. For more details of the methodology, see the [2012 Annual Report](#).

### Survey data on road accidents

- It has long been known that police data do not provide a complete record of all personal injury accidents and casualties. To help address this, the **National Travel Survey (NTS)** has included questions asking people about their involvement in road accidents since 2007.
- Our best current estimate, derived from the NTS data, is that the **total number of road casualties in Great Britain** annually, including those not reported to the police, is within the range 630 to 800 thousand with a central estimate of 720 thousand.
- For more details of the survey data methodology, see the [2012 Annual Report](#).

#### Detailed statistics...

Detailed tables on survey data on road accidents can be found in [RAS54001-RAS54004](#).

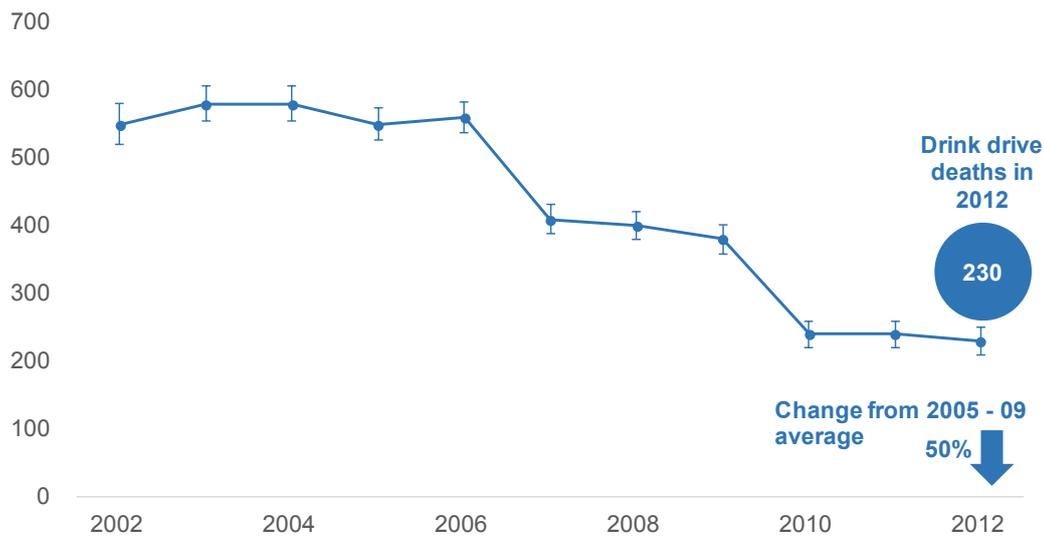
### Drinking and driving

- The latest estimates of drink drive casualties are for 2012 and show that there were 230 **drink drive deaths** in 2012, not significantly different to the previous two years.
- Following a sharp drop in deaths between 2009 and 2010 (a fall of around 40 per cent) **drink drive deaths have been stable since 2010**, between 230 and 240. These are the lowest figures seen since detailed reporting began in 1979.
- There were 1,430 **drink drive killed or seriously injured casualties (KSIs)** in 2012, a fall of 5 per cent from 2011. Drink drive KSIs fell each year from 2002 to 2010, with an average fall of around 10 per cent each year. Since then, the KSI numbers have been relatively stable.
- In 2012, 6 per cent of killed motorcyclists and around a quarter of vehicle drivers were found to be over the **legal alcohol limit** when they died. These proportions have fluctuated over the past decade, but without a significant upward or downward trend. However, the overall number of killed drivers and riders has fallen, which has contributed to a fall in the number of drink drive deaths.
- **Breath test data** shows that in 2013, 3 per cent of drivers and riders failed a breath test following a reported personal injury accident. This proportion has been broadly stable since 2010, following falls earlier in the decade from 4 per cent in 2004.

#### Detailed statistics...

Detailed tables on reported drink driving can be found in [RAS51001-RAS51104](#).

## Killed casualties in reported drink drive accidents: GB 2002 to 2012; error bars show 95% confidence intervals



### Contributory factors

- As in previous years, the most commonly recorded contributory factor in reported road accidents in 2013 was **“driver/rider failed to look properly”**, recorded in around 26 per cent of fatal, 36 per cent of serious and 43 per cent of slight accidents.
- **“Driver/rider failed to look properly”** was the most commonly recorded factor in serious and slight accidents. For fatal accidents, **“loss of control”** was the most commonly recorded factor, accounting for 34 per cent of cases.
- For more information about the contributory factors system in STATS19, including its limitations, see the chapter in the [2011 Annual Report](#).

### Detailed statistics...

Detailed tables on contributory factors can be found in [RAS50001-RAS50015](#).

### Further information...

Detailed tables can be found on Reported road casualties Great Britain – 2013 annual report web page at: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics)

## Detailed tables

The annual report also includes detailed tables based on data reported to the police. Areas covered are listed below, with relevant table numbers in brackets:

- accidents ([RAS10](#))
- drivers and vehicles involved ([RAS20](#))
- casualties ([RAS30](#))
- combined accidents, casualties, vehicles ([RAS40](#))
- area comparisons ([RAS30038-RAS30058](#), [RAS10014-RAS10015](#), [RAS41002-RAS41004](#))
- international comparisons ([RAS52](#))
- inter modal comparisons ([RAS53](#))
- Strategic Framework for Road Safety outcome indicators ([RAS41](#))
- reported drink driving ([RAS51](#))
- contributory factors ([RAS50](#))
- survey data on road accidents ([RAS54](#))
- hospital admissions as a result of road accidents ([RAS55](#)) (to be updated at a later date)
- accident and casualty costs ([RAS60](#))

A full list of tables in the road safety series and an index linking 2009 RRCGB report table numbers with 2013 RRCGB web tables can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-accidents-and-safety-statistical-tables-index](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-accidents-and-safety-statistical-tables-index)

## Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Comparisons of road accident reports with **death registrations** 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 police accident data would suggest.

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We have updated our estimate of the total number of road casualties in Great Britain, including those not reported to the police, in this year's Survey data on road accidents tables [RAS54001-RAS54004](#).

The police data are therefore not a complete record of all injury accidents and this should be borne in mind when using and analysing the data included in this publication. Police data on road accidents remain the most detailed, complete and reliable single source of information on road casualties covering the whole of Great Britain.

We also continue to look at other sources of data on road accidents. Although the RRCGB 2013 annual report does not contain any new analyses of hospital data, an article can be found in the [2011 annual report](#) and in tables [RAS55001-RAS55016](#). This article and the tables will be updated at a later date. Further information on complementary sources of data on road accidents and casualties, can be found in Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 annual reports, which are available through: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics)

## Background notes

**1)** Further information about the Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2013).

**2)** On 17 December 2011, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, signifying their compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.
- Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The statistics were reassessed in 2013 and confirmed as National Statistics. The report (number 258) was published on 25th July 2013 at: [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/)

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[assessment-reports/index.html](#).

- 3)** Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-accident-and-safety-statistics-pre-release-access-list](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-accident-and-safety-statistics-pre-release-access-list).
- 4)** A full list of the definitions used in this publication can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/48822/reported-road-casualties-gb-notes-definitions.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48822/reported-road-casualties-gb-notes-definitions.pdf).
- 5)** Further information on Reported Road Casualties Great Britain, including information about the variables collected on the STATS19 form, historical publications and factsheets, can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics-guidance).
- 6)** Reported accident and casualty data are also released at record level (subject to meeting confidentiality requirements) as part of the government's transparency agenda. These records can be accessed through the data.gov website: [data.gov.uk/dataset/road-accidents-safety-data](http://data.gov.uk/dataset/road-accidents-safety-data).
- 7)** The next release of road accidents and casualty data will be estimates for the second quarter of 2014 on 6 November 2014.

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## Key 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. 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.

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

**Fatal accident:** An accident in which at least one person is killed; other casualties (if any) may have serious or slightly injuries.

**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.

**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.

**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.