



Department for Transport

Road Freight Statistics: United Kingdom April 2015 - March 2016

About this release

This statistical release summarises the latest statistics on the domestic and international activity of UK-registered heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

Domestic road freight data are derived from the Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport Great Britain (CSRGT GB) which measure the domestic activity of GB - registered HGVs operating in the UK.

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Definitions

Goods lifted: the weight of goods carried measured in tonnes.

Goods moved: a measure of activity taking into account the weight of the load and distance through which it is hauled. It is equal to the weight of goods multiplied by distance and is measured in tonne kilometres.

Domestic road freight: main results

In the 12 months ending March 2016 there were ... Compared to the 12 months ending March 2015

1.68
billion tonnes



↑ 8 per cent

155
billion tonne kilometres



↑ 10 per cent

18.5
billion kilometres



↑ 6 per cent

- ▶ The amount of goods lifted in the UK by GB-registered heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) increased by 8 per cent to 1.68 billion tonnes compared with the previous year. This is 5 per cent lower than 10 years earlier but 24 per cent higher than the recessionary low of 2009.
- ▶ The amount of goods moved by HGVs increased by 10 per cent to 155 billion tonne kilometres compared with the previous year. This is 2 per cent higher than 10 years earlier and 24 per cent higher than the recessionary low of 2009. [See [Table RFS0101](#) for detailed statistics]

The 12 months ending March 2016 in context ...

GDP

↑ 2.0

per cent increase compared to the previous year



↑ 1.7

per cent higher in March 2016 compared to March 2015

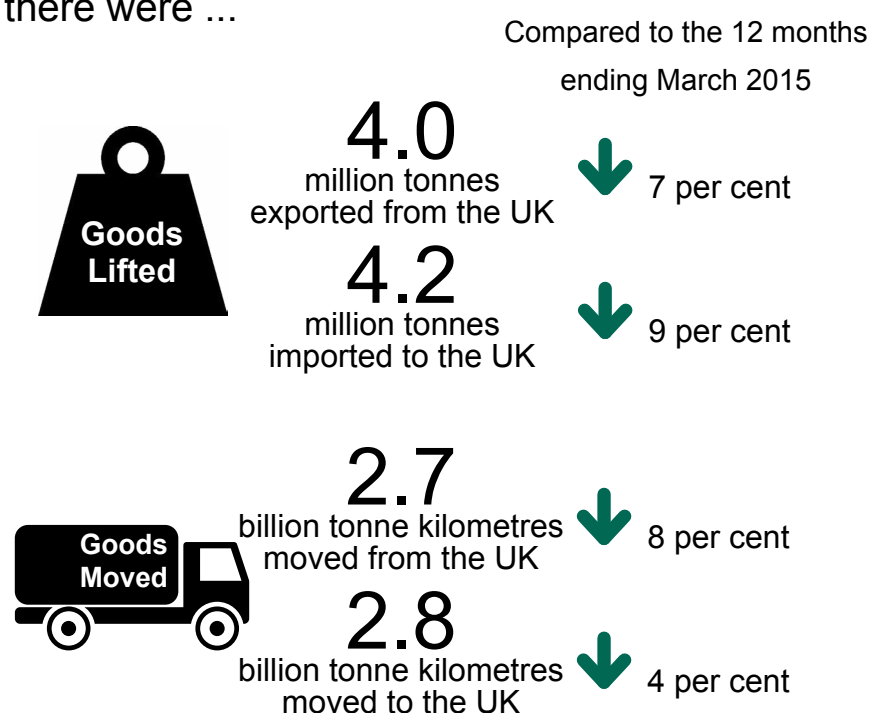
Diesel

↓ 16.9

p/litre drop in average diesel prices compared to the previous year

International road freight: main results

In the 12 months ending March 2016 there were ...



- ▶ UK-registered HGVs **lifted** a total of 8.2 million tonnes of goods (4.0 million tonnes exported and 4.2 million tonnes imported) to or from the UK in the 12 months ending March 2016, 8 per cent fewer than the 8.9 million tonnes carried in the previous 12 months. This is 28 per cent lower than the same period 10 years earlier and 15 per cent lower than in 2009 during the recession.
- ▶ Over the same period, 5.5 billion tonne kilometres of **goods were moved** compared to 5.9 billion tonnes kilometres in the 12 months ending March 2015, a decrease of 6 per cent. This is 35 per cent lower than the same period 10 years earlier and 18 per cent lower than in 2009 during the recession. [See [Table RFS0144](#) and [Table RFS0201](#) for detailed statistics]

[More detailed information can be found in the [annual release](#)]

Users and uses of statistics

Road freight statistics are a key source of management information on the use of the country's infrastructure. Their main use occurs across various types of public and private bodies: the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat); local and central government, such as the Office for National Statistics and Highways England; local town and transport planning bodies; commercial organisations, such as haulage operators and transport consultants; and academics.

Users are mainly interested in information such as the length of haul, empty running, the pattern of freight from abroad on UK roads. The statistics also support policies on freight, road safety and on reducing congestion and pollution.

About this release

International road freight data are derived from two surveys run by the Department for Transport:

The International Road Haulage Survey (IRHS) which measures the international activity of GB-registered HGVs.

The Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport Northern Ireland (CSRGT NI) which measures the domestic and international activity of NI-registered HGVs.

Strengths and weaknesses of data

The figures in this release are derived from the Continuing Survey of Road Goods Transport Great Britain/Northern Ireland (CSRGT GB/NI) and the International Road Haulage survey (IRHS) which provide information on the UK and international activity of HGVs registered in the UK. Excluded from the surveys are foreign-registered vehicles and vehicles of 3.5 tonnes or less gross vehicle weight (Light Goods Vehicles).

The CSRGT GB/NI are continuous surveys which collect a range of information on freight movements from a stratified sample of HGVs. Figures are weighted to be representative of the HGV population however, like any statistical source, there are limitations. For example, as a sample survey the resulting figures are estimates with associated sampling error.

The International Road Haulage Survey (IRHS) is a continuous business-level survey of road freight activity. It collects information on international journeys made by HGVs, transporting freight by road, that are registered to businesses in GB. This data is combined with international trip data from the CSRGT NI survey to build a picture of all international activity by UK registered vehicles.

Businesses are identified for inclusion in the IRHS from records of HGV operator licences owned by the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC) and provided to DfT by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). Only firms possessing a "Standard International" HGV operator's licence (which permits them to carry their own goods and those of others in the UK and internationally) are surveyed under the IRHS. Firms in possession of a "Restricted" or "Standard National" licence (which permit them to move their own goods internationally but not those of others) are excluded from the survey on the basis of balancing cost, resources and time with coverage.

This does mean there may be some underreporting of international road freight activity as well as the potential for bias in the road freight data if the activities, type of work or nature of freight moved by firms with standard international licences differs to that of firms carrying other licence types. Initial anecdotal feedback from the OTC and DVSA suggests that the majority of international work is conducted by HGVs holding Standard International Licences therefore any underreporting or bias is likely to have a minimal impact on the data. However, DfT will continue to investigate this and take actions as appropriate and will update these strengths and weaknesses in future publication to reflect their findings.

Figures from the IRHS are weighted to be representative of the volume of HGV traffic travelling from GB to mainland Europe using ferry routes and the Channel Tunnel. This information is collected from returns provided by the roll-on/roll-off ferry operators (RORO), giving the number of powered vehicles and unaccompanied trailers carried on each route from GB to mainland Europe and from monthly information supplied by Eurotunnel.

The use of RORO data to weight the IRHS data may introduce a small bias due to the fact that this information is collected on outward traffic only. This will affect the weighting of vehicles which return to the UK using a route different than that for the outward journey. RORO data is also only able to disaggregate between UK and foreign vehicles. An assumption is therefore made on the proportion of UK vehicles which are registered in Northern Ireland to obtain an estimate of GB registered vehicles.

Users should note that the freight statistics in this publication have not been seasonally adjusted and quarterly figures are prone to fluctuation therefore quarterly percentage changes are not displayed. Comparisons between 12 month periods are likely to be more informative and have been presented for this reason.

Between 2011 and 2012, a number of changes were made to how the three DfT road freight surveys were processed. Caution should therefore be used for statistics based on the three freight surveys when making comparisons over time. See the [Road Freight Statistics methodology note](#) for more information.

Guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics and further information can be found in the [Road Freight Statistics notes and definitions](#).

Background notes

The data tables give further detail on the key results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other road freight topics. These data tables are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-freight-domestic-and-international-statistic>

This release also collates statistics from a number of published sources that are revised and updated throughout the year. The data for this release were extracted in September 2016, and users can refer to the links below for the most recent or revised data available for each of the sources used, and also view any caveats relating to the sources.

- ▶ United Kingdom National Accounts, Office for National Statistics (ONS): <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/naa1-rd/united-kingdom-national-accounts/index.html>
- ▶ Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/quarterly-energy-prices>
- ▶ Vehicle licensing statistics for HGVs, Department for Transport (DfT): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/veh05-licensed-heavy-goods-vehicle>

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-freight-statistics-pre-release-access-list>.

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