

Road freight statistics

Statistical Release

27 October 2011



Road freight economic, environmental and safety statistics

This Statistical Release summarises a number of broad economic, environmental and safety statistics about the road freight industry.

The release draws on a number of pre-published statistical series from other Government Departments, mainly the Office for National Statistics and other teams in the Department for Transport.

This release is part of a suite of statistical releases on different aspects of the road freight industry.

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Key results

- There were 30,149 enterprises in the road freight industry in 2009 (the latest Annual Business Survey data available). This was 7 per cent lower than the figure for 2008 and 20 per cent lower than the figure for 1999.
- Turnover for the road freight industry was £23.9 billion in 2009, 9 per cent lower than in 2008. Gross value added was also lower in 2009 than in 2008, at £10.7 billion.
- Estimates from the Labour Force Survey show there were 299,000 HGV drivers in 2010, a 5 per cent increase on the 2009 figure of 285,000.
- At the end of 2010 there were 389,700 goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes licensed in Great Britain.
- In 2010, there were 7,103 accidents involving at least one HGV, with 9,686 casualties. Of those casualties, 263 were fatalities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

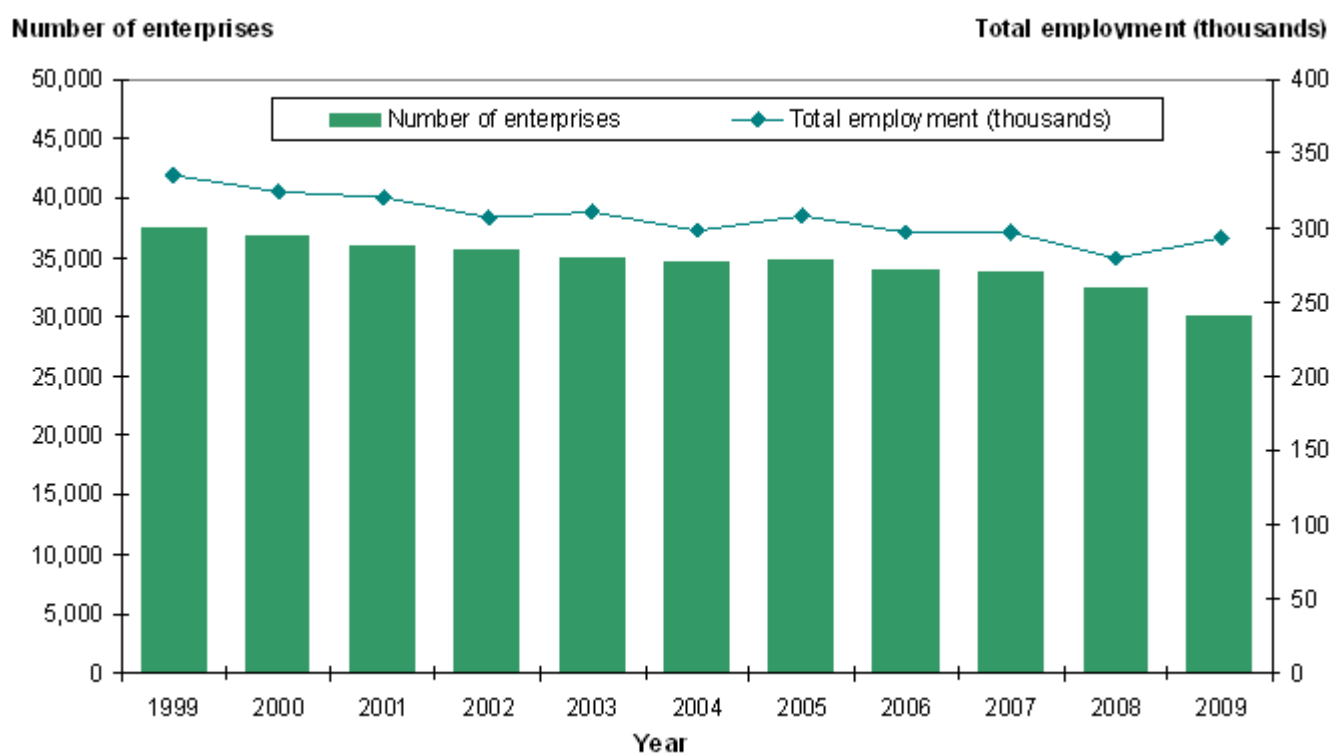
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1. Road freight economic activity

- There were 30,149 enterprises in the road freight industry in 2009 (the latest Annual Business Survey data available). This was 7 per cent lower than the figure for 2008 and 20 per cent lower than the figure for 1999.
- These enterprises generated turnover for the road freight industry of £23.9 billion in 2009, 9 per cent lower than in 2008. Gross value added in the road freight industry was also lower in 2009 than in 2008, at £10.7 billion.
- There were approximately 293,000 people in employment in the industry in 2009. This was 5 per cent higher than the figure of 280,000 in 2008 (**Chart 1**).

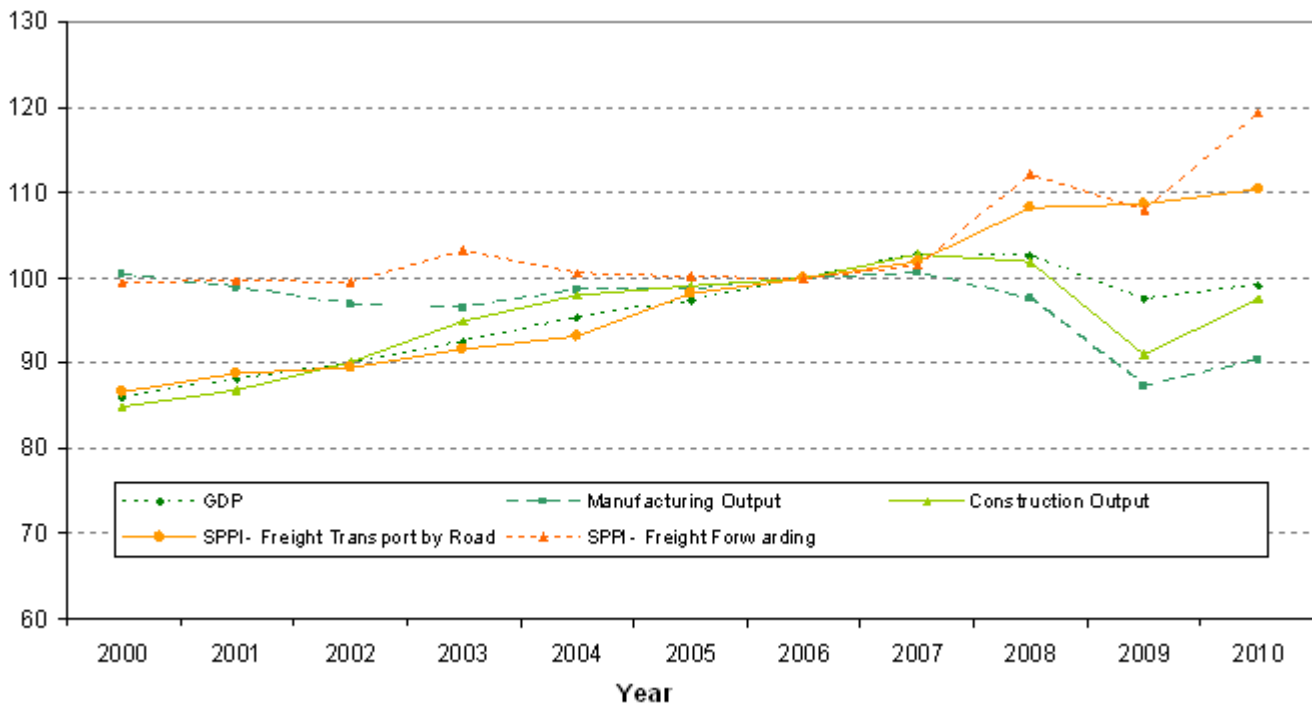
Chart 1: Road freight enterprises and employment, 1999-2009



Source: Annual Business Survey, Office for National Statistics

- Service Producer Price (SPP) Indices for the 'freight transport by road' industry were slightly higher in 2010 compared to 2009, but 27 per cent higher than in 2000. In 2010, SPP Indices for the freight forwarding industry were 10 per cent higher than in 2009 (**Chart 2**).
- SPP Indices captures quarterly and annual changes in the price received for services provided by UK businesses to other UK businesses and Government.

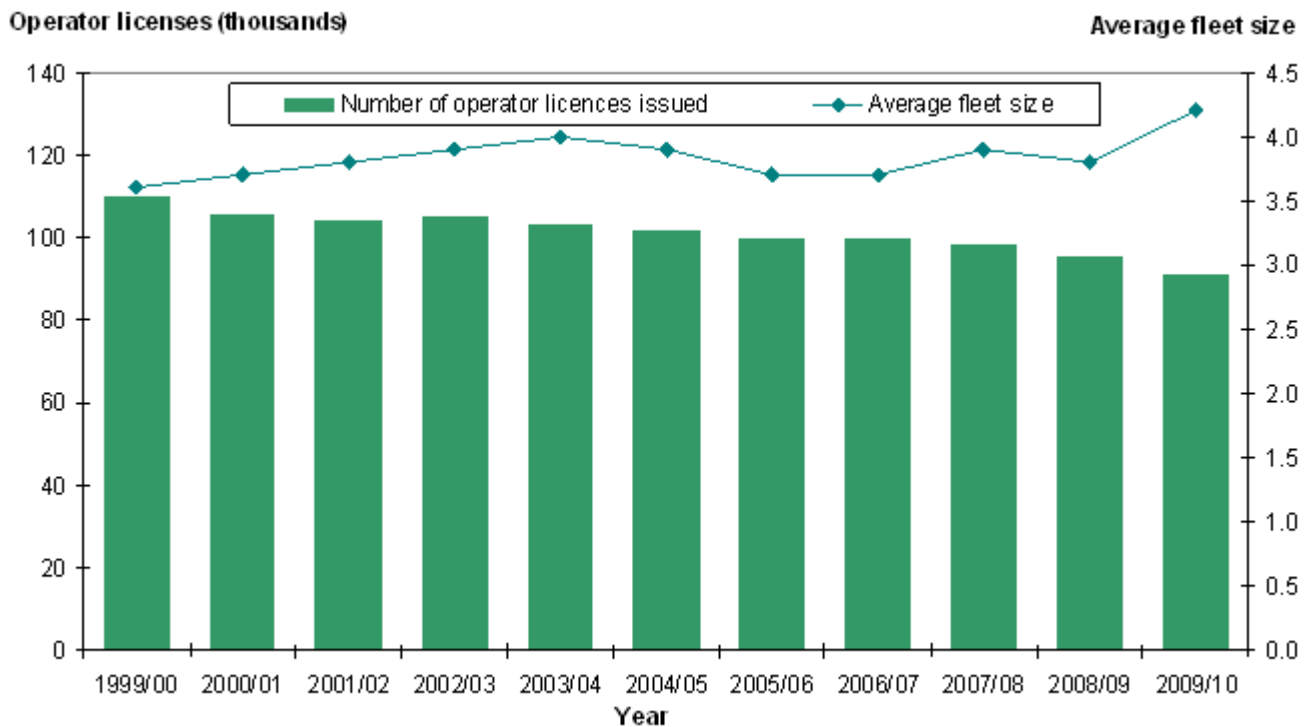
Chart 2: Indices of road freight activity measures (Index 2006=100)



Source: [Service Producer Prices Indices \(SPPI\)](#) and [National Accounts, Office for National Statistics](#)

- The number of goods vehicle operators in Great Britain has fallen over the last ten years, from 110,000 in 1999/00 to 91,000 in 2009/10. The 2009/10 figure was 4.4 per cent lower than the year before.

Chart 3: Operator Licences issued in Great Britain and average fleet size, 1999/00-2009/10



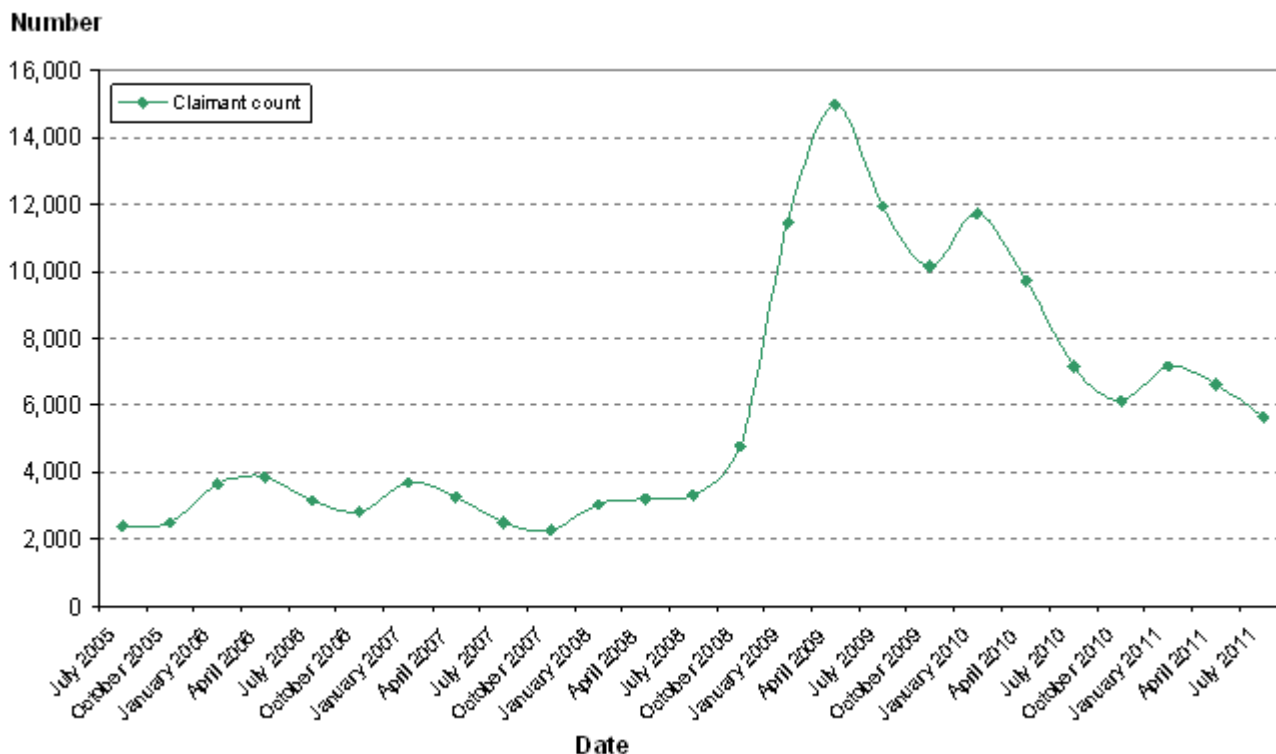
Source: [Traffic Commissioners' Report, Vehicle and Operators Service Agency](#)

- The average size of operators' fleets has increased from 3.7 vehicles in 1999/00 to 4.2 vehicles in 2009/10. This average size increased last year from 3.8 to 4.2 vehicles (**Chart 3**).

2. Employment and unemployment of HGV drivers

- Estimates from the Labour Force Survey show there were 299,000 HGV drivers in 2011 (April-June estimate), a 5 per cent increase on the 2010 figure of 285,000. Around 270,000 were employees and 29,000 were self-employed.
- The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings showed that in 2010, the median number of total paid hours worked per week (i.e. including overtime) by HGV drivers was 48.0. This figure has remained relatively similar since 2005. In 2004, the average was 50.0 hours worked per week.
- In July 2011, 5,620 people claiming Jobseekers' Allowance stated that HGV driver was their usual occupation. This was 63 per cent lower than the recent high of 15,305 in March 2009. In July 2005, the number was 2,370 (**Chart 4**)

Chart 4: Claimant count totals where usual occupation is HGV driver: July 2005 – July 2011



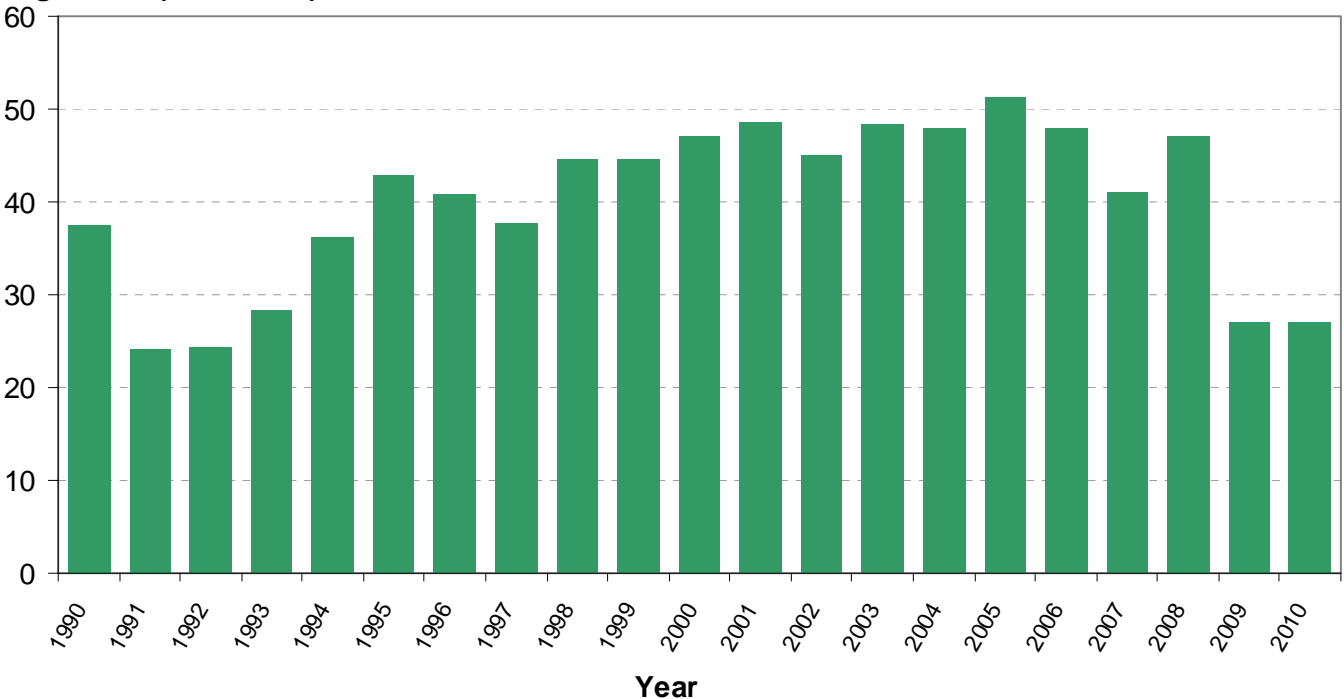
Source: [Claimant count \(from Nomis\), Office for National Statistics](#)

3. The population of licensed goods vehicles

- At the end of 2010 there were 470,100 heavy vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight licensed in Great Britain, of which 389,700 were taxed as 'goods vehicles'.
- Of these goods vehicles, 105,300 were articulated vehicles and 284,400 were rigid vehicles. About a quarter of rigid goods vehicles were licensed as Box Vans.
- In 2010 there were 27,000 new goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes licensed, the same number as in 2009, but a 43 per cent decrease on the figure of 47,000 first registered in 2008 (**Chart 5**).
- In recent years, a greater proportion of heavier articulated goods vehicles have been licensed. In 2000, around 26 per cent of articulated goods vehicles licensed were over 40 tonnes. In 2010 this proportion had risen to 72 per cent.

Chart 5: Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes registered by year, 1990-2010

Number of goods vehicles first registered (thousands)



Source: [Vehicle Licensing Statistics, Department for Transport](#)

- In addition to the number of vehicles over 3.5 tonnes registered in Great Britain, there were an additional 3.2 million light goods vehicles (LGVs) registered as at 31 December 2010. This was a 35 per cent increase on the total of 2.4 million in 2000.

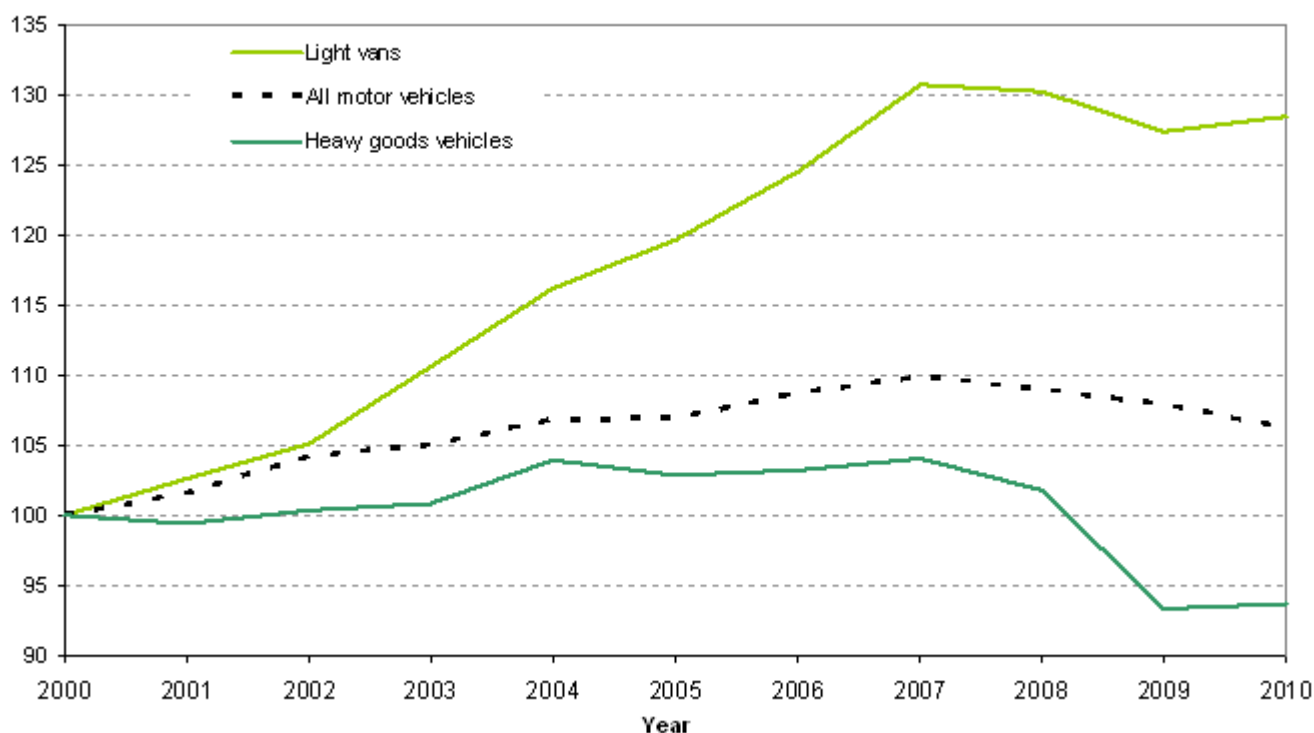
- LGVs can be utilised on a number of tasks including carrying freight, providing transport, carrying equipment or for private use. The DfT Van Activity Baseline Survey showed that around 21 per cent of LGVs in 2008 were used for the 'collection or delivery of goods'.

4. HGV and LGV road traffic

- **Chart 6** shows estimates of HGV and LGV traffic for Great Britain from the Department's National Road Traffic Survey.

Chart 6: Road Traffic for HGVs and LGVs in Great Britain, 2000 - 2010

Traffic volume Index: 2000 = 100



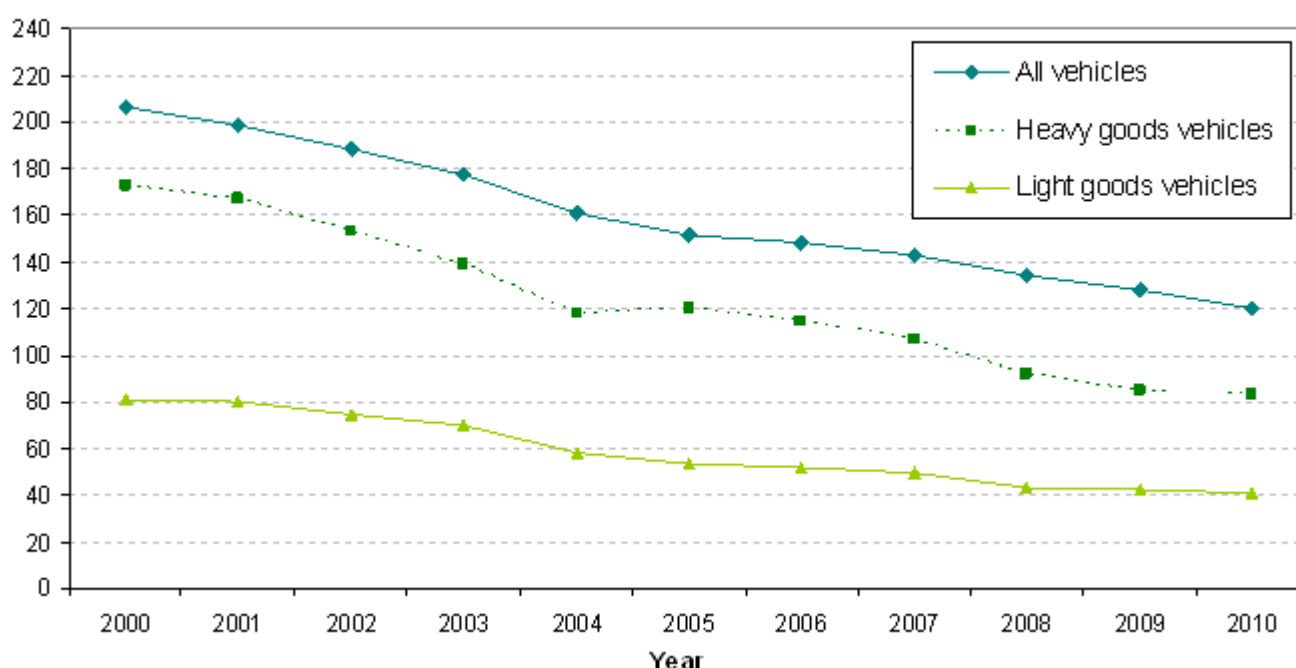
- In 2010 heavy goods vehicle traffic was 16.4 billion vehicle miles. This represents a 0.3 per cent increase from 2009; although heavy goods vehicle traffic levels remain 6.3 per cent lower than 2000.
- Light van traffic increased by 0.9 per cent between 2009 and 2010 to 41.8 billion vehicle miles. This was 28.6 per cent higher than 2000. Light van traffic showed the greatest increase in traffic volume in 2010, although not all of these vans would be carrying freight.
- The figures derived from the National Road Traffic Survey are different to those derived from the Department's road freight surveys. The traffic estimates are based on a combination of data from manual and automatic traffic counts that record traffic by vehicle type.

5. Road accidents involving HGVs

- In 2010, there were 7,103 accidents involving at least one HGV, with 9,686 casualties. Of those casualties, 263 were fatalities.
- There were around 83 fatal or serious accidents involving HGVs per billion vehicle miles in 2010. This figure was lower than the rate for all vehicles (120 accidents per billion vehicle miles) and has decreased from 173 per billion vehicle miles in 2000 (**Chart 7**).

Chart 7: Involvement rates in reported road accidents, by vehicle type 2000-2010

Rate per billion vehicle miles



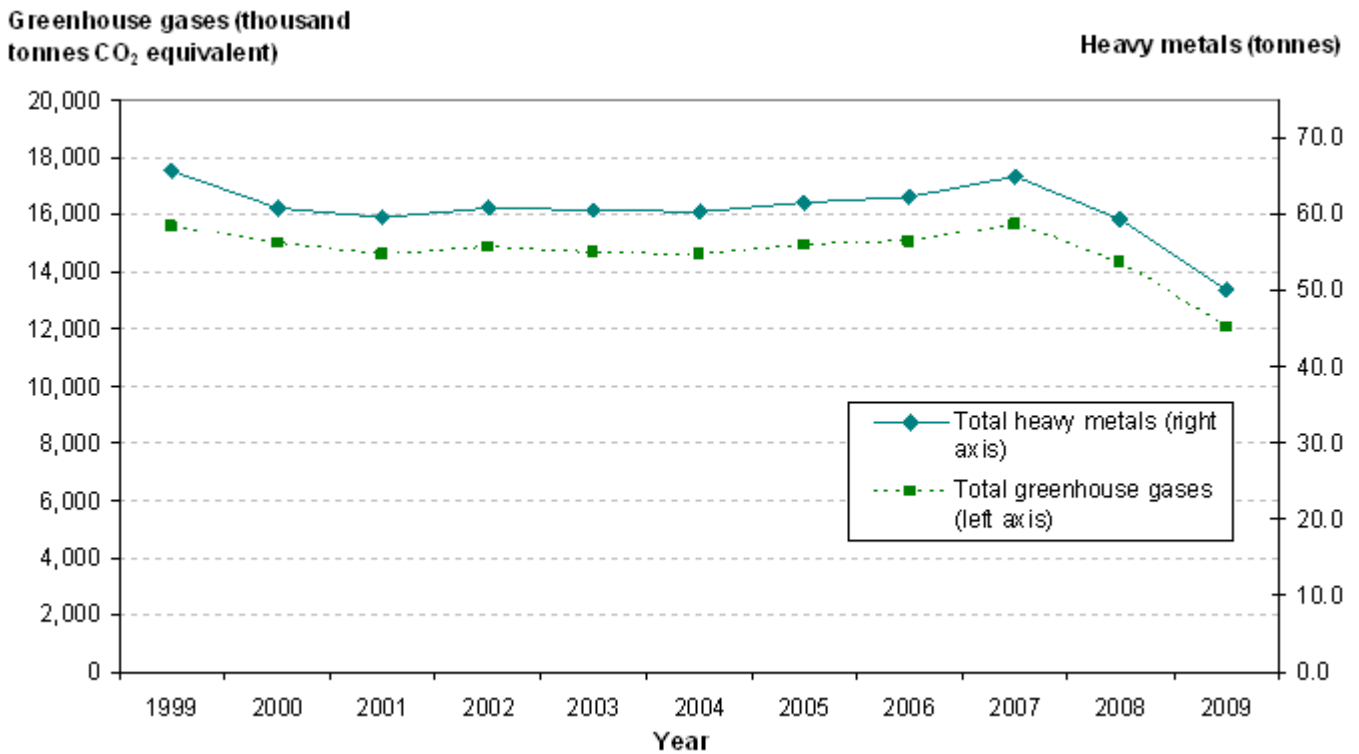
Source: [Road Accidents and Safety Statistics, Department for Transport](#)

6. Road freight industry and the environment

- Greenhouse gas emissions from the freight transport by road and removal services industry group fell by 16 per cent between 2008 and 2009 (the latest data available). This compares with an 18 per cent decrease in the amount of goods lifted and a 13 per cent decrease in the amount of goods moved over the same period (**Chart 8**).
- The total of greenhouse gas emissions accounted for about 1.9 per cent of emissions from all industries in 2009, and this proportion has been broadly similar since 1999.
- The freight transport by road industry also contributed around 50 tonnes of heavy metal pollutants in 2009 (mostly vanadium and copper). This was 4.3 per cent of the heavy metals

generated by all industries.

Chart 8: Greenhouse gases and heavy metals in the freight transport by road and removal services industry, 1999-2009



Source: [Environmental Accounts, Office for National Statistics](#)

Detailed statistics on different aspects of road freight can be found on the [Road Freight Statistics](#) web page, table numbers [RFS0101 to RFS0143](#) and [RFS0201 to RFS0212](#).

7. Background Notes

- This statistical release is one of three providing information on the road freight industry in the UK. The others give information on the domestic activity of GB-registered HGVs, and the international activity of UK HGVs.
- The release collates statistics from a number of published sources that are revised and updated throughout the year. The data for this release were extracted on 31 August 2011, and users can refer to the links below for the most recent or revised data available for each of the sources used, and also caveats relating to the sources.
 - Annual Business Survey: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/abs/annual-business-inquiry/2009-revised-results/index.html>
 - Service Producer Prices Indices from the Office for National Statistics (ONS):

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Services+Producer+Price+Indices>

- HGV operators:
<http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/trafficcommissioners/annualreports/>
- Licensed heavy and light goods vehicles:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/vehicle-licensing/>
- Van Activity Baseline Survey: Chapter 3 in *Road Freight Statistics 2009*:
<http://tna.europarchive.org/20110503185748/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2009>
- Employment and unemployment of HGV drivers:
<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> and <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/august-2011/table-emp16.xls>
- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE):
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=13101>
- Department for Transport Road Traffic estimates
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/traffic/>
- Differences between traffic estimates and freight survey estimates, page 75:
<http://tna.europarchive.org/20110503185748/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2009>
- ONS Environmental Accounts:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=3698>
- Road Accidents and Safety Statistics:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/>