

Road Lengths in Great Britain: 2013



Department
for Transport

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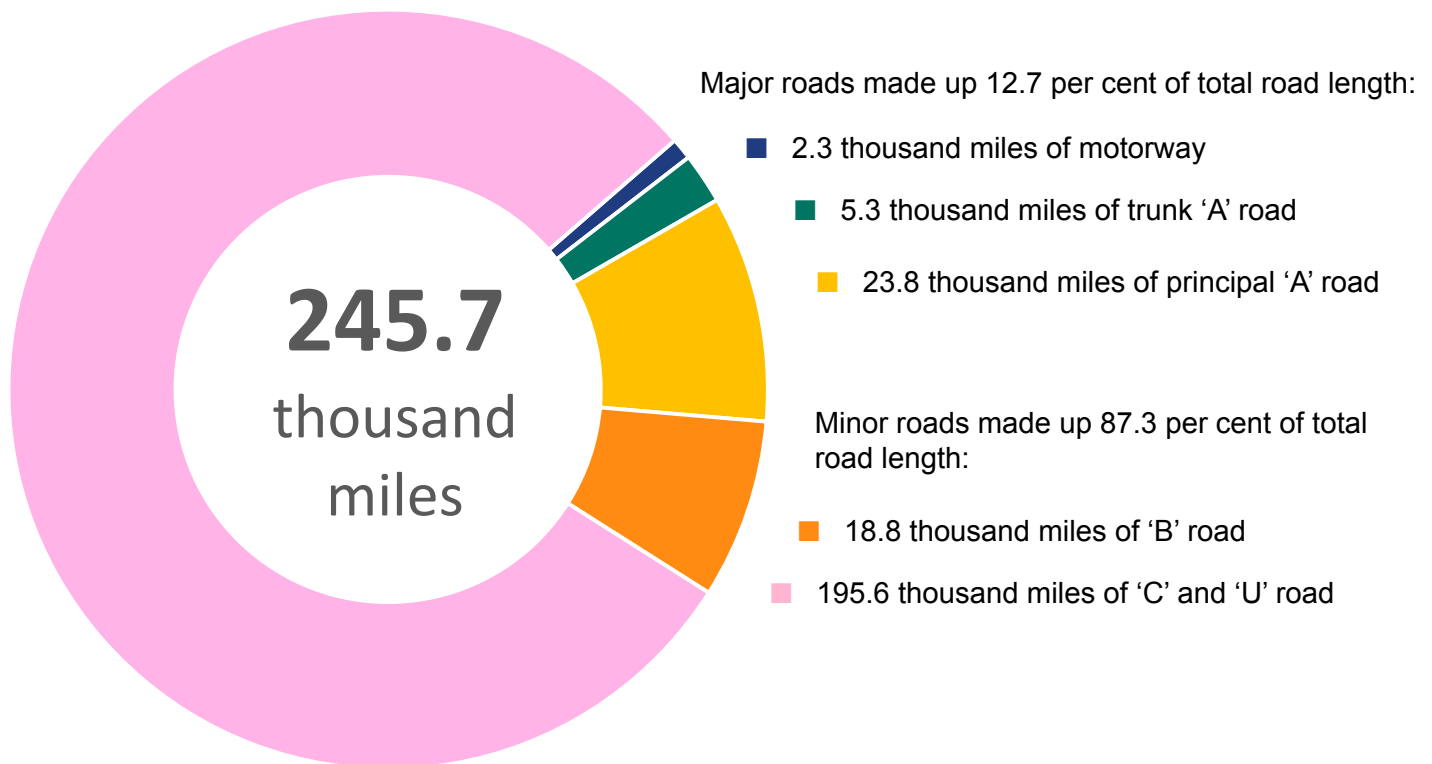


Main findings: Total road length in Great Britain in 2013 was estimated to be 245.7 thousand miles, an increase of 1.9 thousand miles (0.8%) over ten years.

Compared to previous years, total road length in Great Britain in 2013 was:

- 400 miles greater than in 2012, an increase of 0.1 per cent
- 1.9 thousand miles greater than in 2003, an increase of 0.8 per cent
- 6.6 thousand miles greater than 20 years ago in 1993, an increase of 2.7 per cent

Road length by road type in Great Britain, in 2013



About this release

This Statistical Release presents estimates for road lengths in Great Britain in 2013. Road lengths are presented for Great Britain as a whole, and are also available by country, region and by local authority in the accompanying tables.

These road length estimates are based on a range of sources including from Ordnance Survey and local authorities.

Motorways and 'A' roads are referred to as major roads. Major roads are also split into trunk roads which are centrally managed, and principal roads which are managed by local authorities (including Transport for London). 'B', 'C' and unclassified 'U' roads are referred to as minor roads.

Further charts and detailed statistical tables can be accessed on line via the [road length statistical series](#).

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Road lengths by road type

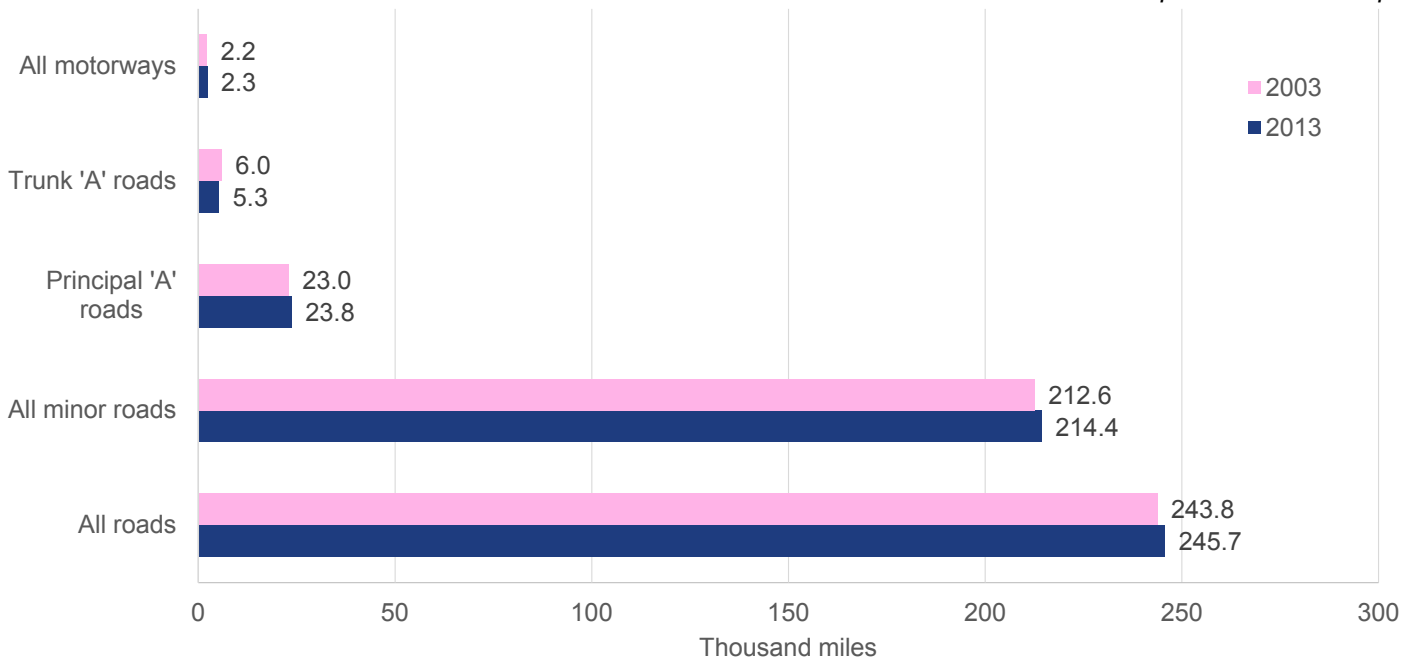
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The total road length in Great Britain in 2013 was estimated to be 245.7 thousand miles. This is an increase of 400 miles (0.1%) since 2012, 1.9 thousand miles (0.8%) since 2003 and 6.6 thousand miles (2.7%) since the current methodology of estimating road length came into affect in 1993.

There were 31.3 thousand miles of major road in 2013, making up 12.7 per cent of total road length in Great Britain. There were 214.4 thousand miles of minor road, making up 87.3 per cent of total road length in Great Britain. This comprised 18.8 thousand miles of 'B' road and the rest 'C' and 'U' roads. The chart below shows how this compares to road length 10 years ago in 2003.

Road length by road type in Great Britain, 2013 and 2003

Source: Department for Transport



The Government's detrunking programme involves the transfer of centrally managed trunk roads to local authority managed principal roads, with most of these transfers carried out between 2001 and 2003.

Road lengths (miles) by road type in Great Britain, annual from 1914 [RDL0103](#)

Road lengths (kilometres) by road type in Great Britain, annual from 1914 [RDL0203](#)

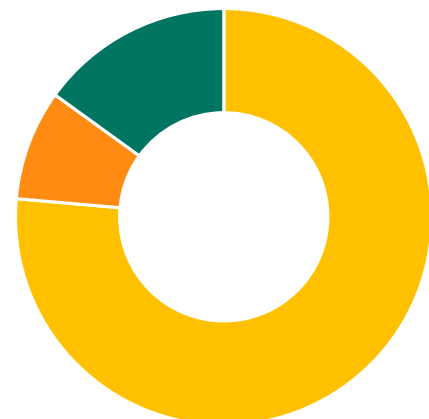
Road length by country

Road length by country in Great Britain, in 2013

Source: Department for Transport

On the 245.7 thousand miles of road length in Great Britain in 2013:

- 76.4 per cent, 187.7 thousand miles, was in England
- 8.6 per cent, 21.1 thousand miles, was in Wales
- 15.0 per cent, 37.0 thousand miles, was in Scotland



Road length (miles) by road type and region and country in Great Britain from 2005 [RDL0101](#), in kilometres [RDL0201](#)

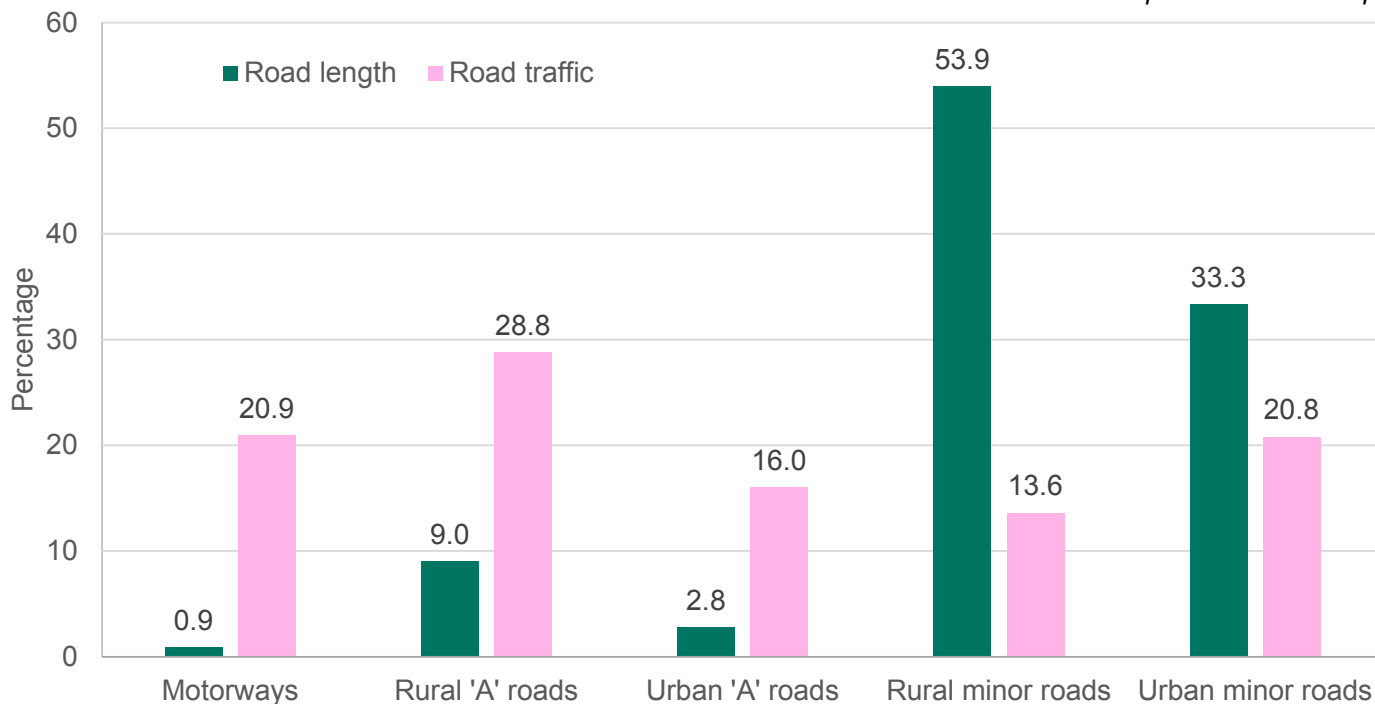
Road length and road traffic

Although major roads accounted for only 12.7 per cent of total road length in 2013, they carried 65.6 per cent of total road traffic. While minor roads made up 87.3 per cent of total road length, but carried only 34.4 per cent of total road traffic.

The chart below shows the percentage of road length compared with the percentage of road traffic carried, by road type in 2013. All types of major road carried a greater percentage of total road traffic than the percentage of the road length that they make up. The opposite was true for minor roads.

Percentage of road traffic and road length by road type in Great Britain, in 2013

Source: Department for Transport



Statistics on road traffic in Great Britain are available [here](#)

Road lengths (miles) by road type and local authority in Great Britain, annual from 2005 [RDL0102](#)

Road lengths (kilometres) by road type and local authority in Great Britain, annual from 2005 [RDL0202](#)

Trunk roads and the Strategic Road Network

Trunk roads are centrally managed by the Highways Agency, Transport Scotland and the Welsh Government. In 2013 trunk roads made up 3.1 per cent of total road length in Great Britain but carried 33.7 per cent of total road traffic in Great Britain.

The length of trunk road in Great Britain in 2013 was 7.5 thousand miles. Since the detrunking programme began in 2001, the length of trunk road has decreased by 1.7 thousand miles or 18.2 per cent.

The Strategic Road Network (SRN) includes all trunk motorways and 'A' roads in England only. In 2013, the SRN was 4.4 thousand miles long, making up 2.4 per cent of total road length in England but carried 32.9 per cent of road traffic in England.

Statistics on road traffic on the SRN are available [here](#)

[Highways Agency](#)

[Transport Scotland](#)

[Welsh Government](#)

Background information

Request for feedback

We are always keen to receive comments from users of transport statistics. If you have any comments about how the statistics in this release are presented or analysed, please contact us using the details listed on the first page of this release. It would be useful if you could specify which data in the release you are particularly interested in and if you use it for any specific purpose.

We are currently collecting user feedback on the annual Road Conditions in England publication. This publication is available [here](#). To assist with collecting these views we have set-up a survey for users to complete, more details of which can be found in the publication itself.

Technical information

Further information about road length data can be found in the road length statistics notes and definitions document and the methodology document which can both be found on the Road Network Size and Condition Statistics webpage <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-network-size-and-condition-statistics-guidance>.

As the R199b road length consultation did not take place in 2013, minor road lengths in 2013 have been estimated differently to previous years. These have been estimated using the Ordnance Survey Integrated Transport Network in conjunction with information collected in previous years, which is consistent with the methodology used elsewhere in the publication. For this reason, 'C' and 'U' roads have been combined in the accompanying tables.

All the statistics related to this statistical release can be found in tables in the road length statistics series <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-network-size-and-condition>.

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

DfT also publishes statistics on road traffic <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics>.

National Statistics

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

As road lengths estimates are based on information from a range of sources, the final estimates are reliant on all of these sources being accurate and up to date.

Up to 2012, the Department for Transport conducted a consultation exercise with local authorities to compare their records for the roads they manage with the records held by the Department. This was to ensure the accuracy of the road length data and to pick up any changes which have occurred to the road network. Due to resource constraints the Department did not complete this exercise in 2013, which may increase the level of uncertainty in figures for minor roads. More information on this change is given above in the Technical Information section.

Small changes may occur between years which are not accounted for by changes to the physical road network but may have occurred due to improved measurement of road lengths and better accuracy of the data sources used.

Next update

The next update, Road Lengths in Great Britain: 2014, and accompanying tables are due to be published in 2015.