Department for Transport

Vehicle Speed Compliance Statistics, Great Britain: 2017

Overall vehicle compliance with speed limits has remained broadly consistent since 2011, although between 2016 and 2017 there were minor increases in vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

About this release

This statistical release presents estimates of compliance with speed limits in free flowing conditions on roads in Great Britain.

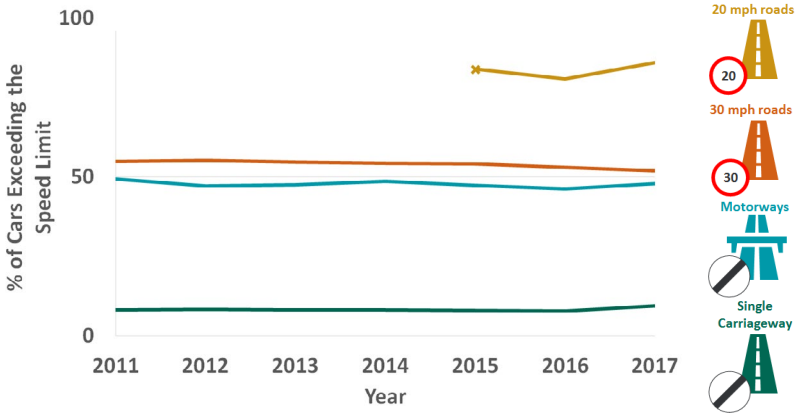
These are based on speed data from a sample of DfT's Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs), chosen to exclude locations where external factors might restrict driver behaviour (e.g. junctions, hills, sharp bends and speed cameras).

The statistics provide insights into speeds at which drivers choose to travel when free to do so, but are not estimates of average speeds across the whole network, which are available separately (see p. 19).

The release also presents information from a range of other sources releveant to vehicle speeds and compliance.

In this publication

Figure 1: Cars exceeding the speed limit, 2011-2017 (Table SPE0111)



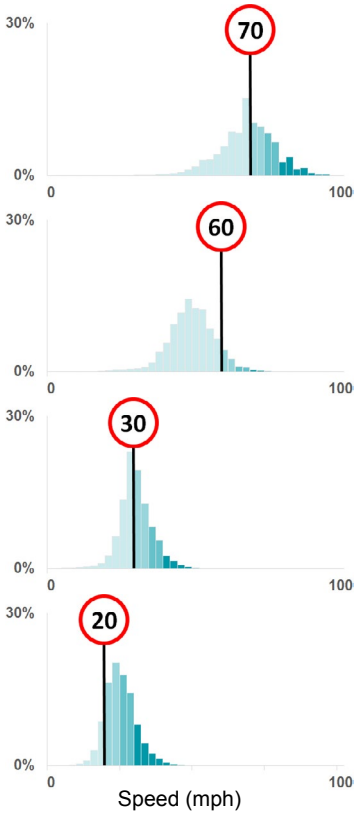
On motorways, 48% of cars exceeded the speed limit in 2017, with 12% exceeding the speed limit by more than10mph.

Single carriageway roads where the national speed limit applies (60 mph for cars) had the highest levels of speed limit compliance, with only 9% of cars exceeding the speed limit.

On 30mph roads, 52% of cars exceeded the speed limit with 6% exceeding the speed limit by 10mph or more.

On 20mph roads (under free flow conditions - which may not be typical of most 20 mph roads), 86% of cars exceeded the speed limit.

Figure 2: Car speeds by road speed limit (Table SPE0111)



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Compliance With Speed Limits Summary

The number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit varies by road and vehicle type. Figure 1 below shows a summary of the percentage of vehicles exceeding the speed limit for each vehicle class. More detailed results for each vehicle type are shown on the following pages.

Figure 3: Percentage of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0112)

Road Type	Cars	LCVs	Articulated HGVs	Rigid HGVs	Short Buses	Long Buses	Motorcycles
Motorways	48%	49%	1%	..	..	..	56%
National Speed Limit Single Carriageways	9%	..	20%	37%	35%	30%	26%
30mph Roads	52%	55%	42%	50%	35%	28%	54%
20mph Roads	86%	84%	..	75%	53%	77%	85%

.. Data is not available

Understanding and interpreting these statistics

When interpreting the speed limit compliance statistics shown on the following pages, it is worth considering the following points:

- Speeds and compliance with limits have been measured at sites where the road conditions are free flowing and there are no junctions, hills, sharp bends, speed enforcement cameras or other traffic calming measures. Therefore, the speed limit compliance and average speed figures published here will reflect how drivers behave when travelling freely, rather than being representative of speeds across the whole road network.
- Traffic calming measures are common on 20mph roads and whilst efforts have been made to ensure the use of free flow sites, it has not been entirely possible so some sites with limited traffic calming are also used. Even so, given the effort to use free-flowing sites, the average speed across the small number of 20mph sites sampled may be higher than that found across the wider 20mph network.
- Buses and HGVs are legally required to fit speed limiters (restricting them to speeds of 62mph and 56mph respectively). This will be a factor in their compliance on roads with higher speed limits.
- Since last year we have reviewed the sites used for these statistics and several non-free flow or otherwise unsuitable sites have been removed from the sample. As a consequence, the figures presented here will not be directly comparable with those published in previous years.

Key Definitions

Exceeding the speed limit

Vehicles travelling at a speed higher than their applicable speed limit are defined as “exceeding the speed limit”.

Free flow speed

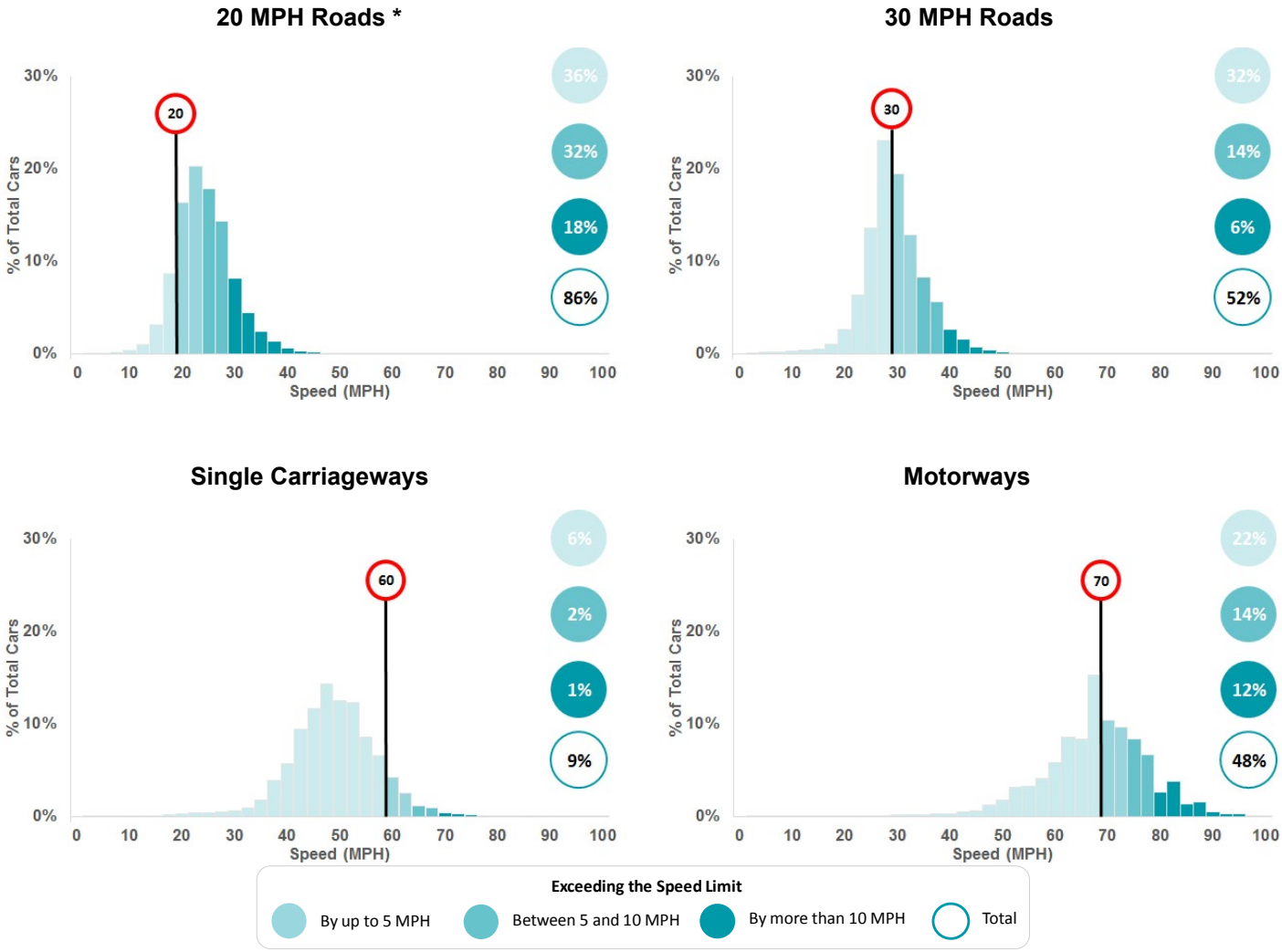
Free flow speeds are observed in locations where external factors which might restrict driver behaviour (e.g. junctions, hills, sharp bends and speed enforcement cameras) are not present.

Speed Limits

All vehicles have the same speed limit on 20mph and 30mph roads. On other road types, speed limits differ by vehicle type (see Background Information section).

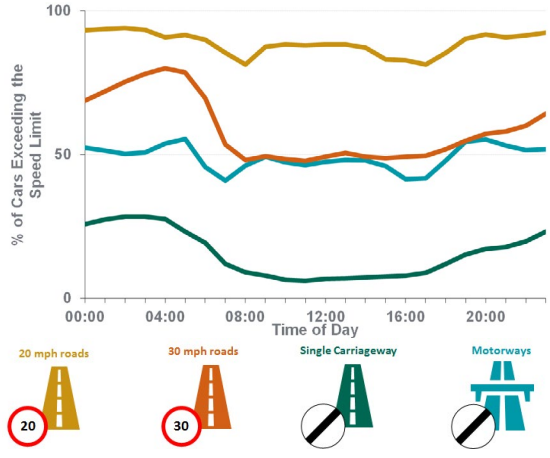
For some combinations of vehicle and road type, the Automatic Traffic Counters used to collect the data do not have the information required to determine which speed limit applies, so for these combinations speed limit compliance statistics are not shown.

Figure 4: Distribution of car speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0111)



How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 5: Cars exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)



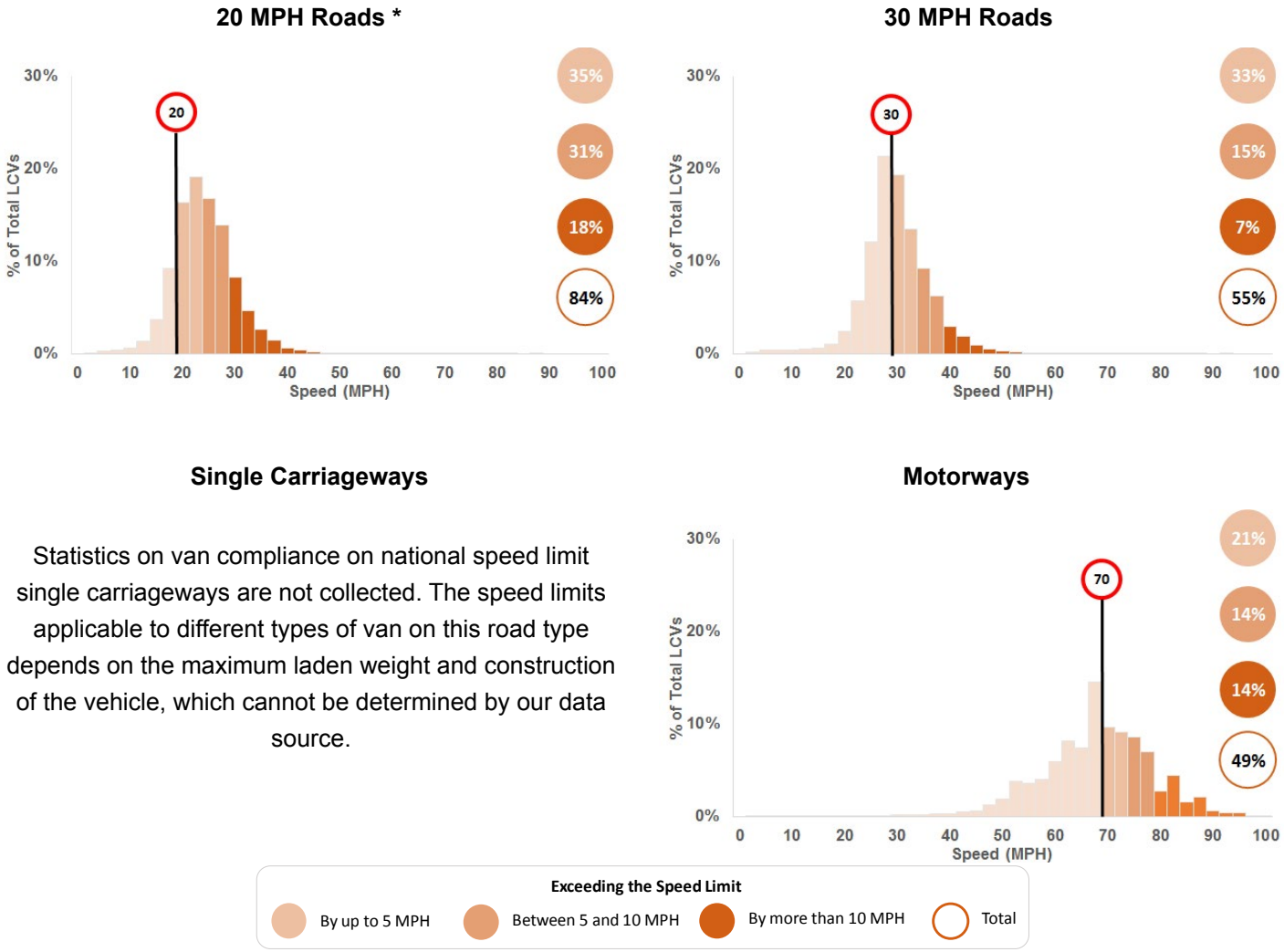
Summary

- In free flow conditions, the proportions of cars complying with the speed limit were 52% on motorways, 91% on national speed limit single carriageways, 48% on 30mph roads and 14% on 20mph roads.
- 9% of cars exceeded the speed limit on national speed limit (NSL) single carriageway roads, compared to 86% on 20mph roads. 1% and 18% exceeded the speed limit by 10mph or more on these roads respectively.

* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

Light Commercial Vehicle (van) compliance with speed limits

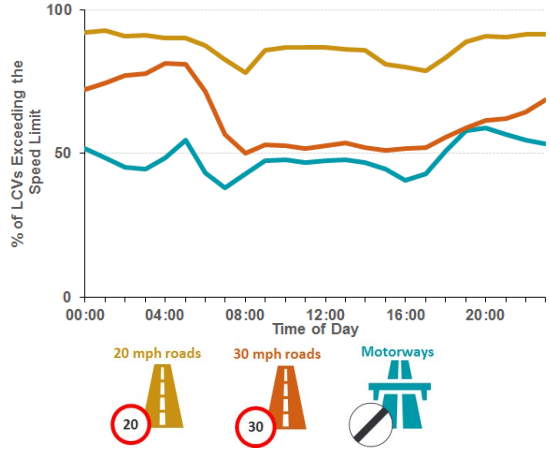
Figure 6: Distribution of van speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0111)



Statistics on van compliance on national speed limit single carriageways are not collected. The speed limits applicable to different types of van on this road type depends on the maximum laden weight and construction of the vehicle, which cannot be determined by our data source.

How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 7: Vans exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)

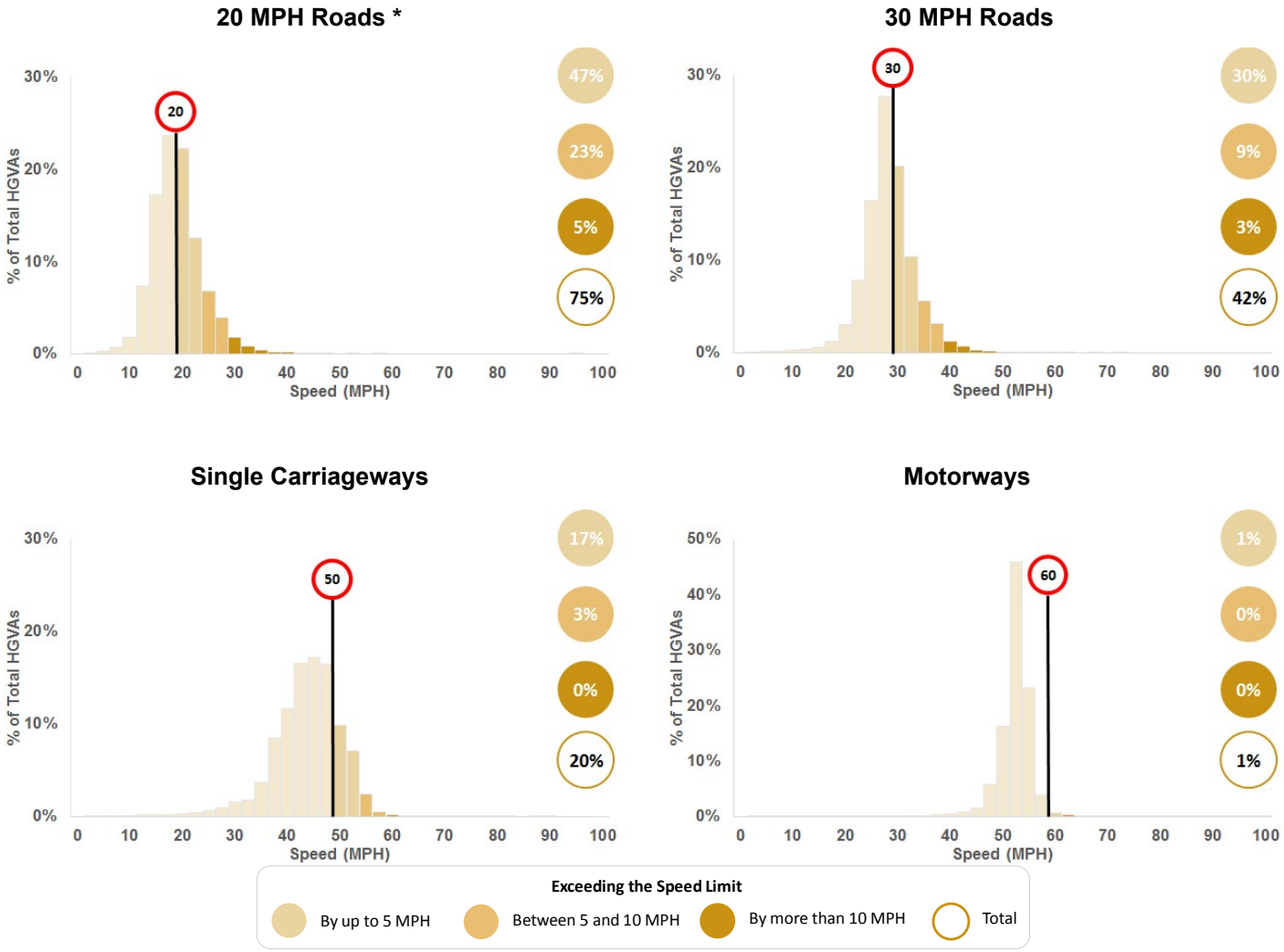


Summary

- In free flow conditions, the proportions of vans complying with the speed limit were 51% on motorways, 45% on 30mph roads and 16% on 20mph roads.
- 49% of vans exceeded the speed limit on motorways and 55% on 30mph roads, compared to 84% on 20mph roads. 14%, 7% and 18% exceeded the speed limit by 10mph or more on these roads respectively.

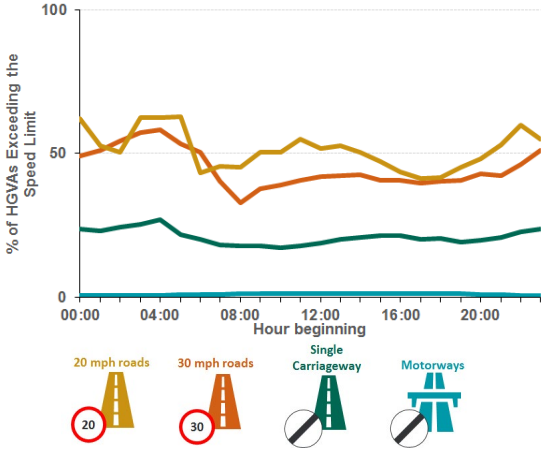
* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

Figure 8: Distribution of articulated HGV speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0111)



How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 9: Articulated HGVs exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)



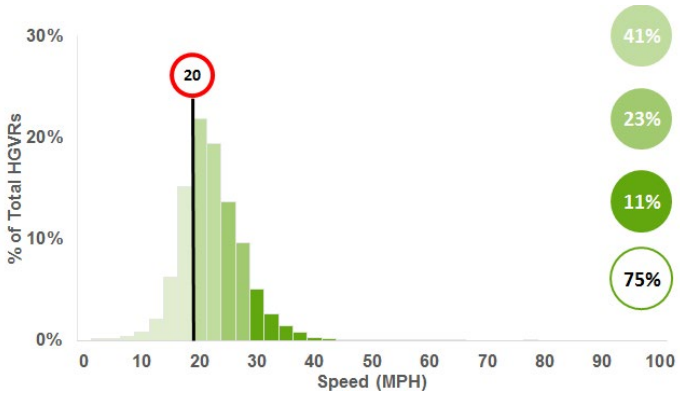
Summary

- In free flow conditions, the proportions of articulated HGVs complying with the speed limit were 99% on motorways, 80% on national speed limit single carriageways, 58% on 30mph roads and 25% on 20mph roads.
- 20% of articulated HGVs exceeded the speed limit on (NSL) single carriageway roads, compared to 42% on 30mph roads. Less than half a percent and 3% exceeded the speed limit by more than 10mph on these roads respectively.

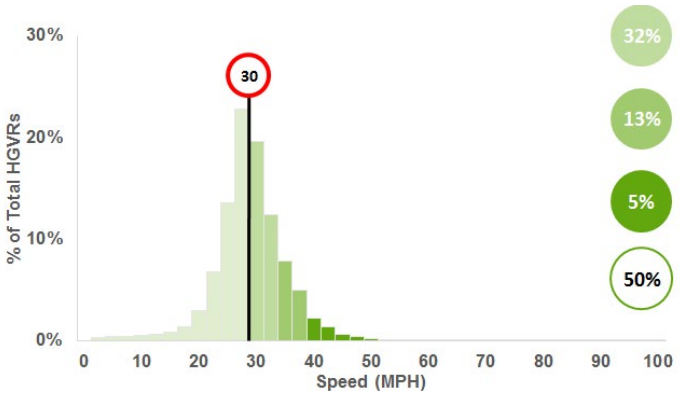
* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

Figure 10: Distribution of rigid heavy goods vehicle speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table

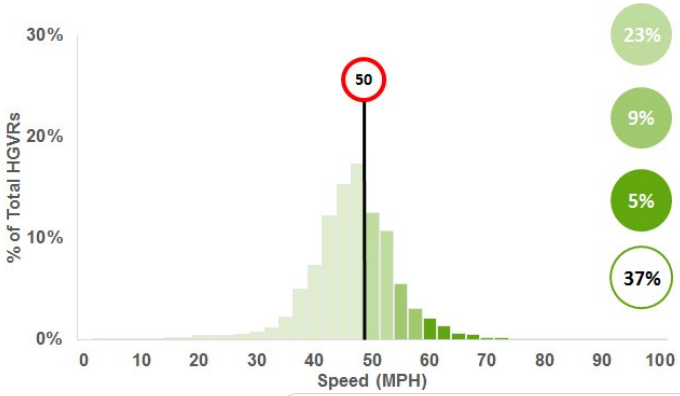
20 MPH Roads *



30 MPH Roads

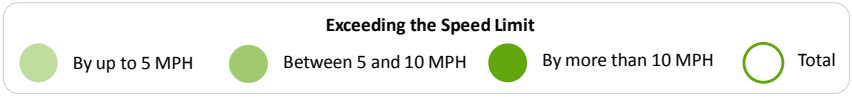


Single Carriageways



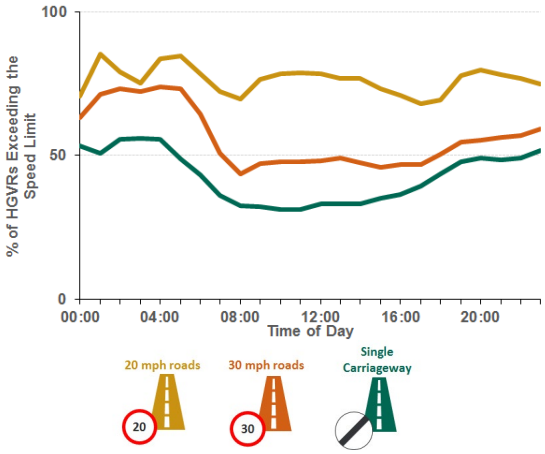
Motorways

Statistics on rigid HGV compliance on motorways are not collected. There are significant numbers of rigid HGVs both above and below the 7.5 tonne gross weight threshold, which are subject to different motorway speed limits. Our data does not collect weight information to enable vehicle data to be matched to the applicable speed limit.



How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 11: Rigid HGVs exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)



Summary

- In free flow conditions, the proportions of rigid HGVs complying with the speed limit were 63% on national speed limit single carriageways, 50% on 30mph roads and 25% on 20mph roads.
- 37% of rigid HGVs exceeded the speed limit on NSL single carriageway roads, compared to 75% on 20mph roads. 5% and 11% exceeded the speed limit by 10mph or more on these roads respectively.

* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

Change in speed limits for HGVs over 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight

On 6 April 2015, in England and Wales only, the national speed limit for HGVs more than 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight increased from 50 mph to 60 mph on *dual carriageways*, and from 40 mph to 50 mph on *single carriageways*[2].

Analyses for *dual carriageways* are not included in this publication due to insufficient sample size.

What is the impact on HGVAs in our sample of roads in free flowing conditions?

Treating articulated HGVs as being over 7.5 tonnes, the speed limit has risen from 40mph to 50mph on single carriageway roads in England and Wales for all axle types. An impact of this change on our sample of roads can be seen in the charts below.

Figure 12: Articulated HGVs exceeding the speed limit (%), Great Britain: 2011 to 2017 (Table SPE0112)

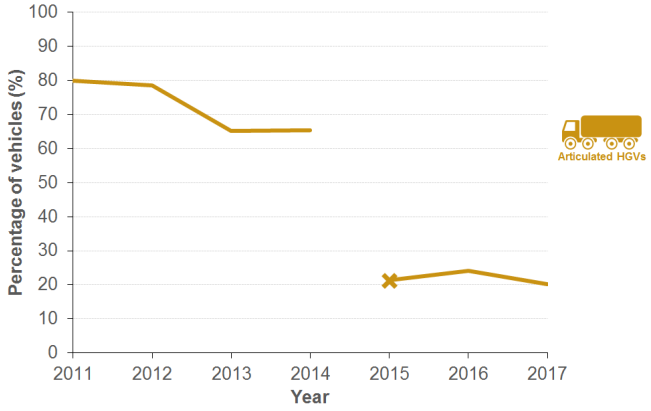
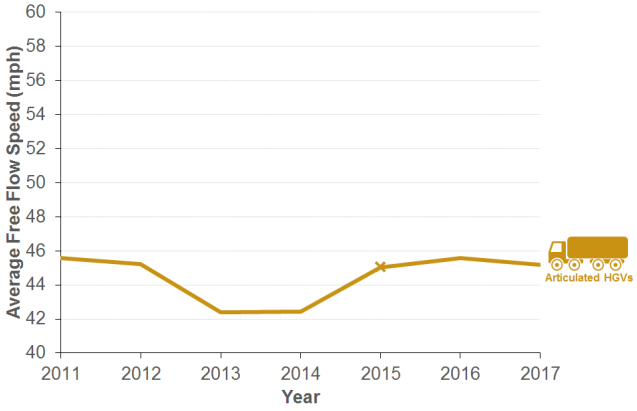


Figure 13: Average free flow speed (mph) of articulated HGVs, Great Britain: 2011 to 2017 (Table SPE0112)



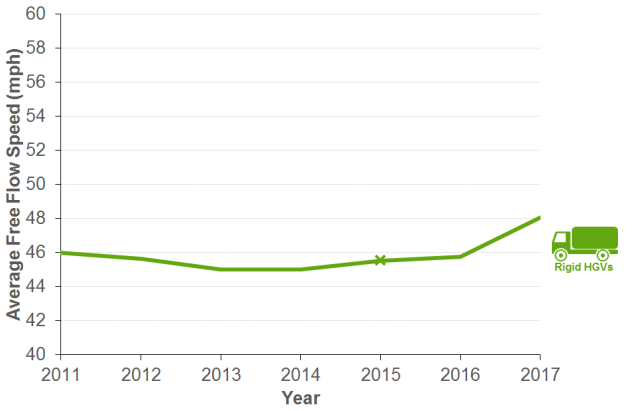
As can be seen on the left hand chart, the percentage of articulated HGVs exceeding the speed limit has reduced noticeably since the speed limit change was introduced in 2015 from 80% in 2011 to 21% in 2015, and was 20% in 2017. Over the same period, the average speed has not changed much, ranging between 42mph (2013 & 2014) and just below 46mph (2016).

What about rigid HGVs?

There are significant numbers of rigid HGVs both below and above the 7.5 tonne threshold, so the applicable national speed limit on *motorways* and *national speed limit single carriageways* (prior to 2015) cannot be determined for those vehicles at our ATC sites, as the data do not include laden weight information.

Consequently, speed compliance data for *rigid HGVs* on these road types prior to 2015 are not included in this publication. However, average speed information is available (see chart on the right).

Figure 14: Average free flow speed (mph) of rigid HGVs, Great Britain: 2011 to 2017 (Table SPE0112)



The average speed of rigid HGVs has not changed much since 2011, but has seen a two mile per hour increase in 2017.

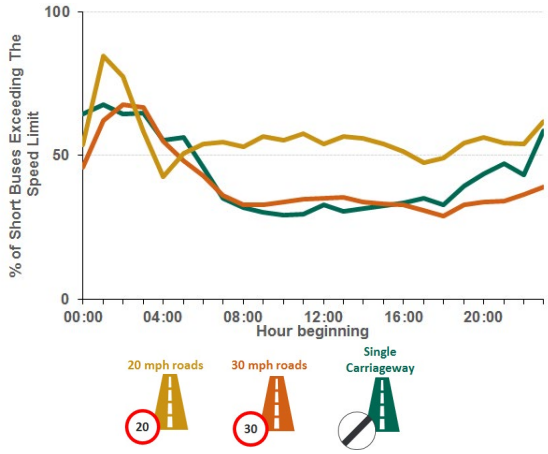
Figure 15: Distribution of short bus speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0111)

Motorways

Statistics on short and long buses' speed compliance on motorways are not published, as the sample size did not meet the data quality threshold required for publishing.

How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 16: Short buses exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)



Summary

- 35% of short buses (under 12m) exceeded the speed limit on NSL single carriageway and 30mph roads. 4% and 2% exceeded the speed limit by 10mph on these roads respectively.
- In free flow conditions, the proportions of short buses complying with the speed limit were 65% on national speed limit single carriageways, 65% on 30mph roads and 47% on 20mph roads.

* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

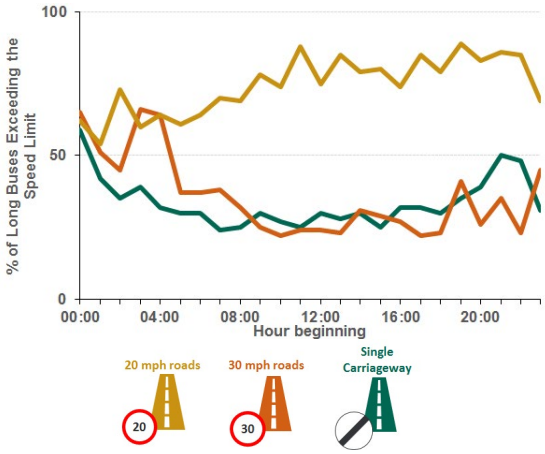
Figure 17: Distribution of long bus speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0111)

Motorways

Statistics on short and long buses' speed compliance on motorways are not published, as the sample size did not meet the data quality threshold required for publishing.

How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 18: Long buses exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)

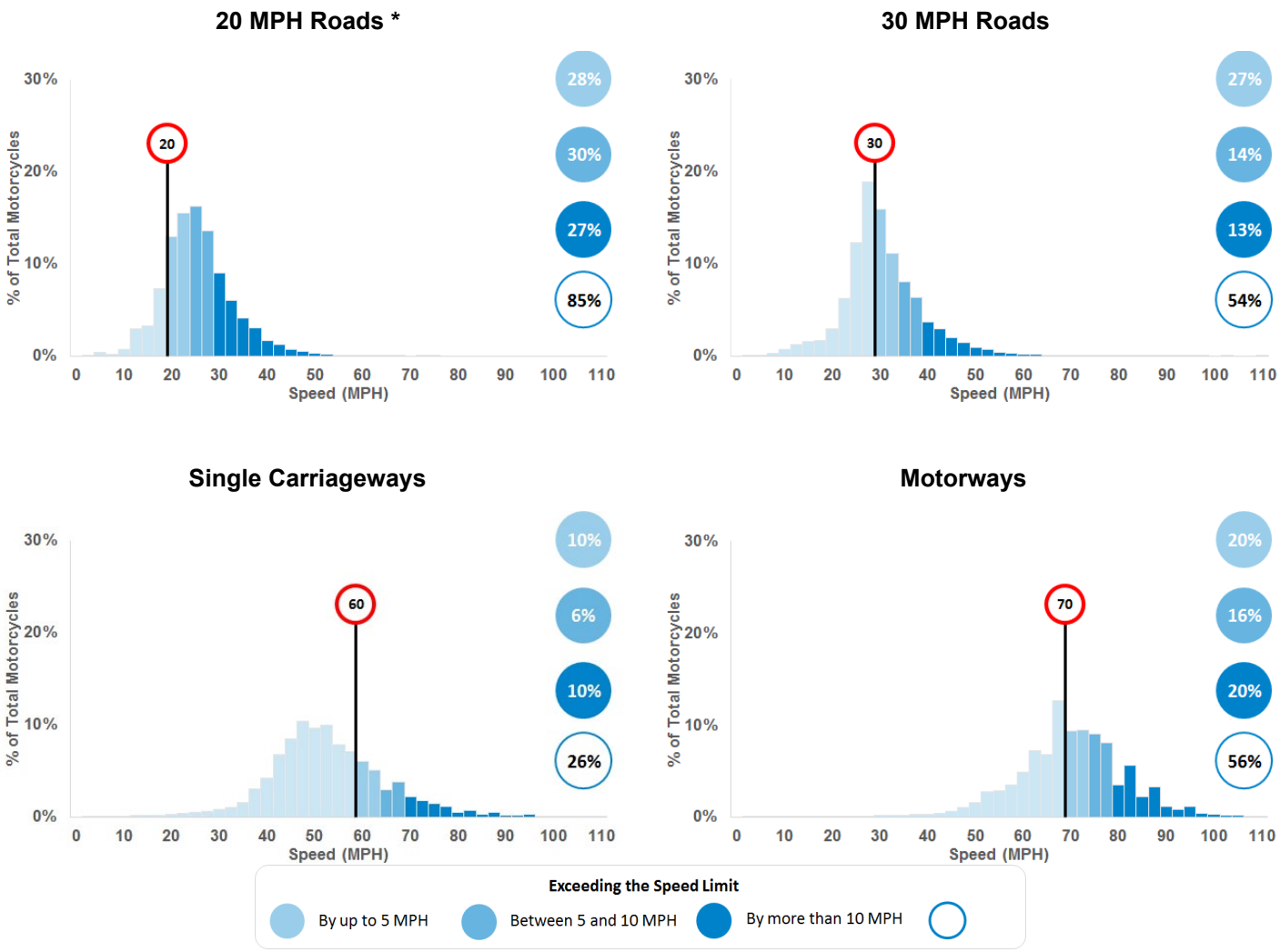


Summary

- 28% of long buses (over 12m) exceeded the speed limit on 30mph roads, compared to 77% on 20mph roads. 1% and 5% exceeded the speed limit by 10mph or more on these roads respectively.
- In free flow conditions, the proportions of long buses complying with the speed limit were 70% on national speed limit single carriageways, 72% on 30mph roads and 23% on 20mph roads.

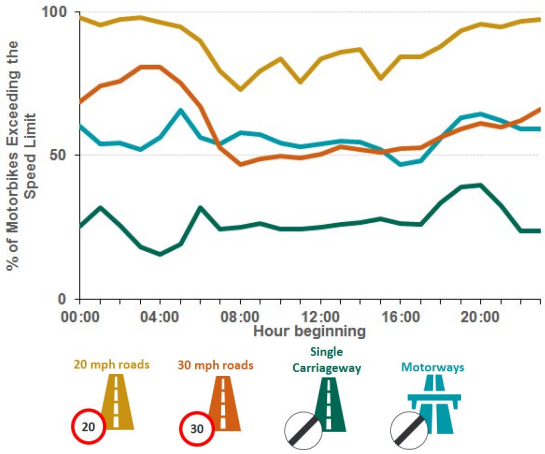
* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

Figure 19: Distribution of Motorcycle speeds by road type in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0111)



How does compliance with the speed limit vary with the time of day?

Figure 20: Motorcycles exceeding the speed limit by time of day in Great Britain, 2017 (Table SPE0113)



Summary

- 56% of motorcycles exceeded the speed limit on motorways, compared to 85% on 20mph roads. 20% and 27% exceeded the speed limit by 10mph or more on these roads respectively.
- In free flow conditions, the proportions of motorcycles complying with the speed limit were 44% on motorways, 74% on national speed limit single carriageways, 46% on 30mph roads and 15% on 20mph roads.

* the roads have limited traffic calming measures in this sample

Reasons given for breaking the speed limit

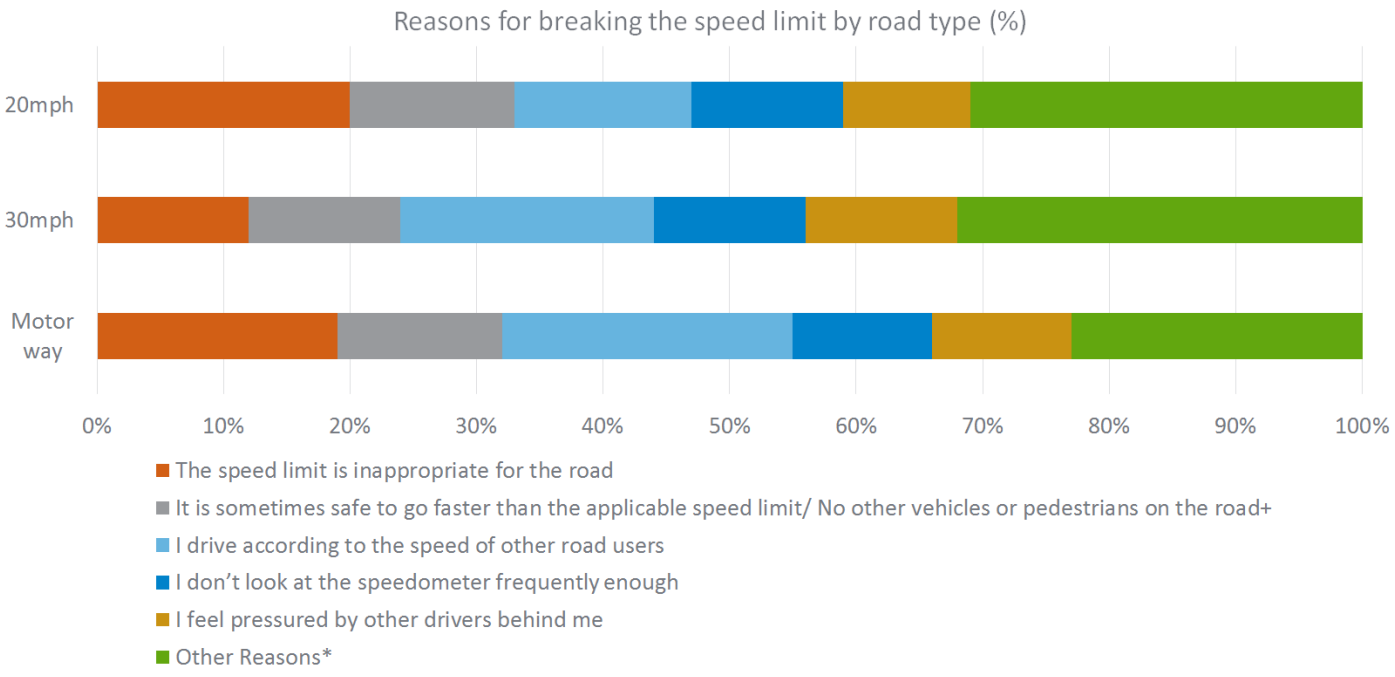
Key findings:

- According to the RAC Report on Motoring, 2017, the top five reasons cited for breaking the speed limit were the same for both motorways and 30mph roads. For motorways, these top five reasons make up 78% of the reasons given by respondents for breaking the speed limit. This compares with 70% for 30mph roads.

- Of these top five reasons, the top reason given was "I drive according to the speed of other road users" and was given by 23% of motorway users and 17% of 30mph road users. This was followed by "The speed limit is inappropriate for the road" (17% and 14% for motorway and 30mph road users respectively).

Figure 21: Reasons for breaking the speed limit on motorways and 30mph roads

Source: RAC Report on Motoring, 2017



This data comes from the RAC's Report on Motoring 2017. The report is published annually and is based on drivers' attitudes to motoring, including a section on speeding and attitudes to speeding. It is based on an online quota-based survey of UK motorists. Drivers who admitted to exceeding the speed limit on particular types of road were asked their reasons for doing so, which are shown here. These are not National Statistics, but are included here to provide additional context.

+ := for motorways, there is a category in the reasons given called "It is sometimes safe to go faster than the applicable speed limit". For 30mph roads, this category is not present but there is another category called "No vehicles/pedestrians on the road". These two have been taken together in this analysis, as it is deemed that they are covering broadly the same safety issue but fitted for the differing nature of the different road types.

* := Other reasons here include: I underestimate the power of my car; Insufficient speed limit signage; Chances of being caught are low; I lose concentration while driving...; Speed limits are meaningless to me; Other and Don't know.

The results are taken from respondents who self-reported as speeding "frequently" or "occasionally" on the listed roads. The sample size was higher for motorways (1,082) than for 30mph roads (670) or 20mph road (698).

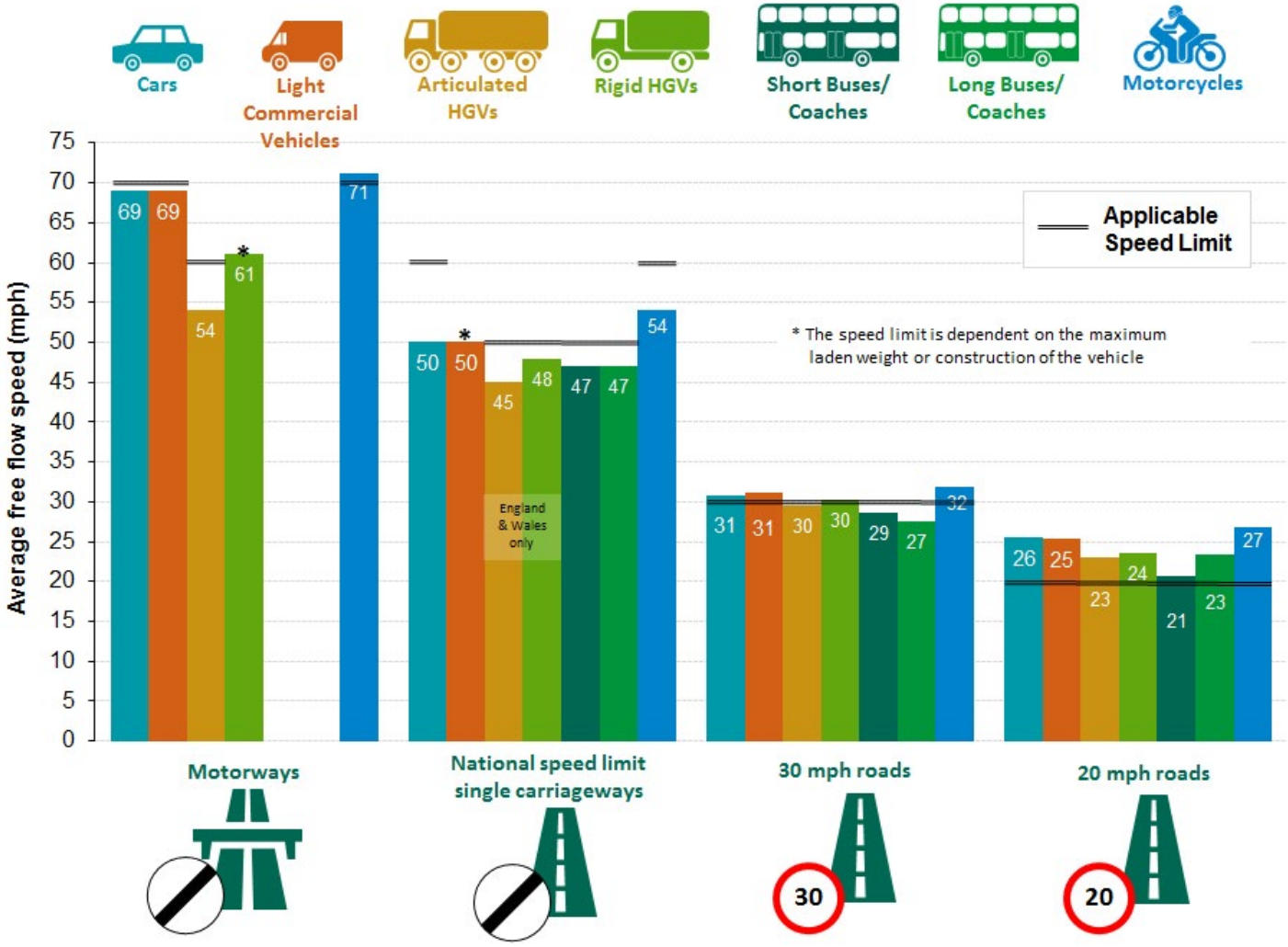
Speed by Road and Vehicle Type

The following section presents the average free flow speeds at which drivers choose to travel as observed at sampled ATC locations. These are not average speeds across the whole network - these are estimated in another DfT statistics publication (see page 19).

Key findings:

- The average free flow speed for each vehicle type is correlated with the applicable speed limit for that road type. So, for faster roads and higher speed limits, the average free flow speed tends to be higher.
- For motorways and national speed limit single carriageway roads, the average free flow speed is below the designated speed limit for each vehicle type, except motorcycles on motorways. This is particularly marked for single carriageway roads where speeds are significantly below the relative speed limits, which is consistent with the greater compliance with speed limits on those roads that were observed earlier.
- For 30mph roads the average free flow speed is slightly above the speed limit for three vehicle types (cars, motorcycles and LCVs), with averages ranging from 27mph to 32mph overall. For 20mph roads, the average speed is above the speed limit for all vehicle types, ranging from 21mph to 27mph. Again, this is consistent with the lower compliance with speed limits observed on these roads.

Figure 22: Average free flow speeds by vehicle type and road type on roads in Great Britain, 2017
(Table SPE0111)



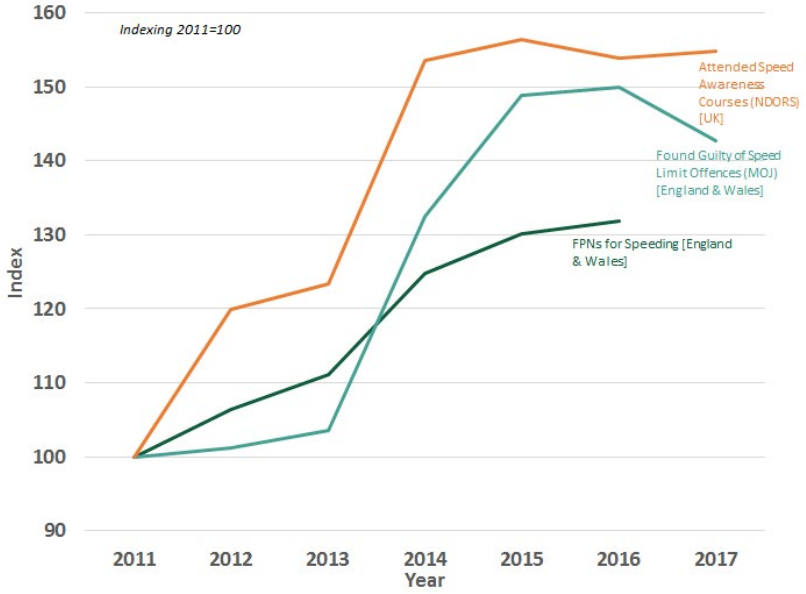
Speed offences

This section reports on previously published data directly relating to speeding offences and road traffic accidents involving speeding.

Motor vehicle offences relating to exceeding the speed limit;

Sources: Home Office (HO), Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS)

Figure 23: Indices of motor vehicle offences relating to exceeding the speed limit, 2011 to 2017 (Table SPE0201)



Fixed Penalty Notices

- There were 1,97 million Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued for speed limit offences in England and Wales in 2016, an increase of 1.3% compared with the previous year.
- The scope of the Home Office FPN series has widened since the previous publication to include those cases where a driver retraining course, such as a speed awareness course, was attended by the individual, or the individual faced court action. The series has been recalculated back to 2011.

Key terms

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

Offered to motorists to avoid prosecution for various motoring offences (e.g. speeding, neglect of traffic directions and using a mobile phone while driving) by paying a prescribed financial penalty.

Speed Awareness Courses

National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) is a set of schemes unique to the UK, where a motorist who has been caught committing a traffic offence at a 'low level', such as speeding, is given an opportunity to attend a course focusing on re-education designed to achieve greater compliance with the Road Traffic legislation.

Conviction Ratio

The number of convictions as a proportion of the number of proceedings. These are calculated on a principal offence basis.

Speeding Offences

- There was a 91% conviction ratio for people proceeded against for speed limit offences in England and Wales in 2017 (160,000 were found guilty).
- 27% of motoring convictions in 2017 were for speed limit offences.
- Speeding offence convictions have seen a recent decrease to 160,000 in 2017, having been relatively stable between 2015 and 2016.

Speed Awareness Courses

- In 2017, more than 1.23 million drivers attended a speed awareness course in the UK. Between 2014 and 2017 there have been consistently around 1.2 million speed awareness course attendences.
- The speed awareness course data include 250,000 Driver Retraining Course Attendances processed in Scotland, Northern Ireland or locally by police forces that are not included in Home Office's FPN series.

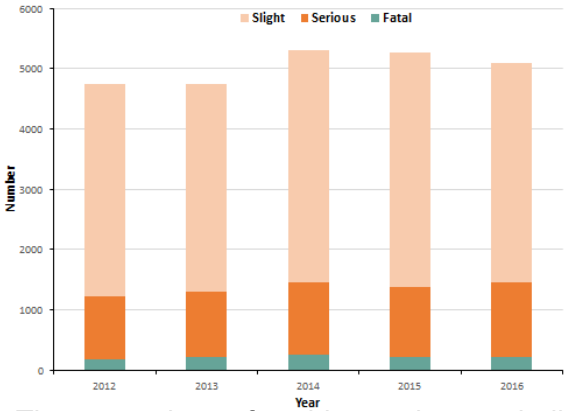
Speed as a contributory factor in road accidents

Under presumed free flow[1] conditions:

- Exceeding the speed limit was reported as a contributory factor for 4,545 accidents in 2016, a continued fall since the increase to 4,783 in 2014.
- The share of fatal and serious accidents where exceeding the speed limit was reported as a contributory factor was 7.3% (1,299) in 2016. This share is a marginal increase on 2014 and 2015 (7.1% and 7.0%).
- The share of all accidents where exceeding the speed limit was reported as a contributory factor was 4.8% (4,545) in 2016. This is similar to the 2015 value of 4.6% (4,744) and the share has gradually increased since 2011 (3.9%).

Figure 24a: Reported accidents where exceeding the speed limit was reported as a contributory factor, by severity, 2012 to 2016, excluding non-free flow conditions[1] (Table SPE0204)

Figure 24b: Reported accidents where exceeding the speed limit was reported as a contributory factor, by severity, 2012 to 2016 (Table SPE0202)



- The proportions of accidents when excluding or including contributory factors of abnormal or non-free flow conditons[1] are very similar. In comparison this suggests that free flow sites likely behave similarly to non-free flow sites.

[1]Those accidents with contributory factors relating to traffic calming, stolen vehicle, road layout, temporary road layout, vehicle in course of crime, and emergency vehicle on a call have been excluded. Accident sites may still have these conditions, but they were not recorded as a contributory factor, no contributory factors were recorded or a police officer did not attend the scene.

Source: DfT Road Accidents and Safety Statistics.

Key terms

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.

Fatal accident

An accident in which at least one person is killed.

Serious accident

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

Slight accident

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

Contributory factor

Contributory factors provide some insight into why and how road accidents occur. They are designed to give the key actions and failures that led directly to the actual impact to aid investigation of how accidents might be prevented. Please note that this ***does not assign blame*** for the accident to any specific road user, but gives an indication of which factors the attending officer thought contributed to the accident.

More information is available in the notes & definitions document.

Speed as a contributory factor in road accidents

Key findings:

- In 2016, for all accidents, 2.8% (5,157) of vehicles had an exceeding the speed limit contributory factor allocated to them. This has remained stable over the past five years, with the value being 2.6% (5,645) in 2011.
- Motorcycles were the vehicle type with the highest proportion of all accidents (5.2%) where exceeding the speed limit was a contributory factor, in 2016. 22.8% of fatal motorcycle accidents had exceeding the speed limit as a contributory factor, compared to 8.7% for all vehicles.
- HGVs had the lowest proportion of all accidents (0.6%) in 2016 where exceeding the speed limit was a contributory factor. This may relate to HGVs being speed limited or the drivers being professionally trained.

Figures 25a to 25b: Percentage of vehicles with an exceeding the speed limit contributory factor by vehicle type, split by severity, 2016 (Table SPE0203)

Figure 25a: All Accidents

Figure 25b: Fatal Accidents

Figures 26a to 26b: Percentage of vehicles with an exceeding the speed limit contributory factor by vehicle type, split by severity, 2012 to 2016 (Table SPE0203)

Figure 26a: All Accidents

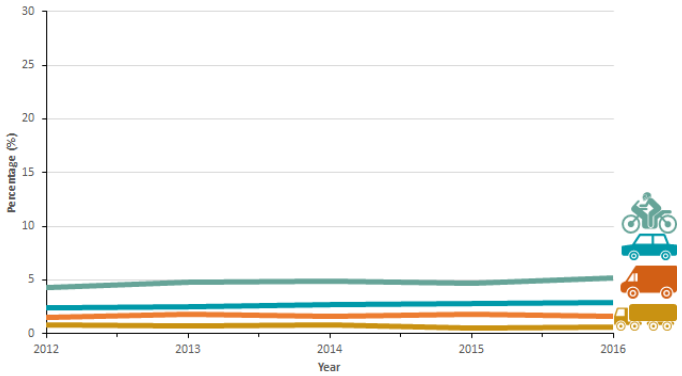
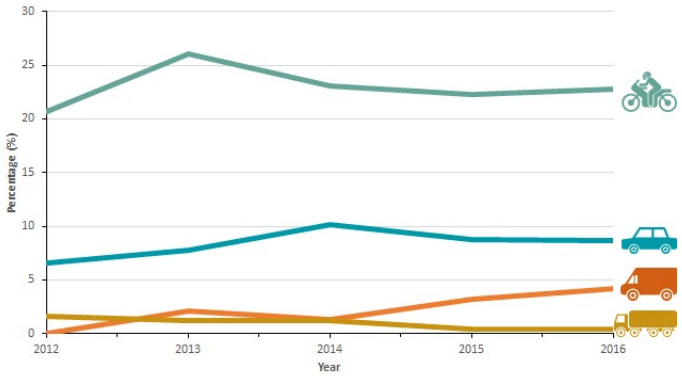


Figure 26b: Fatal Accidents



Vehicle Headway

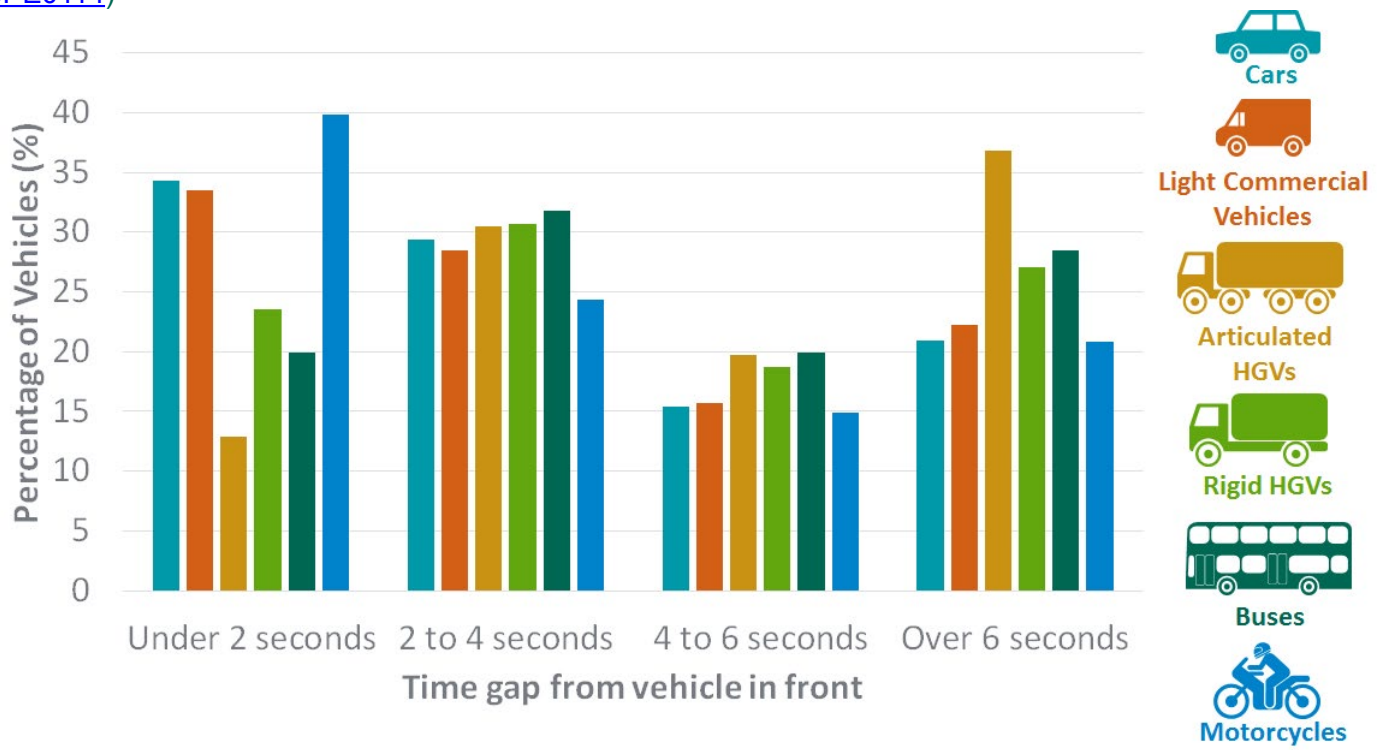
This section provides information about the time gaps between two vehicles. This time gap is referred to as headway.

- In 2017, 66% of cars and Light Commerical Vehicles, and 60% of motorcycles left the recommended two-second gap between themselves and other vehicles.
- A higher percentage of vehicles with slower speed limits leave the recommended minimum two-second gap: 87% of articulated HGVs, 76% of rigid HGVs and 80% of buses and coaches.
- Adherence to the recommended two-second gap has remained relatively stable since 2011.

Headway

Headway is the measurement of time between two vehicles. The Highway Code (rule 126) states that all drivers "should allow **at least a two-second gap** between you and the vehicle in front on roads carrying faster-moving traffic", and "this should be at least doubled" in inclement conditions. More information can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/general-rules-techniques-and-advice-for-all-drivers-and-riders-103-to-158.

Figure 27: Distribution of time gaps between vehicles, split by type of vehicle behind, 2017 (Table SPE0114)



Headway data: a note of caution

Headway data (originally from table TRA3107) is collected from a small selection (seven) of the free flow statistics motorway sites and are only based on traffic in the inside lane. These are classed as Official Statistics but not as National Statistics and should be treated with caution as the sample size is small. Research is continuing into the quality of the headway measurement for motorcycles; it is possible that the percentage of motorcycles less than 2 seconds behind the vehicle in front is understated in these figures.

Background information

What's changed in this release

Several new additions are included in this release, alongside some changes to previous datasets, including:

► **Refined number of sites**

Since the last release of this series we have conducted another review of our list of ATC sites to ensure they continue to reflect free flow sites of each road class. Sites that have been removed have changed road class, road layout, or have traffic calming measures such as speed indicator devices, speed cameras, or are smart motorways.

► **Introduced motorcycle data**

We have introduced motorcycle data with this version of the release. Motorcycles had previously been excluded, however the groundworks had been laid for future inclusion and they have been successfully integrated for the 2018 release.

► **New headway data**

As an improvement to previous analyses of vehicle headway, we have expanded the selection of vehicles analysed to now include cars, LCVs, buses and motorcycles.

► **New Road Accidents Table (SPE0204)**

As a new addition to this year's release we introduced a table that removes contributory factors that may be abnormal or otherwise incompatible with a free flow site. This table was added as a means of viewing how free flow sites might compare against other sites.

Vehicle definitions

Car: includes cars, car-derived vans and dual-purpose vehicles (definition of these vehicles can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/car-derived-vans-and-dual-purpose-vehicles).

LCV: Light Commercial Vehicle, goods vehicle of 3.5 tonnes gross weight and under.

HGV: Heavy Goods Vehicle, goods vehicle of over 3.5 tonnes gross weight. For the purpose of these statistics, rigid 2-axle HGVs do not have a definitive national speed limit and have been excluded from the motorway sites. All other observed HGVs are considered to have more than 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight and therefore have a speed limit.

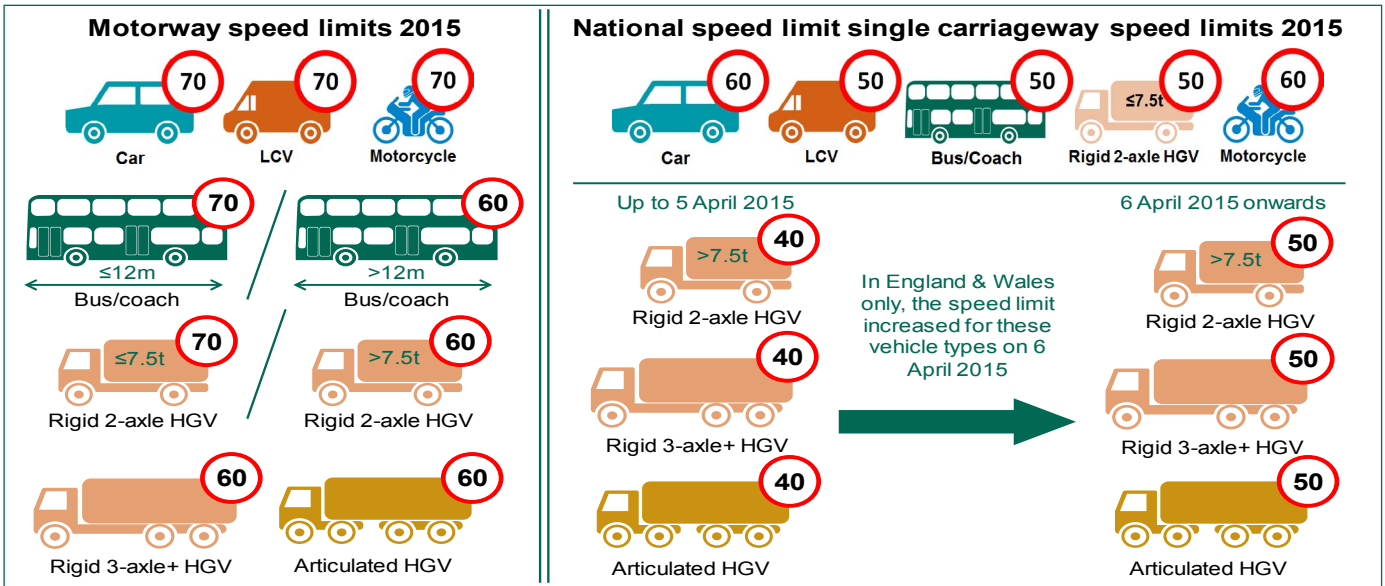
Motorcycle: Two Wheel Motor Vehicles, here simplified to motorcycles, including scooters and mopeds.

More information is available in the notes & definitions document.

Speed limits on different road types

Information on speed limits is provided in Figure 28.

Figure 28: Applicable speed limits for motorways and national speed limit single carriageways as of 2015



These are the relevant speed limits for the vehicle and road types published in this release. More information on the complete breakdown of national speed limits can be found online at https://www.gov.uk/speed-limits.

All vehicles have the same speed limit on *20 mph and 30 mph roads*.

Sources, strengths and weaknesses of the data

- These estimates are based on traffic speed data collected from a current sample of 92 Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) operated by DfT. In some cases (e.g. motorways), two ATCs may be covering different directions of traffic flow at the same location. The number of individual vehicles observed in the production of the 2017 statistics was 637 million. Although this is a reduction on the previous year, there is still sufficient data by road and vehicle class. The breakdown for each year is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Number of Automatic Traffic Counters and Vehicles used to produce Free Flow Vehicle Speed Statistics for Great Britain, 2011 to 2017

Number

Year	Automatic Traffic Counters Used	Vehicles used (millions)	Significant proportion of data removed from (sites)
2011	99	685	3 motorways
2012	99	702	3 motorways
2013	98	605	3 motorways
2014	105	567	3 motorways
2015[1]	107	743	3 motorways
2016[1]	107	725	0
2017	92	637	0

1. We have re-evaluated the way we count sites, hence the discrepancies in the number of ATCs used since last year.

- The ATC technology used to collect this data can experience technical failures and produce output data which is incorrect and not representative of the traffic passing the counter. The methodology accounts for these occasions and removes any data which is not accurately recorded, as well as during times when traffic volumes are abnormally low or high.
- The ATCs classify vehicles using the number of axles, the axle spacing and the length of the vehicle.

- Full guidance on the sources and methods used to compile these statistics, plus information on speed limits, can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance.
- Detailed information on the Reported accidents data used in this release can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2016.
- Detailed information on the Home Office data used in this release can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-powers-and-procedures-in-england-and-wales-201112-user-guide.
- Detailed information on the Ministry of Justice data used in this release can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638272/guide-criminal-justice-statistics-march-2017.pdf or in their statistical release at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly.
- Detailed information on the NDORS data used in this release can be found at https://ndors.org.uk/faqs/.
- Average speed statistics for both local authority managed 'A' roads and the Strategic Road Network are available online as part of a suite of travel time measures from the Road Congestion and Reliability Statistics series at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-congestion-and-reliability-statistics. Note that this series also uses the term "free flow speed" but this is calculated in a different way (e.g. 'capped' at national speed limits) and using a different data source to the statistics presented in this release.

Next update

The 2018 release of this publication is due to be published in summer 2019. We are continuing to review methodologies and the coverage of these statistics and further changes may be reflected in the next publication. We welcome feedback on this publication including content, timing, and format via email to roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

National Statistics

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

Free Flow Vehicle Speed Statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice and were confirmed as National Statistics in February 2013.

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/pre-release-access-lists-for-road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-series.

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