



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY • GOODS VEHICLES EDITION

REPORTED ROAD CASUALTIES

GREAT BRITAIN, ANNUAL REPORT: 2021

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Road Casualty Figures 2021

The following data has been obtained from facts and figures included in Reported Road Casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2021 published in September 2022

Introduction

- i. With a third national lockdown in place from January to March 2021 the **coronavirus pandemic** and associated travel restrictions affected road safety and the overall figures for 2021 remain lower than pre-pandemic levels. Over the second half of the year, both casualties and traffic returned to levels similar to those in 2019. Monthly changes in casualties during 2021 generally showed a similar trend to changes in motor vehicle traffic levels.
- ii. When making any comparisons with the relevant data from previous years, consideration has to be given to the effects of the pandemic together with the **changes in the reporting of injury severity**. The figures for serious injuries in 2021 are based on adjusting the figures reported by the police to take account of changes in the reporting of injury severity by some police forces in recent years. The adjusted figures can reliably be used to compare trends over time and are based on estimates of what the totals would be if all police forces were using injury-based severity reporting systems.
- iii. **Note: The changes in severity reporting systems lead to changes in severity numbers but NOT to changes in the overall number of casualties.**



Key Findings

i. Fatalities -

the total number of road users killed in 2021 was **1,558**, which is an **increase of 98** on the number in 2020 and represents an **increase of 7%**

ii. Serious Injuries -

the total number of road users seriously injured in 2021 was 25,892 which is an **increase of 3,823** on the number in 2020 and represents an **increase of 15%**

iii. All Casualties -

the total number of road users killed or injured in 2021 was 128,209 which is an **increase of 12,625** on the number in 2020 and represents an **increase of 11%**

Comment:

There are two key ways of looking at casualty numbers, in terms of **absolute counts** (as above), or in terms of **casualty rates** taking into account distance travelled. As a result of the effects of the pandemic, using absolute counts as an indicator for any change(s) does not provide a meaningful result when applied to the 2021 data. The Report uses casualty rates to show whether there has been any change(s) to the number(s) of road casualties.

Casualty Rates:

The total number of miles travelled on the roads in Great Britain in 2021 was 298 billion miles. Using this figure together with the respective numbers of fatalities, serious injuries and all casualties, the following casualty rates have been calculated:-

i. Fatalities

There were 5.2 fatalities per billion miles travelled in 2021
This is a **decrease of 5%** compared to the data for 2020

ii. Serious Injuries

There were 87 serious injuries per billion miles travelled in 2021
This is an **increase of 4%** compared to the data for 2020

iii. All Casualties

There was a total of 430 casualties per billion miles travelled in 2021
This is an **increase of 1%** compared to the data for 2020

The overall casualty rate showed a small increase in 2021 which suggests a correlation between the increase in the total number of miles travelled and the number of casualties. However, fatality rates did show a reduction.

Goods Vehicle Occupants Killed or Injured in 2021

i. Fatalities:

- **HGV** – 18 occupants were killed in 2021, an **increase of 2** on the total for 2020
- **Van/LGV** – 42 occupants were killed in 2021, an **increase of 4** on the total for 2020

ii. Serious Injuries:

- **HGV** – 150 occupants were seriously injured in 2021 an **increase of 12** on the total for 2020
- **Van/LGV** – 594 occupants were seriously injured in 2021 an **increase of 151** on the total for 2020

iii. All Casualties:

- **HGV** – 735 occupants were killed or injured in 2021, an **increase of 25** on the total for 2020
- **Van/LGV** - 3,913 occupants were killed or injured in 2021, an **increase of 588** on the total for 2020

Casualty Rates for Goods Vehicle Occupants

The total number of miles travelled by goods vehicles on the roads in Great Britain in 2021 was:-

HGVs - 17.5 billion miles - an **increase of 1.1 billion miles** on the total for 2020

VANs/LGVs - 54.4 billion miles - an **increase of 3.9 billion miles** on the total for 2020

Using these figures, together with the respective numbers of fatalities, serious injuries and all casualties, the following casualty rates have been calculated:-

i. Fatalities:

• HGVs

There were 1.02 fatalities per billion miles travelled in 2021

This is an **almost identical** number compared to the data for 2020

• VANs/LGVs

There were 0.77 fatalities per billion miles travelled in 2021

This is an **almost identical** number compared to the data for 2020

ii. Serious Injuries:

• HGVs

There were 8.57 serious injuries per billion miles travelled in 2021

This is a **slight increase (2%)** compared to the data for 2020

• VANs/LGVs

There were 10.9 serious injuries per billion miles travelled in 2021

This is an **increase of 19%** compared to the data for 2020

iii. All Casualties:

• HGVs

There was a total of 42 casualties per billion miles travelled in 2021

This is a **decrease of 3%** compared to the data for 2020

• VANs/LGVs

There was a total of 71.9 casualties per billion miles travelled in 2021

This is an **increase of 11%** compared to the data for 2020

Comment:

Casualty rates provide a more reliable method of making comparisons between the data for 2020 and 2021. The rates for HGV occupants show an improvement in 2021 but the rates for VAN/LGV occupants do give cause for some concern.

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Vehicles involved in reported personal injury collisions in 2021

The total number of vehicles involved in reported injury collisions in 2021 was 186,443 of these, 3,549 were HGVs = 1.9% - a **reduction of 0.1%** on the number in 2020 and 12,463 were VANS/LGVs = 6.7% - an **increase of 0.5%** on the number in 2020

Comment:

- i. The Report defines HGV as goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes maximum permissible gross vehicle weight
- ii. The Report defines VAN/LGV as those vehicles not over 3.5 tonnes maximum permissible gross vehicle weight

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Vehicles Licensed

The total number of motor vehicles licensed at the end of 2021 was 40.3 million. Of these:-

- i. 529,00 are HGVs = 1.3%
This is an **increase of 8.9%** on the total for 2020
- ii. 4,541,000 are VANS/LGVs = 11.3%
This is an **increase of 7.6%**

Where Casualties Occur

Type of road	Fatalities	All Casualties
Motorway	103	5,301
Built-up roads		
20mph	53	16,531
30mph	501	67,715
40mph	157	11,492
Non built-up roads		
50mph	115	5,824
60mph	514	1,7311
70mph	115	4,035
Totals	1,558	12,8209

Comment

- i. As in previous years, the figures clearly show that the greatest risk (numerically) of being killed or injured is on a road with a 30mph speed limit and/or on a road with a 60mph speed limit.
- ii. The figure for All Casualties shows an **increase of 11%** and the majority of the above figures reflect this rate of increase. As the total vehicle mileage for 2021 (in billion vehicle miles) increase by 12%, an increase in All Casualties of 11% for 2021 could be considered as proportionate.

Goods Vehicles Involved in Collisions Causing Death or Injury:

Goods Vehicle Type	Involved in Fatal Collisions		Involved in Killed or Injured Collisions	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
HGV				
Rigid	121	121	2,247	2,162
Artic.	95	88	1,246	1,185
Totals	216	209	3,493	3,347
VAN/LGV	194	176	12,463	10,338

Comment:

- i. The above table shows the number of reported collisions causing death or injury that goods vehicles were involved in and does not indicate any degree of blameworthiness.
- ii. With the exception of Rigid HGV's, the above figures show an increase in each category but the only one to show a noticeable increase are Vans/LGVs with a **17% increase** in the total number of involvements resulting in death or injury.

Goods Vehicle involvement in collisions involving a fatality in 2021

Type of road	Collisions (1 or more deaths)	HGVs involved	VAN/LGV involved	Vehicles involved
Motorways	92	44 (48%)	12 (13%)	186
Non Built Up Roads (Speed limit over 40mph)	695	122 (17%)	110 (16%)	1,325
Built Up Roads (40mph or less)	687	50 (7%)	72 (10%)	1,122
Totals	1,474	216 (14%)	194 (13%)	2,634

Comment:

- i. The above figures show the number of fatal collisions that goods vehicles were involved in on different types of road, they do not indicate any degree of blameworthiness
- ii. The figures show that there were 92 collisions on Motorways (that resulted in 103 fatalities). The number of HGVs involved in those collisions was 44 **(48%)** and this percentage is much greater than the rate of involvement of HGVs in fatal collisions on other types of road.
- iii. The figures above show that the rate of involvement of goods vehicles in collisions involving a fatality in 2021 is very similar to the rates of involvement in this type of collision in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Contributory Factors

Numerous contributory factors are included in the Report. What could be regarded as the principle contributory factors in causing fatalities and in causing all injuries are:-

Contributory Factor	Fatalities	All Casualties
Driver/Rider failed look properly	361	28,293
Loss of control	335	9,393
Exceeding speed limit	253	6,559
Driver/Rider careless, reckless or in a hurry	225	14,817
Driver/Rider failed to judge other's path or speed	168	15,335
Driver/Rider impaired by alcohol	149	6,073
Poor turn or manoeuvre	137	9,912
Travelling too fast for conditions	130	5,678
Aggressive driving	108	4,258
Driver/Rider illness or disability, mental or physical	85	2,339
Driver/Rider impaired by drugs	79	2,497
Slippery road due to weather	69	5,863
Distraction in vehicle	67	3,700

Comment:

- i. The figures include only casualties in collisions where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported. The factors are largely subjective and depend on the skill and experience of the investigating officer to reconstruct the events which directly led to the collisions causing casualties. They reflect the attending officer's opinion at the time of reporting and are not necessarily the result of extensive investigation.
- ii. Contributory Factors are similar year on year but it is interesting to **note** that in 2020 again, exceeding the speed limit was recorded in collisions involving a fatality on more occasions than the driver/rider being careless, reckless or in a hurry and remains in the top three contributory factors for fatalities.
- iii. The most frequently identified contributory factor was a driver or rider **failing to look properly** and was a factor in **21%** of the fatalities recorded. This factor also resulted in the highest number of casualties, at **24%**.
- iv. **If** exceeding the speed limit and travelling too fast for conditions were regarded as one factor of **driving or riding at an inappropriate speed**, this possible factor resulted in 13,117 casualties but a total of 383 fatalities, 22 more than failing to look properly.

Goods Vehicles Involved In Reported Collisions by Contributory Factor

Contributory Factor	HGVs Involved	LGVs Involved	Total collisions
Failed to look properly	562	1,982	23,816
Failed to judge other's path or speed	301	1,071	12,618
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	196	816	12,023
Poor turn or manoeuvre	176	535	7,482
Vehicle blind spot	115	126	976
Following too close	102	327	3,003
Loss of control	100	267	7,120
Distraction in vehicle	68	220	2,336
Slippery road (due to weather)	63	251	4,418
Travelling too fast for conditions	50	209	3,877
Sudden braking	47	240	3,032
Fail to signal/misleading signal	26	159	1,426
Exceeding speed limit	22	199	4,918
Road layout (e.g. bend, winding road, hill crest)	19	138	836

Note:

- i. The above table shows the number of reported collisions causing death or injury that goods vehicles were involved in and the contributory factors to those collisions - it does not indicate any degree of blameworthiness
- ii. It is interesting to note that 6 out of 14 of the most frequently recorded contributory factors are included in the DfT's category of Driver/Rider error or reaction.

Reported Collisions and Manoeuvre

Contributory Factor	HGVs Involved	LGVs Involved	Total collisions
Going ahead other	1,709	5,313	78,101
At a junction	1,323	6,590	107,719
Slowing or stopping	215	844	10,714
Changing lane to left	188	101	1,434
Parked	185	749	8,093
Turning right	183	1,094	15,852
Going ahead - right hand bend	147	352	5,614
Moving off	132	521	8,521
Changing lane to right	129	112	1,493
Waiting to go - held up	129	521	7,654
Turning left	116	525	6,085
Going ahead - left hand bend	110	352	4,894

Comment

- i. In 2018 the DfT decided to discontinue including data on vehicles involved in reported collisions by junction type as it was “identified as rarely used”. The nearest point to examining data regarding junction collisions is to consider the record of collisions under the heading of Reported Collisions by Vehicle Type and Manoeuvre, which does include a total figure for collisions at a junction
- ii. The data provided by the DfT shows that there were 186,443 vehicles involved in collisions reported to the police and recorded by them.
 - Of these, 3,549 were HGVs and 12,463 were VAN/LGVs.
- iii.
 - The highest number of reported collisions, 107,719, were **at a junction**
 - 1,323 (**37%**) of the 3,549 collisions involving HGVs were **at a junction**
 - 6,590 (**53%**) of the 12,463 collisions involving VAN/LGVs were **at a junction**
- iv. The list of the top twelve manoeuvres does provide some indication of where the greatest risk of a collision exists for HGVs in comparison to VAN/LGVs (e.g. the **Turning Right** manoeuvre), and in comparison to all recorded collisions where injury occurred.

Pedestrians and Pedal Cyclists:

i. Pedestrians:

The total number of pedestrians killed in 2021 was 361, an **increase of 15** on the total for 2020

ii. Pedal Cyclists:

The total number of pedal cyclists killed in 2021 was 111, a **decrease of 30** on the total for 2020.

Overall

Comments are made in various parts of the Report regarding the reliability of the figures and do have some relevance on the data produced:

- i. The problems caused by some Police Forces changing to a new system of recording Serious Injury
- ii. The information used to create the statistics is taken from personal injury collisions reported to the Police but not all injury collisions are so reported
- iii. The data used as the basis for these statistics are not a complete record of all personal injury collisions, and this should be borne in mind when using and analysing the figures.
- iv. Police data on collisions, whilst not perfect, remain the most detailed, complete and reliable single source of information on road casualties covering the whole of Great Britain, in particular for monitoring trends over time.

16th November 2022 • D.Sharpe