

Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2010 Provisional Estimates for accidents involving illegal alcohol levels

Statistical Release

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Department for
Transport

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This publication presents statistics on personal injury accidents in 2010 on public roads (including footways) in Great Britain, which became known to the police within 30 days.

These are provisional statistics on accidents reported to the police involving drinking and driving in Great Britain in 2010. The figures also include final estimates for 2009. More detailed statistics on drink driving accidents and casualties will be available in Article 3 of Reported Road Casualties Great Britain - Annual Report, due for publication in September 2011.



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Provisional 2010 drink drive estimates show:

- Fatalities resulting from drink and drive accidents fell by 35 per cent from 380 in 2009 to 250 in 2010, whilst seriously injured casualties fell by 18 per cent from 1,490 to 1,230. Slight casualties resulting from drink drive accidents fell by 19 per cent from 10,150 to 8,220. Total casualties also fell by 19 per cent from 12,030 to 9,700.
- Fatal accidents decreased to 230 in 2010, a decrease of 34 per cent. Overall drink and drive accidents fell by 18 per cent from 8,050 to 6,630.

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN:
Pat Kilbey

FURTHER INFORMATION

Media Enquiries:

020 7944 6898

Public Enquiries:

020 7944 6595

Roadacc.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk

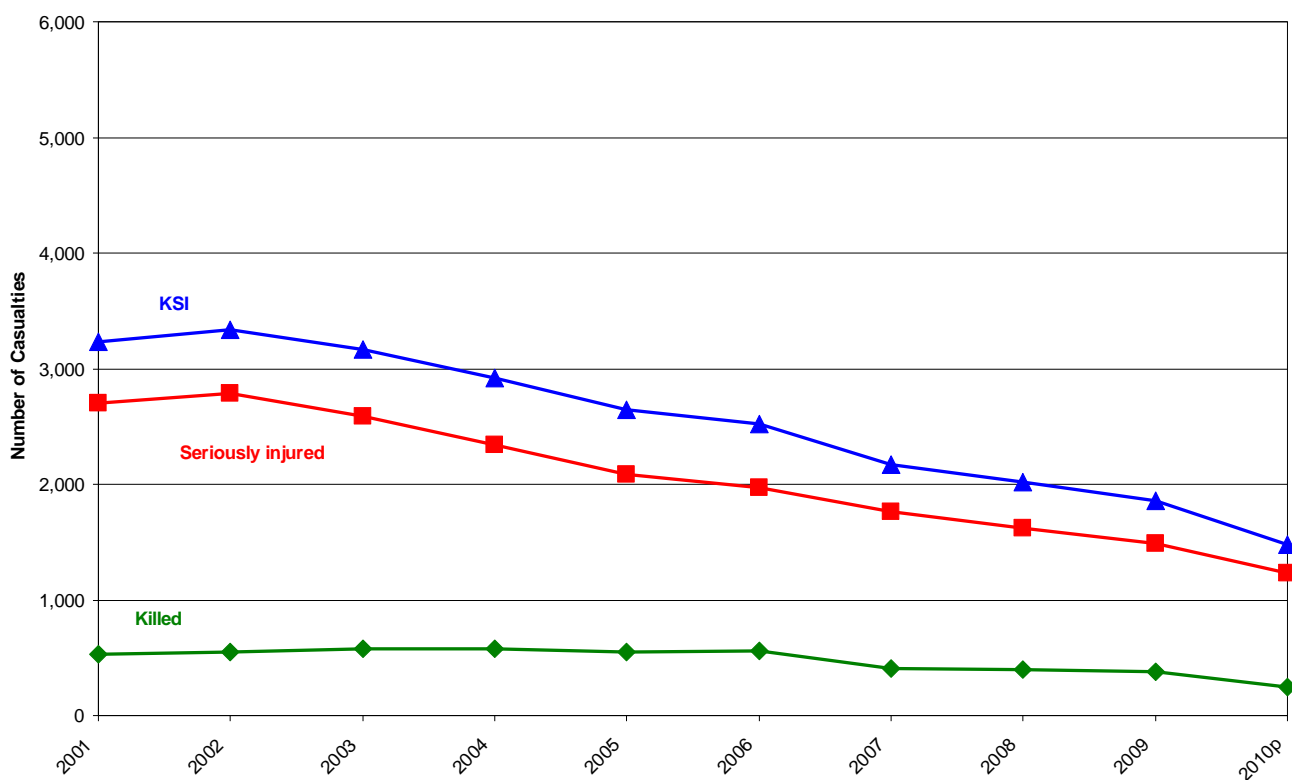
Table RAS51001 shows the estimated number of reported accidents and casualties involving at least one driver/rider over the legal alcohol limit for GB in 1979 to 2010.

A note on the methodology used to produce these estimates can be found at: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-drink-drive-estimates-2010/methodology-notes-drink-drive.pdf>

Estimated number of reported drink drive accidents and casualties: GB 2001 - 2010
(Road Accident Safety web table RAS51001)

Year	Number							
	Accidents				Casualties			
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	Killed	Serious	Slight	Total
2001	470	2,020	9,780	12,270	530	2,700	15,550	18,780
2002	480	2,050	10,620	13,150	550	2,790	16,760	20,100
2003	500	1,970	9,930	12,400	580	2,590	15,820	18,990
2004	520	1,790	8,900	11,210	580	2,340	14,060	16,980
2005	470	1,540	8,060	10,070	550	2,090	12,760	15,400
2006	490	1,480	7,430	9,400	560	1,970	11,840	14,370
2007	370	1,400	7,520	9,280	410	1,760	11,850	14,020
2008	350	1,280	6,980	8,620	400	1,620	10,960	12,990
2009	340	1,180	6,530	8,050	380	1,490	10,150	12,030
2010 ^P	230	990	5,420	6,630	250	1,230	8,220	9,700

^P Provisional data



1. Drink drive limits and definitions

For the purposes of these drink drive statistics, a drink drive accident is defined as being an incident on a public road in which someone is killed or injured and where one or more of the motor vehicle drivers or riders involved *either* refused to give a breath test specimen when requested to do so by the police (other than when incapable of doing so for medical reasons), *or* one of the following:

- i) failed a roadside breath test by registering over 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath
- ii) died and was subsequently found to have more than 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

Drink drive casualties are defined as all road users killed or injured in a drink drive accident.

2. Data sources

Two sources of data are used to assess the extent of drink drive accidents in Great Britain. These are:

(i) **Coroners' data:** Information about the level of alcohol in the blood of road accident fatalities aged 16 or over who die within 12 hours of a road accident is provided by Coroners in England and Wales and by Procurators Fiscal in Scotland.

(ii) **STATS19 breath test data:** The personal injury road accident reporting system (STATS19) provides data on injury accidents in which the driver or rider survived and was also breath tested at the roadside. If the driver or rider refused to provide a breath test specimen, then they are considered to have failed the test unless they are deemed unable to take the test for medical reasons.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The sample of fatality data from Coroners for 2009 has now been finalised but 2010 estimates are based on a reduced sample of coroners' returns and may be biased. They remain provisional until more complete information for 2010 is available.

Comparisons of road accident reports with death registrations show that very few, if any; road accident fatalities are not reported to the police. However, it has long been known that a considerable proportion of non-fatal casualties are not known to the police, as hospital, survey and compensation claims data all indicate a higher number of casualties than police accident data would suggest.

Our best estimate produced in 2010, derived primarily from National Travel Survey (NTS) data, is that the total number of road casualties in Great Britain each year, including those not reported to police, is within the range 610 thousand to 780 thousand with a central estimate of 700 thousand. A discussion of how this estimate has been derived, and its limitations, together with information on complementary sources of data on road accidents and casualties, are contained in Article 5

(pages 61-68) of Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2009 Annual report, which can be found at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110503151558/http://dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablepublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/rrcgb2009>

A revised estimate will be produced later this year as part of the main analysis of 2010 road accident statistics.

The data used as the basis for these statistics are therefore not a complete record of all personal injury road accidents, and this should be borne in mind when using and analysing the figures. However, police data on road accidents (STATS19), 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.

5. Background notes

1. Reported road casualties in Great Britain: 2010 provisional estimates for accidents involving illegal alcohol levels web page provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release. The table is available at: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/tables/ras51001.xls>

2. On 17 December 2010, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, signifying their compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

3. Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release and a full list of definitions used to produce these statistics can be found here:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/>