



Sponsored by Ageas

Embargo: 00.01 hrs Monday 14 November 2016

**Making Road Travel as Safe as Rail and Air
ROAD SAFETY FOUNDATION ANNUAL TRACKING REPORT
AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS**

“Travelling on our road system could be made as safe as on rail and air within a generation.” This is the message of this year’s analysis of crashes on the British network of motorways and A roads outside urban cores, carried out by charity The Road Safety Foundation, and sponsored by Ageas UK.

The same systematic approach to measuring and managing risks needs to be applied to roads as that taken by industries ranging from medicine to mining as well as aviation and rail. Road deaths are now *10 times greater than all deaths in all workplaces added together*. Not a single rail passenger or worker has been killed over the last nine consecutive years, while commercial airline travel is even safer than rail. On highways, there is greater discipline protecting road workers from risks than the general public using them, the report says.

Some key facts in the report:

- For the first time, the South East is the area with highest rate of death and serious injury on the network
- In the South East, risk is over 80% higher than the risk for the network in the West Midlands, the English region with the lowest rate of death and serious injury
- The cost of road crashes in Hampshire, Kent and Essex each exceed £0.5 billion over the three year data period 2012-14
- England’s most improved strategic road is a 13km section of the A1 near Newcastle
- The largest single cause of death is running off the road (29%); the largest cause of serious injury is at junctions (33%)
- An estimated 2% of total GDP is lost in road crashes
- Highways England handles the biggest single crash costs of any authority: £2.1 billion over the three year period
- Report calls for government to boost the economy by investing in proven measures to deliver safer infrastructure and tackle unacceptably high risk roads

Regional findings

This year's Foundation report, *Making Road Travel as Safe as Rail and Air* also highlights the regions with the highest risk roads. It lists persistently high risk roads with little or no change, and highlights the modest actions by authorities on the 10 most improved roads that led to local falls in serious crashes from 168 to 53 (-68%).

Among Britain's top 10 most improved roads

This year's most improved road is the A227 between Tonbridge and the A25 near Borough Green. Kent County Council is responsible for this road, and has introduced a routine maintenance regime. In addition to a signing and lining package, there are yellow backed signs in hazardous locations, good use of double white lines, speed limit roundels and road safety education packages.

Two roads have moved from the highest level of risk (black):

The A809, this year's fifth most improved road, was the highest risk road in Scotland in the 2012 and 2014 Performance Tracking results. A series of measures has improved the A809 – in particular, visibility for drivers, by ensuring a high standard of signing, lining and road studs and by removing roadside hazards. Vehicle activated signs and high friction surfacing have also been implemented.

The A537 between Macclesfield and Buxton ("The Cat and Fiddle Pass") once topped the 'persistently higher risk roads' tables regularly in the annual Performance Tracking results. Last year, the road featured for the first time in the table of 'most improved roads'. The measures that were implemented by the Cheshire Safer Road Partnership and Cheshire East Council (formerly Cheshire County Council) have enabled the road to have significantly improved between 2009 and 2014. These include the implementation of motorcycle friendly barriers and average speed cameras. The road reduced from a significantly high level of risk to a medium-high risk.

Improved roads are those where there has been a statistically significant reduction in the number of fatal and serious crashes over time. Only 2% of roads on the Risk Mapped network have shown a significant reduction in fatal and serious crashes.

Between 2009-11 and 2012-14, fatal and serious crashes on the roads listed fell by 68% from 168 to 53. This led to an annual economic saving for fatal and serious crashes of £20 million in 2013 values, or £112,000 per kilometre, with a net present value worth approximately £0.3 billion over 20 years.

A list of Britain's top 10 most improved roads is in the report and accompanies this release as a pdf.

Top 10 persistently higher risk roads

England's most persistent high risk road is the A285 between Chichester and Petworth in West Sussex. It is a rural, winding road located within the South Downs National Park. It is popular with motorcyclists who account for 39% of crashes causing death or serious injury. Half of the crashes causing death or serious injury occur from running off the road.

In previous reports the roads listed were concentrated in the North West and the East Midlands regions. However, roads in the South East of England now account for 5 of the 10 roads featured.

A list of the top 10 persistently higher risk roads in Britain is in the report and accompanies this release as a pdf.

This report presents more detailed regional results [see accompanying notes.]

Highways England roads

The report shows analysis and maps for Highways England, the corporation responsible for England's strategic roads. The company's stated goal is to bring the number of people killed or injured on the network as close as possible to zero by 2040. This goal is matched by immediate, measurable reductions in risk levels it must achieve by 2020 to satisfy its regulator.

Highways England plans to address the high risk roads on its strategic road network – some that have been on the list for years – with focus on its busy single carriageways.

- Highways England's highest risk road is the 23km stretch of the A21 between Hurst Green and Hastings. The road is entirely rural and passes through several villages. In this year's report, the road is medium-high risk, with crashes concentrated at junctions and bends.

Road Safety Foundation Chairman, Lord Whitty says: "A lifetime of care for a single trauma victim can cost more than £20m. This report identifies the authorities with high costs from road crashes, and shows how risks can be reduced and lives saved with economic returns that are higher, quicker and more certain than from most projects competing for funds.

"We can now identify roads where risk is 20-times higher on some roads than others; and regions where the risk of death and serious injury on the main roads might be twice that of another."

"Highways England plans to address the long ignored high risk roads on its strategic road network, not least its busy single carriageways. Plans now need to be prepared and turned into action. The section of A21 identified in this report in particular is the highest risk road on the English strategic road network.

"All the persistent high risk roads identified in this report have rates of death and serious injury that are unacceptable. Some have been on the list for years. For the government's new safety strategy to succeed, it must help remove the cultural and institutional obstacles that permit this chronic loss of life to continue," says Lord Whitty.

The report has been funded by Britain's third largest motor insurer, Ageas UK, since 2012. Chief Executive, Andy Watson, says: "Every day we see the devastating impact that road crashes have on our customers and their families, who we believe should not have to tolerate high risk roads on national routes and local authority A roads. Since the start of our sponsorship, we've witnessed first-hand the impact that the proven actions from the report have on preventing death and trauma on our roads. The human and financial benefits of making safety the top priority couldn't be clearer."

Ends/more

Notes to editors

The detailed data used to produce these results was commissioned from TRL Limited and included the creation of the British EuroRAP network of road sections, assignment of crashes and traffic data to individual routes and classification of crash types.

The full report is temporarily available at <http://www.roadsafetyfoundation.org/2313.aspx> and will be on the Road Safety Foundation website www.roadsafetyfoundation.org on Monday 1 November.

Pdf attachments show:

- Top 10 most improved roads across the UK
- Top 10 persistently higher risk roads across the UK
- Economic loss by non-metropolitan road authority
- Highest risk road by region/nation
- Most improved road on the English Strategic Road Network
- Persistently higher risk road on the English Strategic Road Network

The Rail Safety and Standards Board Annual Report 2015/2016 records that there have been no passenger or workforce deaths for 9 years on trains. <http://www.rssb.co.uk/Library/risk-analysis-and-safety-reporting/2016-07-13-annual-safety-performance-reports-key-charts.pdf> . During the 6 year data period covered by this report, there were more than 10,000 road deaths in Britain. The recent loss of life on the Croydon tram system after the current report went to press means care is needed to differentiate between heavy rail, with its significant investment in train protection and segregation from the road network, and trams.

For embargoed interviews please contact the numbers below.

Media contacts

Road Safety Foundation

To arrange interviews, for regional data and other detailed media enquiry, please contact:
Richard Rhydderch 01256 345598 or 07776 147262
Caroline Moore on 01256 345598 or 07787 228166

Ageas UK

Press Office: 07500 665 791 E-mail: press.uk@ageas.co.uk

Hadstrong

Becky Hadley 020 7808 7997

Around Britain: local authority costs

- The authorities bearing the highest costs are larger ones with high volumes of travel
- These are all in England, particularly in the South East
- The economic burden of serious road crashes in Hampshire, Kent and Essex each exceed £0.5 billion over the three year data period
- Targeting the EuroRAP network within each authority could pay substantial dividends, especially in Kent, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire where over 50% of costs came from this network
- The authorities with the lowest costs are low-population authorities in Wales and Scotland where the total amount of travel – and so the total exposure to risk - is small and fatal and serious injuries are generally fewer.

Around Britain: relative road risk

- Each part of Britain performs better or worse depending on the amount of travel on safer road types such as motorways or relatively unsafe roads like single carriageways.
- For the first time, the part of Britain with the highest rate of death and serious injury on the network is the South East. The risk on the South East network is over 80% higher than the risk for the network in the West Midlands, the English region with the lowest rate of death and serious injury.
- The West Midlands EuroRAP network is significantly safer than all other regions and nations. The second safest region, the North West is 50% more unsafe than the West Midlands.
- The North West carries the largest volume of its traffic on motorways (64%). However, underperforming motorways and single carriageways mean that the region's risk performance is not as good as the top performer, West Midlands.
- The distribution of travel in Scotland and the South West is almost identical. Scotland performs worse than the South West because of underperforming motorways. These are nearly 25% worse than those of the South West. The performance of the single carriageways in the South West and Scotland are almost identical.

England

- Three authorities in England suffered crash losses in excess of £0.5 billion over the 3-year data period: Hampshire, Kent and Essex
- The largest single crash cost centre in Britain is Highways England with serious crash costs in excess of £2.1 billion

Scotland

- Scotland saw the greatest improvement in risk of death and serious injury over time with a 21% reduction between 2009-11 and 2012-14
- The authority suffering the lowest total economic loss from serious road crashes is East Ayrshire in Scotland (£34 million) over the 3-year data period
- The greatest Scottish loss per capita is Aberdeenshire (£821).
- Highest-risk road in Scotland is the A909 between Burntisland and Kelty

Wales

- Comparing the British regions with Scotland/Wales, average risk on the strategic 'A' road network is highest in Wales (23 fatal and serious crashes per billion vehicle km travelled)
- The economic cost of serious road crashes per capita ranges nearly fivefold across Britain from the lowest in Wales at £211 (Caerphilly) to the highest in Wales at £988 (Powys).

South East

- The risk of death and serious injury is highest in the South East (29 fatal and serious crashes per billion vehicle km travelled)
- Only 24% of local authority 'A' roads are rated low to low-medium risk in the South East
- The A227 between Tonbridge to Borough Green (12km) saw a 90% decrease in fatal and serious crashes over 2009-11 to 2012-14 due to Improved signing and lining including speed limit roundels, double centre line, yellow backing boards, resurfacing, education (local schools)
- The A3100 between Milford to Guildford (10km) saw an 80% decrease in fatal and serious crashes over 2009-11 to 2012-14 due to 'Operation Horizon' - full carriageway resurfacing with improved lining and road studs
- The highest risk road in the South East is once again the A285 between Chichester and Petworth
- The South East also has Highways England's highest risk road: the 13km stretch of the A21 between Hurst Green and Hastings. The road is entirely rural and passes through several villages. In this year's report, the road is medium-high risk, with crashes concentrated at junctions and bends
- In previous reports the persistently-high risk roads listed were concentrated in the North West and the East Midlands regions. However, roads in the South East of England now account for 5 of the 10 roads featured.

South West

- The South West saw an increase in risk of death and serious injury over time of 5% between 2009-11 and 2012-14.

West Midlands

- The risk of death and serious injury is lowest in the West Midlands (16 fatal and serious crashes per billion vehicle km travelled)
- Risk on single carriageway 'A' roads is lowest in the West Midlands (34)
- Risk on motorways is lowest in the West Midlands (4)
- At the regional level, average risk on the strategic 'A' road network is lowest in West Midlands (8)
- At the regional level, average risk on the local authority 'A' road network is lowest in West Midlands (32)
- Only 4% of local authority 'A' roads have unacceptably high risk in the West Midlands
- 69% of local authority 'A' roads are rated low or low-medium risk in the West Midlands

East Midlands

- Part of Britain's second most-persistent high risk road is also in the East Midlands: the A18 Laceby – Ludborough between the East Midlands and Yorkshire

North West

- Risk on single carriageway 'A' roads is highest in the North West (64 fatal and serious crashes per billion vehicle km travelled)
- At the regional level, average risk on the local authority 'A' road network is highest in the North West (58)
- 35% of local authority 'A' roads have unacceptably high risk in the North West

North East

- The greatest English loss per capita is North Yorkshire (£765).
- Highways England's most improved road is the 13km section of the A1 between J65 and A69 near Newcastle

East England

- Risk on motorways is highest in East England (9 fatal and serious crashes per billion vehicle km travelled)