



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Scottish Transport Statistics 2021

Injury Road Accidents

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I. Introduction

1.1 This chapter provides information on injury road accidents which were reported to the police, such as the number and severity of accidents, the police force area in which the accidents occurred, the types of vehicle involved, the number and severity of casualties resulting from the accidents, and the costs of injury and non-injury accidents.

1.2 During 2019 Police Scotland started to use a new accident recording system. The introduction of this new system has changed the way casualty severity is recorded and, as a result, comparisons of the number of serious and slight casualties to earlier years should be made with caution.

More information can be found in the Transport Scotland National Statistics publication [Reported Road Casualties Scotland](#)

Transport and travel habits in Scotland were profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020.

Key points

- There were 141 people killed in road accidents in 2020, 25 (15%) less than the previous year.
- There were 1,547 people recorded as seriously injured in road accidents in 2020.
- Over two thirds of casualties in 2020 were car users or pedestrians. Fifty five per cent of casualties were car users and 16 per cent were pedestrians. Pedal cycles accounted for 12 per cent and Motorcycles for 8 per cent.

2. Main Points

Accidents

2.1 There were 3,878 injury road accidents reported in 2020, 1,928 (33%) fewer than in 2019. The number of reported accidents has been falling over the past ten years, and in 2020 was 62% lower than in 2010; the lowest figure since current records began in 1970. There were 131 fatal accidents in 2020: 28 (18%) less than in 2019. The reported number of accidents in which someone was seriously injured,

but no-one died was 1,371 and the number of reported slight accidents was 2,376. (*Table 6.1*)

2.2 In 2020, over one third of all reported injury road accidents (1,415: 36%) were on non-built up roads (speed limit of more than 40 m.p.h. - see injury road accidents section of the user guide). However, such roads accounted for a higher proportion of fatal accidents (81: 62%), partly because speeds tend to be higher on non built-up roads than on built up roads. There was a 33% decrease in accidents on both built-up and non built-up roads between 2019 and 2020. (*Table 6.1*)

2.3 The long term trends in the number of injury road accidents reported between 2010 and 2020 varied between the Police Force divisions across Scotland, ranging from a 33% fall Dundee) to an 80% fall (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire). The figures for an area may fluctuate from year to year, especially in smaller areas, although the trends appear to be downwards. (*Table 6.2*)

2.4 There were 6,650 vehicles involved in reported injury road accidents in 2020. Over two thirds of them were cars (4,654: 70%); light goods vehicles were the next vehicle type most often involved in accidents (393: 6%), though pedal cycles are a similar proportion. (*Table 6.3*) Up until 2010, the number of motorcycles involved was higher than the number of pedal cycles but since then there has been an increase in pedal cycle traffic.

Casualties

2.5 141 people were killed in road accidents in 2020, 25 (15%) less than the previous year. This was 52% less than the 2004-08 average, the time period used as the baseline for Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020. (*Table 6.4*) Further analysis of progress against the Road Safety Framework Targets can be found in article 1 of Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2020.

2.6 There were 1,547 people recorded as seriously injured in road accidents in 2020. 3,352 people were recorded as slightly injured in 2020. There were a total of 5,040 casualties in 2020, 2,705 (35%) lower than in 2019. (*Table 6.4*)

2.7 In the context of the total volume of traffic on the roads in Scotland, the 5,040 total casualties recorded represented 13.31 casualties per 100 million vehicle kilometres. The Road Safety Framework also monitors the numbers of slight injuries per 100 million vehicle kilometres. The 3,352 people who were recorded as slightly injured in 2020 represented 8.85 casualties per 100 million vehicle-kilometres. (*Table 6.4*)

Child casualties

2.8 There were 493 reported child casualties in 2020, representing 10% of the total number of casualties of all ages. There were six child fatalities, 144 children were seriously injured, and 343 were classified as slightly injured. Due to the relatively small number of child fatalities, these are often monitored using a three year average to remove the effect of year on year fluctuations. In the three years to 2020, there was an average of 4 child fatalities. (*Table 6.4*)

Casualty Rates & Costs

2.9 *Table 6.5* provides road casualty rates per thousand population by age group and mode of transport. Overall, there were 0.92 casualties per thousand population in 2020. The casualty rate for children (0-15 years) was 0.54 per thousand population. However, the child and young adult pedestrian casualty rates (0.25 and 0.17 per thousand population respectively) were much higher than the pedestrian casualty rate for adults (0.13). The total young persons' (16-24 years) casualty rate in 2020 was 1.67 per thousand population, just under twice the rate for all ages. The young persons' casualty rate in cars (1.12 per thousand population) was almost double the rate for adults aged 25-59 (which was 0.60 per thousand population). Further information about the mid-year population estimates used to calculate these rates can be found at the [National Records of Scotland](#). (*Table 6.5*)

2.10 The cost of all road accidents (including damage only non-injury accidents) in 2020 is estimated at £818 million at 2020 prices. (*Table 6.6*)



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