

Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2010 Annual Report

Contributory factors to reported road accidents

Summary

This article describes the scope and limitations of the information on contributory factors collected as part of the national road accident reporting system, and presents results from the sixth year of collection.

- *Failed to look properly* was again the most frequently reported contributory factor and was reported in 40 per cent of all accidents reported to the police in 2010. Four of the five most frequently reported contributory factors involved *driver or rider error or reaction*. For fatal accidents the most frequently reported contributory factor was *loss of control*, which was involved in 34 per cent of fatal accidents.
- *Pedestrian failed to look properly* was reported in 60 per cent of accidents in which a pedestrian was injured or killed, and *pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry* was reported in 25 per cent of accidents.
- *Exceeding the speed limit* was reported as a factor in 5 per cent of accidents, but these accidents involved 14 per cent of fatalities. At least one of *exceeding the speed limit* and *travelling too fast for the conditions* was reported in 12 per cent of all accidents and these accidents accounted for 24 per cent of all fatalities.

Introduction

From 2005 all police forces in Great Britain have been reporting contributory factors as an integral part of the STATS19 collection system. The contributory factors system has been developed to provide some insight into why and how road accidents occur. Contributory factors 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. The factors are largely subjective, reflecting the opinion of the reporting police officer, and are not necessarily the result of extensive investigation. Some factors are less likely to be recorded since evidence may not be available after the event. While this information is valuable in helping to identify ways of improving safety, care should be taken in its interpretation.

This article presents general analysis from accidents reported to the police in 2010 and explains the scope of the system, along with the limitations of its use.

Contributory factor system

The contributory factor system allows the recording of up to six factors in injury road accidents where the police attended the scene. Multiple factors may be recorded against an individual participant in the accident. These participants include a vehicle, a casualty or an uninjured pedestrian. Factors relating to a driver/rider should be assigned to their vehicle. Any given factor may be assigned to a number of participants. Both accidents and vehicles can have more than one contributory factor attributed to them, therefore percentages in this article will not necessarily add up to 100.

The form used by the police to report contributory factors includes a list of 77 contributory factors. These 77 factors fall into nine categories and these are: *Road environment contributed*, *Vehicle defects*, *Injudicious action*, *Driver/rider error or reaction*, *Impairment or distraction*, *Behaviour or inexperience*, *Vision affected by external factors*, *Pedestrian only factors (casualty or uninjured)* and *Special codes*. A copy of the form can be found using the following link:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/stats19-road-accident-injury-statistics-report-form.pdf>

The contributory factors are largely subjective and depend on the skill and experience of the investigating officer to reconstruct the events which directly led to the accident. They reflect the attending officer's opinion at the time of reporting and are not necessarily the result of extensive investigation. Furthermore, it is recognised that subsequent enquiries could lead to the reporting officer changing his/her opinion. The contributory factors are therefore different in nature from the remainder of the STATS19 data which is based on the reporting of factual information. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the data.

It is important to note that it may be difficult for a police officer, attending the scene after an accident has occurred, to identify certain factors that may have contributed to a cause of an accident. In addition, contributory factors are disclosable in court and police officers would require some supporting evidence before reporting certain factors. As a result some contributory factors may be less likely to be reported. Research¹ comparing this data to the 'On the Spot' (OTS) study found that in general fewer factors were reported per accident by the police in STATS19 than in the more in-depth investigations carried out in the OTS study. In particular the police appeared to be less likely to report factors that appeared to allocate blame for an accident, such as those relating to *injudicious action*. The factor *careless, reckless or in a hurry* stood out as being reported considerably more often in the OTS study than in STATS19.

It is also important to note that not all accidents are included in the following analysis of the contributory factor data. Only accidents where the police attended the scene and reported at least one contributory factor are included. Seventy eight per cent of accidents reported to the police in 2010 meet these criteria to be included. Further details of the accidents included in this analysis can be found in the Annex.

¹ Linking Accidents in National Statistics to In-Depth Accident Data

http://www.trl.co.uk/online_store/reports_publications/trl_reports/cat_road_user_safety/report_linking_accidents_in_national_statistics_to_in-depth_accident_data.htm

Contributory factors recorded for accidents in GB 2010

On average 2.5 contributory factors per accident were reported in 2010. The 77 contributory factors fit into one of nine categories as previously discussed. Chart RAS50001 shows the percentage of accidents with contributory factors in each category. Please note that only reported accidents where a police officer attended the scene and reported at least one contributory factor were considered.

- The contributory factor category *driver/rider error or reaction* was the most frequently reported category, involved in 70 per cent of all accidents reported to the police. It was the most frequently reported category for each severity of accident.
- *Injudicious action* (including *travelling too fast for conditions*, *following too close* and *exceeding speed limit*) was the second most frequently reported category, involved in 25 per cent of all accidents. The corresponding figure for fatal accidents was higher at 29 per cent.
- Special codes (including *stolen vehicle*, *vehicle in course of crime* and *emergency vehicle on a call*) were reported for 4 per cent of all accidents.
- Pedestrian contributory factors can be attributed to an injured or uninjured pedestrian involved in the accident. These factors were reported in 13 per cent of all accidents and 17 per cent of fatal accidents.

Chart RAS50001: Contributory factor type: Reported accidents by severity: GB 2010

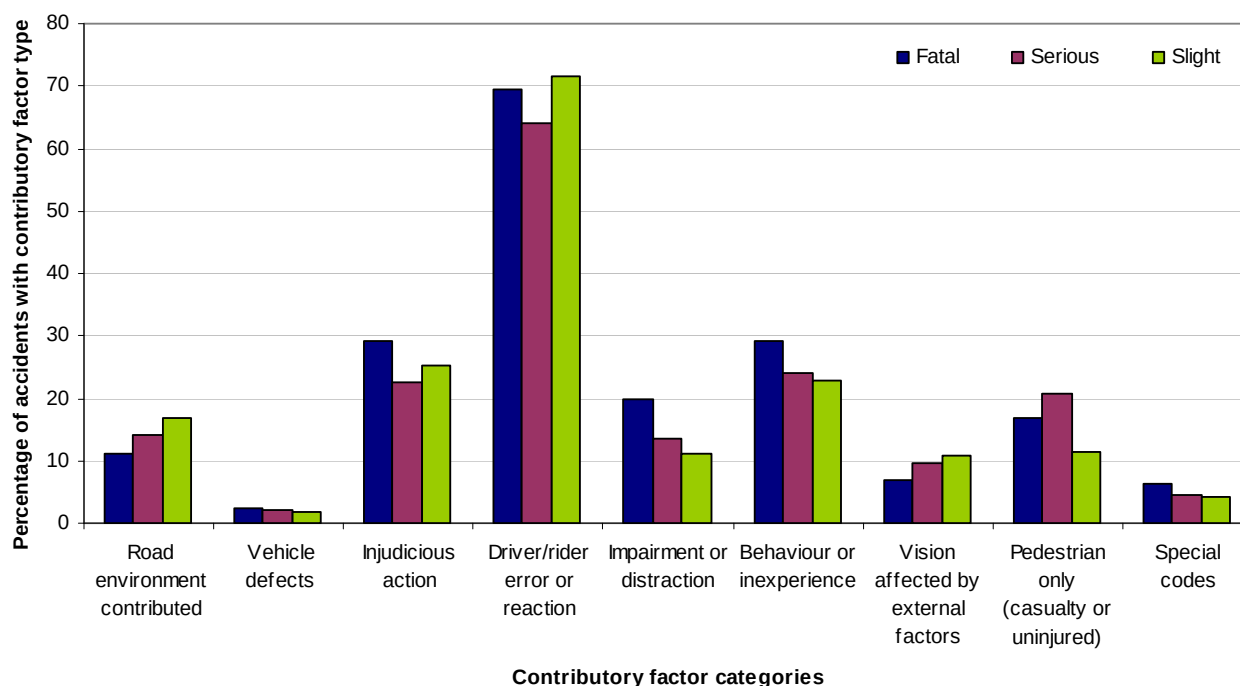


Table RAS50001 shows the percentage of reported road accidents in which each contributory factor was reported, including a breakdown by accident severity.

- Four of the five most frequently reported contributory factors in road accidents were in the category *driver/rider error or reaction*, including *failed to look properly* and *failed to judge other person's path or speed*.

- *Failed to look properly* was the most frequently reported contributory factor and was involved in 40 per cent of all reported accidents. This was followed by *failed to judge other person's path/speed* (21 per cent) and *careless, reckless or in a hurry* (16 per cent). *Failed to look properly* was the most frequently reported contributory factor for slight and serious accidents (41 per cent and 33 per cent).
- The most frequently reported contributory factor for fatal accidents was *loss of control*, which was involved in 34 per cent of accidents. *Loss of control* was also the second most frequent contributory factor for serious accidents (20 per cent).

Table RAS50001: Contributory factor: Reported accidents¹ by severity: GB 2010

Contributory factor reported in accident	Number/ percentage							
	Fatal accidents		Serious accidents		Slight accidents		All accidents	
	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²
Road environment contributed	181	11	2,573	14	17,068	17	19,822	16
Poor or defective road surface	19	1	191	1	671	1	881	1
Deposit on road (eg. oil, mud, chippings)	9	1	283	2	1,213	1	1,505	1
Slippery road (due to weather)	110	7	1,564	9	12,481	12	14,155	12
Inadequate or masked signs or road markings	3	0	62	0	455	0	520	0
Defective traffic signals	1	0	20	0	174	0	195	0
Traffic calming (eg. speed cushions, road humps, chicanes)	1	0	26	0	123	0	150	0
Temporary road layout (eg. contraflow)	3	0	37	0	317	0	357	0
Road layout (eg. bend, hill, narrow carriageway)	46	3	479	3	2,449	2	2,974	2
Animal or object in carriageway	11	1	206	1	1,104	1	1,321	1
Vehicle defects	39	2	389	2	1,789	2	2,217	2
Tyres illegal, defective or under inflated	15	1	144	1	587	1	746	1
Defective lights or indicators	4	0	28	0	142	0	174	0
Defective brakes	9	1	128	1	689	1	826	1
Defective steering or suspension	8	0	48	0	212	0	268	0
Defective or missing mirrors	0	0	4	0	7	0	11	0
Overloaded or poorly loaded vehicle or trailer	7	0	61	0	210	0	278	0
Injudicious action	474	29	4,081	23	25,435	25	29,990	25
Disobeyed automatic traffic signal	14	1	266	1	1,864	2	2,144	2
Disobeyed 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign or markings	32	2	502	3	3,642	4	4,176	3
Disobeyed double white lines	19	1	68	0	155	0	242	0
Disobeyed pedestrian crossing facility	10	1	114	1	413	0	537	0
Illegal turn or direction of travel	22	1	125	1	701	1	848	1
Exceeding speed limit	221	14	1,179	7	4,436	4	5,836	5
Travelling too fast for conditions	215	13	1,565	9	8,231	8	10,011	8
Following too close	20	1	508	3	7,869	8	8,397	7
Vehicle travelling along pavement	2	0	49	0	283	0	334	0
Cyclist entering road from pavement	8	0	204	1	876	1	1,088	1
Driver/rider error or reaction	1,127	70	11,582	64	72,362	72	85,071	70
Junction overshoot	25	2	343	2	2,331	2	2,699	2
Junction restart (moving off at junction)	6	0	216	1	1,876	2	2,098	2
Poor turn or manoeuvre	224	14	2,413	13	13,332	13	15,969	13
Failed to signal or misleading signal	15	1	287	2	2,217	2	2,519	2
Failed to look properly	400	25	5,987	33	41,885	41	48,272	40
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	195	12	2,818	16	22,564	22	25,577	21
Passing too close to cyclist, horse rider or pedestrian	31	2	341	2	1,867	2	2,239	2
Sudden braking	49	3	857	5	8,003	8	8,909	7
Swerved	90	6	798	4	3,994	4	4,882	4
Loss of control	558	34	3,609	20	13,862	14	18,029	15

1 Includes only accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

2 Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as accidents can have more than 1 contributory factor.

Table RAS50001: Contributory factor: Reported accidents¹ by severity: GB 2010 (Cont.)

Number/ percentage

Contributory factor reported in accident	Fatal accidents		Serious accidents		Slight accidents		All accidents	
	Number	Per	Number	Per	Number	Per	Number	Per
		cent ²		cent ²		cent ²		cent ²
Impairment or distraction	324	20	2,459	14	11,265	11	14,048	12
Impaired by alcohol	121	7	1,131	6	4,041	4	5,293	4
Impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	39	2	158	1	368	0	565	0
Fatigue	65	4	306	2	1,395	1	1,766	1
Uncorrected, defective eyesight	5	0	36	0	193	0	234	0
Illness or disability, mental or physical	66	4	407	2	1,375	1	1,848	2
Not displaying lights at night or in poor visibility	10	1	61	0	286	0	357	0
Cyclist wearing dark clothing at night	11	1	62	0	308	0	381	0
Driver using mobile phone	26	2	58	0	265	0	349	0
Distraction in vehicle	60	4	380	2	2,532	3	2,972	2
Distraction outside vehicle	20	1	199	1	1,627	2	1,846	2
Behaviour or inexperience	473	29	4,316	24	23,102	23	27,891	23
Aggressive driving	125	8	759	4	2,978	3	3,862	3
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	322	20	2,846	16	15,635	15	18,803	16
Nervous, uncertain or panic	24	1	258	1	1,828	2	2,110	2
Driving too slow for conditions or slow vehicle (eg tractor)	2	0	10	0	101	0	113	0
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	54	3	913	5	4,545	4	5,512	5
Inexperience of driving on the left	7	0	79	0	395	0	481	0
Unfamiliar with model of vehicle	14	1	196	1	663	1	873	1
Vision affected by external factors	111	7	1,741	10	11,044	11	12,896	11
Stationary or parked vehicle(s)	18	1	582	3	3,456	3	4,056	3
Vegetation	4	0	70	0	327	0	401	0
Road layout (eg. bend, winding road, hill crest)	16	1	222	1	1,278	1	1,516	1
Buildings, road signs, street furniture	3	0	26	0	256	0	285	0
Dazzling headlights	5	0	48	0	247	0	300	0
Dazzling sun	23	1	378	2	2,510	2	2,911	2
Rain, sleet, snow, or fog	18	1	283	2	2,027	2	2,328	2
Spray from other vehicles	2	0	25	0	196	0	223	0
Visor or windscreen dirty or scratched	2	0	32	0	163	0	197	0
Vehicle blind spot	22	1	211	1	1,464	1	1,697	1
Pedestrian only (casualty or uninjured)	272	17	3,722	21	11,564	11	15,558	13
Pedestrian crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	22	1	790	4	2,312	2	3,124	3
Pedestrian failed to look properly	155	10	2,825	16	8,937	9	11,917	10
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	80	5	914	5	2,726	3	3,720	3
Pedestrian wrong use of pedestrian crossing facility	26	2	269	1	853	1	1,148	1
Dangerous action in carriageway (eg. playing)	37	2	357	2	1,000	1	1,394	1
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	75	5	576	3	1,458	1	2,109	2
Pedestrian impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	9	1	57	0	118	0	184	0
Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	39	2	1,149	6	3,777	4	4,965	4
Pedestrian wearing dark clothing at night	48	3	233	1	515	1	796	1
Pedestrian disability or illness, mental or physical	31	2	151	1	298	0	480	0
Special codes	104	6	837	5	4,389	4	5,330	4
Stolen vehicle	14	1	139	1	573	1	726	1
Vehicle in course of crime	7	0	76	0	378	0	461	0
Emergency vehicle on a call	5	0	73	0	601	1	679	1
Vehicle door opened or closed negligently	3	0	77	0	497	0	577	0
Other	76	5	507	3	2,570	3	3,153	3
Total number of accidents¹	1,620	100	18,043	100	101,164	100	120,827	100

1 Includes only accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

2 Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as accidents can have more than 1 contributory factor.

Table RAS50002 compares the ten most frequently reported contributory factors in the previous five years. Please note that only reported accidents where a police officer attended the scene and reported at least one contributory factor were considered.

- The top ten factors have remained unchanged in the past five years, although there were some changes in the order and frequency of the factors.
- The largest change was an increase in *failed to look properly*, which was reported in 35 per cent of accidents in 2006 and 40 per cent in 2010. At this stage it is not possible to tell whether changes are the result of the reporting police officers developing their understanding of the new system or a genuine change in the types of factors that contribute to accidents.

Table RAS50002: Contributory factor of reported accidents¹: GB 2006-2010 comparison

Contributory factor reported in accident ²	Number/percentage									
	2006*		2007		2008*		2009		2010	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Failed to look properly	50,412	35	49,533	35	48,035	37	48,313	38	48,272	40
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	26,988	18	26,671	19	25,343	19	26,176	20	25,577	21
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	25,689	18	23,354	17	20,237	15	19,265	15	18,803	16
Loss of control	21,485	15	20,540	15	19,581	15	19,190	15	18,029	15
Poor turn or manoeuvre	20,636	14	19,424	14	18,003	14	17,402	14	15,969	13
Slippery road (due to weather)	13,695	9	13,514	10	14,066	11	14,382	11	14,155	12
Pedestrian failed to look properly	13,901	10	13,253	9	12,715	10	12,084	9	11,917	10
Travelling too fast for conditions	16,125	11	13,856	10	12,282	9	11,479	9	10,011	8
Sudden braking	10,378	7	9,990	7	9,292	7	9,740	8	8,909	7
Following too close	10,046	7	8,853	6	8,196	6	8,315	6	8,397	7
Total number of accidents¹	146,040	100	140,361	100	131,592	100	128,185	100	120,827	100

* 2006 and 2008 figures have been revised since the previous publication.

1 Includes only accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

2 Includes only the ten most frequently reported contributory factors. Factors not shown may also have been reported.

Accidents with contributory factors by road class

Table RAS50003 shows contributory factors of road accidents by road class. The ten most frequently reported contributory factors for each road type are represented in the table.

- *Failed to look properly* was the most frequently reported contributory factor for every road class. Forty three per cent of accidents on A roads had this factor reported compared to 31 per cent on motorways.
- *Following too close* was a contributory factor in 17 per cent of accidents on motorways compared to 9 per cent for A roads and 6 per cent for B roads. Similarly, motorways also had the highest percentage of accidents which involved either *sudden braking* or *swerved* as contributory factors when compared to other road types.
- Pedestrian associated contributory factors were more common on other roads (C roads and unclassified roads), partly due to the higher usage of these types of roads by pedestrians.

- B roads had *slippery road* as a contributory factor in 14 per cent of accidents compared to 11 per cent for motorways and 10 per cent for A roads.

Table RAS50003: Contributory factors: Reported accidents¹ by road class: GB 2010

Contributory factor reported in accident ³	Number/ percentage									
	Motorways		A roads		B roads		Other roads ²		All roads	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Failed to look properly	1,784	31	24,467	43	5,926	38	16,095	37	48,272	40
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	1,577	28	13,828	25	3,144	20	7,028	16	25,577	21
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	558	10	9,325	17	2,404	15	6,516	15	18,803	16
Loss of control	1,306	23	7,958	14	2,617	17	6,148	14	18,029	15
Poor turn or manoeuvre	572	10	8,200	15	2,133	14	5,064	12	15,969	13
Slippery road (due to weather)	672	12	5,917	10	2,130	14	5,436	13	14,155	12
Pedestrian failed to look properly	21	0	4,762	8	1,336	9	5,798	13	11,917	10
Travelling too fast for conditions	631	11	4,203	7	1,487	10	3,690	9	10,011	8
Sudden braking	764	13	4,900	9	1,029	7	2,216	5	8,909	7
Following too close	948	17	5,047	9	937	6	1,465	3	8,397	7
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	144	3	2,152	4	871	6	2,345	5	5,512	5
Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	9	0	2,116	4	577	4	2,263	5	4,965	4
Swerved	521	9	2,315	4	605	4	1,441	3	4,882	4
Total number of accidents	5,712	100	56,355	100	15,627	100	43,133	100	120,827	100

1 Includes only accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as accidents can have more than 1 contributory factor.

2 Other roads includes C roads and unclassified roads.

Accidents involving pedestrians with contributory factors

Table RAS50004 shows information on road accidents with contributory factors allocated to pedestrians. The ten most frequently reported contributory factors for pedestrians, for both accidents involving pedestrian casualties and accidents involving uninjured pedestrians, are represented.

- *Pedestrian failed to look properly* was the most frequently reported contributory factor for pedestrians in both accidents involving injured or killed pedestrians and accidents involving uninjured pedestrians.
- *Slippery road* was reported for 15 per cent of accidents involving uninjured pedestrians, whereas this was reported for less than 0.5 per cent of accidents involving injured pedestrians.
- In 16 per cent of accidents involving pedestrian casualties, the pedestrian had *pedestrian crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicles* reported as a contributory factor. The equivalent figure for uninjured pedestrians was 10 per cent.

Table RAS50004: Reported accidents¹ involving pedestrians^{2,3} with contributory factors: GB 2010

Contributory factor attributed to pedestrian ⁴	Number/ percentage			
	Accidents involving injured or killed pedestrian		Accidents involving uninjured pedestrian	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Pedestrian failed to look properly	11,166	60	135	45
Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	4,668	25	84	28
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	3,428	18	37	12
Pedestrian cross road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	2,987	16	29	10
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	1,941	10	22	7
Dangerous action in carriageway (eg. Playing)	1,283	7	24	8
Wrong use of pedestrian crossing facility by pedestrian	1,102	6	18	6
Pedestrian wearing dark clothing at night	761	4	5	2
Pedestrian disability or illness, mental or physical	426	2	5	2
Pedestrian impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	169	1	0	0
Slippery Road (due to weather)	25	0	45	15
Deposit on road (eg. Oil, mud, chippings)	2	0	9	3
Animal or object in carriageway	7	0	8	3
Number of accidents	18,749	100	301	100

1 Includes only accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported. Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as accidents can have more than one contributory factor.

2 Due to recording errors some pedestrian factors may have been allocated to vehicles, so the figures in this table are generally smaller than those in other tables in this article.

3 Accidents can involve both pedestrian casualties and uninjured pedestrians who were assigned a contributory factor.

4 Includes only the ten most frequently reported contributory factors for injured or killed pedestrians and for uninjured pedestrians. Factors not shown may also have been reported.

Contributory factors recorded for accident participants in GB 2010

Contributory factors recorded for vehicles

Table RAS50005 shows the percentage of **vehicles** which had each contributory factor by vehicle type. The table shows the ten most frequently reported contributory factors for each vehicle type. As noted previously, only vehicles involved in reported accidents where a police officer attended the scene and reported at least one contributory factor were considered.

The percentages in this table are different from those in Table RAS50002 which gives the percentage of **accidents** with each contributory factor. For example when looking at *failed to look properly* – 50,521 vehicles had this contributory factor, out of a total of 221,362 vehicles (23 per cent) involved in accidents with at least one contributory factor reported by the police. The vehicles which had this contributory factor were in 48,272 accidents out of a total of 120,827 reported accidents (40 per cent of accidents). Part of the reason for the lower number when looking at the percentage of vehicles is that 91,083 vehicles (41 per cent) involved in accidents with at least one reported contributory factor had no contributory factor assigned to the vehicle itself.

Table RAS50005: Contributory factors reported for vehicles^{1,2} in reported accidents by vehicle type: GB 2010

Contributory factor attributed to vehicle ³	Number/ percentage							
	Pedal cycle		Motorcycle		Car		Bus or Coach	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Failed to look properly	3,020	25	2,764	16	39,205	23	707	15
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	1,215	10	2,164	13	20,696	12	398	9
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	959	8	1,460	9	14,899	9	238	5
Loss of control	690	6	2,766	16	13,646	8	70	2
Poor turn or manoeuvre	601	5	1,511	9	12,479	7	212	5
Slippery road (due to weather)	165	1	1,275	8	12,488	7	131	3
Travelling too fast for conditions	247	2	953	6	8,223	5	47	1
Sudden braking	151	1	1,147	7	6,966	4	650	14
Following too close	146	1	698	4	6,944	4	171	4
Exceeding speed limit	35	0	844	5	4,782	3	10	0
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	136	1	1,364	8	3,946	2	7	0
Impaired by alcohol	241	2	283	2	4,433	3	6	0
Stationary or parked vehicle(s)	341	3	496	3	3,624	2	39	1
Disobeyed 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign or markings	189	2	119	1	3,564	2	31	1
Other	127	1	195	1	1,672	1	134	3
Passing too close to cyclist, horse rider or pedestrian	67	1	78	0	1,631	1	154	3
Vehicle blind spot	9	0	25	0	944	1	42	1
Cyclist entering road from pavement	998	8	1	0	61	0	2	0
Cyclist wearing dark clothing at night	320	3	11	0	39	0	1	0
Vehicles with no contributory factor	5,730	48	5,849	35	69,600	41	2,328	51
Number of vehicles	11,929	100	16,833	100	168,990	100	4,570	100

Contributory factor attributed to vehicle ³	LGV		HGV		All vehicles ⁴	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Failed to look properly	2,686	27	1,619	25	50,521	23
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	1,509	15	882	14	27,143	12
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	1,013	10	411	6	19,168	9
Loss of control	508	5	284	4	18,128	8
Poor turn or manoeuvre	801	8	592	9	16,390	7
Slippery road (due to weather)	633	6	289	5	15,091	7
Travelling too fast for conditions	481	5	225	4	10,260	5
Sudden braking	427	4	211	3	9,622	4
Following too close	623	6	357	6	9,013	4
Exceeding speed limit	160	2	61	1	5,930	3
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	40	0	13	0	5,536	3
Impaired by alcohol	157	2	25	0	5,185	2
Stationary or parked vehicle(s)	188	2	39	1	4,762	2
Disobeyed 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign or markings	215	2	50	1	4,202	2
Other	112	1	122	2	2,431	1
Passing too close to cyclist, horse rider or pedestrian	186	2	92	1	2,243	1
Vehicle blind spot	154	2	492	8	1,714	1
Cyclist entering road from pavement	3	0	0	0	1,067	0
Cyclist wearing dark clothing at night	1	0	0	0	372	0
Vehicles with no contributory factor	3,947	39	2,577	40	91,083	41
Number of vehicles	10,053	100	6,398	100	221,362	100

1 Includes only vehicles in road accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as accidents can have more than one contributory factor.

2 Due to recording errors some vehicle specific factors may have been allocated to the wrong vehicle in some accidents.

3 Includes only the ten most frequently reported contributory factors for each vehicle type. Factors not shown may also have been reported.

4 Includes other vehicles types and cases where the vehicle type was not reported.

- *Failed to look properly* was the most frequently reported contributory factor for every vehicle type except motorcycles. This factor was analysed in more detail in our 2006 report.
- *Failed to judge other person's path or speed* was the second most frequently reported factor for cars and goods vehicles and was reported for 12 per cent of vehicles overall.
- Motorcycles had a notably higher percentage of the contributory factors *loss of control* (16 per cent) and *learner/inexperienced driver* (8 per cent) compared to other vehicle types.
- Eight per cent of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) involved in accidents had *vehicle blind spot* as a contributory factor. Thirty-four per cent of foreign registered HGVs involved in accidents with contributory factor(s) reported by the police were attributed with *vehicle blind spot*. The corresponding figure for non-foreign registered HGVs was 5 per cent.
- *Sudden braking* was the second most commonly reported contributory factor for buses or coaches (14 per cent). In most of these cases the bus or coach was the only vehicle involved in the accident and a passenger was injured.
- *Cyclist entering road from pavement* was attributed to 8 per cent of pedal cycles in accidents and *cyclist wearing dark clothes at night* was attributed to 3 per cent.
- *Exceeding speed limit* was attributed to 3 per cent of cars involved in accidents, while *travelling too fast for conditions* was attributed to 5 per cent. For vehicles involved in fatal accidents these figures were both 8 per cent.
- The proportion of vehicles involved in personal injury accidents without a reported contributory factor varied by vehicle type. For example, 51 per cent of buses or coaches were not attributed with a contributory factor compared to 35 per cent of motorcycles. However, contributory factors are largely subjective, assigned quickly after the occurrence of the accident and often without extensive investigations. So these differences may in part be due to preconceptions of certain vehicle user groups.

Most commonly reported pairs of contributory factors

Table RAS50006 shows the most frequent pairs of contributory factors assigned to the same vehicle or pedestrian casualty in road accidents reported to the police in 2010.

- The pair of contributory factors most frequently reported for the same vehicle were *failed to look properly* and *failed to judge other person's path or speed*, with 7 per cent of vehicles having both factors assigned to them. Over half of all vehicles that were assigned *failed to judge other person's path or speed* were also assigned *failed to look properly* (55 per cent). These were also the two most frequently reported contributory factors in all accidents.
- The pair of contributory factors most frequently assigned to the same pedestrian casualty were *pedestrian failed to look properly* and *pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry*. Twenty per cent of pedestrian casualties were assigned this pair of factors. Over 80 per cent of all pedestrian casualties with *pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry* as a contributory factor were also assigned *pedestrian failed to look properly*.

Table RAS50006: Most common pairs of contributory factors reported together^{1,2}: GB 2010

		Number/ percentage	
Factor with lower code ³	Factor with higher code ³	Number	Per cent
		Vehicles	
Failed to look properly	Failed to judge other person's path or speed	14,929	7
Failed to look properly	Careless, reckless or in a hurry	9,287	4
Poor turn or manoeuvre	Failed to look properly	8,638	4
Slippery road (due to weather)	Loss of control	4,512	2
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	Careless, reckless or in a hurry	4,203	2
Poor turn or manoeuvre	Failed to judge other person's path or speed	4,104	2
Slippery road (due to weather)	Travelling too fast for conditions	3,419	2
Travelling too fast for conditions	Loss of control	3,401	2
Following too close	Failed to look properly	3,371	2
Disobeyed 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign or markings	Failed to look properly	3,116	1
Following too close	Failed to judge other person's path or speed	3,104	1
Poor turn or manoeuvre	Careless, reckless or in a hurry	2,964	1
Loss of control	Careless, reckless or in a hurry	2,734	1
Swerved	Loss of control	2,221	1
Failed to look properly	Stationary or parked vehicle(s)	1,964	1
Travelling too fast for conditions	Careless, reckless or in a hurry	1,903	1
Exceeding speed limit	Careless, reckless or in a hurry	1,822	1
Exceeding speed limit	Loss of control	1,755	1
Travelling too fast for conditions	Failed to look properly	1,709	1
Sudden braking	Loss of control	1,690	1
All vehicles in accidents		221,362	100
		Pedestrian casualties	
Pedestrian failed to look properly	Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	3,960	20
Pedestrian failed to look properly	Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	2,720	14
Pedestrian crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	Pedestrian failed to look properly	2,420	12
Pedestrian failed to look properly	Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	1,087	6
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	1,077	6
All pedestrian casualties in accidents		19,398	100

1 Includes only participants in accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

2 Includes the 20 pairings most frequently reported to vehicles and the 5 most frequently reported to pedestrian casualties.

3 All contributory factors are recorded by a code number between 101 and 999. The factor with the lower code number is listed first.

Casualties resulting from accidents with contributory factors in GB 2010

Table RAS50007 shows the number of casualties, resulting from road accidents with at least one contributory factor reported, for each contributory factor by casualty severity.

Unsurprisingly the pattern is very similar to that seen in Table RAS50001 which shows the number of accidents with each factor reported. *Failed to look properly* was the most commonly reported contributory factors for accidents, and for the resulting casualties (40 per cent of casualties were assigned this factor).

Comparison with table RAS50001 shows that accidents with *pedestrian only* factors reported had the lowest number of casualties per accident, while accidents with *injudicious action* factors reported had the highest number.

Table RAS50007: Contributory factors: Casualties in reported accidents¹ by severity: GB 2010

Number/ percentage

Contributory factor reported in accident	Killed		Seriously injured		Slightly injured		All casualties	
	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²
Road environment contributed	194	11	2,944	15	24,929	17	28,067	17
Poor or defective road surface	19	1	209	1	937	1	1,165	1
Deposit on road (eg. oil, mud, chippings)	9	1	308	2	1,721	1	2,038	1
Slippery road (due to weather)	118	7	1,787	9	18,098	12	20,003	12
Inadequate or masked signs or road markings	3	0	68	0	766	1	837	0
Defective traffic signals	1	0	20	0	282	0	303	0
Traffic calming (eg. speed cushions, road humps, chicanes)	1	0	35	0	171	0	207	0
Temporary road layout (eg. contraflow)	3	0	41	0	478	0	522	0
Road layout (eg. bend, hill, narrow carriageway)	50	3	582	3	3,745	3	4,377	3
Animal or object in carriageway	12	1	236	1	1,626	1	1,874	1
Vehicle defects	43	2	448	2	2,849	2	3,340	2
Tyres illegal, defective or under inflated	18	1	172	1	1,020	1	1,210	1
Defective lights or indicators	4	0	30	0	190	0	224	0
Defective brakes	9	1	140	1	1,043	1	1,192	1
Defective steering or suspension	8	0	57	0	352	0	417	0
Defective or missing mirrors	0	0	4	0	8	0	12	0
Overloaded or poorly loaded vehicle or trailer	8	0	74	0	344	0	426	0
Injudicious action	513	30	4,835	24	40,405	28	45,753	27
Disobeyed automatic traffic signal	14	1	298	1	3,150	2	3,462	2
Disobeyed 'Give Way' or 'Stop' sign or markings	34	2	564	3	5,666	4	6,264	4
Disobeyed double white lines	20	1	118	1	369	0	507	0
Disobeyed pedestrian crossing facility	10	1	117	1	468	0	595	0
Illegal turn or direction of travel	24	1	157	1	1,127	1	1,308	1
Exceeding speed limit	241	14	1,495	7	7,585	5	9,321	6
Travelling too fast for conditions	234	14	1,890	9	13,313	9	15,437	9
Following too close	20	1	554	3	12,636	9	13,210	8
Vehicle travelling along pavement	2	0	57	0	324	0	383	0
Cyclist entering road from pavement	8	0	208	1	943	1	1,159	1
Driver/rider error or reaction	1,223	71	13,099	65	107,137	73	121,459	72
Junction overshoot	27	2	419	2	3,752	3	4,198	2
Junction restart (moving off at junction)	6	0	232	1	2,755	2	2,993	2
Poor turn or manoeuvre	249	14	2,739	14	19,665	13	22,653	13
Failed to signal or misleading signal	16	1	307	2	3,181	2	3,504	2
Failed to look properly	422	24	6,447	32	60,580	41	67,449	40
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	205	12	3,094	15	34,465	24	37,764	22
Passing too close to cyclist, horse rider or pedestrian	31	2	350	2	1,972	1	2,353	1
Sudden braking	52	3	929	5	12,600	9	13,581	8
Swerved	101	6	980	5	6,265	4	7,346	4
Loss of control	615	36	4,425	22	21,075	14	26,115	16
Impairment or distraction	355	20	2,992	15	17,511	12	20,858	12
Impaired by alcohol	131	8	1,387	7	5,983	4	7,501	4
Impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	42	2	208	1	639	0	889	1
Fatigue	67	4	403	2	2,177	1	2,647	2
Uncorrected, defective eyesight	5	0	39	0	286	0	330	0
Illness or disability, mental or physical	75	4	486	2	2,193	1	2,754	2
Not displaying lights at night or in poor visibility	10	1	66	0	347	0	423	0
Cyclist wearing dark clothing at night	11	1	63	0	319	0	393	0
Driver using mobile phone	28	2	74	0	449	0	551	0
Distraction in vehicle	69	4	484	2	4,465	3	5,018	3
Distraction outside vehicle	22	1	228	1	2,450	2	2,700	2

¹ Includes only casualties in accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

² Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as casualties are from accidents which can have more than 1 contributory factor.

Table RAS50007: Contributory factors: Casualties in reported accidents¹ by severity: GB 2010 continued.

Number/ percentage

Contributory factor reported in accident	Killed		Seriously injured		Slightly injured		All casualties	
	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent ²
Behaviour or inexperience	504	29	5,089	25	35,266	24	40,859	24
Aggressive driving	135	8	970	5	4,826	3	5,931	4
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	342	20	3,361	17	23,953	16	27,656	16
Nervous, uncertain or panic	24	1	288	1	2,590	2	2,902	2
Driving too slow for conditions or slow vehicle (eg tractor)	2	0	12	0	159	0	173	0
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	59	3	1,039	5	7,088	5	8,186	5
Inexperience of driving on the left	8	0	103	1	637	0	748	0
Unfamiliar with model of vehicle	14	1	210	1	1,018	1	1,242	1
Vision affected by:	114	7	1,872	9	15,417	11	17,403	10
Stationary or parked vehicle(s)	18	1	594	3	4,450	3	5,062	3
Vegetation	4	0	76	0	462	0	542	0
Road layout (eg. bend, winding road, hill crest)	16	1	247	1	1,955	1	2,218	1
Buildings, road signs, street furniture	3	0	28	0	346	0	377	0
Dazzling headlights	5	0	52	0	339	0	396	0
Dazzling sun	24	1	407	2	3,778	3	4,209	2
Rain, sleet, snow, or fog	20	1	328	2	2,970	2	3,318	2
Spray from other vehicles	2	0	31	0	322	0	355	0
Visor or windscreen dirty or scratched	2	0	38	0	258	0	298	0
Vehicle blind spot	22	1	217	1	1,832	1	2,071	1
Pedestrian only (casualty or uninjured)	272	16	3,802	19	12,699	9	16,773	10
Pedestrian crossing road masked by stationary or parked vehicle	22	1	804	4	2,518	2	3,344	2
Pedestrian failed to look properly	155	9	2,870	14	9,718	7	12,743	8
Pedestrian failed to judge vehicle's path or speed	80	5	937	5	3,019	2	4,036	2
Pedestrian wrong use of pedestrian crossing facility	26	2	273	1	960	1	1,259	1
Dangerous action in carriageway (eg. playing)	37	2	367	2	1,088	1	1,492	1
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	75	4	592	3	1,599	1	2,266	1
Pedestrian impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal)	9	1	58	0	138	0	205	0
Pedestrian careless, reckless or in a hurry	39	2	1,165	6	4,061	3	5,265	3
Pedestrian wearing dark clothing at night	48	3	241	1	567	0	856	1
Pedestrian disability or illness, mental or physical	31	2	156	1	325	0	512	0
Special codes	111	6	951	5	6,278	4	7,340	4
Stolen vehicle	14	1	170	1	941	1	1,125	1
Vehicle in course of crime	8	0	92	0	597	0	697	0
Emergency vehicle on a call	5	0	81	0	1,051	1	1,137	1
Vehicle door opened or closed negligently	3	0	77	0	522	0	602	0
Other	82	5	573	3	3,535	2	4,190	2
Total number of casualties	1,732	100	20,150	100	146,496	100	168,378	100

¹ Includes only casualties in accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

² Columns may not add up to 100 per cent as casualties are from accidents which can have more than 1 contributory factor.

Speed as a contributory factor

There are two contributory factors that relate to excessive or inappropriate speed - *exceeding the speed limit* and *travelling too fast for the conditions*. These two factors were analysed in more detail in Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2008 Annual Report.

Exceeding the speed limit should be reported when the driver contributed to the accident by exceeding the posted speed limit, while *travelling too fast for the conditions* should be reported when the driver was travelling within the speed limit, but their speed was not appropriate for the road conditions and/or vehicle type, and contributed to the accident.

If a driver was *exceeding the speed limit* and *travelling too fast for the conditions*, reporting officers are asked to report only the former factor. However in a number of cases both factors are reported. Accidents with both factors reported are only counted as having *exceeding the speed limit* reported in the following analysis. Table RAS50008 shows the number of accidents and resulting casualties where the two speed factors were reported.

- *Exceeding the speed limit* was reported as a contributory factor for 5 per cent of all accidents. The proportion of accident with this factor increased as the accident severity increased, reaching 14 per cent for fatal accidents. These accidents accounted for 14 per cent of all fatalities.
- *Travelling too fast for the conditions* was reported as a contributory factor in 7 per cent of accidents. Again, the proportion of accidents with this factor reported increased with accident severity. Twelve per cent of all accidents had at least one of *exceeding the speed limit* and *travelling too fast for the conditions* reported and these accidents accounted for 24 per cent of all fatalities.

Table RAS50008: Speed as a contributory factor: Reported accidents and casualties by severity¹: GB 2010

Contributory factor in accident	Number/ percentage							
	Accidents							
	Fatal		Serious		Slight		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Exceeding speed limit	221	14	1,179	7	4,436	4	5,836	5
Travelling too fast for conditions ²	165	10	1,341	7	7,427	7	8,933	7
Exceeding speed limit or travelling too fast for conditions	386	24	2,520	14	11,863	12	14,769	12
Total number of accidents	1,620	100	18,043	100	101,164	100	120,827	100
Contributory factor in accident	Casualties							
	Killed		Seriously injured		Slightly injured		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Exceeding speed limit	241	14	1,495	7	7,585	5	9,321	6
Travelling too fast for conditions ²	180	10	1,594	8	11,883	8	13,657	8
Exceeding speed limit or travelling too fast for conditions	421	24	3,089	15	19,468	13	22,978	14
Total number of casualties	1,732	100	20,150	100	146,496	100	168,378	100

¹ Includes accidents and casualties in accidents where a police officer attended the scene and a contributory factor was reported.

² Excluding accidents and casualties in accidents which had *exceeding the speed limit* reported as a contributory factor. These figures will therefore differ from those shown in other tables in this article.

Vehicles with speed contributory factors

In 2010, there were 15,120 vehicles with either *exceeding speed limit* or *travelling too fast for conditions* allocated to it. These vehicles accounted for seven per cent of all vehicles involved in accidents with at least one contributory factor.

Table RAS50009 shows the number of vehicles which had the two speed contributory factors allocated, by selected vehicle type.

- Motorcycles were most likely to have one of the speed factors assigned to them in 2010. Five per cent were reported as *exceeding the speed limit* compared to 3 per cent of cars. Ten per cent of motorcycles were reported as having either of the speed factors assigned to them. The corresponding figure for cars was seven per cent.
- Heavy goods vehicles were less likely to have either of the speed factors assigned than other vehicles. Only 4 per cent of heavy goods vehicles had one of the factors assigned to them. Light goods vehicles were less likely to be *exceeding the speed limit* than cars, with 2 per cent of light goods vehicles involved in accidents having this factor reported.
- A higher proportion of vehicles were assigned *travelling too fast for conditions* than *exceeding the speed limit* for most vehicle types. For motorcycles, these two factors were equally prevalent.

Table RAS50009: Vehicles with speed factors reported by selected vehicle type¹: GB 2010

Contributory factor attributed to vehicle	Number/ percentage									
	Motorcycles		Cars		Light goods vehicles		Heavy goods vehicles		All vehicles ²	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Exceeding speed limit	844	5	4,782	3	160	2	61	1	5,930	3
Travelling too fast for conditions ³	844	5	7,309	4	454	5	211	3	9,190	4
Exceeding speed limit or travelling too fast for conditions	1,688	10	12,091	7	614	6	272	4	15,120	7
All vehicles in accidents	16,833	100	168,990	100	10,053	100	6,398	100	221,362	100

1 Includes vehicles in accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

2 Includes other vehicle types.

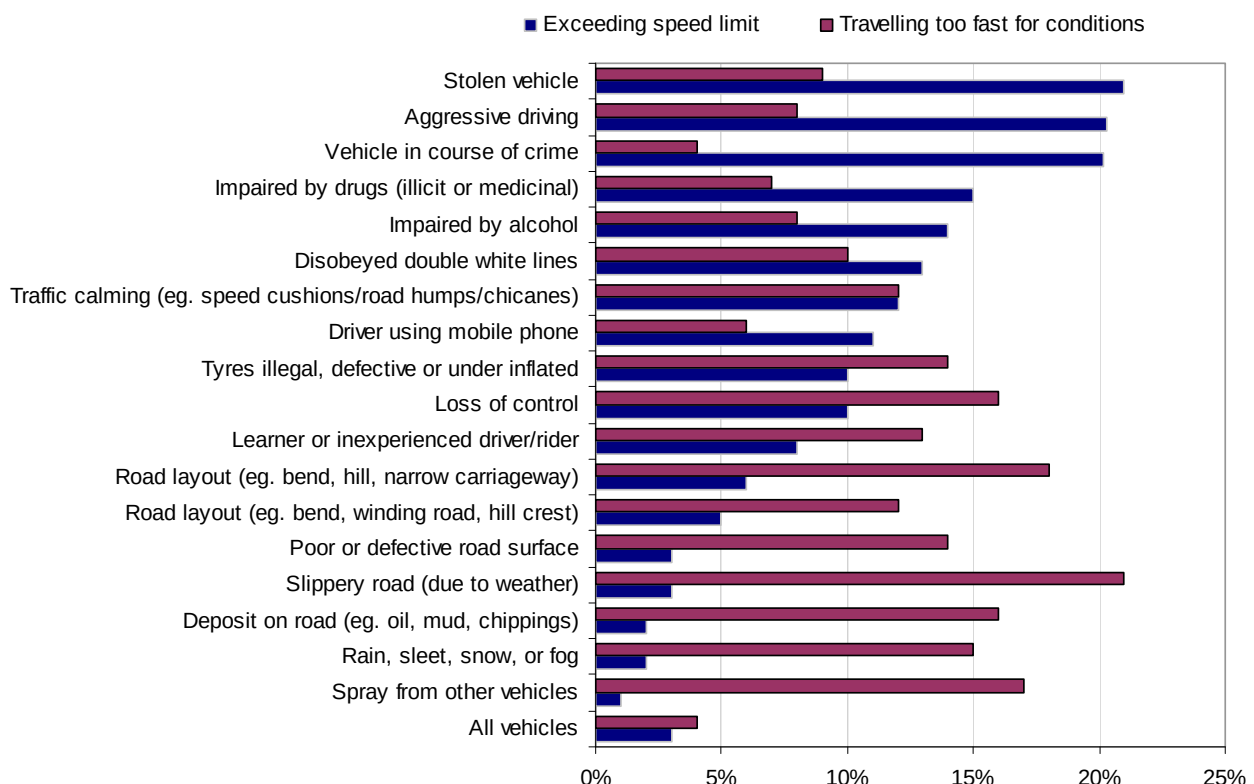
3 Excluding vehicles which had *exceeding the speed limit* reported as a contributory factor. These figures will therefore differ from those shown in other tables in this article.

In 2010 just over seven out of eight vehicles with one of the speed contributory factors reported had at least one other contributory factor reported. *Loss of control* was assigned to 31 per cent of vehicles with a speed factor and *slippery road (due to weather)* was reported to 24 per cent of vehicles.

Chart RAS50010 shows the association between the two speed factors and other contributory factors. In particular, the proportion of the speed factors among vehicles with other factors.

- *Exceeding the speed limit* tended to have stronger associations with factors related to other illegal activities. Twenty one per cent of vehicles assigned with *stolen vehicle* also had the factor *exceeding the speed limit*, as did 20 per cent of vehicles assigned with *vehicle in course of crime*.
- *Travelling too fast for conditions* had stronger associations with factors relating to the road environment and bad weather. For example it was reported for 21 per cent of vehicles that were assigned *slippery road (due to weather)*.

Chart RAS50010: Percentage of vehicles with selected contributory factor which also had a speed factor reported: GB 2010



Annex: Accidents included in the contributory factor analysis

For accidents in which a police officer did not attend the scene it may not be possible for the reporting officer to accurately report the correct contributory factors. As a result, the analyses shown in this article only include accidents in which a police officer attended the scene. In 2010, 81 per cent of accidents met this condition. Accidents which had no contributory factors were also excluded from this analysis. At least one contributory factor was recorded in 97 per cent of accidents in which a police officer attended the scene.

Table RAS50011 shows the proportion of accidents and vehicles that satisfied both of the above conditions, shown for different accident severities, road classes and vehicle types.

- In 2010, 78 per cent of all accidents satisfied both conditions and these accidents are the basis for the analysis in this article. This compares to similar proportions in the previous four years (78/77 per cent) and 74 per cent in 2005.
- 94 per cent of fatal accidents satisfied these conditions, compared to 77 per cent of slight accidents.
- 88 per cent of accidents occurring on motorways were included in this analysis. This compares to 80 per cent for A roads and 79 per cent for B roads.
- 86 per cent of motorcycles involved in accidents in 2010 were included in this analysis. This compares to 67 per cent of pedal cycles and 61 per cent of buses or coaches.

Table RAS50011: Reported accidents and vehicles included in the contributory factor analysis: GB 2010

Category	Number/ percentage		
	Number included in analysis ¹	Total number in 2009	Per cent included in analysis ¹
Accidents: severity			
Fatal	1,620	1,731	94
Serious	18,043	20,440	88
Slight	101,164	132,243	77
Accidents: road class			
Motorways	5,712	6,500	88
A roads	56,355	70,274	80
B roads	15,627	19,755	79
Other roads ²	43,133	57,885	75
Accidents included in analysis	120,827	154,414	78
Category	Number/ percentage		
	Number included in analysis ¹	Total number in 2009	Per cent included in analysis ¹
Vehicles: type			
Pedal cycles	11,929	17,811	67
Motorcycles	16,833	19,534	86
Cars	168,990	212,685	79
Buses or coaches	4,570	7,462	61
Light goods vehicles	10,053	12,866	78
Heavy goods vehicles	6,398	7,615	84
Other vehicles ³	2,589	3,428	76
Vehicles included in analysis	221,362	281,401	79

¹ Includes accidents and vehicles involved in accidents where a police officer attended the scene and in which a contributory factor was reported.

² Other roads includes C roads and unclassified roads.

³ Includes other vehicles types and cases where the vehicle type was not reported.

Background notes

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “Contributory factors to reported road accidents” can be found on Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain – 2010 Annual Report web page at:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?orderby=date&post_type=table&series=road-accidents-and-safety-series

Table numbers RAS50001-RAS50011

1. Further information about the Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report can be found at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010>
2. Notes & Definitions used in STATS19 can be found at:
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/reported-road-casualties-gb-main-results-2010/reported-road-casualties-gb-main-results-2010-definitions.pdf>
3. A copy of the form filled in by the police, which includes the 77 contributory factors can be found at:
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/stats19-road-accident-injury-statistics-report-form.pdf>