

Road Conditions in England

Statistical Release

28 February 2013



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FURTHER INFORMATION

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Department
for Transport

Road Conditions in England: 2012

This statistical release presents information on the condition of local authority roads and trunk roads in England.

The statistics are drawn from a number of sources, including local authority surveys, TRAffic-speed Condition Surveys (TRACS) for the Highways Agency's network, manual surveys for the majority of unclassified roads and skidding resistance surveys. This statistical release also includes statistics on maintenance expenditure on roads.

This is an interim publication to be republished with additional content later in the year. The Department's Road Condition Index for classified local authority roads formerly contained within section 1.1 has been removed from this interim version of the publication due to the identification of an error. Further information on this matter is provided in section 1 of the release.

The key findings from this statistical release include:

- Overall 24 per cent of the local authority principal road network needed further investigation to check whether the existing level of skidding resistance was acceptable over the period 2009/10 - 2011/12. This compares to 25 per cent from the previous three-year period.
- The proportion of the trunk motorway network likely to require planned maintenance within a year has fallen from 6 per cent in 2003 to 3 per cent in 2012, with the proportion for trunk 'A' roads falling from 11 per cent to 4 per cent over the same period.
- In 2012, 5 per cent of the trunk motorway network and 13 per cent of the trunk 'A' road network required further investigation to assess whether the level of skidding resistance was acceptable.
- In 2011/12, £3.0 billion was spent on the maintenance of local authority managed roads compared to £3.1 billion in 2010/11 and £3.3 billion in 2009/10 (all figures are quoted in 2011/12 prices).
- The Highways Agency spent £0.8 billion on the maintenance of trunk roads and motorways in 2011/12, the same as in 2010/11 (all figures are quoted in 2011/12 prices).

1. Local authority roads

The surface condition of classified local authority roads is assessed using machine-surveys called SCANNER surveys. In addition, visual inspections are carried out to assess the surface condition of unclassified roads. The skidding resistance of classified local authority roads is assessed using machine-surveys called SCRIM surveys. Further details can be found in the [Technical note](#).

1.1 Surface condition of classified local authority roads ('A', 'B' and 'C')

The Department's Road Condition Index (RCI) and associated Highways Condition Index (HCI) for classified local authority roads in England have been temporarily withdrawn due to the identification of an error. This error affects data for the period 2006-07 to 2010-11 inclusive. We are investigating the matter and plan to republish the historic data series later in 2013. Please see our website for further details: www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-conditions-in-england-2011

The Department for Transport has continued to collect Single Data List items from local authorities relating to the percentage of principal (local authority A-road and motorway) and non principal (B and C) classified roads where maintenance needs to be considered. These data are not affected by the above error and can be found in [table RDC0120](#).

Users should note that although the RCI/HCI use the same base data as the Single Data List items mentioned above, there are some small differences which would produce different outputs:

- The Single Data List items draw on surveys from multiple years, if necessary, to cover as large a proportion of the network as possible. RCI calculations are carried out using just the data surveyed during the relevant year.
- The Single Data List items report the proportion of the network where maintenance should be considered. The HCI provides an indication of the proportion of the network that is in good condition.

Further information can be found within the [Technical note](#).

1.2 Surface condition of unclassified roads

The surface condition of unclassified road is assessed primarily through visual inspections.

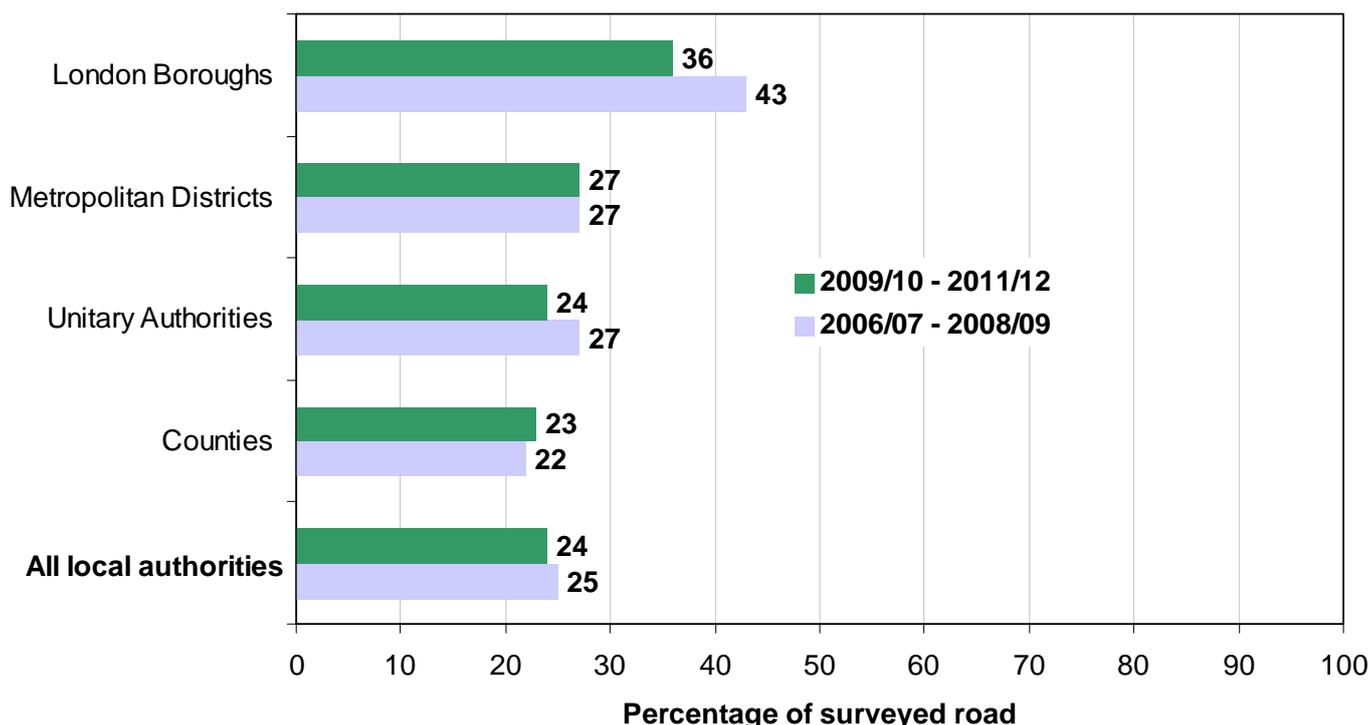
- Between 2006/07 and 2010/11, the percentage of the unclassified road network in England for which maintenance needed to be considered has varied little, being in the range 15 to 16 per cent. These data can be found in [tables RDC0310 to RDC0320](#) respectively. Information relating to the surface condition of local authority unclassified roads has not been updated for 2011/12 due to the unavailability of data.

1.3 Skidding resistance on local authority principal roads

Skidding resistance is a measure of the road surface contribution to the frictional forces developed between a vehicle's tyres and the road when accelerating, braking or cornering. The results are presented as three year averages as it is common practice for authorities to survey their principal road network over two or three year cycles. Across the country a more detailed check by highways engineers will indicate whether work is needed, dependent on the specific local conditions and road use.

- Overall, 24 per cent of the local authority principal road network required further investigation to check whether the existing level of skidding resistance was acceptable over the period 2009/10 - 2011/12. This compares to 25 per cent over the previous three-year period (2006/07 – 2008/09).
- The average proportion of the local authority principal road network needing further investigation of the level of skidding resistance over the period 2009/10 – 2011/12 was highest in London at 36 per cent, a reduction from 43 per cent for the previous three-year period (2006/07 – 2008/09).

Proportion of principal roads requiring further investigation of their level of skidding resistance, by type of local authority, England ([table RDC0140](#))



1.4 Maintenance treatment carried out on local authority roads

- In 2011/12, 7.6 per cent of the principal road network received maintenance treatment. Since 2006/07, on average, 6.7 per cent of the principal road network has been treated each year.
- In 2011/12, 4.1 per cent of the minor road network ('B', 'C' and 'U' roads) received maintenance treatment. The average proportion since 2006/07 has been 3.8 per cent. These data can be found in [table RDC0320](#).
- In 2011/12, £3.0 billion was spent on the maintenance of local authority managed roads of which £1.1 billion was spent on principal roads and £1.9 billion was spent on minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U'). This compares with £3.1 billion spent on local authority managed roads in 2010/11 and £3.3 billion in 2009/10 (all figures are quoted in 2011/12 prices). These data can be found in [table RDC0310](#).

Statistics on the condition of classified local authority roads can be found in [table RDC0120](#). Statistics on maintenance work carried out on local authority roads and maintenance expenditure can be found in [tables RDC0310 to RDC0320](#).

2. Trunk roads

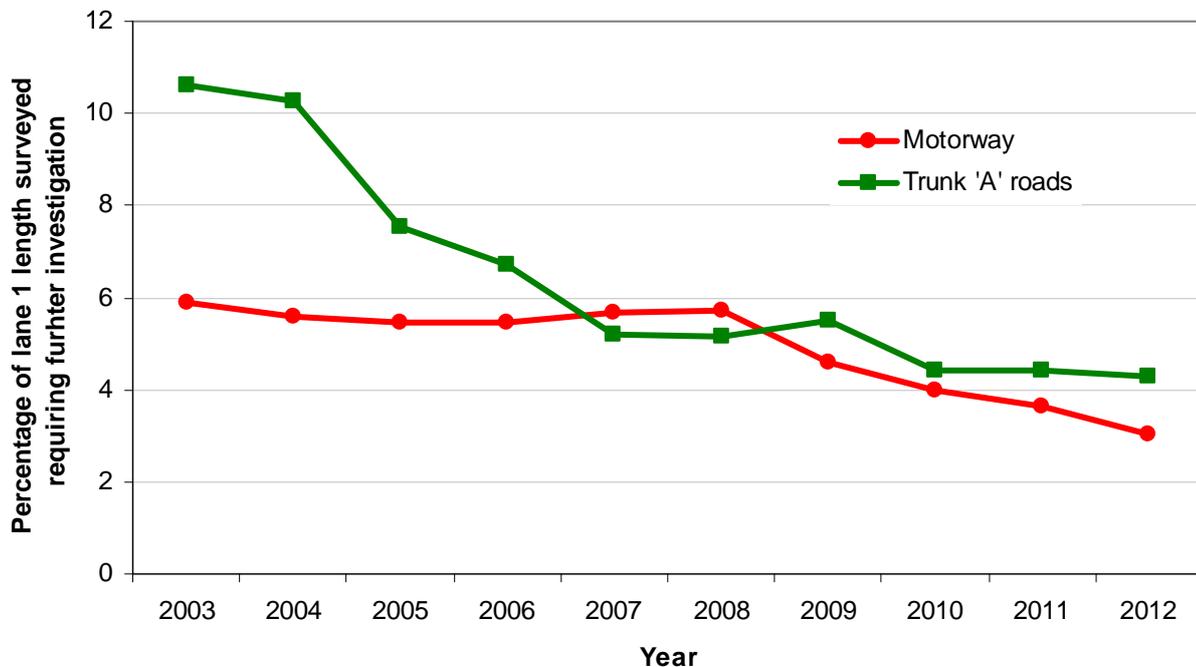
Trunk roads in England are roads which are managed by the Highways Agency. These include almost all motorways in England and many of the long distance rural 'A' roads.

2.1 Surface condition of Trunk Road

In a similar way to SCANNER surveys on classified local authority roads, the surface condition of trunk roads (Highways Agency managed roads in England) is assessed on a consistent basis, using measurements from machine surveys carried out on trunk roads (TRACS - TRAFFIC-speed Condition Surveys).

- The proportion of the trunk motorway network likely to require planned maintenance within one year has reduced from 6 per cent in 2003 to 3 per cent in 2012. Over the same period, the proportion of trunk 'A' roads likely to require planned maintenance within one year has also fallen, from 11 per cent to 4 per cent.

Proportion of trunk road network with surface condition requiring further investigation, England, 2003 - 2012 ([table RDC0201](#))



2.2 Skidding resistance on trunk roads

As is the case for local authority roads, the Highways Agency carries out surveys of skidding resistance on the roads it manages using SCRIM (see section 1.3).

- In 2012, 5 per cent of the trunk motorway network required further investigation to assess whether the level of skidding resistance was acceptable. This is more than double the percentage observed in 2011 (2 per cent) and a larger increase on the period between 2003 and 2010 when it was 1 per cent.
- In 2012, 13 per cent of the trunk 'A' road network required further investigation to assess whether the level of skidding resistance was acceptable compared to 11 per cent in 2011. Since 2003 the percentage has been in the range 10 to 13 per cent. These data can be found in [table RDC0210](#).

2.3 Maintenance expenditure on trunk roads

- In 2011/12, £0.8 billion was spent by the Highways Agency on the maintenance of trunk roads and motorways, unchanged from 2010/11 (all figures are quoted in 2011/12 prices).

Statistics on the condition of trunk roads in England can be found in [table RDC0201](#) and [table RDC0210](#)
Statistics on maintenance expenditure on trunk roads in England can be found in [table RDC0310](#).

3. Request for feedback

We are always keen to receive comments from users of transport statistics. If you have any comments about how the statistics in this release are presented or analysed, please contact us using the details listed on the first page of this release. It would be useful if you could specify which data in the release you are particularly interested in and if you use it for any specific purpose.

4. Background notes

1. Further information about road conditions data and surveys can be found in the [Basic guide](#), [Notes and definitions](#) and the [Technical note](#) which can all be found on the [Road Condition Statistics webpage](#).
2. All the statistics related to this statistical release can be found in [tables RDC0120 to RDC0320](#).
3. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
4. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the [Pre-release access list](#).
5. Further data on road expenditure and on road construction can be found in [tables TSGB0717 to TSGB0720](#).
6. DfT also publishes statistics on [road traffic](#) and [road lengths](#).
7. Further information on the Single Data List can be found on the [Department for Communities and Local Government website](#).