

Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2011 Annual Report

Drinking and Driving

This article presents statistics, and an analysis of, reported drinking and driving accidents and the casualties involved.

Summary

- It is estimated that in 2011, 9,990 reported casualties (5 per cent of all road casualties) occurred when someone was driving whilst over the legal alcohol limit.
- The provisional number of people estimated to have been killed in drink drive accidents was 280 in 2011 (15 per cent of all road fatalities), an increase of 30 fatalities (12 per cent) compared to final 2010 estimates.
- The provisional number of KSI (killed or seriously injured) casualties in 2011 was 1,570, 5 per cent higher than the final 2010 estimates.
- Provisional figures for the number of slight casualties in 2011 rose by 3 per cent since 2010, from 8,210 to 8,430.

Analysis of reported drink drive data

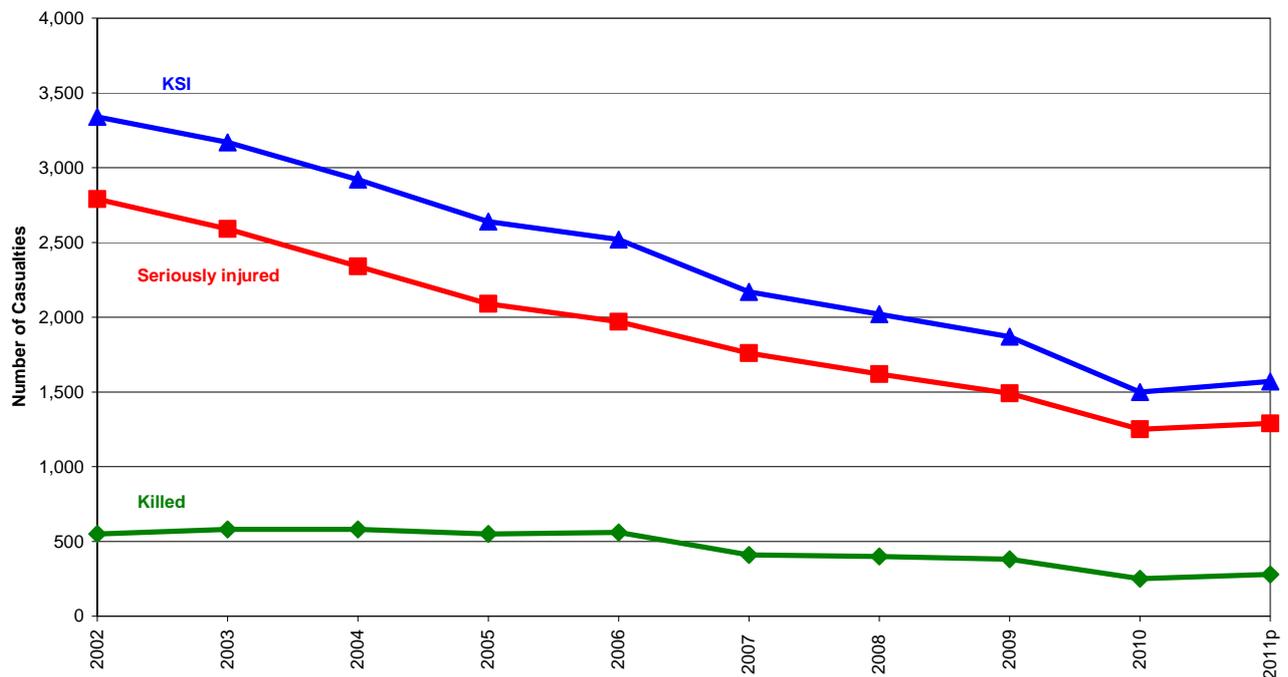
- Provisional figures show that in 2011 there were 6,730 reported personal injury road accidents involving at least one driver/rider over the legal alcohol limit, of which 260 were fatal accidents. This represents a 2 per cent increase in all drink drive accidents and 18 per cent increase in fatal accidents since 2010. Serious accidents rose to 1,040, whilst slight accidents rose to 5,430.
- In 2011, there were 9,990 casualties resulting from drink drive accidents, a 3 per cent increase since 2010.
- The provisional number of fatalities rose to 280 in 2011, an increase of 12 per cent from 2010, however only one sixth of the number of fatalities recorded in 1979. The number of drink drive fatalities accounts for 15 per cent of all road accident fatalities and 6 per cent of serious injuries.
- The number of killed and seriously injured (KSI) drink drive casualties was declining gradually between 2002 and 2010. The recent increase in casualties observed in 2011 is likely to be related, at least in part, to the adverse weather conditions (heavy snow falls) experienced in the first and last quarters of 2010 but not in 2011. The 2010 KSI figure of 1,500 was the lowest ever recorded since the series began, less than a sixth of the 1979 figure; see Table/Chart RAS51001, below.
- Slight casualties in 2011 rose 3 per cent from previous year, from 8,210 to 8,430.

Table RAS51001: Estimated number of reported drink drive accidents and casualties: GB 2002 – 2011p

Year	Number							
	Accidents				Casualties			
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	Killed	Serious	Slight	Total
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	220	990	5,420	6,630	250	1,250	8,210	9,700
2011 ^P	260	1,040	5,430	6,730	280	1,290	8,430	9,990

^P Provisional data

Chart RAS51001: Estimated number of killed or seriously injured reported drink drive casualties: GB 2002- 2011p



P - Provisional

Characteristics of reported drink drive casualties

Women are much less likely to be involved in a drink drive accident, as drivers, than men. Table RAS51005, below, shows that a quarter of the total casualties in drink drive accidents were women.

It is estimated that in 2010 there were around 310 pedestrian casualties and 100 pedal cyclist casualties in accidents where the driver was over the legal alcohol limit.

Table RAS51005: Estimated number of drink drive casualties by casualty type: GB 2010

Killed or seriously injured casualties										
	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Motor-cyclists	Car drivers Over limit	Car drivers Under limit	Car passenger	Other	Male	Female	Total
0-15	20	0	0	0	0	30	0	30	20	50
16-24	20	0	60	210	20	210	10	400	130	530
25-59	50	10	140	360	80	140	30	620	190	810
60+	10	10	0	20	20	20	0	50	30	80
All ages ¹	100	20	210	590	120	410	50	1,120	380	1,500
Total Casualties										
0-15	50	20	0	0	0	270	10	180	160	350
16-24	70	10	170	1,350	360	1,360	50	2,340	1,030	3,370
25-59	130	50	320	2,230	1,270	1,040	210	3,610	1,640	5,260
60+	40	10	10	170	160	130	10	310	210	520
All ages ¹	310	100	510	3,760	1,810	2,920	290	6,590	3,110	9,700

¹ Includes age not recorded.

Detailed analysis of drink drive accidents and casualties is limited to 2010 as finalised Coroners' data are available for analysis around eighteen months in arrears.

Table RAS51006, below, shows the percentage of driver and rider fatalities (by age group) in reported accidents that were over the legal alcohol limit from 2001 to 2011p. In the early 1980s, a third of drivers and riders killed were over the limit but since then, the proportion has fallen to around a fifth.

Table RAS51006: Drivers and riders killed in reported accidents: percentage over the legal blood alcohol limit: GB 2001 – 2011p

Year/ Age	Percentage										
	Motorcycle riders					Cars and other motor vehicles					All
	16-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total	16-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total	
2001	11	14	12	1	10	18	35	25	14	22	18
2002	27	15	10	2	11	18	31	37	14	19	19
2003	10	20	12	8	13	18	33	28	12	19	19
2004	19	19	13	10	14	26	31	32	16	25	21
2005	26	11	13	11	13	25	33	33	13	24	20
2006	8	18	12	9	13	25	36	31	17	26	22
2007	18	17	7	8	11	18	31	31	13	22	18
2008	9	9	12	7	9	23	36	35	13	24	19
2009	7	17	5	12	11	25	39	33	13	25	20
2010	11	15	15	2	8	19	34	36	12	22	17
2011 ^p	18 ⁽¹⁾		10 ⁽²⁾		12	8	42	25	11	21	18

Source: Coroners and Procurators Fiscal only

P - Provisional data. The sample size for 2011 is not yet sufficient to give a full age breakdown.

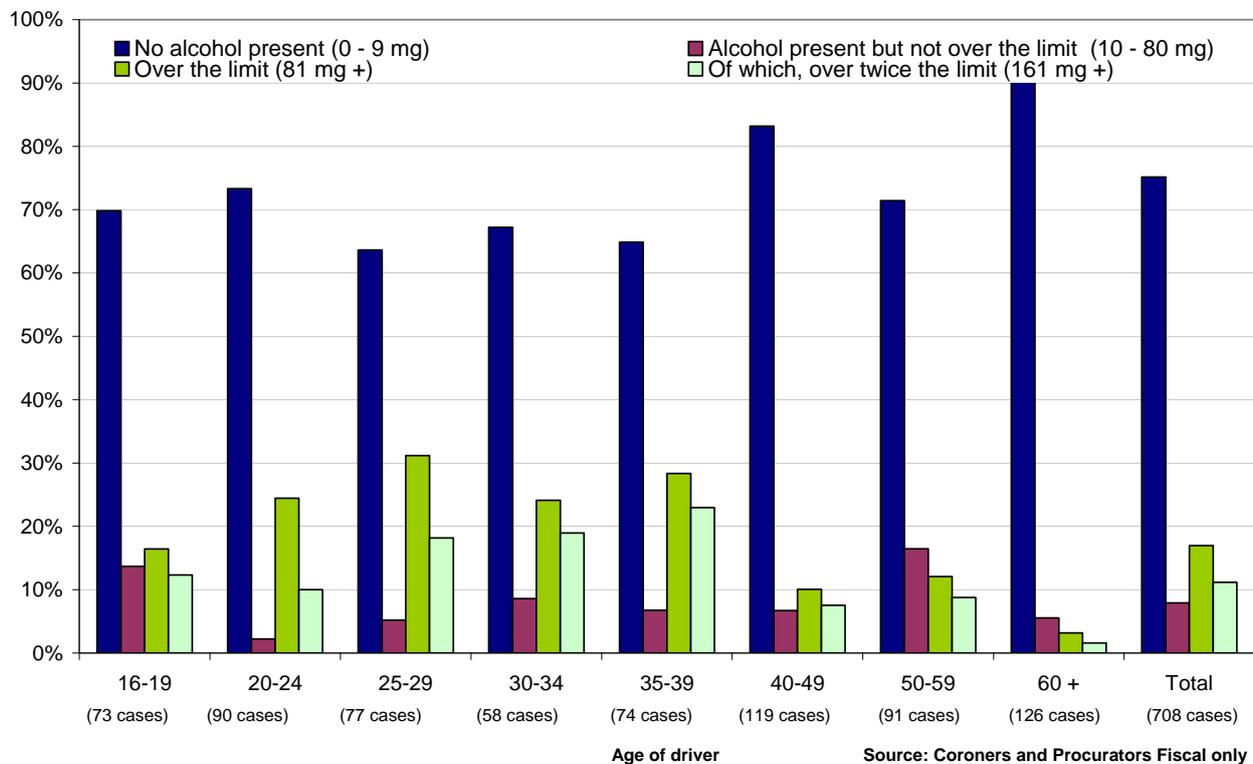
1 Age 16-29

2 Age 30+

Provisional figures for 2011 indicate that the percentage of car and other motor vehicle driver fatalities that were over the limit for all age groups remained relatively stable over the last five years (fluctuating between 17 – 20 per cent). However, motorcycle riders showed an overall increase from 2010, largely owed to a rise in the proportion of young motorcycle drivers (16–29) killed in a road accident, while over the legal alcohol limit.

The chart below (RAS51007) shows the percentage of killed drivers/riders within each blood alcohol content (BAC) category, by age. The definition of “No alcohol present” to 0 - 9mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood is to take into account levels of alcohol which may be naturally present in the body or which are present due to the consumption of medication or household products such as mouthwash.

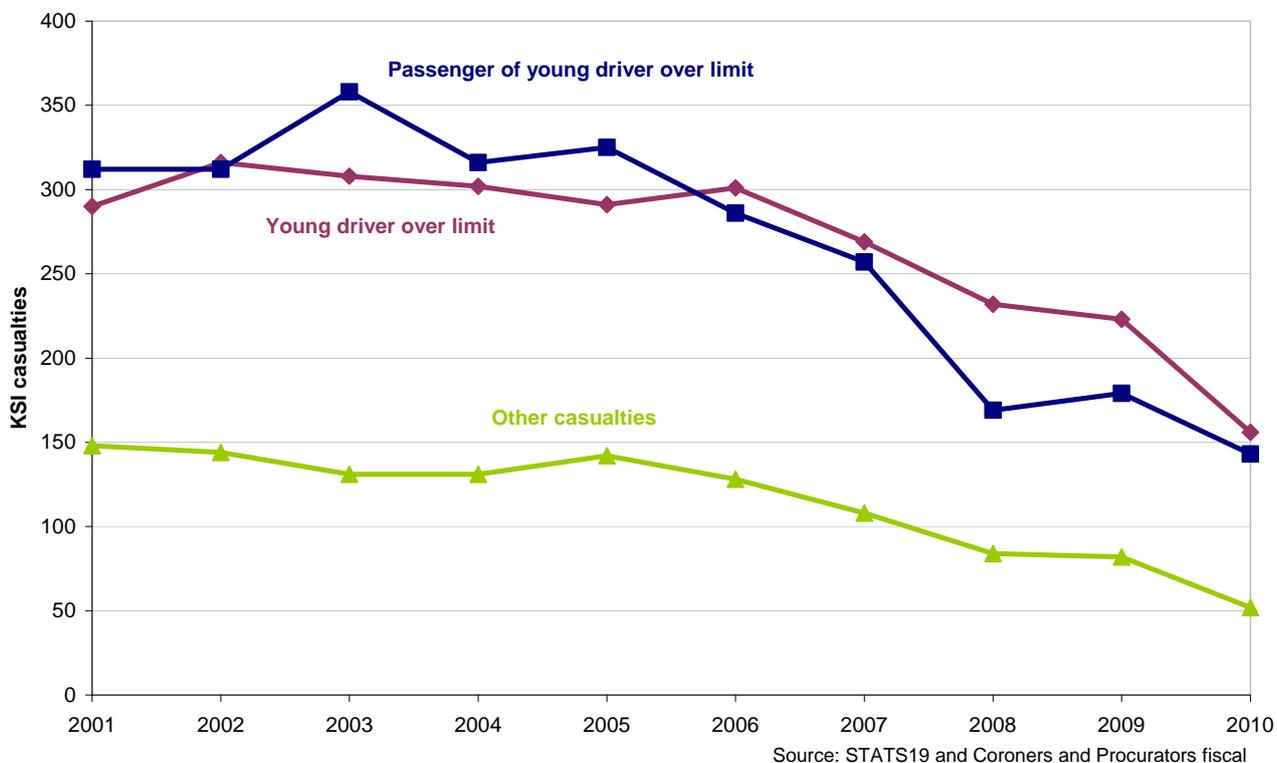
Chart RAS51007: Proportion of all killed drivers/riders resulting from reported accidents in each BAC category, by age: GB 2010



- People aged 60 years or over had the highest proportion of killed drivers/riders with no alcohol present in their blood (91 per cent). In contrast, they had the lowest proportion of killed drivers/riders over the legal alcohol limit (3 per cent).
- 25-29 year olds had the lowest proportion of killed drivers with no alcohol present (64 per cent)
- 25-29 years olds had the highest proportion of killed drivers/riders over the legal alcohol limit (31 per cent) followed by 35-39 year olds (28 per cent).
- Overall, almost two thirds of drivers/riders killed, exceeding the legal alcohol limit, were over twice the alcohol limit (over 160mg/100ml).

Chart RAS51008, below, shows the number of reported killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties resulting from personal injury road accidents where a young driver/rider (17- 24 years old) was over the legal alcohol limit. These figures are based solely on data from reported road accidents and differ from figures in Table RAS51005 which are based on estimates.

Chart RAS51008: Killed and seriously injured casualties in reported accidents involving young drivers (17-24 years old) over the legal alcohol limit: GB 2001-2010



- Between 2001 and 2010, the number of KSI passengers of young drivers over the legal alcohol limit was at its highest in 2003 (358), but by 2008 had fallen by more than half to 169. Between 2009 and 2010, the figures fell by 20 per cent which was similar to the fall in KSI passengers for all young drivers, at 21 per cent.
- Young drivers KSI over the alcohol limit have fallen by almost half the number between 2006 (301) and 2010 (156). The largest of these reductions took place between 2010 and 2011, with a 30 per cent drop.
- The numbers of other drink drive casualties (pedestrians and other drivers, of an age, whether or not over the legal alcohol limit) declined to 52 in 2010, a 37 per cent decline compared to 2009.

Table RAS51009, shown below, is based on 2010 Coroners' and Procurators' Fiscal data using a sample which accounts for over two thirds of reported fatalities aged 16 or over in that year. It shows the percentage of fatalities exceeding varying levels of blood alcohol for different classes of road user. For example for motorcycles, 19 per cent of riders killed had over 9mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, whilst 8 per cent had over 80mg/100ml (i.e. over the drink drive limit). Four per cent of motorcycle riders killed had over 200mg/100ml.

The pedestrian, passenger and cyclist fatalities shown in the table were not necessarily

involved in “drink drive” accidents (accidents involving a motor vehicle driver or rider who was over the legal alcohol limit). Also, blood alcohol levels were available for 70 per cent of motorcycle riders but for only 46 per cent of pedestrian fatalities. The figures may therefore overestimate the proportion of pedestrian fatalities which are over the legal limit since a pedestrian fatality is more likely to be tested if there is a suspicion of alcohol use.

In 2010,

- The proportion of motorcycle riders killed when over the legal limit (8 per cent) was under half the rate for other drivers (22 per cent).
- Over one in six car drivers killed were over the legal limit for driving a motor vehicle.

Table RAS51009: Blood alcohol levels of reported fatalities aged 16 and over: GB 2010

	Cumulative percentage over blood alcohol levels (mg/100ml)						Sample size	Percentage over 80mg/100ml time of accident	
	Below limit		Above limit					22:00-03:59	04:00-21:59
	9	50	80	100	150	200			
Motorcycle riders	19	10	8	7	7	4	270	43	6
Car drivers	29	24	23	21	15	6	389	58	13
Other vehicle drivers/riders	26	18	18	18	13	8	39	18	18
Passengers	36	32	29	21	10	5	97	44	19
Pedestrians	49	44	43	41	34	27	176	70	25
Cyclists	23	17	13	12	6	4	52	71	4

Source: Coroners and Procurators Fiscal only

Table RAS51009 also shows fatalities by time of day:

- Over half of car drivers killed between 10 pm and 4 am were over the limit.
- Over two thirds of pedestrians killed between 10 pm and 4 am were over the legal limit for drivers.
- Over two thirds of cyclists killed between 10 pm and 4 pm were over the legal limit; however this equates to only 5 out of the 7 fatalities where a cyclist, aged 16 or over, was involved in a road accident between 10pm and 4am. This can be compared to the 74 pedal cyclists in total, aged 16 or over, killed in 2010.

Characteristics of reported drink drive accidents

Table RAS51010, below, shows that in both 2000 and 2010 of all car drivers, those aged under thirty had the most drink drive accidents. Young car drivers (aged 17-24) had more drink drive accidents per 100 thousand licence holders and per billion miles driven than any other age group. Car drivers aged 60 years old and over had the least. In all age groups, there was a reduction of almost a half from 2000-2010 in both the numbers and rates of drink drive accidents.

Table RAS51010: Estimated number of car drivers in drink drive road injury accidents: accidents per licence holder and per mile driven, GB 2000 and 2010

	Number					
	Car driver drink drive accidents		Drink drive accidents per 100 thousand licence holders		Drink drive accidents per billion miles driven	
	2000	2010	2000 ¹	2010	2000 ¹	2010
Under 17	80	10
17 - 19 ²	1,060	500	76	32	326	121
20 - 24	2,150	1,370	76	42	156	118
25 - 29	1,790	1,010	52	30	77	52
30 - 34	1,480	720	37	22	50	33
35 - 39	1,180	600	35	16	38	20
40 - 49	1,430	920	21	12	25	14
50 - 59	750	470	13	7	17	9
60 or over	360	300	5	3	11	6
All ages³	10,440	5,970	30	15	44	24

1 Based on NTS 1999-2001 average

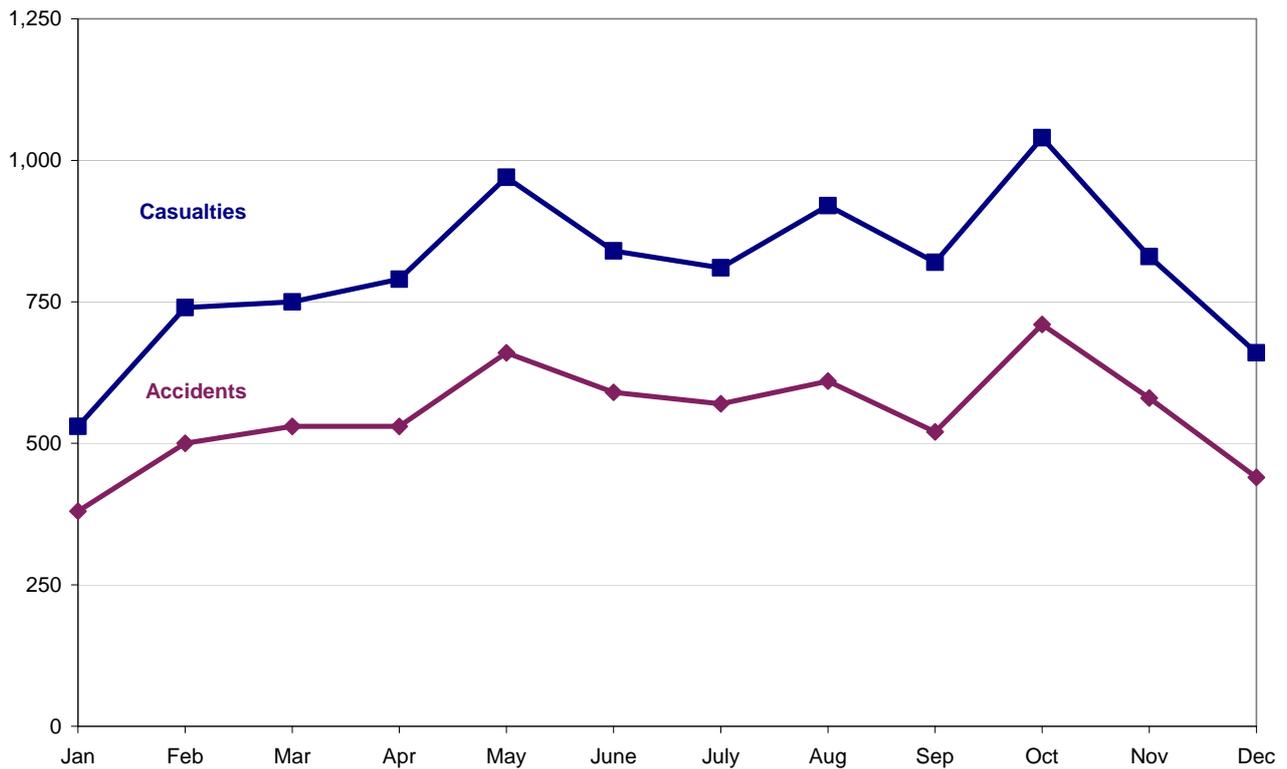
Source: National Travel Survey, STATS19

2 Figures based on a small NTS sample.

3 Includes age not known.

Drinking and driving is a year-round problem. Although the exact pattern varies year on year, the first few months of the year generally have lower numbers of drink drive accidents and casualties than other months of the year. However in 2010, there were peaks in both the number of accidents and casualties in both May and October (Chart RAS51011, below). This differs from the overall pattern of accidents and casualties which tend to increase steadily throughout the year, and drop slightly between December to February.

Chart RAS51011: Estimated number of reported drink drive accidents and casualties, by month: GB 2010



In 2010, nearly two thirds (65 per cent) of all drink drive accidents occurred on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, with more than two-fifths of these occurring during the hours of 9pm to 3am. Chart RAS51012, below, shows the proportion of drink drive accidents by time of day in 2000 and 2010. In 2010 41 per cent of drink drive accidents occurred between 5pm and midnight compared to 52 per cent in 2000.

Chart RAS51012: Reported drink drive accidents, by time of day: GB 2000 & 2010

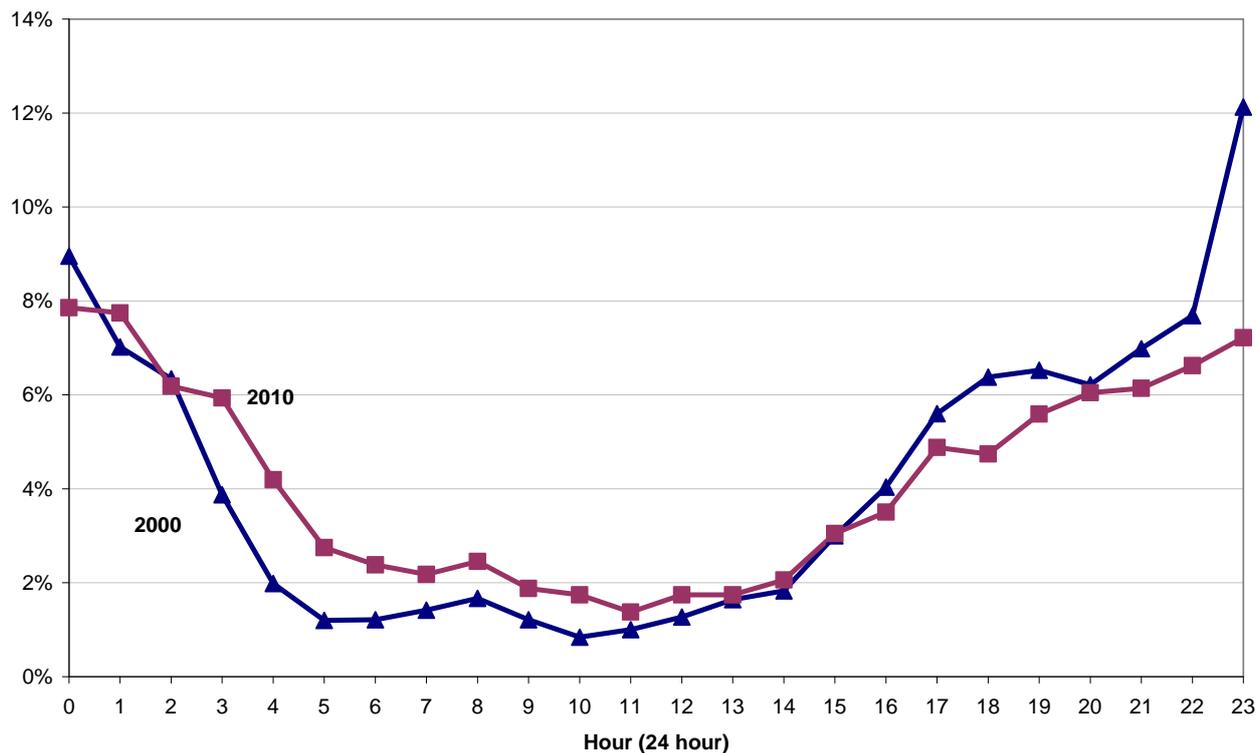


Table RAS51013, below, shows that in 2010:

- Forty two per cent of reported drink drive accidents were single vehicle accidents involving no pedestrians. In these accidents there was therefore only one driver/rider over the legal alcohol limit.
- Forty one per cent of all drink drive accidents involved two vehicles.
- Whilst 13 per cent of all drink drive accidents involved three or more vehicles.

Table RAS51013: Reported drink drive accidents by pedestrian involvement: GB 2010

Pedestrians involved	Number of vehicles involved			Number
	1	2	3 or more	Total
No	1,847	1,783	544	4,174
Yes	155	28	8	191
Total	2,002	1,811	552	4,365

Breath testing

Breath testing rates at reported personal injury road accidents remained at 54 per cent in 2011. The proportion of drivers and riders failing breath tests has been falling over the last few years; rising slightly in 2011 to 3.1 per cent. The number of drivers and riders failing a breath test as a proportion of all involved in accidents has been close to 2 per cent over the past ten years, with 2011 figure at 1.7 per cent (see Table RAS51014).

Table RAS51014: Drivers and riders in reported injury road accidents: breath tests and failures: GB 2002 – 2011

	Number/Percentage									
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
a. Total involved	390,479	374,278	362,543	348,982	331,307	318,185	294,621	280,936	263,417	256,101
b. Total tests requested	196,253	187,292	183,999	183,239	179,290	179,572	162,994	151,933	141,264	138,650
c. Total failed	8,104	8,151	7,430	7,116	6,595	6,279	5,521	5,129	4,288	4,366
Testing rate (b/a x 100)	50	50	51	53	54	56	55	54	54	54
Test failure rate (c/b x 100)	4.1	4.4	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.1
Total failure rate (c/a x 100)	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.7

Source: STATS19

Overall, 2.5 per cent of men involved in an accident failed a breath test, which is well over twice the rate for women (1.1 per cent) and for both groups the percentage failing a breath test generally declines amongst older age groups (see Table RAS51015). In general, men are slightly more likely to be tested after being involved in an accident than women.

Table RAS51015: Car drivers in reported personal injury road accidents: breath tests and failures: GB 2011

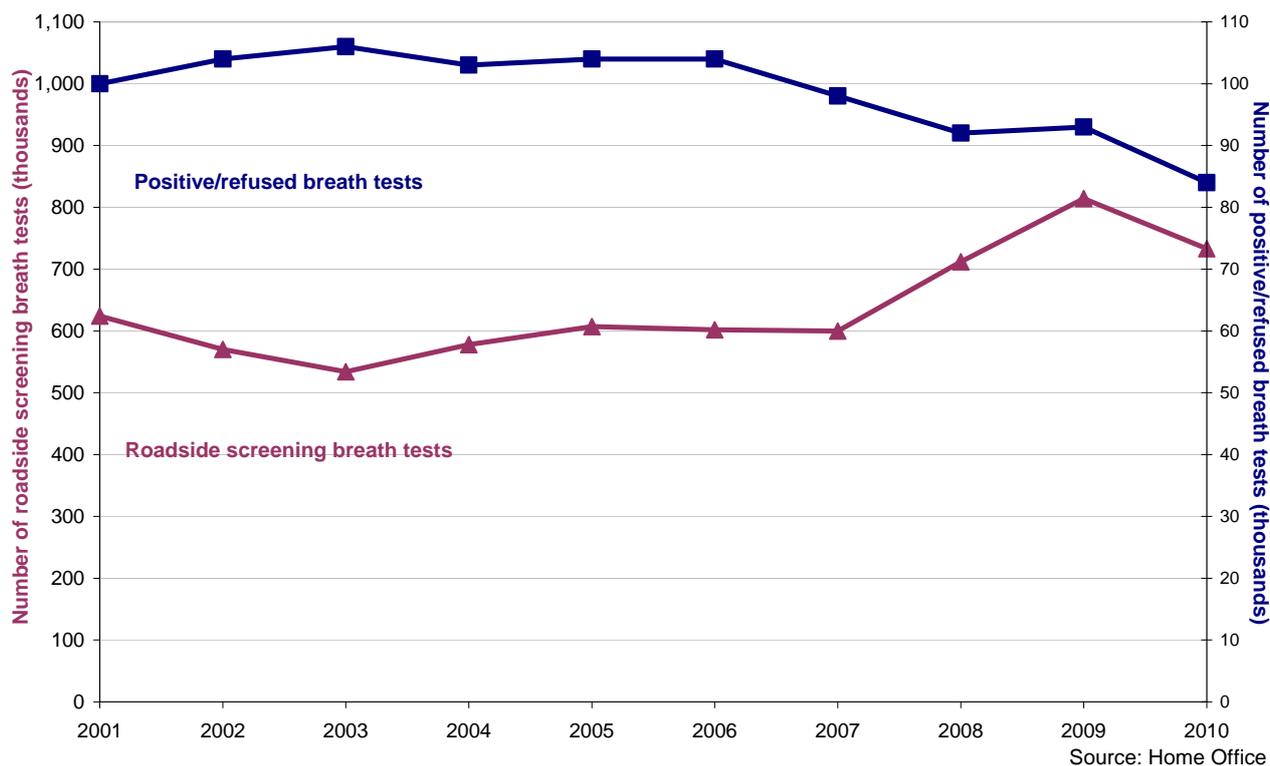
	Number/percentage									
	Men					Women				
	a. Involved in	b. Tested	c: Failed	b as % of a	c as % of a	a. Involved in	b. Tested	c: Failed	b as % of a	c as % of a
<17	90	48	9	53	10.0	13	6	1	46	7.7
17 - 19	7,170	5,044	240	70	3.3	4,741	3,050	68	64	1.4
20 - 24	14,074	9,348	674	66	4.8	9,842	5,945	165	60	1.7
25 - 29	12,613	8,064	532	64	4.2	8,495	4,984	105	59	1.2
30 - 34	12,073	7,379	413	61	3.4	7,715	4,252	99	55	1.3
35 - 39	10,799	6,705	287	62	2.7	7,320	4,100	89	56	1.2
40 - 49	21,561	13,631	439	63	2.0	14,568	8,563	168	59	1.2
50 - 59	14,742	9,329	227	63	1.5	8,728	5,108	79	59	0.9
60 - 69	9,445	6,011	104	64	1.1	4,756	2,809	27	59	0.6
70 - 99	7,680	4,877	50	64	0.7	3,262	1,818	13	56	0.4
All ages ¹	118,596	71,271	3,017	60	2.5	72,692	40,928	822	56	1.1

¹ Includes age not known

Source: STATS19

Chart RAS51016, below, shows the number of all roadside screening breath tests required by the police. The number of tests fell from 715 thousand in 2000 to 534 thousand in 2003 then increased to 814 thousand in 2009, before reducing to 733 thousand in 2010. This increase coincides with the rollout of roadside digital breath screening equipment to police in April 2008, which may have streamlined breath test procedures for many forces. Despite rising to a peak of 20 per cent in 2003, the proportion of failed breath tests has since progressively fallen to 11 per cent in 2010. Of all recorded roadside breath tests, just under a fifth (19 per cent) were as a result of a reported personal injury road accident.

Chart RAS51016: Reported roadside screening breath tests and breath test failures, England and Wales 2001-2010



Analysis of reported roadside breath alcohol screening tests¹

The following section presents statistics, and an analysis of, the results of roadside breath alcohol screening tests, administered by police forces in 2011, using recently introduced digital breath testing devices. All analysis in this section is based on data thus far supplied to the Department for Transport by 39 (out of 43) police forces in England and Wales, each of whom have supplied at least one month of data relating to 2011 (around 561 thousand tests in total). The data for 2011 are not complete, do not cover England and Wales as a whole and relate to drivers of road vehicles only, however they are suitable for examining proportions and distributions within the data.

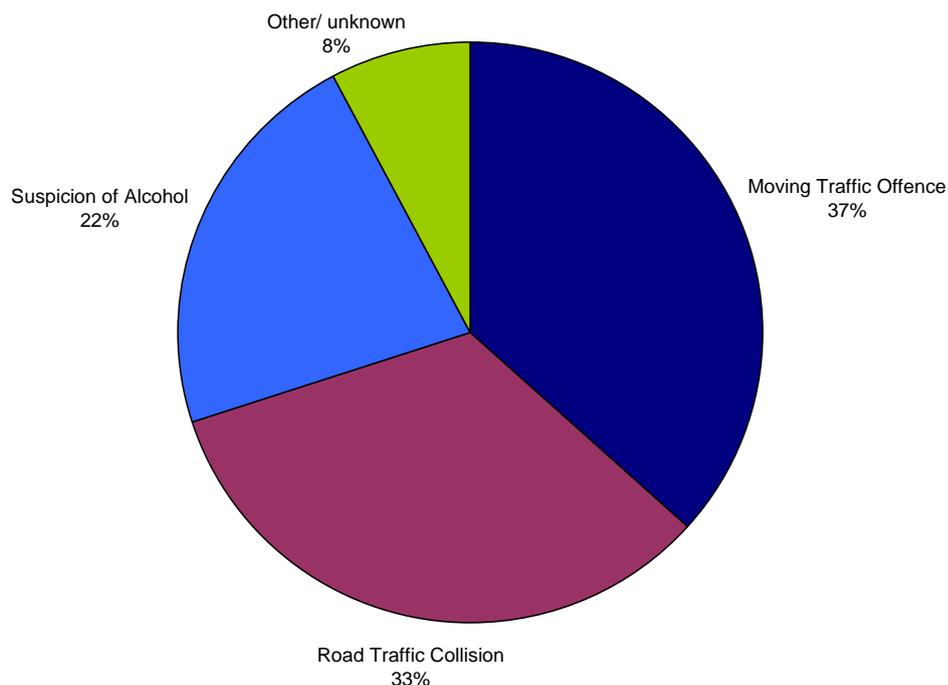
Results of breath alcohol screening tests can only be regarded as indicative of the level of alcohol present in a sample of breath and are not used to determine whether a driver was above or below the legal limit to drive.

Reason and results of breath tests

In 2011, the most common reason for the police requiring a driver to undergo a breath alcohol screening test was following a moving traffic offence (37 per cent). A road traffic collision, including damage only incidents, was the second most common reason (33 per cent of cases) and just under a quarter (22 per cent) of tests were because the driver was suspected of consuming alcohol, see RAS51017, below.

¹ The figures in this section are outside the scope of National Statistics and unlike other data presented in this article, are not exclusively collected following a personal injury road accident.

Chart RAS51017: Breath tests, by reason² for test: 2011



The majority of people screened for alcohol at the roadside (90 per cent) were indicated to be within the legal breath alcohol limit for driving (up to and including 35 micrograms (mcg) of alcohol per 100 millilitres (ml) of breath), although this proportion varied with the reason the test was required.

Following a road traffic collision, 92 per cent of people were under the legal alcohol limit, however in cases of suspected alcohol consumption, only 81 per cent of people tested were within the legal limit, see Table RAS51017.

Table RAS51017: Screening test results, by reason for test: 2011

Reason for test	0 - 4 mcg	5 - 20 mcg	21 - 35 mcg	36 - 50 mcg	51 - 80 mcg	81 mcg +	Per cent	
							Under the limit	Over the limit
Moving Traffic Offence	83	7	3	2	3	2	93	7
Road Traffic Collision	88	3	2	2	3	3	92	8
Suspicion of Alcohol	60	14	7	6	8	5	81	19
Other/ unknown	80	4	4	4	5	3	88	12
All	80	7	4	3	4	3	90	10

² It is the case that multiple reasons can occur at the same incident e.g. a moving traffic offence and a suspicion of alcohol frequently occur together. The devices do not allow an officer to record multiple reasons for the test and it is at the discretion of the reporting police officer what reason is recorded for the test being required. Care should therefore be taken when comparing the reasons for carrying out breath alcohol screening tests.

Table RAS51018: Results of screening breath tests following a road traffic collision: 2011

		Negative						Positive	
		0 - 4 mcg	5 - 20 mcg	21 - 35 mcg	36 - 50 mcg	51 - 80 mcg	81 mcg and over	Under the limit	Over the limit
16-19	Male	9,145	296	253	226	377	207	9,694	810
	Female	3,587	78	54	45	115	55	3,719	215
20-24	Male	15,762	707	537	534	1,078	872	17,006	2,484
	Female	6,717	129	95	91	207	154	6,941	452
25-29	Male	11,992	465	297	348	720	680	12,754	1,748
	Female	5,106	80	52	54	129	141	5,238	324
30-39	Male	24,115	899	551	520	930	1,063	25,565	2,513
	Female	8,944	136	93	76	200	307	9,173	583
40-49	Male	21,970	610	358	304	598	716	22,938	1,618
	Female	8,339	111	76	70	174	321	8,526	565
50-59	Male	13,975	352	222	168	320	379	14,549	867
	Female	4,995	60	34	42	82	150	5,089	274
60-69	Male	8,041	234	93	100	165	126	8,368	391
	Female	2,675	26	17	13	46	45	2,718	104
70+	Male	5,334	162	75	45	57	32	5,571	134
	Female	1,660	22	5	13	8	10	1,687	31
All	Male	110,334	3,725	2,386	2,245	4,245	4,075	116,445	10,565
	Female	42,023	642	426	404	961	1,183	43,091	2,548
Total		152,357	4,367	2,812	2,649	5,206	5,258	159,536	13,113

Table RAS51018 shows the results of screening tests following a road traffic collision (RTC), broken down by the gender and age of the driver tested. Following an RTC in 2011, a higher proportion of men compared to women were indicated to be over the legal limit.

Proportionally, males aged 20-29 years were the most likely to fail a test (between 12-13 percent). This is around twice the proportion of women of this age who failed their test. The proportion of failed tests following a road traffic collision declined amongst older age groups as was the case with personal injury road accidents, with only 4 per cent of drivers aged 60 or over, which were tested, failing a breath test.

The number of convictions (findings of guilt at courts for driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs) fell from approximately 58,700 in 2010 to 54,900 in 2011 (as reported by ministry of justice in their latest report: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/criminal-justice/criminal-justice-statistics>).

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “Drinking and driving” can be found on Reported road casualties Great Britain – 2011 annual report web page at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&series=road-accidents-and-safety-series

Table numbers RAS51001-RAS51019.

Background notes

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.

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-2011/methodology-notes-drink-drive.pdf>

3. Digital breath screening data sources

From April 2008 onwards, police forces across England and Wales progressively began using new digital recording equipment in place of traditional breath testing screening devices. Unlike previous devices, the new equipment is able to record and report the specific quantity of any alcohol present in a persons system at the roadside, the reason for the test, the age and gender of the person being tested and the date and time it was carried out.

A breath alcohol screening test can be required when a driver involved in a collision, is suspected of driving with alcohol in the body or following the commission of a moving traffic offence. Results of breath alcohol screening tests can only be regarded as indicative of the level of alcohol present in a sample of breath and are not used to determine whether a driver

was above or below the legal limit to drive.

It remains the case that it is only at a police station or hospital that a specimen(s) can be obtained to determine a person's actual alcohol concentration. A person's breath alcohol content (BrAC) can be measured, using evidential devices, which are calibrated before and after the test and which ensure that: a sample of breath is not been affected by mouth alcohol or other interfering substances or that blood or urine specimens may be taken for subsequent laboratory analysis. Roadside breath testing devices have more limited ability and are calibrated monthly and so consequently, the breath alcohol reading obtained through a screening at the roadside can only ever be regarded as indicative. Care should therefore be taken when examining the figures produced.

4. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The sample of fatality data from Coroners for 2010 has now been finalised but 2011 estimates are based on a reduced sample of coroners' returns and may be biased. They remain provisional until more complete information for 2011 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. 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.

In 2011, the Department produced an estimate of the total number of road casualties in Great Britain each year derived primarily from National Travel Survey (NTS) data. Our best estimate is within the range 660 thousand to 800 thousand with a central estimate of 730 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 the survey data on road accidents article of Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2010 Annual report, which can be found at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010/rrcgb2010-05.pdf>

A revised estimate will be produced next year when NTS 2011 data are available.

In addition, a new article *self-reported drink and drug driving: findings from the Crime Survey and England and Wales (CSEW)*, was in the Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain 2011 report. The article presents data on people admissions of driving whilst being under the influence of drugs or over the legal alcohol limit, and can be found at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010/rrcgb2011-05.pdf>

Further information about the Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2011 Annual Report can be found at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2011>

Notes & Definitions used in STATS19 can be found at:

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