

Road casualty statistics: Frequently asked questions

September 2024

Where does the road collision data come from?

London collision data is collected by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the City of London Police (CoLP) or reported to the police by members of the public. The reported data is then provided to Transport for London (TfL) and undergoes rigorous processing, including data validation checks, to ensure it meets the required standard when it is submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) as a national statistics, known as STATS19.

Why is data only available from January 2017 onwards?

In November 2016 the MPS changed the system used for recording collision information, to a system called COPA (Case Overview Preparation Application) and provided an online self-reporting tool to allow members of the public to report collisions. The new system changed the way in which injury severity is recorded from the officer's subjective decision to an automated assignment based on the casualty injury. The impact of this change to 'injury-based reporting' was that the number of reported serious casualties almost doubled (many of these would have previously been categorised as slight). Therefore, data post-November 2016 cannot be directly compared with pre-COPA data before November 2016 and thus would be misleading to include in a dashboard containing time series comparisons.

Why can't I see real time data?

We work with the MPS and the CoLP to process data as quickly as possible but there will always be a delay in issuing information.

- TfL spends a lot of time and resource checking and processing collision reports to ensure that they are as accurate as possible and meet the DfT's STATS20 guidelines.
- Police investigations relating to collisions can take time to complete and therefore details may change from the initial submission.
- The MPS undertake Quality Assurance checks of all serious collisions to ensure that the severity of injuries matches DfT classifications. This normally occurs around three months after the collision has occurred.
- Collisions may also be self-reported online by members of the public up to six months after their occurrence.
- Injury severity may not be confirmed until after the collision took place. If a person involved in a collision dies from their injuries within 30 days, then the injury severity is deemed 'fatal'. If a person dies after 30 days, it will show as serious.

- Collisions resulting in fatal injuries are subject to additional scrutiny and investigation, additional details may be added at a later stage to a provisional record.

Collision data is published on the Road danger reduction dashboard regularly, after each month of data is processed and validated by TfL. There is usually a three month or so time lag between the collision happening and it being published.

Road traffic collision data remains provisional until the year is finalised and closed. Collision details can be amended, new records added, or records deleted at any time during that processing year, hence numbers can change.

Why has the published collision data changed?

Road traffic collision data remains provisional until the whole year of data is processed and finalised by TfL and the DfT confirms that the year can be closed. Until then the records can be amended based on revised collision details and further investigation.

For the most accurate statistics on traffic fatalities, please refer to the Provisional Fatalities on TfL Road Safety Data website (updated monthly) or DfT official statistics (updated annually).

What is included in the road collision statistics?

All collisions that were reported to the police and that occurred on a public highway, involving at least one motor vehicle, horse rider or pedal cyclist, and where at least one person was injured are included. To meet the definition of a national statistic for road safety the collision record must meet the STATS19 criteria. Therefore, a record that has been submitted to the police may fail to meet the criteria for a national statistic and therefore may not be reported in national statistics. Collisions that happened on private land (including private drives) or car parks are not included in the statistics. Damage only collisions that do not result in personal injury are also excluded from these statistics.

Why there is a difference in collision figures for London published by TfL and DfT?

Collision figures published by TfL include collisions that occurred within the Greater London Authority (GLA) boundary (which excludes Heathrow) and were reported by the MPS or CoLP.

Collision figures published by DfT for London includes collisions that occurred within the GLA boundary and Heathrow, as reported by any police force.

What is the difference between a “serious” and “slight” injury/casualty?

Examples of ‘serious’ injury are fracture, internal injury, severe cuts, crushing, burns (excluding friction burns), concussion, severe general shock requiring hospital treatment, detention in hospital as an in-patient, either immediately or later, injuries to casualties who die 30 or more days after the collisions from injuries sustained in that collision.

Examples of 'slight' injury are sprains, not necessarily requiring medical treatment, neck whiplash injury, bruises, slight cuts, slight shock requiring roadside attention. Persons who are merely shaken and who have no other injury are not included unless they receive or appear to need medical treatment. Further information is available in the [Road accident and safety statistics guidance](#) available on the DfT's website.

What is the difference between collision figures reported by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the City of London Police (CoLP)?

The CoLP force use a different software for collecting their collision data than the rest of London, which is covered by the MPS. This software was developed by the DfT and does not differentiate between taxis and private hire vehicles but keeps them as one combined category of taxi. As set out in our Vision Zero action plan and progress report we are committed to promoting a culture of transparency internally and across operators, and publishing data wherever possible. We have worked with the MPS to split out taxi and private hire vehicles and this information, as reported by the police at the scene of a collision, can now be queried in the dashboard. Data sent to TfL by the MPS and CoLP is validated to ensure that it meets DfT's STATS20 guidance on the completion of collisions. For more information see the [STATS20 Instructions for Completion of Road Accident Reports](#) on the DfT's website.

However, it is important to note that this information is subjective and may not always accurately capture the correct classification of vehicle types involved in collisions or whether a vehicle was being used as a taxi or private hire vehicle at the time of the collision. We are working with the DfT to further enhance the STATS19 dataset as part of the DfT's STATS19 review. For more information see the [STATS19 review: Final recommendations](#) report on the DfT's website.

I was involved in a collision; how do I find it in your dashboard?

It is possible to use the Collision Location Map to zoom into an area and locate individual incidents or filter by date. However, the information we display relating to collisions is limited as we need to obey General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules and ensure that no personally identifiable information is provided.

I was involved in a collision, but it is not showing in your dashboard, why?

There are a few reasons why a collision may not be included in the statistics:

- The online dashboard only includes collisions that were reported (either by the police or by a member of the public either online or at a police station), and where one or more parties were injured as a result.
- The dashboard only shows collisions resulting in injury that took place between 1 January 2017 and the most recent validated data.
- In accordance with DfT's STATS20 guidance, only collisions that meet certain criteria such as those that take place on the public highway (i.e. not on private property) and where the injuries were not the result of natural causes (i.e. medical episodes) are recorded. Deaths from suicides are also not included in these figures.

Why are some of the details of the collision I was involved in incorrect?

Collision details can be recorded by a police officer at the scene of the incident or by members of the public online. Often collision details, including the speed limit at the collision location, are an opinion at the time of reporting and may not be the result of extensive investigation. TfL carries out quality assurance checks when processing collision records onto its database and makes amendments where necessary, but this is not possible for all records due to the large number of records TfL receives.

Where can I find more information about the dashboard?

More information about the dashboard, its structure and how to use it, is provided in the [Help document](#).

If it does not resolve your query, please contact CollisionDataRequests@tfl.gov.uk.

All Freedom of Information related requests for data must be sent to Fol@tfl.gov.uk.

How can I provide feedback on the dashboard?

You can leave your comments by taking part in our [User survey](#).

We greatly appreciate customer feedback as it helps us improve our data products. Any feedback received will be taken on board in future design iterations.