

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	Visitor road safety
Objective	To explore the mindset of tourists towards pedestrian safety when visiting London, and understand potential reasons for a poorer pedestrian road safety record amongst tourists
Date	March 2010
Methodology	A programme of desk research, observation sessions at hotspots, intercept interviews and accompanied journeys

Key findings

- Tourists visiting London have a higher risk of being injured as pedestrians. Reasons for this include: Different road regulations, UK road design and the 'holiday mentality'.
- There is a lack of available information on road safety, both within the UK and in people's home countries. Road safety is low-involvement, and people are unlikely to actively seek out pedestrian safety information when embarking on a trip abroad – people believe they know how to cross a road.
- There are several areas of confusion which also contribute to tourists being more likely to be involved in an accident. Their state of confusion can make it more likely that they will either inadvertently or deliberately take a risk which places them in a potentially dangerous situation.
- Key sources of confusion include pelican crossings. People can be unaware that they need to press the button before crossing and often underestimate how much time they have to cross. At other crossing points, people are often unsure who has the right of way, and the flow of traffic often means that overseas visitors step into the road when looking in the wrong direction.
- Risk-taking behaviour can be divided into intentional and unintentional. People take a number of risks which they know could be dangerous, often to save time or to keep up with friends and family. Intentional risks include crossing halfway and waiting between two lanes of traffic; crossing between vehicles in a moving traffic flow; crossing between stationary vehicles; crossing on a red signal; walking on the other side of barriers.
- Tourists can also unwittingly put themselves at risk through habit or lack of attention. This behaviour includes taking a first step into the road without looking; getting swept along with crowd; talking to friends; avoiding obstructions; taking photos.

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