



## SCSN Briefing Paper No 07 – Travel Safety

### 1 Topics

- Road Safety
- Transport Safety
- Pedestrian Safety
- Drink Driving
- Drug Driving

### 2 Executive Summary

Regionally, Scotland has the largest length of road in the UK (with the largest amount of single carriage way roads) and currently presents higher rates than those in the rest of the United Kingdom in terms of deaths on the road and through collisions. Three times as many people die on Scottish roads as are killed as a result of a violent incident. There are a higher proportion of people with access to a car in rural areas than in urban areas, and as such collisions in non-built up areas account for 44% of Scotland's accidents, with 71% of these being fatal. The most frequently reported contributing factors for fatal and serious collisions on rural roads are loss of control and inappropriate speed with males aged 17-24, those in higher social grades and those with points on their licence most likely to report a near miss on a rural road. However, it has been seen that the number of 17-25 year olds taking their driving test has declined over the past 5 years.

Scotland has an ageing population who are more active and living longer than previous generations. The proportion of older people holding a driving licence, particularly women, has been increasing and is expected to continue. In 2007, 87 drivers aged 70 and over were killed or seriously injured in Scotland. At age 70 and every three years thereafter, drivers are required to renew their driving licence. There is no requirement for drivers to produce evidence of fitness to drive, however, they are required to make note of any medical conditions that may affect their driving.

Approximately 15% of all road accidents in Scotland (2009) were pedestrian casualties. Children from lower socio-economic groups are over four times as likely to be killed as a pedestrian than those from a higher socio-economic group. This trend is thought to be due to children in more deprived areas cycling and walking further than those in a more affluent area who travel by car.

It is estimated that 1 in 7 deaths on the road involve drivers who are over the legal limit for alcohol. The total cost of a fatal road accident in Scotland is £1,585,510 which equates to drink driving fatalities costing Scotland over £63 million a year. Studies have shown that the figure of people providing a positive breath test has remained the same over the last 5 years and therefore it is assumed that there is a small group of drivers who appear to ignore the dangers of drink driving to themselves and others. There are fewer statistics and results relating to drug driving, however, a survey of 17-39 year olds estimated that up to 11% have driven while impaired by drugs and that the prevalence of drug driving does not appear to have changed since 2000.

Figures show that there is an increase in the number of people utilising public transport and as such the risks associated with this need to be explored i.e. following the introduction of free local bus travel for those aged 60+, there has been an average growth of 20-30% in the numbers of people using buses in urban areas during off-peak hours and rail travel increases are projected (2024/25) at 48-74% for interurban travel and 27-48% rural travel.

The 2002 British Crime Survey showed that 80% of UK adult respondents said they did not report the last incident involving harassment, violence or physical assault they had

experienced on public transport. Incidents involved: being stared at in a hostile way (35%), deliberately jostled or pushed (28%), threatened with violence (18%) or harassment (14%). Incidents that were reported involved theft or physical assault.

According to the Department of Transport, during 2002, 24% of adults surveyed in forms of harassment involved being deliberately jostled or pushed, or being stared at in a hostile or threatening way. The vast majority (90%) of adults surveyed had seen other people experience violence, physical assault or harassment on public transport. In 1999 there were 120 reported assaults on bus staff in Scotland. However, actual incidence of assaults on bus staff may be higher due to assaults not being reported.

### **3 Key Statistics**

- 70% of households in Scotland have access to at least one car.
- The number of 17 to 25-year-olds taking their driving test has fallen by 19 % since 2005/06.
- In Scotland in 2009 there were 15,030 recorded road casualties (the lowest reported since 1949). The majority of incidents involved car users (9,559 cases and 116 fatalities). There were 2,196 pedestrian casualties, 1,017 motor cycle casualties (43 fatalities), 803 pedal cycle casualties and 471 bus and coach casualties.
- There were 1,474 child casualties recorded, 674 related to child pedestrian casualties (1 fatality) with 548 child casualties in cars (3 fatalities), 149 child pedal cycle casualties (1 fatality), 53 child bus and coach user casualties and 50 "other" child casualties.
- 1 in 9 of all British fatal crashes occurs in Scotland, 75% occurring out with built-up areas.
- Scotland's casualty rate in 2009 was 13% higher for people killed and 16% higher for people injured compared to England and Wales.
- Collisions on non built-up roads accounted for 44% of reported casualties and 71% deaths.
- Rate of collisions (per head of population) is 3.4 per thousand of the population aged 17+ but for males aged 17 – 25, this rate rose to 7.0 per thousand population.
- In 2007, 87 drivers aged 70 and over were killed (14) or seriously injured in Scotland.
- 1 in 7 deaths on Scottish roads involve drivers who are over the legal limit.
- Level Crossing offences in Scotland have increased from 241 (08/09) to 522 (10/11).
- Bulletin of Public Transport Statistics 2003 the main causes of bus assaults cited are hooliganism (20%), fare disputes (17%), boarding or service disputes (13%) traffic incidents (9%) or robbery of crew (8%).

### **4 Discussion Questions**

- What are the challenges for travel safety in the next 5-10 years?
- Are there any examples of effective projects or initiatives that we should be promoting the roll out off?
- As regards preventative spending – what should our three priorities be, and who do we need to work in partnership/collaboratively with to achieve these?

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