



accidents don't have to happen

STATS19 Review

RoSPA's response to Department for Transport's review

May 2021



Response to Department for Transport's consultation: STATS19 review

Introduction

This is the response of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to the Department for Transport's STATS19 review. It has been produced following consultation with RoSPA's National Road Safety Committee.

Over a two year period, a working group, comprising of members of the police, local authorities, road safety researchers and stakeholders has been reviewing STATS19.

The review has sought to make recommendations for modifications to STATS19 variables. It also aims to improve the quality of data and to reduce reporting burdens on the police by:

- Identifying areas where the STATS19 specification can be streamlined and modernised.
- Considering the opportunities for better use of technology, data sharing and matching to modernise road casualty data. The aim is to reduce the amount of manual input data for the police and to enrich the data available
- Developing a roadmap for any longer-term data changes needed to improve the evidence base for road safety interventions.

The consultation seeks views on proposed changes to STATS19, following the generation of recommendations by the working group.



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Do you agree the scope of STATS19 remains unchanged as initial judgement of the officer at the scene?

RoSPA response

RoSPA does not agree. Fatal and some serious collisions are often investigated in more depth, and where more accurate data is available in a timely manner, from a reliable source, such as a collision investigation team, we believe that the data entered at the time of the collision by the officer in attendance should be appended on in the STATS19 record. We believe that currently the published data is checked for accuracy, and therefore does not necessarily reflect the attending officer's initial judgement.

It is vital that STATS19 data is as accurate as possible, as it is the most comprehensive data set available on reported road collisions on our roads. It is treated as definitive by road safety practitioners, the media, academics and the Police and Fire and Rescue Service and sometimes informs decisions on spending and priorities.

Do you think all forces should collect additional information on:

a. seatbelts?

b. cycle helmets?

RoSPA response

RoSPA agrees that unless collecting such data would be particularly burdensome for the police, it would be beneficial for additional information on seatbelt wearing and cycle helmets to be collected. However, it will be vital that this data is as accurate as possible. For this reason, it will be important that training is made available for attending officers to ensure that the form is correctly completed. It will also be necessary to offer a 'don't know' option on the form, as it may be unclear to the officer in attendance whether the casualty was wearing a seatbelt or a cycle helmet at the time of the collision. This data could be treated as indicative, but may not always be accurate, as for example, in some instances, casualties may put their seatbelt on after the collision, due to the legal requirement to wear one.

RoSPA seeks further clarification on whether the data collected would include the use of child restraints. The law requires that all children travelling in the front or rear seat of any car, van or goods vehicle must use the correct child car seat until they are either 135 cm in height or 12 years old. We believe that it would be unfair to expect attending officers to identify whether an appropriate child car restraint was being used at the time of the collision. This is because collecting such data would require the officer to be aware of the age or height of the child, to determine whether a car seat should be used, and if a car seat was being used, whether it was appropriate for the height and weight of the child and correctly fitted.

Do you agree that journey purpose should be maintained and aligned with the DfT National Travel Survey?



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RoSPA response

RoSPA agrees that journey purpose data should be maintained, as it provides an importance source of data on driving for work collisions. This data is particularly valuable to practitioners, due to the rise of different working arrangements, such as the growing gig economy. We also agree that the terminology should be aligned with the DfT National Travel Survey.

Do you agree that a new category of "powered personal transporter device" be added to the vehicle list?

RoSPA response

RoSPA agrees that a new category of 'powered personal transporter device' should be added to the vehicle list. Casualty data is likely to play a role in making decisions about the future of devices such as e-scooters.

However, we seek clarity on whether data could be cut to identify the type of vehicle involved, such as an e-scooter or a Segway.

Do you agree that a new set of Road Safety Factors be collected, that have been reduced to remove duplication or unused categories, and that align with the Safe System pillars?

RoSPA response

RoSPA agrees that the set of road safety factors should be condensed. We welcome the proposed alignment with the pillars of the safe system approach considering safe roads and roadsides, safe speed, safe road use and safe vehicles. As Great Britain is moving towards the adoption of a safe system approach, it seems sensible to categorise the factors in this way.

We also hope that this condensed list will avoid duplication of factors, which in turn will make the process less burdensome for police and lead to more accurate road safety factors data being collected.

Do you agree that ethnicity should remain out of scope of STATS19?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that this matter should be given more consideration, given research that points to a relationship between accident risk and ethnicity. The Department could consider exploring a linked data study pilot to ascertain the viability of NHS data and that in the STATS19 database. We understand that this approach has been successfully used in COVID-19 risk profiling to enable the role of ethnicity and other factors to be discovered.



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However, we do recognise that this data may be more difficult to collect, particularly in fatal or serious collisions. If this data was to be collected, it must be collected accurately, or users are likely to draw unhelpful conclusions when analysing the data. Self-report data from casualties in less serious collisions may have a role to play, although it may not be viable, or even ethical to ask officers collect this data at the scene.

RoSPA has no further comments to make on the consultation process, other than to thank Department for Transport for the opportunity to comment. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

