

**THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS
RoSPA**

CYCLING ACCIDENTS

FACTS AND FIGURES

May 2003

ACCIDENT PATTERNS

Every year in this country around 20,000 cyclists are killed or injured in reported road accidents, including over 2,500 who are killed or seriously injured.

Cyclist Casualties, 2001

Killed	138
Seriously Injured	2,540
Slightly Injured	16,436
Total	19,114

These are reported road accidents only. Between 60% to 90% of cyclist casualties are not reported, especially if the victim is a child and it is a bicycle-only accident. The above figures also exclude cycling accidents that occur away from the road, which could number as many as 150,000 per year.

About one quarter of the cyclists killed, and about one third of those injured, are children. Cycling accidents increase as children grow older and peak at around 16 years. To some extent, this reflects increased cycling as children grow older followed by a switch to motorised transport from the late teens onwards. It also co-incides with the age when children attend Secondary school, and may indicate riskier behaviour by this age group.

Most cycling accidents happen in urban areas where most cycling takes place. Nearly three quarters happen at, or near, a road junction with T-junctions being the most commonly involved. Roundabouts are particularly dangerous junctions for cyclists.

Males are more likely to be involved in cycling accidents than females; four out of five cyclist casualties are male.

Around 80% of cycling accidents occur in daylight - which is when most cycling takes place. For child cyclists, 90% of their accidents occur during the day. The most dangerous hours for cyclists are 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 to 9.00 a.m. on weekdays.

More cycle accidents occur during the Spring and Summer months (May to September) than the Autumn and Winter months (October to April). However, the casualty rate in terms of miles traveled is higher over the Autumn and Winter period.

CYCLING ACCIDENTS

- **90% occur in urban areas**
- **75% happen at, or near, a road junction**
- **80% occur in daylight**
- **80% of cyclist casualties are male**
- **About one third of the cyclists killed or injured are children**
- **Around three quarters of cyclists killed have major head injuries.**

TYPES OF ACCIDENT

Accidents involving child cyclists are often the result of the child playing, doing tricks, riding too fast or losing control. For teenage and adult cyclists, accidents are more likely to involve collisions with motor vehicles.

COMMON CYCLING ACCIDENTS

- **Child cyclist playing or riding too fast**
- **Cyclist and motorist going straight ahead**
- **Cyclist turning right from a major road and from a minor road**
- **Motorist emerging into path of cyclist**
- **Motorist turning across path of cyclist**
- **Cyclist riding into the path of a motor vehicle, often riding off a pavement**
- **Cyclist overtaking**

INJURY PATTERNS

Limb Injuries

Over half of cyclist casualties suffer arm injuries and around 40% receive leg injuries. Serious leg injuries often require long stays in hospital.

Chest/Abdomen Injuries

Chest and abdomen injuries occur much less frequently (5%), but are often serious. When they do occur they are often accompanied by head injuries.

Head Injuries

Head injuries, ranging from fatal skull fractures and brain damage to minor concussion and cuts, are very common injuries to cyclists. Around 70% of the cyclists killed on the road have major head injuries and over half of cyclists injured have head injuries.

Protecting Cyclists

A wide variety of measures can help to reduce the risk to cyclists.

- **Cycle Route Networks**
- **Traffic Calming Schemes**
- **Improved Driver Awareness and Training**
- **Cyclist Training**
- **Conspicuity for Cyclists**
- **Cycle Helmets**