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**February 2013**

## Reports Published – February 2013

### **PUBLISHED PROJECT REPORTS**

**PPR642**     [Mobile phone and seat belt usage rates in Surrey 2012](#)  
J Scoons

**PPR663**     [Investigating the reduction in fatal accidents in Great Britain from 2007-2010](#)  
L Lloyd, C Reeves, J Broughton, J Scoons

***Please note:***

*From 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012, all TRL published reports became available free of charge from the TRL website.*

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## Mobile phone and seat belt usage rates in Surrey 2012

Following funding for annual national seatbelt surveys being unavailable since 2009, Surrey County Council made the decision to fund a new survey at twelve sites within Surrey: six sites previously used for the Department of Transport survey together with six new sites. This report compares the results from the six DfT sites for 2012 with the results from the 2007-09 DfT surveys to give an indication of how restraint use may have changed. The report also details baseline figures for the whole of Surrey from the full set of twelve sites to provide a representative comparator for future surveys. Comparisons of seatbelt wearing rates were made by age group, sex, vehicle type (car or van) and seating position. Differences in restraint usage between road types and use of child car seats were also looked at. The results showed that whilst seatbelt wearing rates amongst car drivers have remained much the same since 2007 the restraint wearing rate of car front seat passengers (FSP) has increased since 2007. Seatbelt wearing rates for car rear seat passengers (RSP), van drivers and van passengers were also investigated. Observations of mobile phone use were compared with data from previous years and found to be much higher in 2012 for all user groups. The age group with the greatest proportion using hand-held phones was 17-29 year olds. Female car drivers were more likely to be using a hand-held mobile and less likely to be using a hands free mobile than male car drivers. Mobile phone use, both hand-held and hands free, by drivers wearing seat belts increased considerably between 2009 and 2012.

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## Investigating the reduction in fatal accidents in Great Britain from 2007-2010

The number of fatalities on British roads fell markedly from 2007 to 2010. This has clearly been "good news", but the reasons for this success had been poorly understood so there could be little confidence that the number would not begin to rise. In the absence of central government investment to investigate this trend, Surrey County Council took the unusual decision to commission TRL to do so. The relevant datasets for the period from 2000 to 2010 have been analysed to investigate this major reduction, including a wide selection of exposure data. The decrease in overall traffic probably contributed, especially the large reduction in HGV traffic, and a fall in the number of young male drivers. The substantial increase in pedal cycling tended to lessen the overall reduction. Statistical models were developed to look at casualty trends and the effects of car secondary safety improvements. Improvements in vehicle safety made a vital contribution to increasing safety throughout the decade, but the reduction of overall fatalities between 2007 and 2010 was not directly related these improvements. The economic downturn from 2007 appears to have had a beneficial effect on driver behaviour, with less speeding and drink driving. The effect of weather on the fatality trend is less certain, but people may have driven more cautiously in the progressively colder winters since 2007.

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