

Section 3

The Van Sector

Commentary

Since 1997, excluding two-wheeled motor vehicles, the type of vehicle that has shown the greatest proportional increase in traffic is the light van. Van traffic has grown by 40 per cent to 68.2 billion vehicle kilometres and now accounts for 13 per cent of traffic on British roads (**Table 3.1**).

Table 3.1: Van Road Traffic: Great Britain: 1997 - 2007

Year	Billion vehicle kilometres		
	Vans	All motor traffic	Percentage share
1997	48.6	450.3	10.8
1998	50.8	458.5	11.1
1999	51.6	467.0	11.0
2000	52.3	467.1	11.2
2001	53.7	474.4	11.3
2002	55.0	486.5	11.3
2003	57.9	490.4	11.8
2004	60.8	498.6	12.2
2005	62.6	499.4	12.5
2006	65.2	507.5	12.8
2007	68.2	513.0	13.3

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The number of vans licensed per annum has also increased and between 1998 and 2007 the van population grew by 40 per cent to just under 3.2 million. The percentage share of licensed vehicles has risen by one percentage point over this period to 9 per cent (**Table 3.2**).

Table 3.2: Number of licensed vans: Great Britain: 1998 - 2007

Year	Thousands		
	Vans	All motor vehicles	Percentage share
1998	2,278	27,538	8.3
1999	2,342	28,368	8.3
2000	2,383	28,898	8.2
2001	2,461	29,747	8.3
2002	2,542	30,557	8.3
2003	2,653	31,207	8.5
2004	2,822	32,259	8.7
2005	2,943	32,897	8.9
2006	3,060	33,369	9.2
2007	3,187	33,957	9.4

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The Department for Transport has conducted a number of surveys of van activity in Great Britain. Surveys were conducted in 1987, 1993 and 1998/99.

In 2003, separate surveys of both company-owned and of privately-owned vans were carried out. The Department commissioned MORI to carry out the survey of privately owned vans between October 2002 and September 2003 with the results being published in January 2004. Those results are available here:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/privatevans/>

Estimates of total van activity (company and private) for 2003 were published in the bulletin *Survey of Van Activity 2003* which is available at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/surveyvan/>

The Survey of Company-owned Vans started in April 2003. Results for years 2003 and 2004 were reported in previous bulletins. 2005 was the final year in which the survey was carried out on a continuous basis.

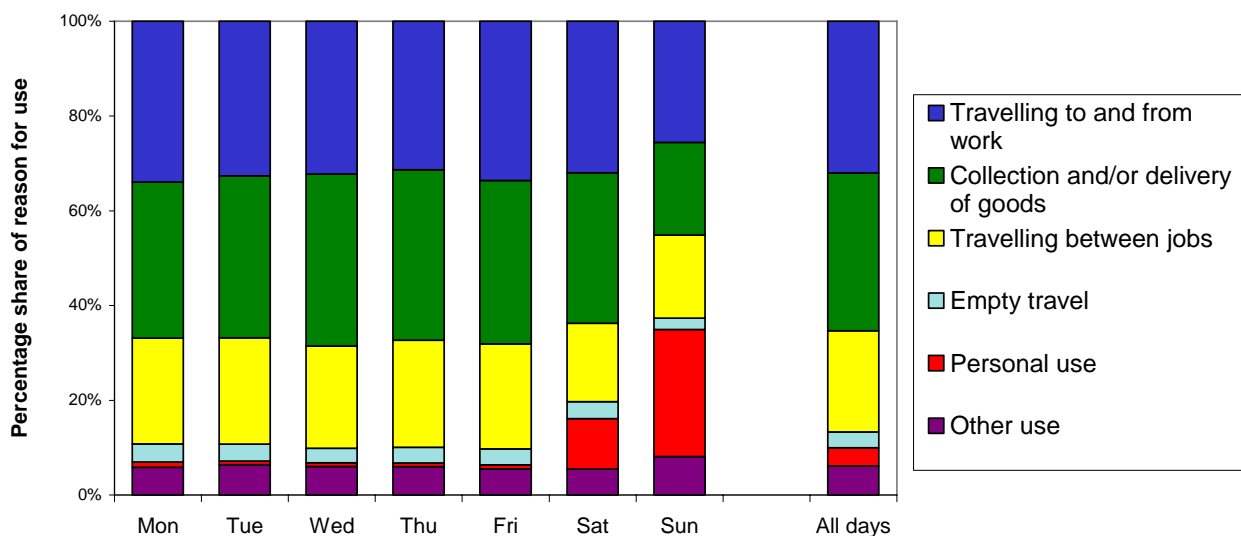
In the Road Freight Statistics 2006 publication there are the company-owned survey results which are based on the sample for the full period of the survey, April 2003 to December 2005.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2006>

The main results from the company-owned van survey are below:

- 34 per cent of van kilometres were due to the collection and/or delivery of goods and 32 per cent was due to travelling to and from work. The chart below shows the reason for travel by day of the week.

Company-owned vans: Vehicle kilometres by day of travel and reason for use: Annual Average 2003 - 2005



- The peak periods for travel during the week were between 7am and 9am and between 4pm and 6pm.

- The construction industry accounted for a third (31 per cent) of company vehicle kilometres and the wholesale and retail trade a fifth (20 per cent). In line with this, 45 per cent of goods carried were tools, machinery and equipment.
- 84 per cent of distance travelled was for journeys that started and ended in the same government office region.
- Company van activity accounted for 11 billion tonne kilometres; about 7 per cent of all freight activity on GB roads by GB-registered vehicles.

The survey forms used for the van surveys can be found in the Methodology section.

