

RURAL ROAD SAFETY REPORT

NFU Mutual Rural Road Safety Report 2025





FOREWORD

In the 10 years to the end of 2024, 10,000 lives were lost on Britain's rural roads. To put that into perspective, that's almost three loved ones killed each day over the last decade.

Every road death is a needless tragedy, but this staggering loss of life becomes even more concerning when considering that people are significantly more likely to lose their lives on countryside roads than any other type of road. In the last ten years, two-thirds more people have been killed on rural roads than on urban roads. Put simply, rural roads are persistently and disproportionately dangerous for those using them, whether they are motorists, cyclists, pedestrians or horse riders.

That's why NFU Mutual launched a rural road safety campaign in 2020, setting out to raise awareness of the avoidable loss of life on our countryside roads. Each year, we carry out analysis of Department for Transport (DfT) figures, and each year this shows that people are more likely to be killed on rural roads.

The unique hazards found on rural roads, from blind corners and junctions to inappropriate speed limits, to navigating vulnerable road users and agricultural vehicles, mean that using countryside roads is fundamentally different to travelling on urban roads or motorways. We worked with

experts including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the main UK farming unions, the Older Drivers Forum and the British Horse Society last year to create the first ever Code for Countryside Roads, which acknowledges the particular skills and awareness needed to use rural roads. But as we continue to see around 1,000 people die each year on rural roads, it's clear that more must be done to address the issue in the new national road safety strategy.

Where there is will to change, we can take leaps forward on road safety, as has been proved by previous campaigns on seatbelt use and drink driving.

It's clear that something needs to change. After years of declining fatalities on rural roads, progress has stalled since around 2012. It's not acceptable that Britain continues to lose around 1,000 people each year to rural road fatalities and more must be done to prevent this needless loss of life.

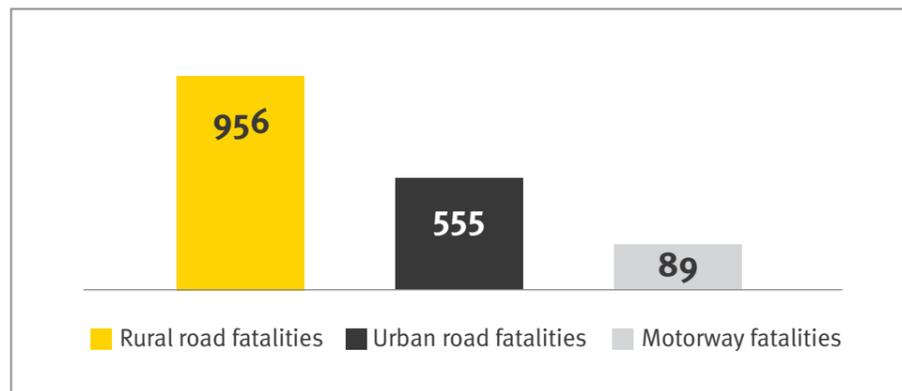


Nick Turner, Chief Executive,
NFU Mutual

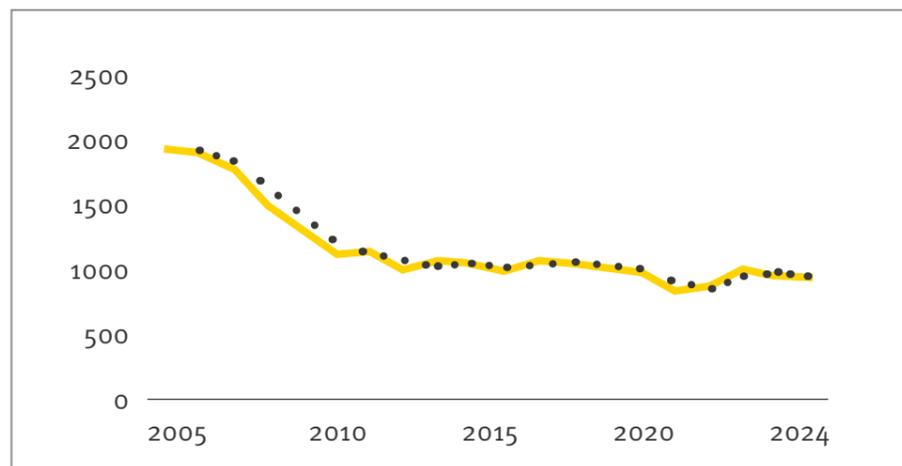
RURAL ROAD SAFETY FACTSHEET

9,884 lives lost on rural roads in 10 years.

In 2024, there were **72%** more fatalities on rural roads than urban roads, and **ten times more** than on motorways.



Progress in reducing rural road fatalities has stagnated since 2012.



Graph showing number of deaths on rural roads, 2005-2024.

Countryside roads are the most dangerous type of road by miles travelled.



By average miles travelled, vulnerable road users are significantly more at risk on rural roads than car drivers and passengers.

2024	Miles travelled per person	Rural road fatalities
car/van	29,791	531
bus/lorry/tractor	656	9
motorcycle	61	253
cyclist	157	42
pedestrians	426	115

A survey of 2,000 UK motorists conducted October 2025 found that:

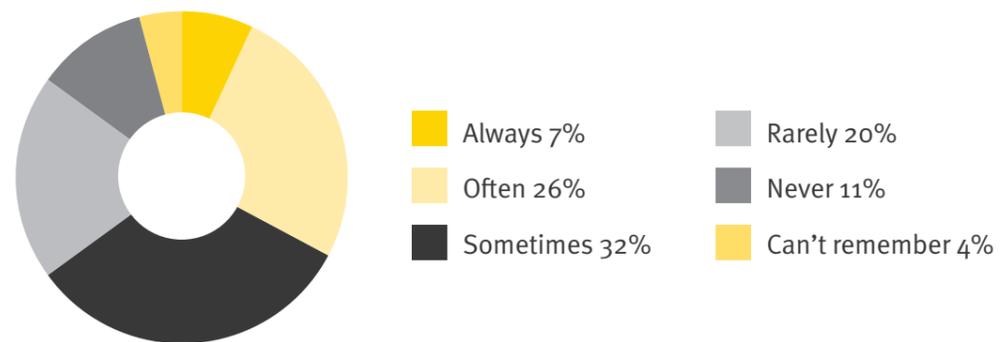
- 31%** rarely or never drove on rural roads prior to passing their test
- 26%** felt unprepared to use rural roads after passing their test
- 23%** have been involved in a collision on a rural road

NFU Mutual commissioned OnePoll to conduct a survey of 2,000 UK motorists across September and October 2025 to understand why countryside roads are disproportionately dangerous for all road users.

23% have been involved in a collision on a rural road.

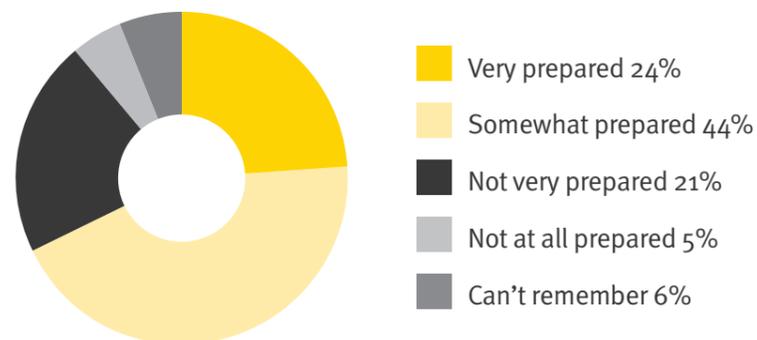
31% rarely or never drove on rural roads prior to passing their test.

While learning to drive, how often did you drive on rural roads?



26% felt unprepared to use rural roads after passing their test.

When you received your driving license, how prepared did you feel to drive on rural roads?



What are your biggest concerns as a rural road user?

62% Blind corners and junctions

56% Narrow or winding roads

49% Poor road quality

47% Impatience of drivers

46% People breaking the speed limit

43% Poor visibility

43% Cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders

39% Animals in the road

35% Agricultural vehicles or other slow-moving traffic

34% Loose livestock or animals in the road

31% Mud or debris on the road

29% Inappropriate speed limits

29% Insufficient road marking or signage

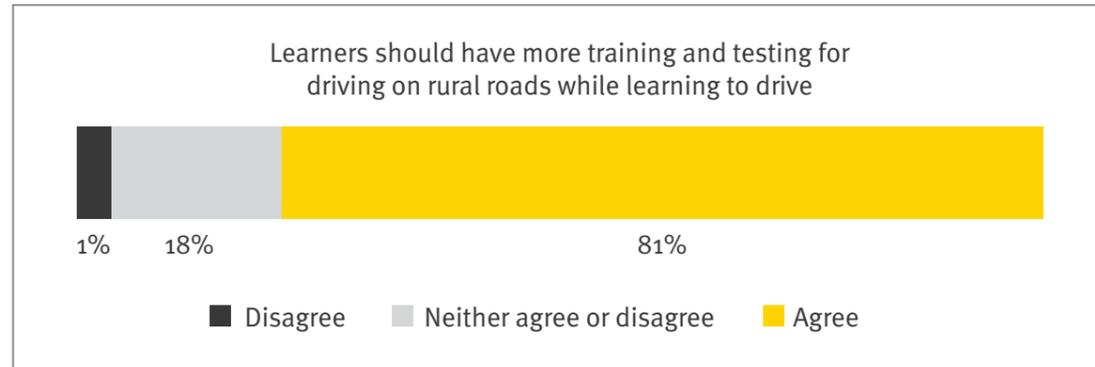
23% Sat-Navs directing people down unsuitable roads

23% Unexpected road or field entrances

20% Delivery vehicles blocking the road

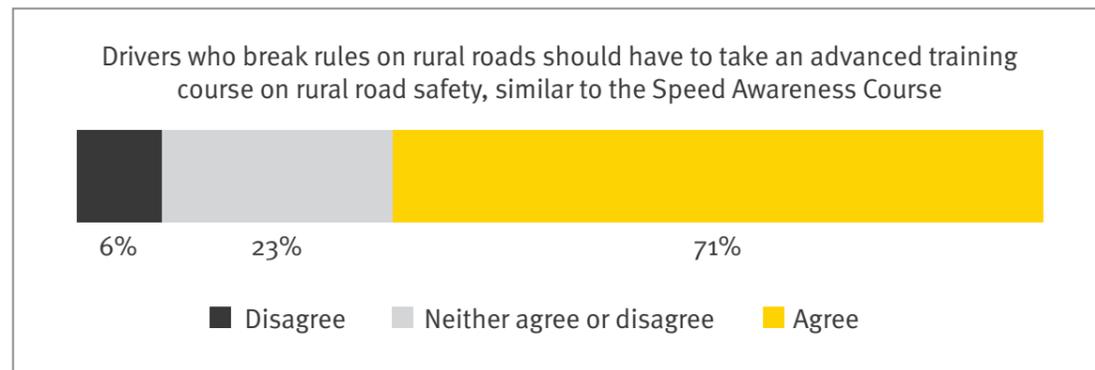
18% Lack of knowledge about rural roads

Drivers support more robust training and punishments for rural road safety.



“Drivers must be given sufficient training on rural roads to navigate them safely, both in theory and practice. Current theory and practical testing doesn’t adequately assess a learner’s ability to navigate the hazards found on rural roads. We support the recent trials to boost exposure to rural and high-speed roads in practical tests, but more can be done.”

Nick Turner, NFU Mutual Chief Executive



“National Speed Awareness Courses have been shown to cut rates of reoffending, and a well-designed course for rural roads could help reduce behaviours which lead to tragic consequences. It would also send a powerful message that rural road safety is being taken seriously, acknowledging the extra risk that comes with using a rural road.”

Nick Turner, NFU Mutual Chief Executive

All survey data from survey of 2,000 motorists across the UK, carried out by OnePoll on behalf of NFU Mutual, 29 September to 1 October 2025.

ROAD FATALITIES BY REGION, 2024



Across Great Britain, there were 72% more fatalities on countryside roads than urban roads in 2024.

VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

By average miles travelled, vulnerable road users are significantly more at risk on rural roads than car drivers and passengers.

2024	Miles travelled per person	Rural road fatalities
 car/van	29,791	531
 bus/lorry/tractor	656	9
 motorcycle	61	253
 pedestrians	426	115
 cyclist	157	42

	2024		2015-2024	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
 car/van	131	531	1,546	5,605
 bus/lorry/tractor	3	9	48	126
 motorcyclist	82	253	987	2,256
 pedestrians	278	115	2,755	1,219
 cyclist	40	42	456	556



For more information on NFU Mutual's rural road safety campaign and for tips on how you can keep yourself and others safe on countryside roads, scan here or visit nfumutual.co.uk/campaigns/rural-road-safety.

All road casualty data taken from Department for Transport reported road casualty data series, released 25 September 2025.



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