

Eight killed using mobility scooters

Mark Hookham, Transport Correspondent

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Mobility scooters were involved in four crashes a week on Britain's roads last year, resulting in eight riders being killed, new figures show.

The number of accidents involving the scooters that were reported to police increased by 6% to 222 in 2015 compared with 2014, according to an analysis of government data by Mapmechanics, a digital mapping company.

Twenty-three mobility scooter riders were killed in accidents between 2011 and 2015 and 490 were injured

A total of 28 pedestrians were seriously injured after being hit by mobility scooters on the pavement or while crossing roads during the past five years and another 100 slightly injured.

Twelve cyclists, eight motorcyclists and a horse rider were also injured in collisions with mobility scooters, which have a top speed of 8mph and are used by an estimated 350,000 people.

In April Gwendoline Copping, a 94-year-old widow, died when she was hit by a Land Rover while crossing a road in Folkestone, Kent, on her mobility scooter.

Last week video footage of a woman riding a mobility scooter around a notorious six-road roundabout in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, was shared and viewed tens of thousands of times on social media.

About 80,000 mobility scooters are sold each year, with sales growing by up to 10% a year.

Most accidents involving the vehicles are believed to involve tipping over on uneven pavements or slopes but the analysis shows significant numbers also involve other road users and pedestrians.

The town with the highest number of mobility scooter accidents last year was Portsmouth with six crashes.

“The use of mobility scooters is only likely to grow as the baby-boomer generation moves into old age and with rising levels of obesity across all generations affecting personal mobility,” said David Cockrell, director of Mapmechanics.

Mobility scooters must be registered and need to be fitted with lights, indicators and a horn to be legally permitted to drive on roads.

The speed limit for riding on the pavements is 4mph. Some can be used on dual carriageways if fitted with a flashing amber warning light.

Kevin Clinton, the head of road safety at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Rospa), said the figures were worrying, adding: “Rospa believes that the best ways to prevent these casualties is to improve the quality and availability of guidance and training for mobility scooter users, manufacturers and retailers.”

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Pensioner drives mobility scooter on an A-road