

# Transport and road accidents

## Road accidents

The survey concerning road accidents, launched on 01<sup>st</sup> January 1934 by the RACI (Royal Italian Automobile Club) was performed without interruptions up to 1942, when it was suspended due to the war. After the war, in 1948, a specific commission was set up by the National Statistical Institute to review the statistics on road accidents, with the aim of initiating a new survey which began in 1949. From that year, statistical information on road accidents has been collected by ISTAT, with the collaboration of ACI, through a monthly survey of the entire range of road accidents in the national territory. When the new survey began it was not possible to acquire a complete range of information, and the data series published here therefore run since 1952.

The survey on road accident is a complex process, the result of the joint activity of several institutions: ISTAT, ACI, the Ministry of the Interiors, Traffic Police, Carabinieri, Provincial Police, Local Police and the Municipal statistical offices of provincial Capitals. Since 2007 some statistical Offices have also participated in the survey from some Regions and Provinces that have signed specific agreements with ISTAT for the decentralisation of data collection processes, the checking of coverage and the subsequent submission of the computerised data to ISTAT.

Following the stipulation in December 2007 of the “Memorandum of Understanding for the coordination of activities for the statistical survey of road accidents” between ISTAT, the Ministry of the Interiors, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Transport, the Conference of autonomous Regions and Provinces, the Union of Italian Provinces and the national Association of Italian Municipalities, some Regions,<sup>1</sup> represented by the competent statistical Office, adhered to an experimental decentralisation to local authorities of the collection and monitoring of information on road accidents in the relevant territories. Some Provinces<sup>2</sup> have also stipulated *ad hoc* conventions for taking over these activities.

The survey's field of observation is formed by the entire range of road accidents reported to a police authority, taking place in the national territory during the course of a calendar year, which caused injuries to people (deaths within 30 days or injuries). The survey has been restructured several times, most recently in 1991, when ISTAT adapted the definition of road accident to international definitions, interrupting the recording of road accidents that do not result in damage to people (with a consequent reduction of the amount of work for the public Authorities responsible for data collection). From 1991, therefore, the field of observation covers all road accidents that happened in roads or squares open to traffic in which standing or moving vehicles (or animals) were involved and which resulted in injuries to people. This definition does however exclude collisions which did not result in injury to people (those that did not take place in areas open to public traffic, i.e. in areas such as courtyards, service stations, vehicle deposits, railways or areas exclusively reserved for tram or rail transport, etc.) and collisions in which vehicles were not involved.

The survey unit is the single road accident; the units of analysis are road accidents and the vehicles, with their specific technical characteristics, and the people involved in the accident (deaths or injuries). The survey refers to the moment in which the accident took place. Information regarding the details of the accident, its causes or relevant circumstances, in addition to the consequences for people and objects involved, are therefore collected with reference to that moment. The survey is

<sup>1</sup> The following Regions adhered: Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Apulia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia. In the regions of Umbria, Campania, Basilicata and Marche data collection, survey monitoring and surveyor training are conducted by local ISTAT offices.

<sup>2</sup> The Provinces that currently manage the survey directly, as not included in a Region that adhered to the entire memorandum, are Vicenza, Treviso, Rovigo, Viterbo, Crotone, Pesaro, Urbino, in addition to the autonomous provinces of Bolzano (Astat) and Trento (Astat).

conducted when the authority that dealt with the event, such as Traffic Police, Carabinieri, Provincial or Municipal Police, compiles the ISTAT Ctt/Inc form (or sends the file containing the information required). The main variables recorded are the date and place of the accident, the public authority recording the event, the area or location of the accident (if in a town centre or outside the inhabited area), a description of the accident, the type of vehicles involved, the circumstances which caused the accident and the consequences to people or vehicles.

#### *Warnings for time series comparisons*

- From 1991 ISTAT has taken care to adapt the concept of road accident to international definitions. Therefore the recording of accidents that do not result in damage to people was suspended. In comparing results over time a fall in the number of accidents should therefore be taken into consideration following the exclusion of accidents without injuries.
- From 01<sup>st</sup> January 1999 ISTAT extended the period of time necessary for counting fatalities from seven to thirty days. The rise in the number of fatalities recorded in the years immediately following 1998 is therefore affected by this widening of the window of time in the definition.