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Police data shows 10% rise in vehicle vandalism in three years

The number of vehicles vandalised in England and Wales has increased by 10% in the last three years, according to data seen by [RAC Insurance](#)*.

A total of 210,418 vehicles were reported to have suffered criminal damage such as deliberate scratches, slashed tyres, snapped windscreen wipers, smashed wing mirrors and broken windows in 2016 – 19,238 more than in 2013 when 191,180 were vandalised.

Responses to a freedom of information request from 40 police forces in England and Wales made by RAC Insurance reveal that the Greater Manchester Police area experienced the biggest rise with 37% more vehicles being damaged in 2013 than 2016 – 10,670 incidents compared to 14,588 last year.

The area also recorded the highest number of vehicle vandalism offences outside of London (the Metropolitan Police force area) which had 26,064 in 2016, equating to 12% of all cases across the country.

Hertfordshire Constabulary and West Yorkshire Police both had the second greatest increase at 25% each. Due to the higher population in West Yorkshire, however, the number of incidents was far larger – 10,051 in 2013 versus 12,542 in 2016. The West Yorkshire force had the second largest number of offences of this type outside of London. Hertfordshire experienced 3,766 four years ago compared to 4,714 last year.

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Rank by % change 2013-16	Police force	2013	2016	% change 2013-16
1	Greater Manchester Police	10,670	14,588	37%
2=	Hertfordshire Constabulary	3,766	4,714	25%
2=	West Yorkshire Police	10,051	12,542	25%
4	Northumbria Police	6,197	7,576	22%
5=	Cambridgeshire Constabulary	2,407	2,864	19%
5=	South Yorkshire Police	5,886	6,983	19%

Twenty-four forces saw increases in cases of vehicle vandalism while 12 forces experienced a drop in the number of reports with Gloucestershire seeing the biggest decline at 17% with 2,301 instances in 2013 falling away to 1,907 in 2016. Only Surrey Police saw no change in the volume of such cases.

RAC Insurance director Mark Godfrey said: “Vandalism is one of the most frustrating and annoying crimes. Just a moment of selfish intentional criminal damage causes vehicle owners no end of grief.

“Not only do many motorists who experience this have to go through the

insurance claims process and the time-consuming and inconvenient experience of getting the vehicle repaired, they will also suffer an inevitable premium rise and then have to declare the claim for three years whenever they apply for a new policy. In reality, however, the overall figure for the number of vehicles vandalised is probably far higher as many motorists may neither report it to the police nor claim on insurance for fear of causing their next insurance premium to go up.

“The cost of repairing vehicles is now greater than it’s ever been and this has had an impact on the price of car insurance. Sadly though, this is just one factor that is causing average premiums to go up. The others include insurance fraud from staged accidents and dubious whiplash claims, insurance premium tax doubling to 12% in two years and the change to the discount rate for life-changing personal injury compensation claims.

“In terms of motorists protecting their vehicles against vandalism there is unfortunately very little they can do being the result of a very deliberate action, or mindless stupidity, or drunkenness. There are, however, a few basic precautions that can be taken to limit the chances of it happening. During the day try to park in well used areas and at night go for well-lit streets away from pubs and clubs if at all possible, and if you have access to a garage use it. It’s also good advice to use car parks that carry the [‘Park Mark’ Safer Parking symbol](#) which means there are measures in place to ensure the safety of people and vehicles.

“Should you be unlucky enough to have your vehicle vandalised take pictures of it, report it to the police and get a crime reference number as this will help with any subsequent insurance claim.”

RAC Insurance’s top level of motor insurance – [RAC 5 Star Car Insurance Plus](#) – includes vandalism cover along with a promise to pay claims resulting from accidents involving uninsured drivers and a commitment to replace child car seats after a collision.

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About the RAC

First formed in 1897 the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of motorists for 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). RAC Fuel Watch is a comprehensive guide to the

latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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