

Road Safety Audit Review

February 2021

This Road Safety Audit Review provides road safety auditors, designers, other road safety professionals and project managers with an update on current road safety audit related topics in addition to the review of Road Safety Audit (RSA) reports.

This January edition comprises the review of the 98 RSA reports submitted to the Highways England inbox (roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk) between July and September 2020 (inclusive).

Winter driving - Emergency kit list for your car (as recommended by the AA).

Undertaking RSA site visits in winter months can involve journeys in poor driving conditions due to inclement weather. The AA has some useful advice on items to keep in your car to help you stay safe if there is likely to be snow or severe weather.

- * Warm clothes and waterproofs
- * Sturdy footwear
- * A flask of hot drink
- * Snacks
- * Hi-vis jacket
- * Warning triangles
- * Jump leads
- * Shovel
- * In-car phone charger or power pack



What is included in this Road Safety Audit Review?

- The continuing impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Road Safety Audits
- Stage 4 road safety audit DOs and DON'Ts
- Use of combined Stage 1 and 2 road safety audits
- Good practice Top 5 checklist

Overview

This review focuses on a sample of the road safety audits uploaded to Highways England's RSA database during the period July to September 2020. A total of 98 RSAs were submitted to the Highways England inbox, 94 of which were carried out to GG 119. A total of 30 of the submitted RSAs have been considered in detail for this review.

KEY REMINDER: If you are involved in or aware of audits on any type of scheme then please remember to submit finalised road safety audits to roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk, or remind those involved in the audit to send them in.

The purpose of this review is to inform discussion on good practice and highlight areas that might need further development.

Other focus areas for this period are to continue to monitor; the impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** on road safety audit and how many **Combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 RSAs** are being undertaken. In addition to this, we focus on the **Stage 4 RSA process**.

The types of schemes covered by the submitted RSAs are shown in Figure 1 and indicate that the majority of the RSA reports submitted to roadsafetyaudit@highwaysengland.co.uk were for maintenance infrastructure / access / safety schemes, with a smaller proportion for signs / markings and bridge schemes.

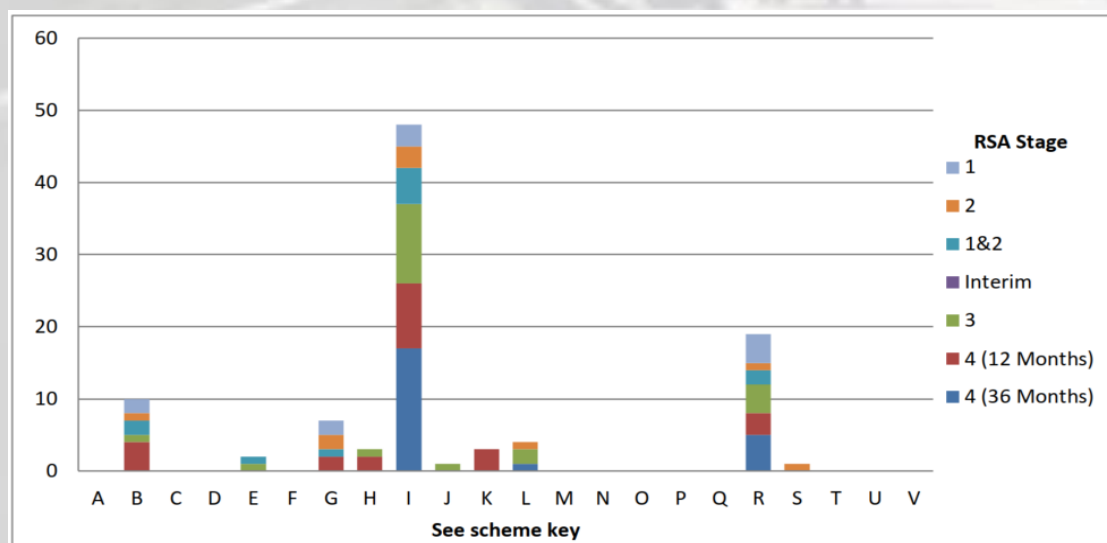


Figure 1 – RSAs by scheme type submitted during this 3-month period (July – September 2020)

Scheme Key			
A	All-Lanes-Running / Smart Motorways	L	WCHR Path / Way / Route
B	Bridge	M	Public Realm / Urban Regeneration
C	Bus Lane / Guided Bus	N	Public Transport Interchange / Hub
D	Conversion from Single to Dual Carriageway	O	Road / Access Closure or Feature / Facility Removal
E	Drainage	P	Shared-Use (WCHRs & Traffic)
F	Enforcement Infrastructure / Cameras	Q	Shared-Use (WCHRs Only)
G	Junction Improvement	R	Signs / Markings
H	Link Improvement	S	Temporary Traffic Management
I	Maintenance Infrastructure / Access / Safety	T	Tram or LRT Route / Facility
J	Traffic Signals (New)	U	Tunnel
K	WCHR Crossing	V	Widening

RSAs submitted by Highways England Areas

Figure 3 shows the number of RSAs submitted to the Highways England inbox between July and September 2020 by each Highways England Area (Area 5 is captured in the DBFO column).

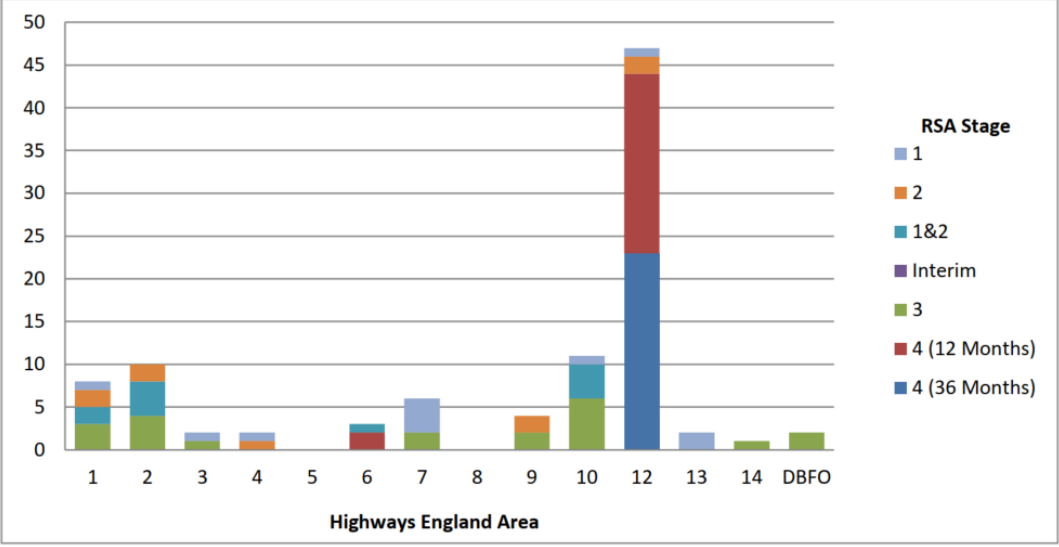


Figure 3 - RSAs submitted in this 3-month period (July - September 2020) by Highways England Operational Area

There is a notable difference in the number of RSAs submitted by Area 12 compared with the other areas during this 3-month period. In the previous 6-month review, Area 7 submitted the most RSAs, although the difference compared with other areas was less significant.

The number of RSAs submitted by Area 12 during this month included a batch of historic Stage 4 RSAs.

The sample

Of the 98 reports submitted, 30 sample reports were selected for review. Figure 2 illustrates the number of each stage of RSA in the study sample.

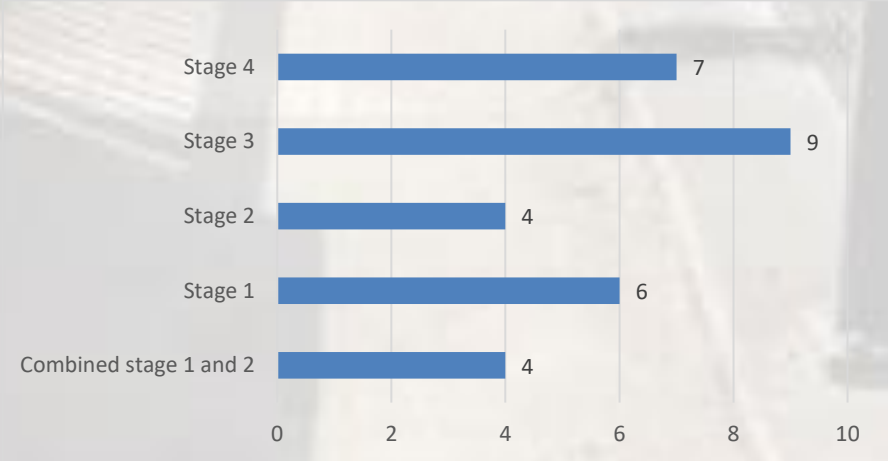


Figure 2 – RSAs by stage for the sample reviewed in this 3-month period (July – September 2020)

Road safety audit during the COVID-19 pandemic

The on-going effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been considered again in this latest quarter because a significant number of the RSAs submitted to the inbox were undertaken during the first lockdown period which was announced in the UK on 23rd March 2020. Highways England's Chief Engineer relaxed the mandatory requirements around the need for site visits as part of the RSA process between 27th March 2020 and 30th June 2020.

Of the 30 RSAs reviewed during this period, 4 were undertaken whilst relaxations were in place around the requirements for a site visit. One of those was a Stage 3 RSA which was visited by both members of the RSA team, in line with the guidance from Highways England's Chief Highways Engineer. For one of the Stage 1 RSAs, both team members attended the site in line with the requirements of GG 119. This was not a mandatory requirement at the time of the RSA. The remaining two RSAs clearly stated that no site visit was undertaken, giving the reason within the RSA report as to why, referencing the advice of Highways England Chief Engineer and, in one case, appending the letter containing the advice to the report. The report also stated the requirement for a fully compliant Stage 1 or 2 Road Safety Audit to be undertaken if the project has not moved beyond this stage after the pandemic is over.

GOOD PRACTICE:

- ✓ **Clearly stating in the RSA report why no site visit was undertaken where applicable.**
- ✓ **Referring in the RSA report to the advice of Highways England Chief Engineer.**
- ✓ **Including a copy of the letter from Highways England Chief Engineer in the RSA report.**
- ✓ **Where applicable, stating the requirement for a fully compliant Stage 1 or Stage 2 Road Safety Audit to be undertaken if the project has not moved beyond this stage after the pandemic is over.**

Combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 RSAs

11% of the RSAs submitted to the inbox during this 3-month period were combined stage 1 and stage 2 RSAs. This is less than the 24% submitted between January and June 2020, although the previous period was across a longer duration. All of the combined stage 1 and 2 RSAs submitted during this period satisfied the requirements for a combined RSA. We will continue to monitor the change in submissions in order to understand how the requirements of GG 119, as they relate to combined stage 1 and stage 2 RSAs, have been captured and interpreted in practice.

Focus on Stage 4 RSAs

A total of 46 stage 4 RSAs were submitted to the inbox between July and September 2020; 23 of these were 36-month post opening RSAs, undertaken in December 2019. Stage 4 36-month post opening RSAs have not been required since the release of GG 119 in January 2019.

Seven stage 4 RSAs were included in the sample, of which 4 were 36-month post-opening RSAs. The remaining 3 did not comply with GG 119 for the following reasons:

- Did not include details of who supplied the RSA Brief.
- Did not include details of who approved the RSA Brief.
- Did not include details of who approved the RSA team.
- No reference to control data.

One of the 12-month post opening RSAs included a site visit. It is likely that this was due to the consistent (1 per year) collision rate, although the reason is not detailed in the report.

The RSA process overview included in GG 119 has been recreated in Figure 4 as a key reminder of when a stage 4 RSA is required.

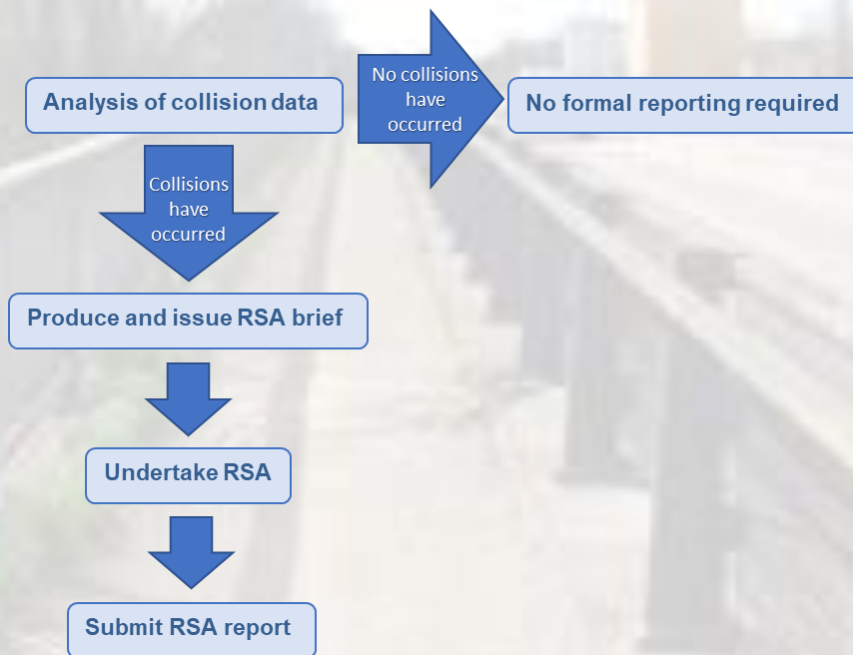


Figure 4 – RSA Process overview (taken from GG 119)

KEY REMINDER: A Stage 4 RSA report is not needed where no road traffic collisions have been recorded in the vicinity of the highway scheme over the 12-month period of post-opening validated road traffic collision data. See clause 5.34 in GG 119.

Stage 4 RSA DOs and DON'Ts

Based on the RSAs reviewed in this sample, this section aims to summarise the requirements in GG 119 around stage 4 RSAs.

Site visit requirements

It was not always clear from the sample reports reviewed why the site was or was not visited as part of the stage 4 RSA process.

KEY REMINDER: The RSA team shall visit the sites of highway schemes if characteristics within the road traffic collision data show:

- 1) higher than expected numbers of road traffic collisions have occurred since the scheme became operational (when compared to control data); or
- 2) the road traffic collision rate or severity has increased since the scheme became operational; or
- 3) common trends (e.g. a high frequency of road traffic collisions during the hours of darkness or on a wet road surface); or
- 4) road safety matters related to vulnerable road users.

See clause 5.39 in GG 119.

The reason for attending site or not attending site should be clearly documented

Post-opening monitoring

36-month post opening stage 4 RSAs are not a requirement of GG 119. This is because other Highways England processes, such as the annual review of collision data within each region, duplicated the work involved in a 36-month post opening Stage 4 RSA.

Stage 4 RSAs are to be carried out using 12 months of validated post highway scheme-opening road traffic collision data.

Collision data analysis

Whilst it is recognised that the use of control data is less relevant when the number of collisions are low, a number of the stage 4 RSAs made no reference to control data as part of the collision analysis. Where relevant, the analysis should be based upon a comparison with control data.

DID YOU KNOW? DfT Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: guide to the statistics and data sources defines validated collision data as “data validated through various processes (which take place within police forces, local highway authorities and national governments) and then forwarded to the Department for Transport for national statistical purposes.” It states “The data are also passed to the local highway authorities that have statutory responsibilities to promote road safety.”

5 Good Practice Tips

1. Use photographs and drawing extracts to clearly illustrate/locate an identified safety problem.
2. State clearly who supplied the RSA Brief **and** who approved the RSA Brief – clause 5.13.
3. Invite both the police **and** the maintaining agent to Stage 3 RSAs – clause 5.42.
4. Check the requirements for undertaking a Stage 4 RSA – clause 5.34.
5. If asked to undertake a combined Stage 1 and Stage 2 RSA, ensure that preliminary design for the scheme has not been undertaken – clause 5.17.2.

Continuing professional development

Table 3.8.2 in GG 119 provides guidance on continuing professional development (CPD) for road safety auditors. Whilst COVID-19 has prevented the majority of face-to-face CPD opportunities, there are numerous online resources available which auditors can access to maintain their CPD record.

DID YOU KNOW? Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design replaces previous guidance provided by LTN 2/08. LTN 1/20 is now expected to be used by Local Authorities and Developers when designing cycle schemes and standards for their roads. CD 195 Designing for cycle traffic and CD 143 Designing for walking, cycling and horse-riding provide the requirements and advice on the Highways England network.
