



Self Storage Traffic Study November 2024

Methodology

The Self Storage Association UK commissioned a traffic study to be completed across various self storage stores to verify data gained from gate access systems as to the number and type of vehicles that use self storage stores in the UK. Camera based traffic monitors were placed in 13 sites across the UK between the 20th and 30th of November 2024. They recorded all traffic entering and exiting the sites 24 hours a day on both weekdays and weekends. Indoor storage stores in the following locations were measured

- London – 2 sites
- Manchester
- Birmingham
- York
- Edinburgh
- Cardiff
- Bournemouth
- Northwich
- Cambridge
- Totnes

The stores chosen all provided after hours access and covered a range of sizes from 803 units to 102.

Two external storage sites were also measured in Cardiff and Cambridge. Both these sites used shipping containers for self storage, had drive up access to all units and had 24 hour access, 7 days a week for customers.

When categorising the stores, city stores include Birmingham, York and Edinburgh. Large stores are those with 400 or more units (5 sites), with small stores (6 sites) having less than 400 units.

Weekday data is the simple average of data from all weekdays measured on that site.

All vehicle counts relate to a single vehicle entering and exiting, not movements on and off site. One vehicle entering and then exiting is counted once. In terms of timing the entrance time was used when different to the exit time bracket.

This report details these results primarily as guidance to town planners and other authorities when considering the impact of a self storage business on traffic and the parking requirements for self storage stores.

Traffic Volumes

As self storage stores come in a range of sizes the data was broken down based on the square feet of occupied space and the number of occupied units. This can then be extrapolated to apply to other self storage projects. Comparisons were also made between large stores and smaller stores to see if there was a significant difference in traffic flows between such stores when broken down to a per sq ft or customer basis.

	Weekday Vehicles		Saturday Vehicles		Sunday Vehicles	
	Number of vehicles per 1000 ft of occupied space	Number of vehicles for every 10 customers	Number of vehicles per 1000 ft of occupied space	Number of vehicles for every 10 customers	Number of vehicles per 1000 ft of occupied space	Number of vehicles for every 10 customers
All Indoor sites	1.59	1.19	1.17	0.88	0.65	0.48
London	0.69	0.39	0.83	0.47	0.56	0.30
Other Cities	1.69	1.34	0.73	0.63	0.65	0.53
Non City Locations	2.09	1.57	1.84	1.41	0.71	0.56
Large Stores	1.30	0.74	0.68	0.38	0.66	0.38
Small Stores	1.76	1.46	1.46	1.19	0.64	0.54
Container Stores	1.11	1.54	0.72	1.11	0.34	.047

This data shows that self storage generally does not attract a lot of traffic. Less than 1.5 vehicles for every 10 customers or 2 per 1000 sq ft of space in the busiest of internal storage stores. Larger cities have less vehicles than secondary cities and non city locations. It is possible that more people walk to their storage store in city locations or potentially use public transportation. There is considerably more traffic on weekdays with the exception of London which has similar numbers of vehicles all week with Saturday having more traffic than weekdays.

The London market does tend to have more residential customers which could account for this. Commercial customers will access their units on weekdays while residential can have more preference to weekends. Commercial customers also tend to access their units more frequently which could also account for the lower numbers of vehicles in London. To further support this hypothesis the container sites which are more commercial customers have much lower access numbers on weekends and generally much higher level of access on weekdays than indoor sites.

Container sites have lower traffic volumes per square foot due to the larger average size of a unit. This suggests that the traffic volumes are more directly proportional to the number of customers than the total storage space, although larger units do attract more usage than smaller units generally.

Type of Vehicles

It is often a misconception that self storage businesses attract large vehicles to the stores. The data shows that this is not the case with 95% of vehicles being cars or light goods vehicles. Not surprisingly few bicycles or motorcycles enter self storage stores as most vehicles are being used to carry items in or out of storage. The bicycles counted were usually used by staff.

	Bicycle	Motorcycle	Car	Light goods vehicle	Ordinary Goods Vehicle 1	Ordinary Goods Vehicle 2
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All Indoor						
Weekday	1.2%	0.3%	69.4%	25.6%	3.3%	0.2%
Saturday	0.8%	0.0%	74.6%	24.4%	0.3%	0.0%
Sunday	0.0%	2.5%	82.8%	14.7%	0.0%	0.0%

London						
Weekday	4.1%	1.2%	68.1%	24.6%	1.9%	0.0%
Saturday	3.1%	0.0%	73.9%	23.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sunday	0.0%	10.0%	79.3%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%

Cities						
Weekday	0.4%	0.1%	69.6%	26.1%	3.5%	0.3%
Saturday	0.0%	0.0%	67.7%	31.5%	0.7%	0.0%
Sunday	0.0%	0.0%	84.7%	15.3%	0.0%	0.0%

Regional						
Weekday	0.0%	0.0%	69.9%	25.7%	3.9%	0.4%
Saturday	0.0%	0.0%	81.9%	18.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Sunday	0.0%	0.0%	83.2%	16.8%	0.0%	0.0%

Container Sites						
Weekday	0.0%	0.0%	41.4%	47.8%	8.8%	2.0%
Saturday	0.0%	1.7%	61.0%	32.2%	5.0%	0.0%
Sunday	0.0%	0.0%	73.2%	26.8%	0.0%	0.0%

Container sites with their drive up access and more use from commercial clients attract a higher percentage of larger vehicles. The more urban and densely populated the area the less large vehicles, with London having less than the cities which in turn had less than regional locations. It is worth noting that even in container sites the level of commercial vehicles accessing the site drops considerably over the weekend. Cars make up 41% of all traffic in container sites on weekdays but 73% on Sundays.

Time of Day

The data shows that despite customers having extended hours access, the vast majority of visits are between 9:00 and 17:00 with very few visits between 21:00 and 7:00. When overlaying this with vehicle type data. All the larger commercial vehicles arrived between 7:00 and 17:00. Access between 21:00 and 7:00 was a fairly equal mix of cars and light good vehicles albeit with a small sample size due to the few vehicles that accessed during these hours.

		Weekdays	Saturday	Sunday
All Indoor	Before 7:00	1%	1%	1%
	7:00-9:00	11%	5%	17%
	9:00-17:00	76%	84%	74%
	17:00-21:00	11%	8%	5%
	21:00-0:00	2%	2%	3%
London	Before 7:00	0%	2%	2%
	7:00-9:00	11%	4%	14%
	9:00-17:00	66%	77%	71%
	17:00-21:00	19%	13%	11%
	21:00-0:00	4%	5%	2%
Cities	Before 7:00	1%	1%	0%
	7:00-9:00	14%	7%	4%
	9:00-17:00	80%	80%	88%
	17:00-21:00	6%	11%	3%
	21:00-0:00	0%	0%	4%
Regional	Before 7:00	1%	0%	0%
	7:00-9:00	7%	6%	29%
	9:00-17:00	81%	93%	65%
	17:00-21:00	9%	0%	4%
	21:00-0:00	2%	0%	2%
Containers	Before 7:00	2%	2%	1%
	7:00-9:00	13%	15%	20%
	9:00-17:00	73%	75%	73%
	17:00-21:00	10%	7%	5%
	21:00-0:00	2%	2%	1%