

Traffic patterns for self storage

Self storage is a relatively new industry to the UK and often builders, town planners and local authorities do not understand the traffic implications of self storage stores. It is a common misconception that self storage creates large numbers of vehicle movements and often these include large lorries. The reality is that across the UK only 11% of customers access their self storage unit more than once a week and 44% visit 3-6 times a year or less (2018 SSA UK Annual Report).

As the table below indicates on average there are less than 7 cars per 100 units, entering a site over the whole day. With customers staying an hour on average, most sites would only ever have 2 or 3 cars per 100 units on site at any given time.

Self Storage units have an entirely different customer base than warehousing. Customers have their own individual unit and can access their goods directly without intervention from the owner of the facility. This type of storage is more often used for people who have goods they want to store for a period of time and do not require regular access too. For example, people moving house, renovating, storing documents or sporting goods off-season. Goods in warehouses are often of commercial nature and accessed regularly. There are also many customers' goods stored in a single warehouse, while self storage customers have their own individual units. This means there is also no requirement for customers to wait while other goods are moved to clear access to their own goods.

There are rarely “visitors” to self storage facilities. Self storage units are not usually used for retail sales. While they can be used for storage of commercial goods, they are not sales offices' or administrative units. In fact most do not even have power to the units. This means there are no “visitors” to the site other than prospective customers. Vehicles within the site are primarily either loading or unloading goods.

The following data sourced from the 2018 SSA UK Annual Survey details the level of vehicle access per day.

Average vehicles entering per day during the regular access hours by centre size and immediate market area

Number of self storage spaces	Average Vehicles per day
Less than 100	6.5
100 to 299	13.1
300 to 499	28.6
500 or more	49.2

Average vehicles entering per day during outside of the regular access hours by centre size and immediate market area.

Number of self storage spaces	Average Vehicles per day
Less than 100	2.1
100 to 299	3.5
300 to 499	5.7
500 or more	6.3

Regular access hours are considered to be when the store is unmanned. This does vary from store to store but is typically 6pm -8am.

For more information please contact the Self Storage Association UK on 01270 623 150 or at admin@ssauk.com