

Enjoying the summer holidays in safety

Stephen Watkins, Director of Corporate Services at the Injuries Board writes that heeding some basic safety tips can help us to avoid accidents getting in the way of holiday fun this summer. The Injuries Board is the state body that processes personal injury claims.



FOR MOST people, summertime conjures up images of sunshine, longer days and the chance to get out and about with family and friends. Unfortunately, it is also the time of year when accidents resulting in public liability awards are most likely to occur in popular places such as leisure centres, parks and amusement fairs, playgrounds, gyms and swimming pools.

Recent data published by the Injuries Board, the state body that processes personal injury claims for accidents in the workplace, on the roads and in public places, shows that the months of July and August have recorded the highest average number of public liability awards over the last three years.

The Injuries Board processed over 1,700 public liability awards in 2013, with a total value of €44m. Slips, trips and falls were the most common accident type, accounting for 67% of total public liability awards. The majority of these claims

involved predominantly soft tissue injuries and minor fractures and resulted in awards of under €38,000.

There were over 100 accidents in places such as leisure centres, parks and amusement fairs, playgrounds, gyms, and swimming pools - all popular places for families and children seeking to enjoy sports and recreation during the summer holidays. Accidents included playground falls on slides and monkey bars, being hit by gym equipment, poolside slips and trips, and dog attacks and bites.

We can all take some basic steps to look after ourselves and others by paying attention to our surroundings and avoiding activities that may become a hazard. Some basic safety tips that will help everyone to enjoy the summer holidays in safety include:

- Watching out for trip and/or fall hazards in public places.
- Making sure animals are kept under control and watching out for those that are not.
- Making sure to avoid dangerous areas that do not have suitable fencing and boundaries.
- Making sure children are adequately supervised when in parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, and all public places.

Since 2004, personal injury claims must be made through the Injuries Board, unless settled directly between the parties. There is no requirement to use a solicitor as the Board accepts direct applications, accompanied by a medical report, which are then assessed by the Board's team of expert assessors. Any awards made are legally binding and compensation levels reflect those made by a Court.

The Injuries Board can be contacted by telephoning the Lo-Call helpline 1890 829 121 between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday, by logging on to www.injuriesboard.ie or by post at InjuriesBoard.ie, P.O. Box 8, Clonakilty, Co. Cork. You can also download the Injuries Board smartphone app through the App Store and on Google Play, or follow us on Twitter @injuriesboard.

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