

# Remember Road Safety this Festive Season

**Stephen Watkins, Director of Corporate Services at the Injuries Board, discusses the importance of road safety, and urges road users to heed safety messages, particularly in the run up to and during the festive season. The Injuries Board is the state body that handles personal injury claims.**



*Stephen Watkins,  
Director of Corporate  
Services*

**W**ith the festive season already in full swing, the nation's roads are busier than ever. Both pedestrians and motorists need to be extra vigilant at this time of year as the volume of traffic increases. Commercial vehicles delivering to shops and restaurants and across the country are joined by large numbers of people on the move to do Christmas shopping and to reunite with friends and family for the holiday season.

It is a season that is eagerly anticipated by many, but each year the celebrations are marred for families who lose loved ones in road accidents. 2013 saw the Road Safety Authority report the first year-on-year increase in the number of road deaths in Ireland since 2005.

The Injuries Board analysis of compensation awards made in 2013 for motor accidents also demonstrates the need for increased vigilance on our roads with a 6% year-on-year increase in the number of awards made for injuries resulting from motor accidents.

8,062 awards totalling €175m were made to claimants nationwide last year, with these awards evenly split between men and women. The average award made was €21,730. Motor liability awards account for 3 in 4 personal injury awards processed by the Injuries Board.

Those aged between 25 and 34 were most likely to suffer injuries in a motor accident resulting in a personal injury claim. Friday was found to be the most dangerous day of the week with 17% of accidents resulting in claims taking place on that day. This could be explained by the large numbers of people who travel on Friday, possibly driving home after a long week at work, or travelling for a weekend away around the country. Motorists need to be even more aware of road safety at busy times like this.

While the majority (65%) of motor liability claims handled by the Injuries Board in 2013 resulted in awards of less than €20,000, tragically there were a number of claims for serious accidents, as well as 48 claims relating to fatalities. Generally the most prevalent injuries sustained were soft tissue injuries (neck and back), and orthopaedic-related injuries (fractures etc.).

Personal injury claims must be made through the Injuries Board, unless settled directly between the parties. There is no requirement to use a solicitor/intermediary as the Board accepts direct applications. Intending claimants are advised to carry out some basic research, or call us directly in the first instance, to avoid committing to a service and cost they might not need.

The assessment of compensation is based on the medical reports provided as well as establishing the financial loss incurred as a result of absence from work or incurring of medical treatment costs. The Injuries Board is fully self-financing, with no reliance on the State for any funding.

**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](http://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 or follow us on Twitter @injuriesboard.**

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