

SATURDAYS IN JULY PEAK PERIOD FOR PUBLIC PLACE ACCIDENTS

Injuries Board awards €53m in compensation for public liability claims in 2014

Friday, 10th July 2015 – The summer months are the most dangerous period for public place accidents that result in a personal injury claim, according to a new analysis released today by the Injuries Board. Last year, July was the month that recorded the highest frequency of accidents resulting in compensation awards, while Saturday proved to be the most dangerous day of the week for public place personal injury accidents.

The Injuries Board is the independent State body that makes statutory personal injury (PI) awards in respect of motor, employer and public liability accidents. Personal injury claims are required to be submitted to the Board unless settled directly between parties. Public liability (PL) awards are made in respect of injuries suffered as a result of an accident in a public place.

In 2014, the Injuries Board made 2,151 PL awards with corresponding compensation totaling €53m, compared to €44m in 2013 in respect of 1,768 awards.

50% of public liability awards were for amounts under €20,000 with just 10 awards related to high value claims in excess of €100,000. The average public liability award decreased slightly to €24,677 last year, compared to €25,120 in 2013.

Figures over the last three years have consistently shown that women are far more likely than men to suffer an accident in a public place resulting in a public liability award. This gap narrowed slightly in 2014, with women now accounting for 7 in 10 (68.9%) of all public liability awards, compared to 3 in 10 (31.1%) for men. The average award for men was €24,275 while women were awarded average compensation of €24,859.

Continuing the trend of recent years, slips, trips and falls were by far the main cause of public liability accidents, accounting for 70% of all PL awards. Uneven or broken pavements/footpaths, and wet or slippery floors/surfaces are the most common causes of slips, trips and falls. The majority of such claims involved predominantly soft tissue injuries and minor fractures.

The analysis of public liability awards also indicated that shops, supermarkets and shopping centres are the top business premises for accidents that result in a public liability claim. Smaller numbers of accidents occur in nightclubs, bars, fast food outlets and restaurants.

Commenting on the analysis of 2014 public liability awards, Stephen Watkins, Director of Corporate Services with the Injuries Board said *"The 2014 figures point to a peak in compensation awards for public place accidents during the summer months. This stands to reason as this is a time when children are on school holidays, people take holidays from work, and there are greatly increased numbers of people out and about enjoying the huge range of festivals, sporting events, and outdoor activities taking place throughout the country."*

While our figures show an increase in the number of public liability awards last year, it is clear that the majority of these are relatively low value claims, with 5 in every 6 (84%) PL compensation awards for amounts less than €38,000. By being safety aware this summer, we can all take some simple steps to avoid the all-too-common slips, trips and falls that make up the majority of public liability awards."

Key statistics from the Injuries Board analysis of public liability awards in 2014 are as follows:

- The average award for a public liability claim was €24,677. The average award for men was €24,275, while women received an average award of €24,859.
- Women are almost twice as likely as men to sustain an injury in a public place, accounting for almost 7 in 10 awards (68.9%), while men accounted for the remaining 3 in 10 (31.1%) cases.
- The awards were generally relatively evenly distributed among the various age groups.
- Slips, trips and falls were the most common accident type.
- The vast majority of awards (84%) were for under €38,000.
- For the fourth consecutive year, Saturday was the most common day for public place accidents while the least number of accidents occurred on Monday.
- July saw the highest number of accidents resulting in public liability awards, April the lowest.
- The highest number of awards by county in 2014 went to Dublin, Cork and Limerick

Last year the Injuries Board awarded €281m in compensation for personal injury claims and total claims increased by just 1%. Of the 12,420 awards made, 17% related to public liability claims, with motor liability representing 75% of awards, and employer liability accounting for the remaining 8%. The Injuries Board delivers compensation to accident victims in approximately 7 months. Since 2004, all personal injury claims in Ireland (excluding medical negligence) must be processed through the Injuries Board.

Ends

Issued on behalf of the Injuries Board by Murray

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Notes to editor:

About the Injuries Board

The Injuries Board is the independent statutory body which makes personal injury compensation awards arising from motor, workplace and public liability accidents. The Board is self-funded predominantly through fees charged to those who are responsible for injuries (or their insurers) arising from such accidents.

Claims can be made direct to the Injuries Board:

- By Phone: Lo-Call helpline on 1890 829 121 between 8am and 8pm from Monday to Friday

- Online at www.injuriesboard.ie 24 hours per day, every day
- By Post to: The Injuries Board, P.O. Box 8, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

Information on the claim process is available via our smartphone app.

By law, personal injury claims (with some minor exclusions) must come to the Injuries Board for assessment regardless of whether the claimant has legal representation or not. Direct claimants can have their claim assessed for a refundable fee of €45. In assessing claims the Board makes no distinction between a direct applicant and a claimant with representation who can typically pay an intermediary the equivalent of up to 10% or more of the value of their award. An Order to Pay, issued by the Injuries Board is legally binding and has the same effect as an award of Court. There is no cap on the level of damages awards that the Board can make.

County ranking of public liability awards by value in 2014			
County	No. of Awards per County	Average Award per County	Total compensation per County
Dublin	779	€22,773	€17.7m
Cork	211	€24,787	€5.2m
Limerick	155	€24,029	€3.7m
Galway	86	€28,515	€2.5m
Kildare	94	€23,119	€2.2m
Louth	79	€27,498	€2.2m
Tipperary	81	€24,709	€2m
Meath	80	€21,161	€1.7m
Waterford	67	€22,123	€1.5m
Wexford	50	€26,300	€1.3m
Kerry	41	€28,427	€1.2m
Clare	38	€28,042	€1m
Wicklow	47	€21,718	€1m
Donegal	42	€23,888	€1m
Westmeath	31	€30,657	€950,367
Roscommon	21	€40,142	€842,982
Carlow	28	€29,633	€829,724
Mayo	27	€29,514	€796,878
Kilkenny	29	€27,107	€786,103
Offaly	27	€26,223	€708,021
Sligo	21	€26,788	€562,548
Cavan	21	€24,829	€521,409
Monaghan	18	€28,873	€519,714
Laois	17	€30,436	€517,412
Longford	22	€20,849	€458,678
Leitrim	9	€36,402	€327,618