

Still a way to travel on road safety journey

During Road Safety Week, Stephen Watkins, Director of Corporate Services at the Injuries Board, highlights the importance of road safety in the darker winter months. The Injuries Board is the state body that handles personal injury claims.



Every year approximately 1.2 million people worldwide lose their lives on the roads. According to the Road Safety Authority (RSA), over 23,000 people have died on Irish roads since records began in 1959. Their figures show that 92 people died between January and July 2015. Of these more than one in three drivers, and one in four passengers, were not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident. This week is Road Safety Week, and it is a good time to reflect on this and work to make the roads safer.

The Injuries Board is the independent State body that makes awards for compensation arising from motor, public and employer liability claims. Over the last three years, of the approximately 33,000 personal injury claims that the Board has assessed, 25,000 (75%) resulted from a road accident. A small proportion resulted in fatalities. Every death and

life-changing injury is one too many, and this Road Safety Week we should all make a renewed effort to use the roads in a safer way.

Our data shows that winter months are the most dangerous for road users and we should be extra vigilant as we move into the coldest and darkest season. It's a good time to ensure your vehicle is in a roadworthy state by checking that tyres, wipers, defrosters and lights are in good working order. The Injuries Board echoes the advice of the RSA and An Garda Síochána:

- Reduce speed, always wear a safety belt, watch out for other road users
- Ensure passengers always wear their safety belt and never distract the driver
- Never use your phone while driving
- If you're feeling tired, Stop, Sip and Sleep
- Pedestrians, make yourself visible and always take care crossing the road
- Cyclists, be seen, obey rules of the road and take great care around large vehicles
- Motorcyclists, be seen, wear appropriate Personal Protection Equipment and slow down
- Parents/guardians, make road safety a priority in your 'Back to School' preparations.

Accident victims who intend making a personal injury claim must do so through the Injuries Board, unless the case is settled directly with the other party involved. Claimants can choose to deal directly with the Board or make their claim through a solicitor/intermediary. Intending claimants are advised to carry out some basic research if choosing a solicitor/intermediary, or call us directly in the first instance, to avoid committing to a service and cost they might not need.

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 or follow us on Twitter @injuriesboard.