

## **SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS BY FAR THE MAIN CAUSE OF PUBLIC LIABILITY (PL) ACCIDENTS IN 2013**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014** – According to figures released by the Injuries Board today, slips, trips and falls were by far the main cause of public liability accidents, with compensation totaling €44m awarded in 2013. Over 1,700 public liability awards were made during 2013.

The average public liability award rose year on year by almost 11% to €25,120. In addition, over a two year period, the number of awards of over €100,000 increased from 2 in 2011 to 18 in 2013. In previous years, females accounted for a far higher proportion of PL awards made than men. This trend continued in 2013, with females now accounting for 71.4% of total awards made.

Slips, trips and falls were the most common accident type, accounting for 67% of total PL awards. The majority of such claims involved predominantly soft tissue injuries and minor fractures and resulted in awards of under €38,000.

Commenting, Patricia Byron, Chief Executive of the Injuries Board said “We can see again from the findings that slips, trips and falls remain the main cause of public liability accidents, with very few complex, high value claims. I encourage all those with responsibility for public areas to invest in basic prevention. On the basis of our claims analysis, it is clear that by simply maintaining public pathways/floor surfaces and by carefully securing loose goods, furniture etc, many of these claims could be avoided or minimized. Prevention must become the key.”

Key statistics from the Injuries Board analysis of public liability awards in 2013 are as follows:

- The average award for a public liability claim was €25,120. The average award for men was €25,664, while women received an average award of €24,902
- Women are almost twice as likely as men to sustain an injury in a public place, accounting for over 7 in 10 awards (71.4%), while men accounted for the remaining 3 in 10 (28.6%) cases
- Nearly two-thirds of public liability awards were to people in the 25 to 64 age group. 18-24 year olds were the least likely to receive a PL award at 8.3% of cases
- Slips, trips and falls were the most common accident type
- The vast majority of awards (85%) were under €38,000.
- For the third consecutive year, Saturday was the most common day for public place accidents while the least number of accidents occurred on Tuesday, as was the case in 2012.
- Over the last three years, January has been the safest month while July saw the highest level of accidents throughout the year taking the last 3 years figures into account.

- The highest percentage of awards in 2013 went to Dublin 37%, followed by Munster at 29%, the rest of Leinster at 19% and Connaught/Ulster at 13%.

Slips, trips and falls accounted for over two-thirds of personal injuries in public places and included accidents on wet floors/surfaces, uneven/broken pavements, drains and manholes. The resulting injuries included fractures, soft tissue injuries, bruises, cuts and lacerations. Other accidents included burns and scalds (2.5% of awards) and accidents involving falling/flying objects (5%). 2% of public place accidents involved animals, including dog attacks and bites, bull attacks, being trampled by a horse, and collisions between cyclists and dogs.

Over 40 awards were made for accidents which occurred in supermarkets, including injuries from trolleys and baskets, while almost 100 accidents occurred in leisure type facilities such as sports clubs/gyms, cinemas and hairdressers.

17% of all awards made by the Injuries Board in 2013 related to public liability, with motor liability representing 75% of awards, and employer liability 8%. The average processing time of 7 months was four times faster than the prior adversarial system, with a substantially lower administration cost. Since 2004, all personal injury claims in Ireland (excluding medical negligence) must be processed through the Injuries Board.

## **Ends**

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