ROAD ACCIDENT FACTS

RELAND

1998

THIS REPORT IS BASED ON
ROAD ACCIDENT INFORMATION
RECORDED BY
AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

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SUMMARY

Persons Killed

A total of 458 persons were killed in 408 fatal accidents on Irish roads in 1998. This represents a 3 per cent decrease on the 472 killed and a 4 per cent decrease on the 424 fatal accidents recorded in 1997. The incidence of fatalities and fatal accidents must be viewed against the steady increase in the number of registered vehicles on Irish roads, from just over 1 million in 1989, when the number of persons killed was 460, to 1.5 million in 1998. Thus the fatality rate per registered vehicle has improved significantly over the last 10 years from 450 persons killed per million registered vehicles in 1989 to 350 killed per million registered vehicles in 1998.

Persons Injured

The number of persons injured in 1998 (12,773), and the number of reported injury accidents (7,831), represent a 3 per cent decrease on the 1997 figures of 13,115 persons injured in 8,072 injury accidents. This is the second successive recorded annual decrease in the numbers of injury accidents and persons injured, and is reflected in all road user categories except for car users which recorded a slight increase. The number of reported serious injury accidents, 1,345, decreased by almost 13 per cent from the 1,544 accidents reported in 1997, maintaining the general downward trend for this accident category in recent years.

Road User Category

The number of pedestrians killed in 1998 was 114 which is a decrease of 16 on the 1997 figure. The number of pedal cycle fatalities, 21, is a decrease of 3 on the 24 killed in 1997. A total of 37 motor cyclists were killed in 1998 compared with 68 in 1997 and is the lowest number of reported fatalities in 30 years for this category of road user. Car user fatalities, 253, increased by 34 maintaining the general upward trend in persons killed for this category of road user in recent years. Other road user fatalities (representing for the most part goods vehicles) increased slightly from 31 to 33.

A total of 1,469 pedestrians were reported injured in 1998 compared with 1,629 in 1997, representing a drop of almost 10 per cent. The number of pedal cyclist injuries, 571, decreased by 12 per cent from the 652 injured in 1997 and is the lowest number of reported injuries in this category of road user since 1982. Motor cyclist injuries, 1,099 decreased by 115 from the 1,214 recorded in 1997, a reduction of 9 per cent. The number of car users injured, 8,498, increased by two per cent on the 1997 figure of 8,346. Other road users injured (representing for the most part goods vehicles) recorded a decrease in from 1,274 in 1997 to 1,136 in 1998.

Date and Time

The worst month for fatalities in 1998 was September when 47 persons were killed in 34 fatal accidents. March recorded the lowest number of fatalities and fatal accidents with 21 persons killed in 17 fatal accidents.

The number of fatal accidents between 9.00 pm and 3.00 am (the hours most associated with drinking and driving), i.e. 116, and the number killed, 135, represent a decrease of 9 and 8 respectively on the 1997 figures. The incidence of fatal accidents and fatalities during these hours account for approximately 28 per cent of all fatal accidents and 29 per cent of all persons killed in 1998 representing a decrease of about 1 per cent on the 1997 situation.

The number of persons killed during the later hours of darkness, between 3.00 am and 6.00 am, was 44, an increase of 3 on 1997. Fatalities during these hours represent approximately 10 per cent of all road accident fatalities, an increase of 1 per cent on the same time period in 1997.

Location

Forty-three per cent of all fatal accidents occurred on the National (primary and secondary) Roads which is an increase of 3 per cent on 1997. Thirty-three percent of all fatal accidents occurred in urban areas, a decrease of 3 per cent on the 1997 figure. The number of fatal accidents in rural areas increased by 3 per cent on the 1997 figure and accounted for 67 per cent of all fatal accidents in 1998.

On a county basis, Louth experienced the highest accident rate per county per 1,000 population maintaining the position experienced in 1997 and earlier years. Louth also had the highest accident rate per 1,000 registered vehicles at 9.8. Westmeath recorded the lowest rate at 4.0 accidents per 1,000 registered vehicles.

Dundalk had the highest average incidence of reported accidents for the years 1990 - 1998 for towns with a population in the range 10,000 - 50,000.

International Comparisons

On the basis of road deaths per 100,000 population, Ireland's rate at 12.8 in 1997, the latest year for which data are available, is ranked eight out of the 15 Member States of the European Union.

NOTES AND DEFINITIONS

Coverage of the report

This report covers all road or traffic accidents reported to the Garda Síochána involving fatalities, personal injury or material damage which occurred on public roads in Ireland (exclusive of Northern Ireland) in 1998.

Accidents on private property, such as railway station approaches or private lanes, are excluded.

All Road Accidents

By 'all reported road accidents' is meant all accidents investigated by or brought to the notice of the Garda Síochána where the exact location of the accident can be determined.

Accidents and Casualties

Road accidents are classified as fatal, personal injury or material damage; casualties are classified as either killed or injured.

Fatal Accident:

Where at least one person is killed as a result of the accident and death occurs within 30 days.

Serious Injury Accident:

Where there are no deaths, but a person or persons are seriously injured.

The definition of serious injury is an injury for which the person is detained in hospital as an 'in-patient', or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital: fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushings, severe cuts and lacerations, severe general shock requiring medical treatment.

Minor Injury Accident:

Where there are no deaths or serious injuries. The definition of a minor injury is: an injury of a minor character such as a sprain or bruise.

Material Damage Accident:

Where no deaths or injuries occur but damage is caused to a vehicle or property.

Learner Driver

A learner driver is a driver holding a provisional licence.

Vehicles

Vehicles are classified as follows

1. Pedal Cycle

A pedal cycle is a two or three-wheeled road vehicle fitted with pedals deriving its sole means of propulsion from human power.

2. Motor Cycle

A motor cycle is any mechanically propelled two-wheeled machine and includes mopeds and motor scooters.

3. Car

A passenger road motor vehicle, other than a motor cycle, seating not more than eight passengers (excluding the driver).

4. Public Service Vehicle (P.S.V.)

A passenger road motor vehicle having seating accommodation for more than eight passengers (excluding the driver), and used for the carriage of passengers for reward.

5. Goods Vehicle

A road motor vehicle designed, exclusively or primarily, to carry goods.

6 Other Motor Vehicles

Other motor vehicles are miscellaneous types of motor vehicle not falling into any of the main categories.

Rural Area

A rural area is defined as an area where the speed limit zone is greater than 40 m.p.h.

Urban Area

An urban area is defined as an area where the speed limit zone is less than or equal to 40 m.p.h.

Built-up Area

A built-up area means an area within a 30 to 40 m.p.h. speed limit zone.

Dark

By 'dark' is meant the hours of darkness which begin half an hour after sunset and end half an hour before sunrise.

Section 1: Accidents

Persons Killed

A total of 458 persons were killed in 408 fatal accidents on Irish roads in 1998. This represents a 3 per cent decrease on the 472 killed and a 4 per cent decrease on the 424 fatal accidents recorded in 1997. The incidence of fatalities and fatal accidents must be viewed against the steady increase in the number of registered vehicles on Irish roads, from just over 1 million in 1989, when the number of persons killed was 460 to 1.5 million in 1998. Thus the fatality rate per registered vehicle has improved significantly over the last 10 years from 450 persons killed per million registered vehicles in 1989 to 350 killed per million registered vehicles in 1998.

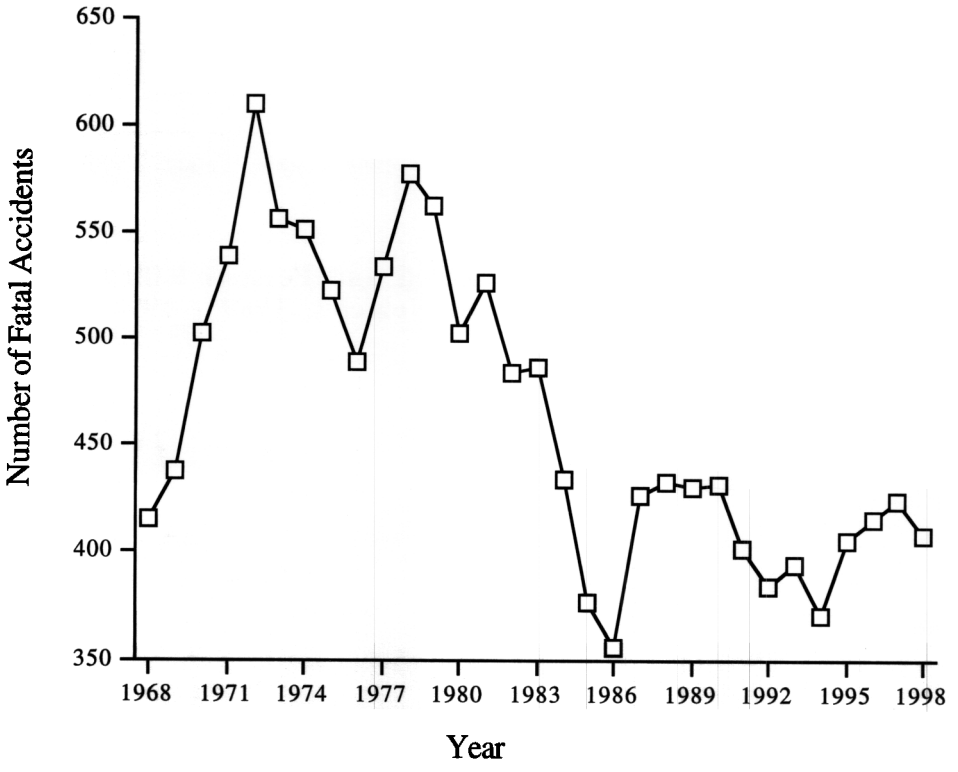


Figure 1: Number of Fatal Accidents 1968 - 1998

Persons Injured

The number of persons injured in 1998 (12,773), and the number of reported injury accidents (7,831), represent a 3 per cent decrease on the 1997 figures of 13,115 persons injured in 8,072 injury accidents. This is the second successive recorded annual decrease in the numbers of injury accidents and persons injured, and is reflected in all road user categories except for car users which recorded a slight increase. The number of reported serious injury accidents, 1,345, decreased by almost 13 per cent from the 1,544 accidents reported in 1997, maintaining the general downward trend for this accident category in recent years.

Figure 2: Number of Persons Killed and Persons Killed per Million Registered Vehicles, 1989 - 1998

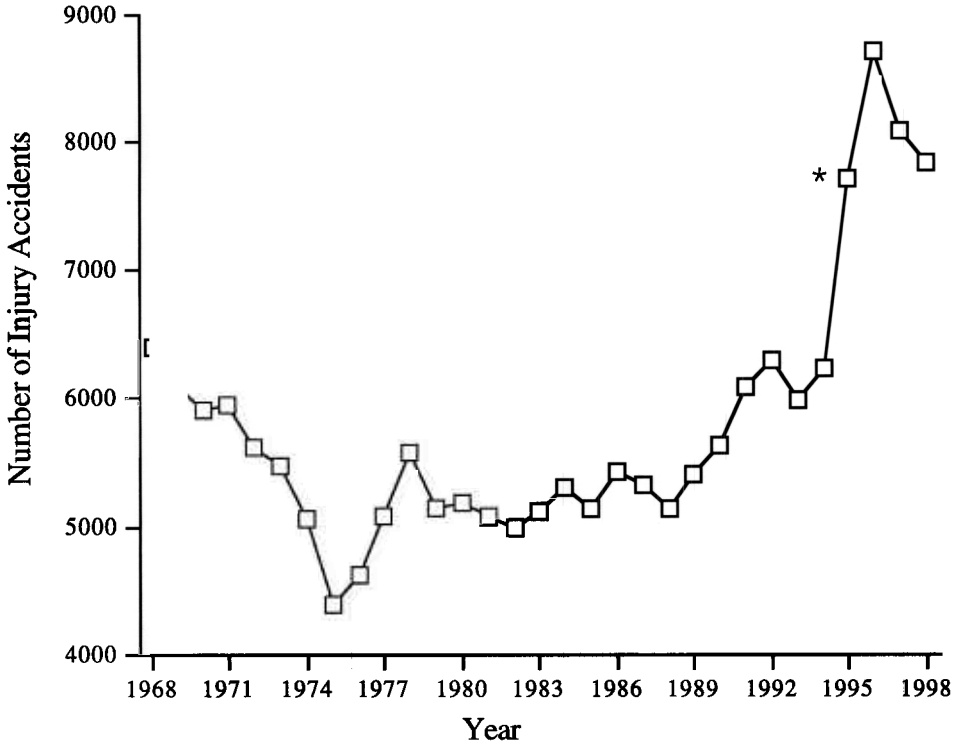


Figure 3: Number of Injury Accidents 1968 - 1998

* Increase in the reporting level of accidents in 1995 due to a significant change in the arrangement applying to the reporting of injury accidents, introduced in association with the launch of a more comprehensive road accident reporting form C(T)68.

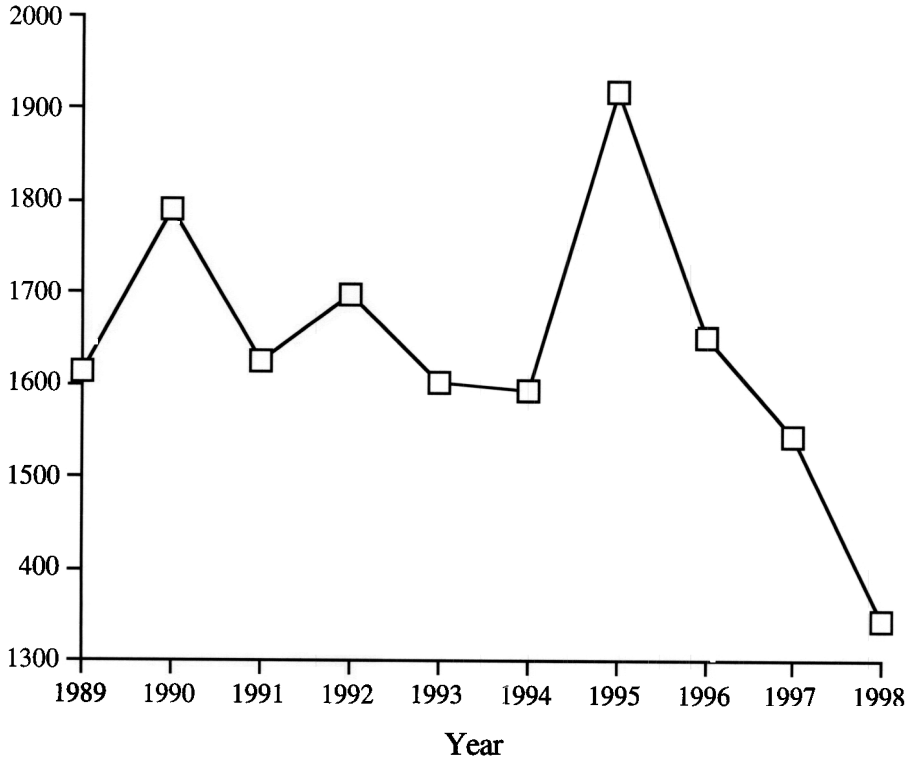


Figure 4: Number of Serious Injury Accidents, 1989-1998

Material Damage Accidents

The number of material damage accidents (where no deaths or injuries occur but damage is caused to a vehicle or property) increased by approximately 6 per cent from 22,364 in 1997 to 23,604 accidents in 1998.

Road User Category

The number of pedestrians killed in 1998 was 114 which is a decrease of 16 on the 1997 figure. Pedal cyclist fatalities, 21, showed a decrease of 3 on the 24 killed in 1997. A total of 37 motor cyclists were killed in 1998 compared with 68 in 1997, the lowest number of reported fatalities in 30 years for this category of road user. Car user fatalities, 253, increased by 34 maintaining the general upward trend in persons killed for this category in recent years. Other road user fatalities (representing for the most part goods vehicles) increased slightly from 31 to 33.

A total of 1,469 pedestrians were reported injured in 1998 compared with 1,629 in 1997, representing a drop of almost 10 per cent. The number of pedal cyclist injuries, 571, decreased by 12 per cent from the 652 injured in 1997, and is the lowest number of reported injuries in this category of road user since 1982. Motor cyclist injuries, 1,099, have also decreased from the 1,214 recorded in 1997, a reduction of 9 per cent. The number of car users injured, 8,498, is an increase of 2 per cent on the 1997 figure of 8,346. The number of other road users injured (representing for the most part users of goods vehicles) decreased from 1,274 in 1997 to 1,136 in 1998.

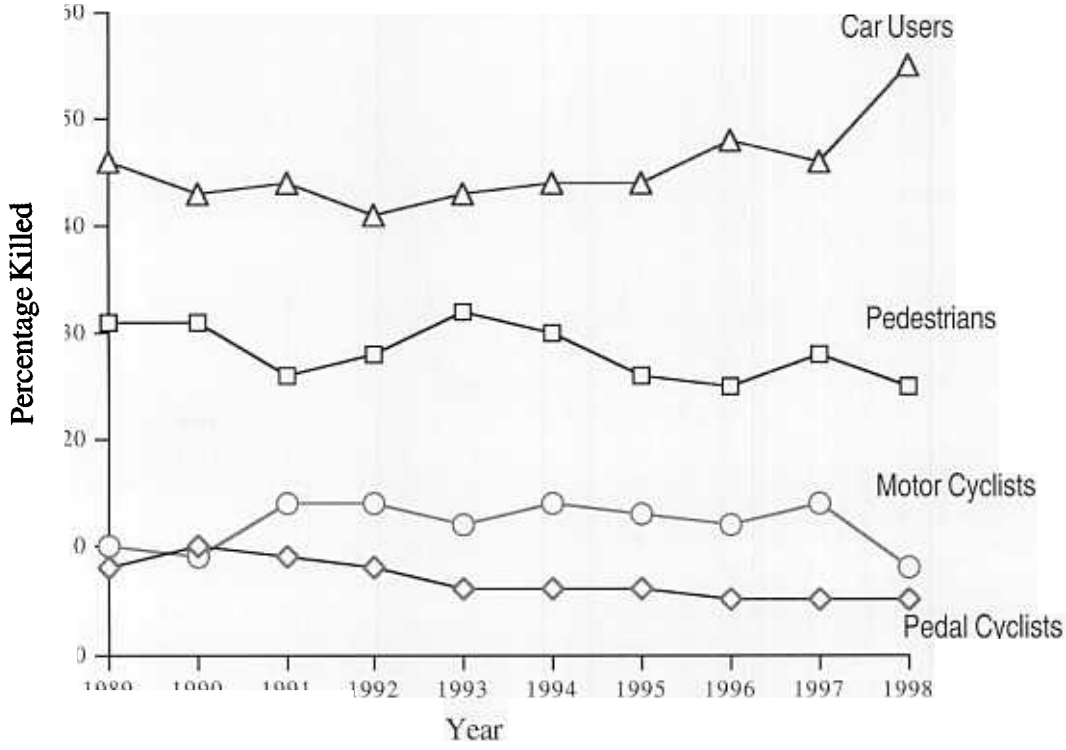


Figure 5: Annual Percentage of Persons Killed per Main Road User Types 1989-1998

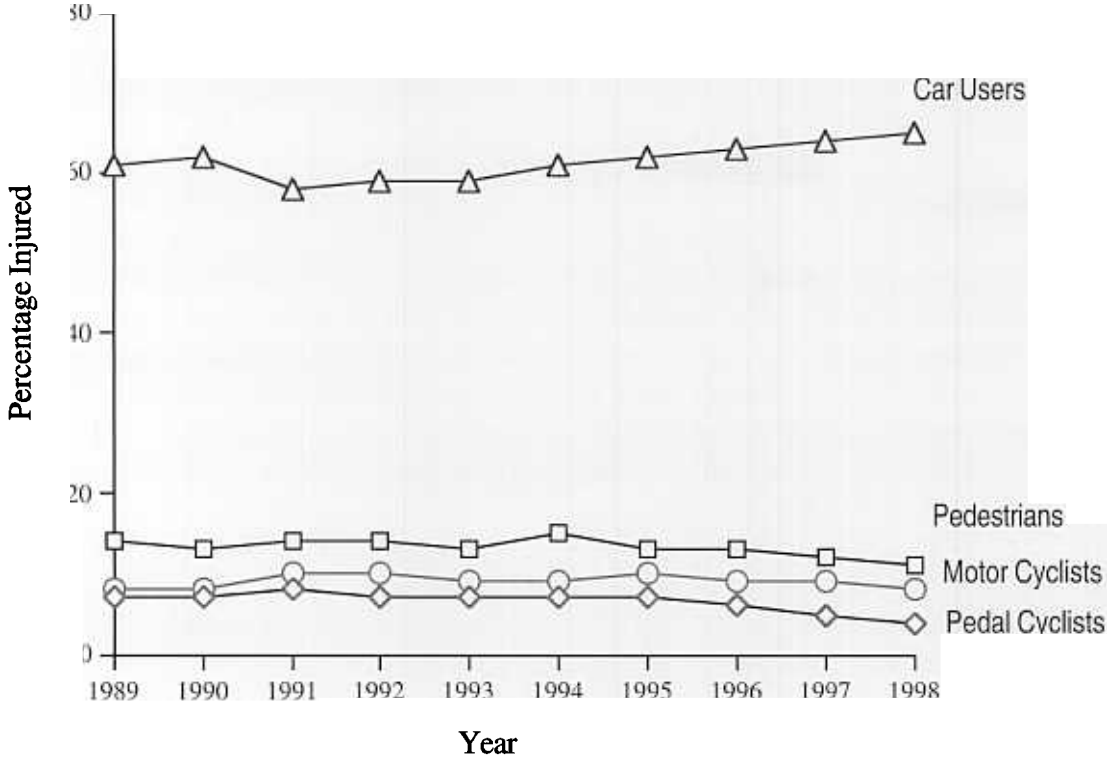


Figure 6: Annual Percentage of Persons Injured per Main Road User Types 1989-1998

Primary Collision Type

In 1998 fatal accidents involving pedestrians accounted for 28 per cent of fatal accidents and 18 per cent of injury accidents, while single vehicle only collisions were reported in 33 per cent of fatal accidents and 17 per cent of all injury accidents. Head-on collisions were recorded in 23 per cent of fatal accidents and in 19 per cent of injury accidents during the year.

Contributory Factors to Road Accidents

Contributory factors to road accidents in 1998 were broadly unchanged from the 1997 figures. The driver was identified by the investigating Garda as a contributory factor in 79 per cent of accidents. This was followed by the pedestrian in 12 per cent, the road in 5 per cent, environment in 3 per cent and, finally, the vehicle in 1 per cent of all reported injury accidents during 1998.

In fatal accidents involving two vehicles the contributory action 'went to wrong side of road' was reported by the investigating Garda in 34 per cent of accidents which is an increase of 2 per cent on the 1997 figure. The contributory action 'exceeded safe speed' was reported in 27 per cent of accidents in 1998 compared with 25 per cent in 1997.

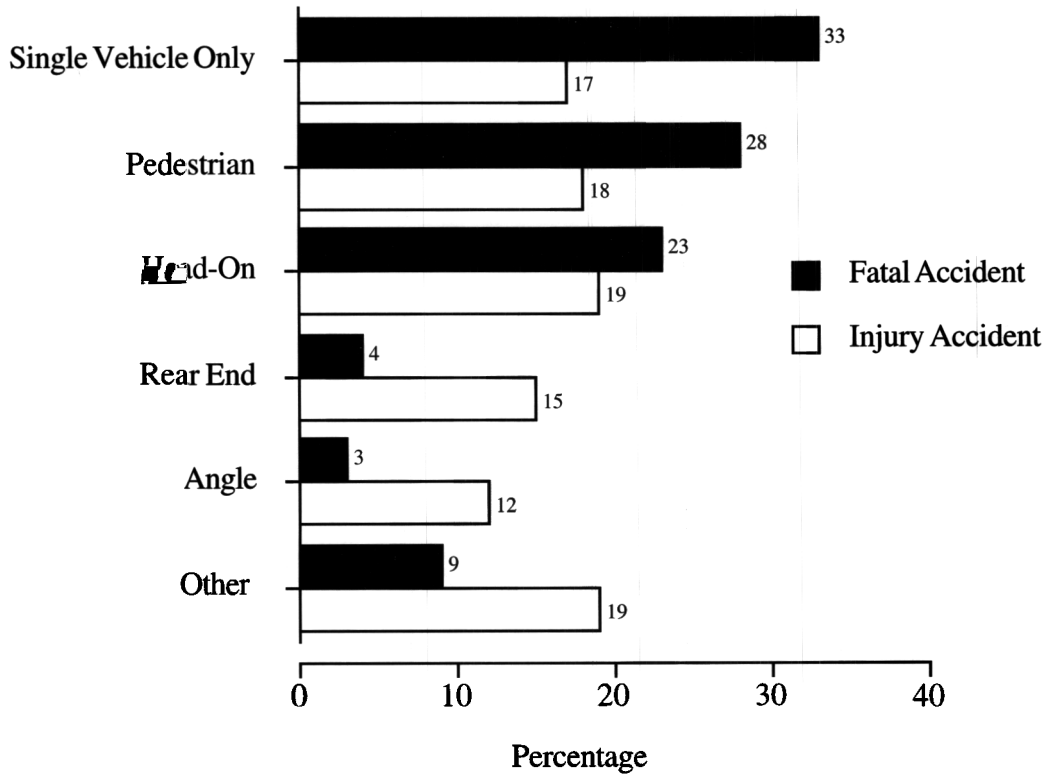


Figure 7: Percentage of Fatal Accidents and Personal Injury Accidents by Primary Collision Type

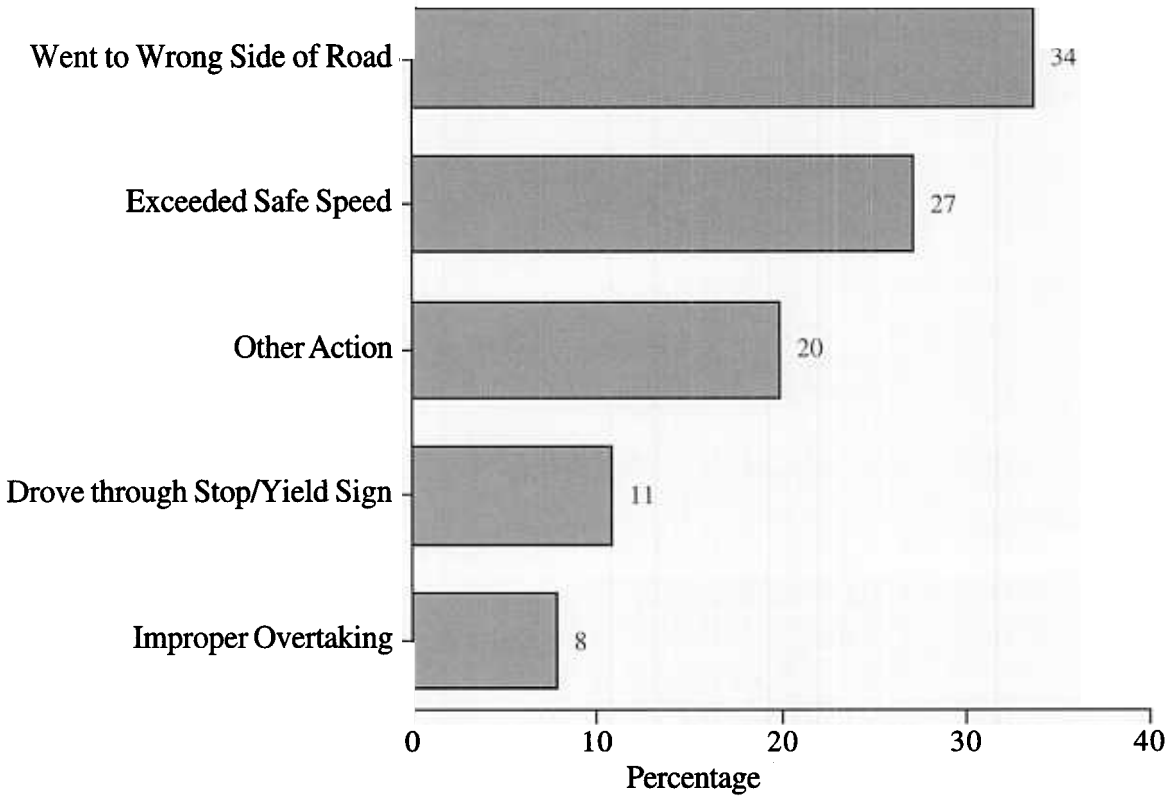


Figure 8: Two Vehicle Fatal Accidents in 1998 Classified by Contributory Action

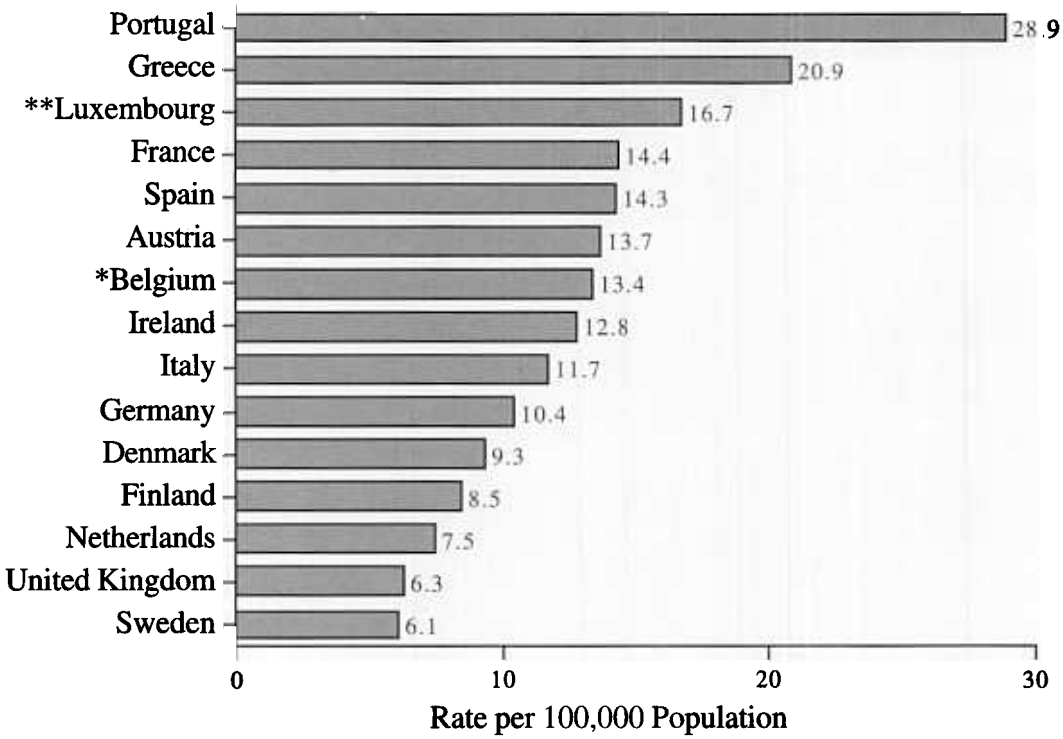
Accident Costs

There are two principal methodologies employed in the estimation of accident costs. One method is based mostly on the cost to the economy arising from the lost output of a person killed or injured. The other method based on willingness to pay includes an additional component related to what society would be prepared to pay to reduce the risk of an accident. In this sense willingness to pay is not a direct monetary accident cost. Since 1997 the National Roads Authority expresses all costs using willingness to pay. Broadly speaking willingness to pay increases the costs of injury accidents by a factor of 3.5 compared with the human capital estimator.

By applying consumer price index increases to the 1997 accident costs, it is estimated that the cost of a fatal accident in 1998 was £908,150, while serious and minor injury accident costs are estimated at £112,700 and £10,800 respectively. The cost of a material damage accident is estimated to be £1,176. The total cost of reported road accidents in Ireland in 1998 is estimated to be in the region of £684 million.

International Comparisons

On the basis of road deaths per 100,000 population, Ireland's rate at 12.8 in 1997, the latest year for which international comparative data are available is ranked eight out of 15 for the Member States of the European Union.



*1996,**1995

Figure 9: European Union Fatality Rate per 100,000 population,1997

Section 2:Date and Time

The worst month for fatalities in 1998 was September when 47 persons were killed in 34 fatal accidents. March recorded the lowest number of fatalities and fatal accidents - 21 persons killed in 17 fatal accidents.

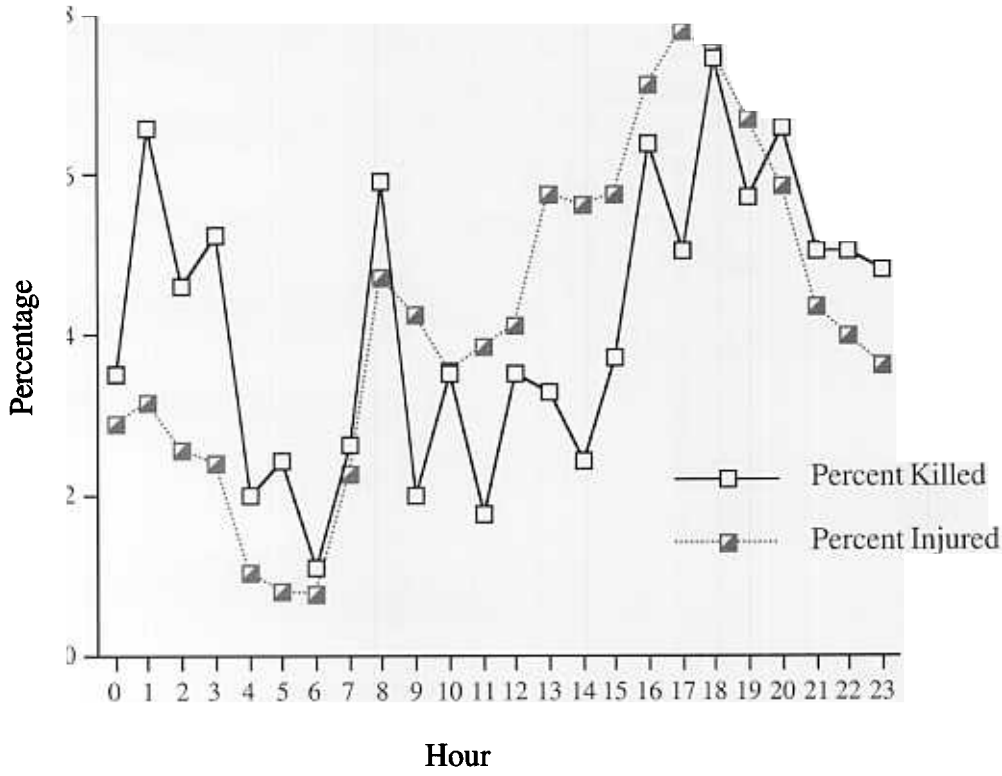


Figure 10: Percentage of Persons Killed and Injured Classified by Hour of Day

The number of fatal accidents between 9.00 pm and 3.00 am (the hours most associated with drinking and driving), i.e. 116, and the number killed, 135, show a decrease of 9 and 8 respectively on the 1997 figures. The number of fatal accidents and fatalities during these hours account for approximately 28 per cent of all fatal accidents and 29 per cent of all persons killed, representing a decrease of about 1 per cent on the 1997 situation.

The number killed during the later hours of darkness, between 3.00 am and 6.00 am, was 44, which is an increase of 3 on 1997. These fatalities account for approximately 10 per cent of all road accident fatalities in 1998, an increase of 1 per cent on the same time period in 1997.

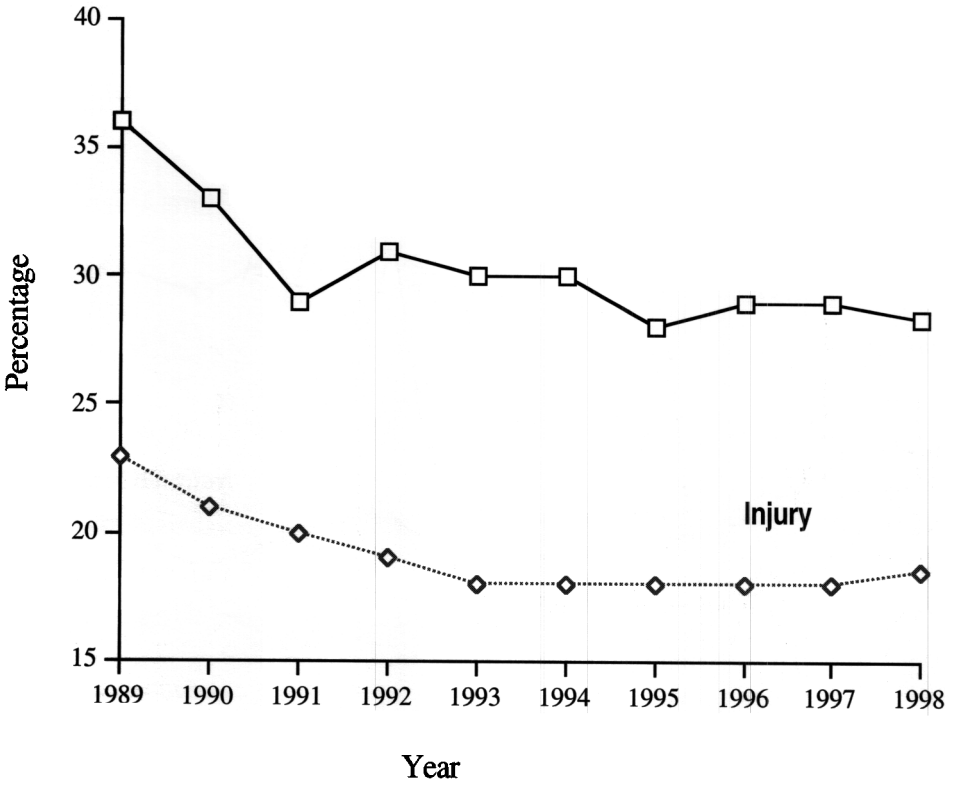


Figure 11: Percentage of Fatal and Injury Accidents 9pm-3am,1989-1998

The worst days of the week for persons killed during 1998 were Saturdays and Sundays each accounting for 83 fatalities. These two days together account for 36 per cent of all fatalities. The lowest number of fatal accidents was reported on Thursdays with 38 persons killed in 37 fatal accidents.

Section 3:Location

Forty-three per cent of all fatal accidents in 1998 occurred on National Roads, an increase of 3 per cent on 1997. Thirty-three per cent of all fatal accidents occurred in urban areas, a decrease of 3 per cent on the previous year. The number of fatal accidents in rural areas increased by 3 per cent on the 1997 figure and accounted for 67 per cent of all fatal accidents in 1998.

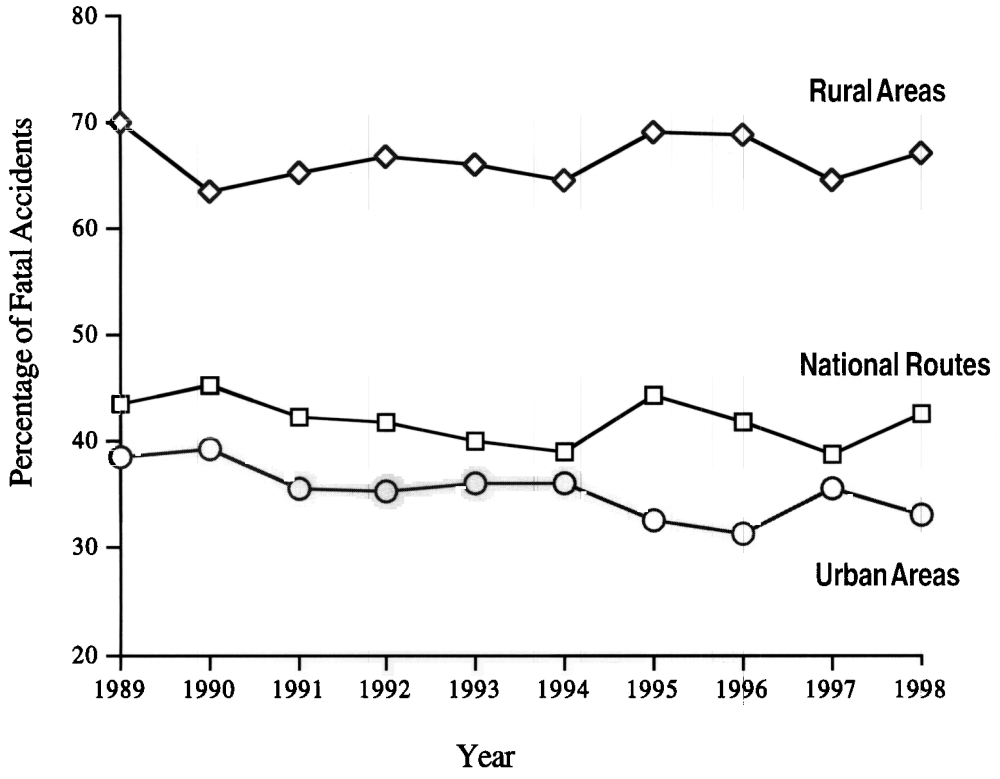


Figure 12: Percentage of Fatal Accidents in Rural,Urban Areas and on the National Routes, 1989-1998

On a county basis, Louth experienced the highest accident rate per county per 1,000 population. Louth also had the highest accident rate per 1,000 registered vehicles at 9.8. Westmeath recorded the lowest rate at 4.0 accidents per 1,000 registered vehicles.

Dundalk had the highest average incidence of reported accidents for the years 1990 - 1998 for towns with a population in the range 10,000 - 50,000.

County	No. of Accidents per 1,000 Population[1]	No. of Accidents per 1,000 Registered Vehicles[2]	No. of Accidents per 10 million Vehicle Kilometres of Travel[3]
Leinster			
Carlow	2.1	4.4	1.4
Dublin	2.5	6.6	5.8
Kildare	2.3	5.2	1.0
Kilkenny	2.2	4.6	0.8
Laois	2.0	4.6	1.8
Longford	2.5	5.8	3.0
Louth	3.5	9.8	3.1
Meath	2.5	5.3	2.6
Offaly	1.7	4.2	1.7
Westmeath	1.7	4.0	1.1
Wexford	2.4	5.2	2.6
Wicklow	2.2	5.2	3.1
Munster			
Clare	1.9	4.2	1.8
Cork	1.9	4.2	2.1
Kerry	2.1	4.8	1.7
Limerick	2.5	5.9	2.6
Tipperary NR	2.3	4.8	2.3
Tipperary SR	2.0	4.4	1.6
Waterford	2.0	4.7	2.5
Connacht			
Galway	1.9	4.8	1.2
Leitrim	2.1	4.8	2.2
Mayo	1.7	4.3	1.2
Roscommon	2.0	4.5	1.8
Sligo	2.1	4.8	3.1
Ulster (part of)			
Cavan	2.8	6.8	1.6
Donegal	2.2	6.2	1.3
Monaghan	2.9	7.1	2.0
TOTAL	**2.3**	**5.5**	**2.3**

[1] Based on 1996 Census of Population

[2] Based on 1998 Registered Vehicle Data

[3] Based on 1997 Vehicle Miles of Travel Estimates

Table A: Accident Rates per Thousand Population (1996), per Thousand Registered Vehicles (1998), and per 10 million vehicle-kilometres of travel (1997), for each County

Note: The vehicle-kilometres of travel for each county will be less accurate than the figure for the whole country, because of smaller sample sizes.