

RSA observational study 2016 – Free Speed Summary



Research Objective

To determine the incidence of drivers speeding on Irish roads.

Free speed definition:

The speed at which drivers choose to travel when unconstrained by road geometry, weather conditions or traffic conditions (e.g. congestion).





Methodology

- In September/October 2016, Nationwide Data Collection conducted an observational study on behalf of the RSA. There were 17,591 vehicles observed in total. The surveys took place at 92 sites: 38 urban and 54 rural. Cars (12,428), rigid goods vehicles (2,739), semi-articulated vehicles (1,586), single decker buses (733), double decker buses (54) and motorcycles (51) were observed. Surveys were carried out from 8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, with some urban sites surveyed between 05:30am to 07:30 am.

Key Findings : Cars

- The percentage of car drivers breaking the speed limit on **urban roads*** was 57% (60% in 2015).
- The percentage of car drivers breaking the speed limit on **rural roads**** was 22% (Same in 2015).
- The percentage of cars speeding on **motorways** increased from 21% in 2015 to 23% in 2016.
- The percentage of cars speeding on **dual carriageways** increased from 28% in 2015 to 34% in 2016.

Average car free speed in 2016 was:

- 113km/h on motorways 
- 96km/h on dual carriageways 
- 65km/h on urban arterial roads 
- 57km/h on urban national roads 

Other Vehicles: Urban* Roads

- 55% of all **rigid trucks** observed were speeding (45% in 2015)
- 55% of all **articulated trucks** observed were speeding (50% in 2015)
- 38% of all **single decker buses** observed were speeding (41% in 2015)

Other Vehicles: Rural** Roads

- 36% of all **rigid trucks** observed on all rural roads were speeding (29% in 2015)
- 38% of all **articulated trucks** observed on all rural roads were speeding (42% in 2015)
- 11% of all **single decker buses** observed on all rural roads were speeding (31% in 2015)

*Urban road: speed limit is less than or equal to 60km/h

**Rural road: speed limit is 80km/h or greater.