

Fatal Collisions 2008-2012

Excessive speed as a factor

Executive Summary

28 April 2016

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Background to Report

Over the time period 2008 to 2012, 983 fatal collisions occurred on Irish roads claiming the lives of 1,077 people. This report examines 867 of the fatal collisions which occurred during this time period specifically focusing on the vehicle and associated behavioural factors which may have contributed to the collision.

The road collision database in Ireland is created using a form called a C(T)68 forwarded to the Road Safety Authority (RSA) from An Garda Síochána. The information provided in this form is based on preliminary information collected at the scene of a collision and does not constitute the findings of the final investigation. The RSA issues reports regularly using the data contained in this database as the best available representation of fatal and injury collisions.

However, this report is based on an analysis of the completed Garda investigation file where the full circumstances of the collisions are available. Access was granted by An Garda Síochána to the completed Investigation File produced for each collision. The file contains two main reports:

1. An Garda Síochána Investigation Report
2. Forensic Collision Investigation Report (FCI)

The RSA collected the data in the Garda National Traffic Bureau. This report provides an analysis of the data by collision, by vehicle and by contributory factor. Therefore, the figures and totals will change depending on the category.

Excessive Speed as Contributory Factor in Collisions Analysed

Of the 867 collisions analysed, 274 (**32%**) were cited as having *excessive speed* for the road and conditions as a contributory factor to the collision. This may not have been the sole cause of the collision but contributed in either full or part to the final outcome. Of this number **19%** cited excessive speed as the sole contributory factor. Therefore, for the purpose of gaining a better insight into the use of excessive speed on our roads, 274 collisions were analysed where there was clear identification of excessive speed on its own or in

combination with other poor road use behaviours. In this report, when discussing the 274 collisions, the term **speed always refers to Excessive Speed.**

Number of People Killed or Injured in Speed Related Collisions

- In total, 322 people died as a result of a collision where excessive speed was cited as a main contributory factor. Of these, 207 were drivers (including motorcyclists), 100 passengers, 2 cyclists and 13 pedestrians were also killed (Table 28).
- In total 74 people were seriously injured and 120 suffered minor injury. While excessive speed was a contributory factor, this may not have been the sole cause of the collision but it did contribute in full or part in combination with other factors such as alcohol, fatigue, vehicle factors etc.
- However, in the 52 collisions where excessive speed was the sole factor indicated, 54 people were killed (48 drivers, 5 passengers and 1 pedestrian). A further nine people were seriously injured (4 drivers, 5 passengers).

Number of People Killed or Injured in Collisions where Speed was a Factor

	Fatal	Serious	Minor
Driver	158	25	61
Motorcyclist	49	4	
Passenger	100	45	59
Cyclist	2	-	-
Pedestrian	13	-	-
TOTAL	322	74	120

- One hundred and nine of the drivers killed were in a single vehicle collision. More passengers were killed in a single vehicle collision than a two vehicle collision (63 of 100 passengers killed).
- Four of the 13 pedestrians killed were deemed to have contributed to the final outcome through their own actions in combination with the speed of the driver.
- Only 1 of the 13 pedestrians was wearing high visibility clothing at the time of the collision even though 9 occurred during the hours of darkness.

Collision Type, When and Where

- Over half (55.8%) of the collisions where excessive speed was cited as a contributory factor involved a single vehicle only
- Of the 274 collisions where excessive speed was a contributory factor, two thirds (76%) of the culpable drivers were driving a private car, almost a fifth (17%) were driving a motorcycle and the remaining 8% were driving a van or HGV.
- Forty three percent of the collisions where excessive speed was a factor occurred between 9pm and 4 am with a small dip between 10pm and 11 pm.
- The majority of collisions (46%) where excessive speed was a factor occurred on a Saturday and Sunday in the early hours of the morning following from 10pm on the Friday night to the early hours of Monday morning.
- There was a slight peak in collisions involving excessive speed in July (11%) followed by October (10%).
- The top five counties where most collisions had excessive speed cited as a factor were Donegal (8.4%), Cork (8%), Wexford (8%), Cavan (7%) and Galway (7%).
- Over half (52%) of the collisions where excessive speed was indicated as a factor occurred on a regional route. A third (33%) occurred on a National route.

- Overall, 12% of the collisions where excessive speed was cited as the contributory factor occurred in a 50 km zone.
- The weather was recorded as dry at the time of the majority (86%) of excessive speed related collisions.
- Over half of the collisions occurred when it was dark (56%).

Profile of Culpable Driver

- The majority (91%) of the 274 drivers were male.
- Half of the drivers (both male and female) were aged between 16 to 24 years.
- Over half (58%) of the drivers involved in a single vehicle collision were aged between 16 and 24 years and a further quarter (26%) were aged between 25 and 34 years.

Pre-Crash Behaviour

- The primary purpose for the trip or journey when the speed related collision occurred was social (84%) occurring between the hours of 10pm and 4 am.
- A third (32%) had no record of insurance at the time of the collision.
- Two thirds (68%) of the drivers had a record of a license at the time of the collision
- One hundred and forty (75%) held a full licence, 31 (17%) were on a Learner Permit and 12 (7%) were driving while disqualified.
- Of the 31 on a Learner Permit, it was recorded that 19 were on a first permit (six unaccompanied), four were on a second permit (one unaccompanied) and one was recorded as being expired. Eleven held their license permit for less than six months at the time of the collision.
- Five of the drivers with a full licence had a previous record of endorsements or penalty points for speeding or had been previously

disqualified. Four of those driving while disqualified had a known history of disqualification.

- Over a third of the vehicles driven by the culpable driver in the 274 collisions where excessive speed was a factor were aged between 10-14 years.
- Twenty nine (11%) of the 274 vehicles ranged from being defective to poor/fair un-roadworthy condition. Specifically, 11 (4%) were driving a dangerously defective vehicle. A further 21 (8%) were rated as mechanically serviceable apart from the condition of the tyres.
- The primary manoeuvre being performed at the time of collision is coded as driving forward (82%).
- The main action indicated for the culpable driver was loss of control of the vehicle (70%), 6% had failed to observe, 6% were performing an improper overtaking manoeuvre, and 6% went to the wrong side of the road.
- The main other factors cited in the fatal speed related collisions involved alcohol over the prevailing legal limit, a combination of illicit or prescription drugs, dangerous behaviour, driving defective vehicles, being distracted and inexperience where the driver was at the very early stages of their driving career.

Working To Save Lives

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre Road Safety Authority

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