



Child Casualties Report

2019-2023

Research Department

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Child Casualties Report

Introduction

This report has been prepared to provide an overview of the number of children aged <16 killed and seriously injured on Irish roads over the last 5 years.

The analyses in this report have been taken from the RSA collision database and are based on collision records transferred from An Garda Síochána (AGS) to the RSA. The data for 2020 onwards is provisional and subject to change until such time as the validation of these collisions has been completed by the RSA. Data is current as of 18 June 2024.

Key findings on killed and seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years (2019-2023)

- **Children represent a greater share of serious injuries relative to fatalities.** Between 2019 and 2023, there were 34 fatalities aged 0-15 years and 592 seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years. This age group represented 4% of total fatalities, and 8% of total serious injuries during this time period (see tables 1a and 1b).
- **Approximately 2 in 3 child casualties were either a pedestrian or a cyclist.** Of the 626 children killed or seriously injured, almost half (49%) were pedestrians, a quarter (25%) were passengers, almost a fifth (19%) were cyclists, 3% were e-scooter users, 2% were motorcyclists and 2% were drivers (see table 2a).
- **Dublin and Cork saw the highest numbers of child casualties.** Three in ten (30%) child casualties among this age group occurred in Dublin and a further 9% occurred in Cork (see table 3).
- **Children were more likely to be injured on an urban road.** Between 2019 and 2023, almost seven in ten (69%) child casualties were injured on urban roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less (see table 4b). When analysing passenger casualties, the majority were injured on rural roads (78%, see table 4d), while in contrast the majority of pedestrian and cyclist casualties were injured on urban roads, 93% and 69% respectively (see tables 4f/h).
- **Proportions of male casualties were higher than female casualties.** Each year since 2019, there have consistently been higher numbers of male child casualties than female child casualties (see table 5a/b). In addition, 79% of male child casualties were vulnerable road users, compared to 63% of female casualties (see table 5c).
- **Two in three of all children seriously injured were aged 10-15 years (66%), and a similar proportion of children killed (65%) were aged 10-15** (see table 6a/b).
- **Children were most likely to be injured during the afternoon and evening.** Of those children killed and seriously injured, seven in ten were injured between 12pm-8pm (see table 7a).
- **Highest proportions of child casualties were injured on a Friday.** Among child fatalities and serious injuries, similar proportions were injured during the weekdays, with 15% injured on each day between Monday and Thursday. The highest proportions were injured on a Friday (17%, see table 7b).

Reference Tables (2019-2023)

1. Fatalities and serious injuries

Between 2019 and 2022, there were 34 fatalities aged 0-15 years and 592 seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years. This age group represented 4% of total fatalities, and 8% of total serious injuries during this time period (see tables 1a/b). Of all road users killed and seriously injured during this time, 8% were aged 0-15 years.

Table 1a Fatalities aged 0-15 years, 2019-2023						
Fatalities	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Aged 0-15	4	8	5	5	12	34
% total	3%	6%	4%	3%	6%	4%
Annual Total	140	144	134	155	185	758

Table 1b Serious injuries aged 0-15 years, 2019-2023						
Serious injuries	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Aged 0-15	134	103	105	128	122	592
% Total	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Annual Total	1507	1216	1362	1669	1473	7227

2. Road user type

Of the 626 children killed or seriously injured, almost half (49%) were pedestrians, a quarter (25%) were passengers, almost a fifth (19%) were cyclists, 3% were e-scooter users, 2% were motorcyclists and 2% were drivers (see table 2a).

Road User	Fatalities	Serious injuries	n	%
Driver ¹	4	7	11	2%
Passenger	13	145	158	25%
Motorcyclist	1	13	14	2%
Pedal cyclist	4	117	121	19%
Pedestrian	11	295	306	49%
E-scooter User	1	15	16	3%
Total	34	592	626	100%

Of vehicle occupants (driver and passengers) injured in seat belt equipped vehicles, 78% were wearing a seat belt, while a further 9% were not wearing a seat belt at the time of the collision. For the remaining 12% their seat belt status is unknown.

During this time period, almost 3 in 4 (73%) children killed or seriously injured were vulnerable road users ²(see table 2c).

Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Vehicle occupants	45	27	28	31	38	169
Vulnerable road users	93	84	82	102	96	457
Total	138	111	110	133	134	626

Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Vehicle occupants	33%	24%	25%	23%	28%	27%
Vulnerable road users	67%	76%	75%	77%	72%	73%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹ Driver fatalities consisted of 3 car drivers and 1 tractor driver.

² Vulnerable road users include pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and e-scooter users.

Eight in ten casualties were traveling for social purposes (82%, 515) while a further 1 in 7 were travelling to or from school at the time of the collision (see table 2d).

Road User	Social	To/From School	Other/Unknown	Total
Driver	9	0	2	11
Passenger	138	8	12	158
Motorcyclist	14	0	0	14
Pedal cyclist	108	11	2	121
Pedestrian	232	66	8	306
E-scooter User	14	2	0	16
Total	515	87	24	626
Total (%)	82%	14%	4%	100%

3. County

Dublin and Cork saw the highest numbers of child casualties. Three in ten (30%) child casualties occurred in Dublin and a further 9% occurred in Cork. A further 7% occurred in Galway (see table 3). Two thirds (67%) of those killed or seriously injured in Dublin were pedestrians.

Table 3 Killed and seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years by county, 2019-2023		
County	n	% Total
Carlow	12	2%
Cavan	10	2%
Clare	10	2%
Cork	55	9%
Donegal	21	3%
Dublin	190	30%
Galway	42	7%
Kerry	18	3%
Kildare	32	5%
Kilkenny	6	1%
Laois	12	2%
Leitrim	4	1%
Limerick	29	5%
Longford	6	1%
Louth	14	2%
Mayo	12	2%
Meath	23	4%
Monaghan	7	1%
Offaly	16	3%
Roscommon	7	1%
Sligo	2	<1%
Tipperary	24	4%
Waterford	15	2%
Westmeath	15	2%
Wexford	25	4%
Wicklow	19	3%
Total	626	100%

One in ten (10%, 16) **passengers** were injured in Dublin and almost one in ten (9%, 14) were injured in Donegal. A further 8% (13) were injured in Galway.

Two in five (42%, 128) **pedestrians** were injured in Dublin and almost one in ten (9%, 29) in Cork. A further 5% (15) were injured in Kildare, and 5% (14) were injured in Limerick.

Over a quarter (27%, 33) of **cyclists** were injured in Dublin, a further 10% (12) injured in Cork and a further 9% (11) were injured in Galway.

4. Urban and Rural roads³

Between 2019 and 2023, almost seven in ten (69%) child casualties were injured on urban roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less (see table 4b). The majority of passenger casualties were injured on rural roads (78%, see table 4d), while the majority of pedestrian and cyclist casualties were injured on urban roads, (93% and 69% respectively, see tables 4f/h).

Table 4a Killed and seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	82	76	84	95	95	432
Rural	56	35	26	38	39	194
Total	138	111	110	133	134	626

Table 4b Killed and seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	59%	68%	76%	71%	71%	69%
Rural	41%	32%	24%	29%	29%	31%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4c Killed and seriously injured passengers aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	9	8	6	6	6	35
Rural	35	18	19	22	29	123
Total	44	26	25	28	35	158

Table 4d Killed and seriously injured passengers aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	20%	31%	24%	21%	17%	22%
Rural	80%	69%	76%	79%	83%	78%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

³ Urban roads have a speed limit of 60km/h or less. Rural roads have a speed limit of 80km/h or more.

Table 4e Killed and seriously injured pedestrians aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	61	47	51	68	59	286
Rural	5	3	1	8	3	20
Total	66	50	52	76	62	306

Table 4f Killed and seriously injured pedestrians aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	92%	94%	98%	89%	95%	93%
Rural	8%	6%	2%	11%	5%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4g Killed and seriously injured cyclists aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	12	18	21	12	20	83
Rural	13	13	4	5	3	38
Total	25	31	25	17	23	121

Table 4h Killed and seriously injured cyclists aged 0-15 years by urban/rural, 2019-2023						
Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Urban	48%	58%	84%	71%	87%	69%
Rural	52%	42%	16%	29%	13%	31%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

5. Gender

During this time period, there have consistently been higher numbers of male child casualties than female child casualties (see tables 5a/b).

Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Male	91	74	62	88	81	396
Female	47	37	48	45	53	230
Total	138	111	110	133	134	626

Aged 0-15	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019-2023
Male	66%	67%	56%	66%	60%	63%
Female	34%	33%	44%	34%	40%	37%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

79% of male child casualties were vulnerable road users, compared to 63% of female casualties (see table 5c).

Road User	Male		Female		Total
	n	%	n	%	
Vehicle occupant	83	21%	86	37%	169
Vulnerable road users	313	79%	144	63%	457
Total	396	100%	230	100%	626

6. Age Group

Among child fatalities and serious injuries, highest proportions were aged in the 10-15 years age group (see table 6a/b).

Age	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-15 years	Total
Total	7	5	22	34
% Total	21%	15%	65%	100%

Age	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-15 years	Total
Total	63	138	391	592
% Total	11%	23%	66%	100%

Road User		0-4 years	5-9 years	10-15 years	Total
Passengers	n	23	36	99	158
	%	15%	23%	63%	100%
Pedestrians	n	40	94	172	306
	%	13%	31%	56%	100%
Cyclists	n	7	10	104	121
	%	6%	8%	86%	100%
Total	n	70	140	375	585
	%	12%	24%	64%	100%

Table 6d Killed and seriously injured road users aged 0-15 years by individual age, 2019-2023

Age	Total	% Total
0	5	1%
1	9	1%
2	13	2%
3	25	4%
4	18	3%
5	32	5%
6	23	4%
7	28	4%
8	27	4%
9	33	5%
10	43	7%
11	48	8%
12	66	11%
13	76	12%
14	102	16%
15	78	12%
Total	626	100%

7. Time of day and day of week

Children were most likely to be injured during the afternoon and evening. Of those children killed and seriously injured, seven in ten were injured between 12pm-8pm (72%, see table 7a).

Table 7a Road users killed aged 0-15 years, by time of day, 2019-2023		
Time of day	n	%
12-4am	14	2%
4am-8am	9	1%
8am-12pm	85	14%
12pm-4pm	186	30%
4pm-8pm	264	42%
8pm-12am	68	11%
Total	626	100%

Among child fatalities and serious injuries, similar proportions were injured during the weekdays, with 15% injured on each day between Monday and Thursday. The highest proportions were injured on a Friday (17%, see table 7b). Of the 106 casualties injured on a Friday, 45% (48) were injured between 4pm and 8pm and a further 20% (21) between 1pm and 3pm.

Table 7b Road users killed aged 0-15 years, by day of week, 2019-2023		
day of week	n	%
Monday	94	15%
Tuesday	95	15%
Wednesday	91	15%
Thursday	94	15%
Friday	106	17%
Saturday	89	14%
Sunday	57	9%
Total	626	100%

8. Vehicles involved and action of road user/vehicle

Passenger collisions

- Of the 158 child passenger casualties, almost two in five (38%, 69) were injured in “head-on” collisions where the vehicles were travelling in opposite directions on the same road. Almost one in ten (8%, 12) were injured in a collision with the road edge/ditch. Lesser proportions were injured in “angle, both straight” collisions (8%, 13) which is where vehicles attempt to drive straight ahead but cross into each other’s paths at a crossroad. A further 7% (11) were injured in “side swipe” collisions.
- Of the 133 vehicles in which the injured child passengers travelled, 9 in 10 (94%, 125) were cars.
- Of the other 107 vehicles involved in these collisions, 8 in 10 (83%, 89) were cars, and a further 8 were HGVs (7%).
- Of the 133 vehicles in which the injured child passengers travelled, 8 in 10 (82%, 109) were driving forward at the time of the collision, and a lesser proportion (6%, 8) were turning right.
- Of the 107 other vehicles involved in these collisions, 83% (89) were driving forward, and a lesser proportion (6%, 6) were turning right.

Pedestrian collisions

- Of the 297 vehicles involved in collisions in which a child pedestrian was injured, the vehicle was most likely to have been a car (80%, 238) or a light goods vehicle (LGV) (8%, 23, see table 8).

Vehicle involved	n	%
Car	238	80%
LGV	23	8%
PSV (bus or mini bus)	12	4%
2 Wheeled Motor Vehicle	7	2%
HGV	5	2%
Pedal Cycle	2	1%
Other	10	3%
Total	297	100%

- Of these 297 vehicles, the vehicle was most likely to have been driving forward (84%, 249). Lesser proportions were documented as slow moving (5%, 14), turning left (3%, 8), or reversing (2%, 7).
- Of the 297 drivers involved in pedestrian child casualty collisions, the most frequently noted action recorded for the driver was 'failed to observe' (24%, 72).
- Of the 306 pedestrian casualties, the most frequently noted actions recorded for the pedestrian were 'failed to observe' (31%, 94), 'crossing the road' (22%, 66), and 'lying or playing in the road' (9%, 28).

Cyclist collisions

- Of the 121 cyclist child casualties, 15% (18) were injured in a single vehicle collision where their pedal cycle was the only vehicle involved. Almost one in ten (9%, 11) were injured in a collision where the driver of the other vehicle failed to remain at the scene. The remaining 76% (92) were injured in multiple vehicle collisions where more than one vehicle was involved.
- Of the 99 other vehicles involved in these collisions, 7 in 10 (72%, 71) were cars, and 1 in 10 were vans (12%, 12).
- Almost 3 in 4 of the 120* pedal cycles (73%, 87) were driving forward at the time of the collision. Lesser proportions (8%, 10) were exiting/entering or turning right (7%, 8).
- Of the 99 other vehicles involved in these collisions, 77% (76) were driving forward, and a lesser proportion (7%, 7) were exiting /entering.
- Of the 99 drivers involved in cyclist child casualty collisions, the most frequently recorded action for the driver was 'failed to observe' (13%, 13).
- Of the 121 cyclist child casualties, the most frequently noted action for the cyclist was 'failed to observe' (37%, 45), and 'failed to stop or yield' (11%, 13).

*Note, two cyclist child casualties were injured when travelling on the same pedal cycle

Appendix

Definitions

Fatality

A fatality is one where death occurs within 30 days of the date of the collision and is not the result of a medical cause or that of a deliberate act (e.g. suicide).

Serious Injuries

A serious injury is one 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; Crushing; Severe Cuts and Lacerations or Severe general shock requiring medical treatment.