



ROAD ACCIDENT FACTS IRELAND

1999

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

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SUMMARY

Persons Killed

A total of 413 persons were killed in 374 fatal accidents on Irish roads in 1999. This represents a 10 per cent decrease on the 458 killed and an 8 per cent decrease on the 408 fatal accidents recorded in 1998. This is the second successive recorded annual decrease in the numbers of fatal accidents and persons killed, and is reflected in all road user categories except for motorcycle users where the number killed increased from 37 in 1998 to 43 in 1999.

Persons Injured

The number of persons injured in 1999 (12,340), and the number of reported injury accidents (7,433), represents a 3 per cent decrease on the 12,773 persons injured and a 5 per cent decrease on the 7,831 injury accidents recorded in 1998. This is the third 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 an increase of 2 per cent.

The number of reported serious injury accidents at 1,302, shows a decrease of 3 per cent on the 1,345 accidents reported in 1998, maintaining the general downward trend for this accident category in recent years.

Road User Category

The number of pedestrians killed in 1999, at 92, is a decrease of 22 on the 1998 figure and is the lowest number killed in over 40 years. Pedestrian fatalities in 1999 comprise 22 per cent of all fatalities compared with 31 per cent of all fatalities a decade ago. The number of pedal cyclist fatalities at 14, dropped by one-third on the 21 reported killed in 1998. As with pedestrian fatalities this is the lowest number of fatalities reported in over 40 years. Pedal cyclist fatalities now comprise just 3 per cent of all road fatalities compared with 8 per cent a decade ago. A total of 43 motor cyclists were killed in 1999 compared with 37 in 1998 while car user fatalities at 236 decreased by 17. Other road user fatalities (representing for the most part goods vehicles) decreased from 33 in 1998 to 28 in 1999.

A total of 1,306 pedestrians were reported injured in 1999 compared with 1,469 in 1998, representing a drop of 11 per cent. The number of pedal cyclist injuries at 461 decreased by 110 from the 571 injured in 1998 which is equivalent to a drop of 19 per cent. Motor cyclist injuries at 943, have also decreased from the figure of 1,099 recorded in 1998 which is equivalent to a reduction of 14 per cent. The number of car users injured at 8,697, increased by 2 per cent on the 1998 figure of 8,498. The number of other road users injured (representing for the most part users of goods vehicles) decreased from 1,136 in 1998 to 933 in 1999.

Date and Time

The worst month for fatalities in 1999 was July when 48 persons were killed in 43 fatal accidents. November recorded the lowest number of fatalities and fatal accidents - 17 persons killed in 16 fatal accidents.

The number of fatal accidents between 9.00 pm and 3.00 am (the hours most associated with drinking and driving), at 104, and the number killed, 115, shows a decrease of 12 and 20 respectively on the 1998 figures. The number of fatal accidents and fatalities during these hours accounts for approximately 28 per cent of all fatal accidents and persons killed, representing a decrease of about 1 per cent on the 1998 situation.

The number killed during the later hours of darkness, that is between 3.00 am and 6.00 am, at 44, was unchanged from 1998. Fatalities between these hours accounted for approximately 11 per cent of all road accident fatalities in 1999, an increase of 1 per cent on the same time period in 1998.

Location

Forty-four per cent of all fatal accidents in 1999 occurred on National Roads, an increase of 1 per cent on 1998. Thirty 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 1998 figure and accounted for 70 per cent of all fatal accidents in 1999.

On a county basis, Louth and Longford experienced the highest accident rate per county per 1,000 population. Louth also had the highest accident rate per 1,000 registered vehicles at 7.7. Clare recorded the lowest rate at 3.6 accidents per 1,000 registered vehicles.

Dundalk had the highest average incidence of reported accidents for the years 1990 - 1999 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 12.4 in 1998, the latest year for which international comparative data are available is ranked ninth 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 1999.

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 413 persons were killed in 374 fatal accidents on Irish roads in 1999. This represents a 10 per cent decrease on the 458 killed and an 8 per cent decrease on the 408 fatal accidents recorded in 1998. This is the second successive recorded annual decrease in the numbers of fatal accidents and persons killed, and is reflected in all road user categories except for motorcycle users where the number killed increased from 37 in 1998 to 43 in 1999. 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 1990, when the number of persons killed was 478 to 1.6 million in 1999. Thus the fatality rate per registered vehicle has improved significantly over the last 10 years from 454 persons killed per million registered vehicles in 1990 to 258 killed per million registered vehicles in 1999.

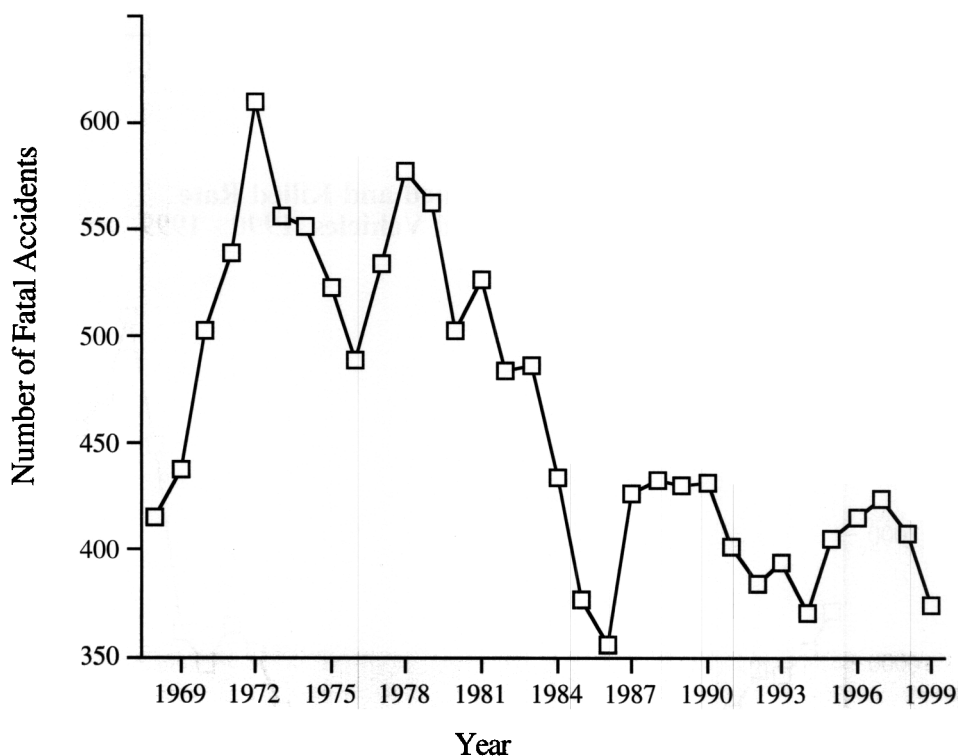


Figure 1: Number of Fatal Accidents 1968 - 1999

Persons Injured

The number of persons injured in 1999 (12,340), and the number of reported injury accidents (7,433), represents a 3 per cent decrease on the 12,773 persons injured and a 5 per cent decrease on the 7,831 injury accidents recorded in 1998. This is the third 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 an increase of 2 per cent. The number of reported serious injury accidents at 1,302, shows a decrease of 3 per cent on the 1,345 accidents reported in 1998, maintaining the general downward trend for this accident category in recent years.



Figure 2: Number of Persons Killed and Killed Rate per Million Registered Vehicles, 1990 - 1999

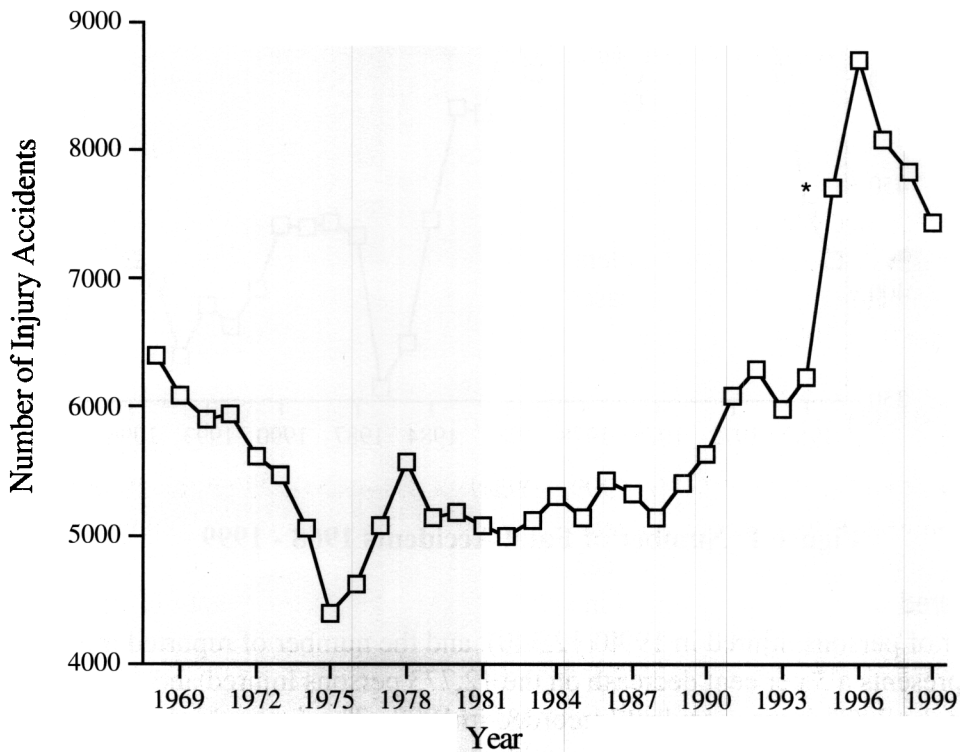


Figure 3: Number of Injury Accidents 1968 - 1999

* 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.

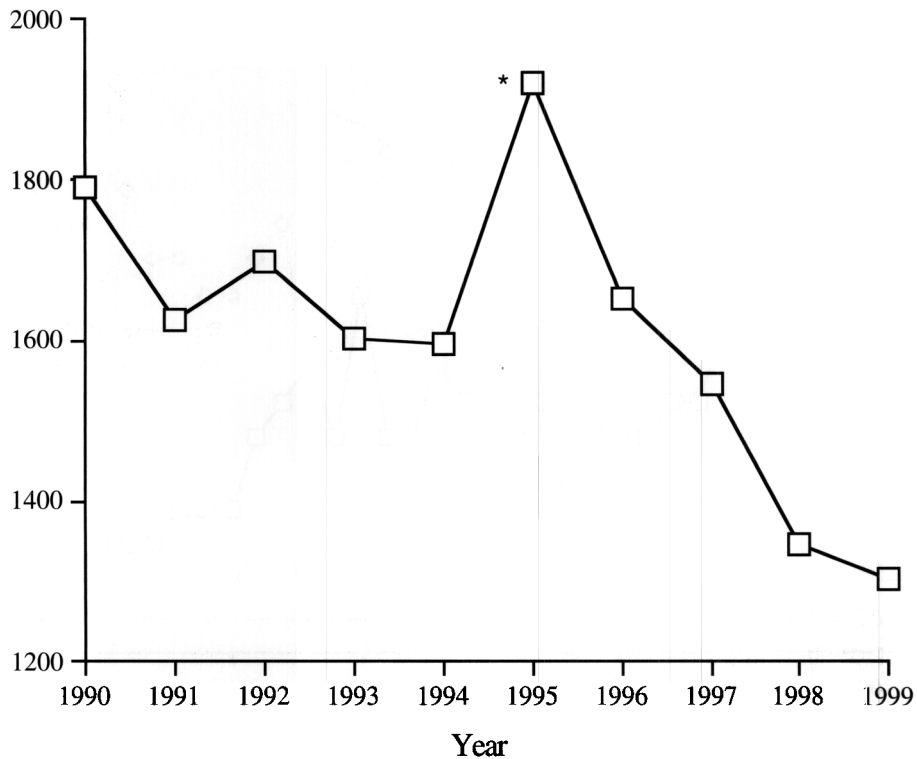


Figure 4: Number of Serious Injury Accidents, 1990-1999

* 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.

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 23,604 in 1998 to 24,995 accidents in 1999.

Road User Category

The number of pedestrians killed in 1999, at 92, is a decrease of 22 on the 1998 figure and is the lowest number killed in over 40 years. Pedestrian fatalities in 1999 comprise 22 per cent of all fatalities compared with 31 per cent a decade ago. Pedal cyclist fatalities at 14 dropped by one-third on the 21 reported killed in 1998. As with pedestrian fatalities this is the lowest number of fatalities reported in over 40 years. Pedal cyclist fatalities now comprise just 3 per cent of all road fatalities compared with 8 per cent a decade ago. A total of 43 motor cyclists were killed in 1999 compared with 37 in 1998, while car user fatalities at 236 decreased by 17. Other road user fatalities (representing for the most part goods vehicles) decreased from 33 in 1998 to 28 in 1999.

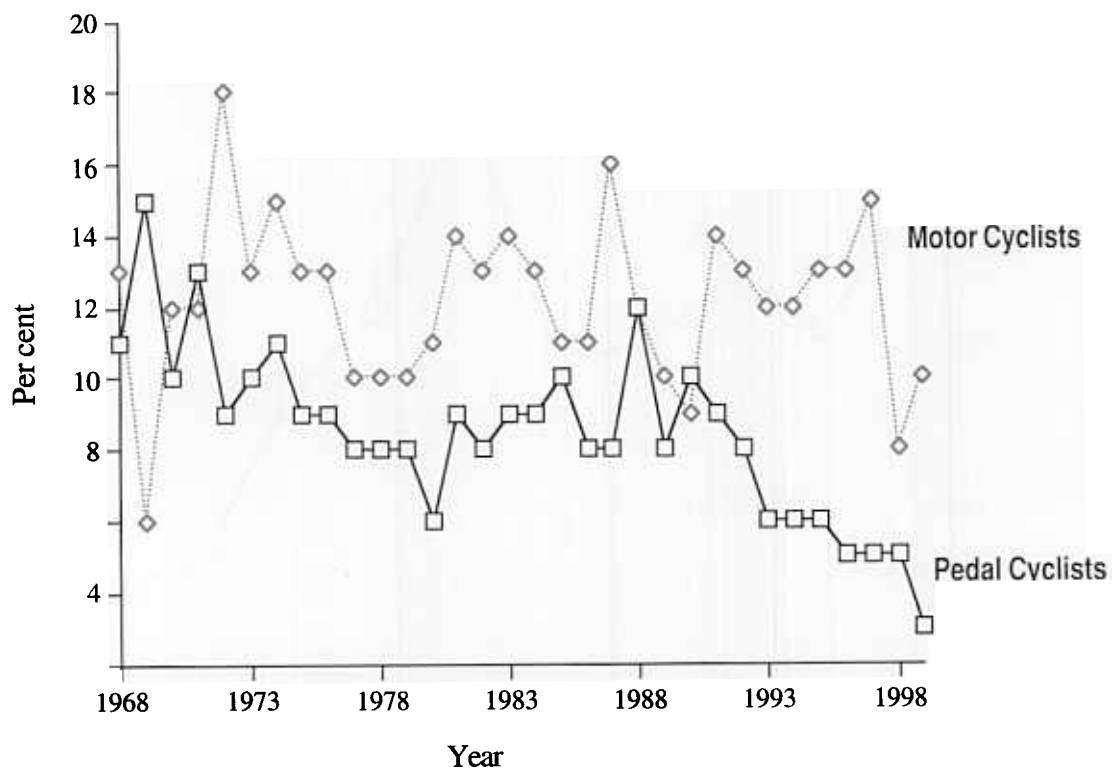


Figure 5: Percentage of Motor Cyclistics and Pedal Cyclists Killed, 1968 - 1999

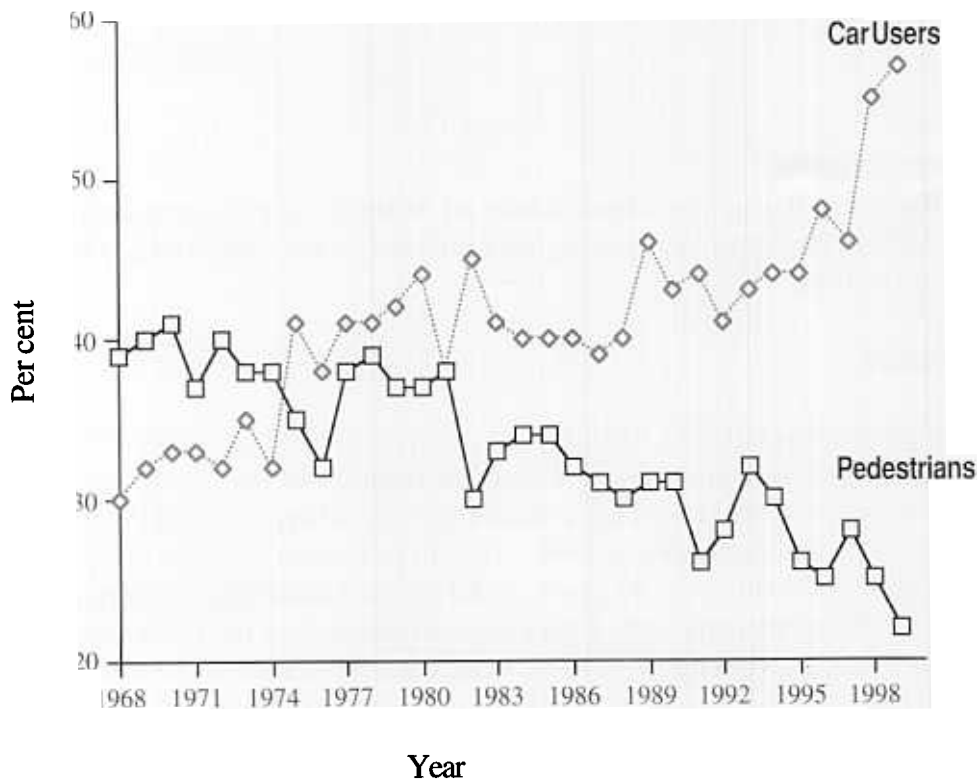


Figure 6: Percentage of Pedestrians and Car Users Killed, 1968 - 1999

A total of 1,306 pedestrians were reported injured in 1999 compared with 1,469 in 1998 representing a drop of 11 per cent. The number of pedal cyclist injuries at 461 decreased by 19 per cent from the 571 injured in 1998. Motor cyclist injuries at 943 decreased by 14 per cent from the 1,099 injuries recorded in 1998. The number of car users injured at 8,697, increased by 2 per cent on the 1998 figure of 8,498. The number of other road users injured (representing for the most part users of goods vehicles) decreased from 1,136 in 1998 to 933 in 1999.

Primary Collision Type

Single vehicle only collisions were reported in 36 per cent of fatal accidents in 1999, representing an increase of three per cent on the 1998 figure. This collision type, which involves no other road user, is strongly associated with the causal factors; excessive speed and/or alcohol. Single vehicle only accidents as a percentage of all fatal accidents have increased steadily in recent years.

Fatal accidents involving pedestrians accounted for 24 per cent of fatal accidents and 16 per cent of injury accidents. Head-on collisions were reported in 21 per cent of fatal accidents and in 20 per cent of injury accidents during the year.

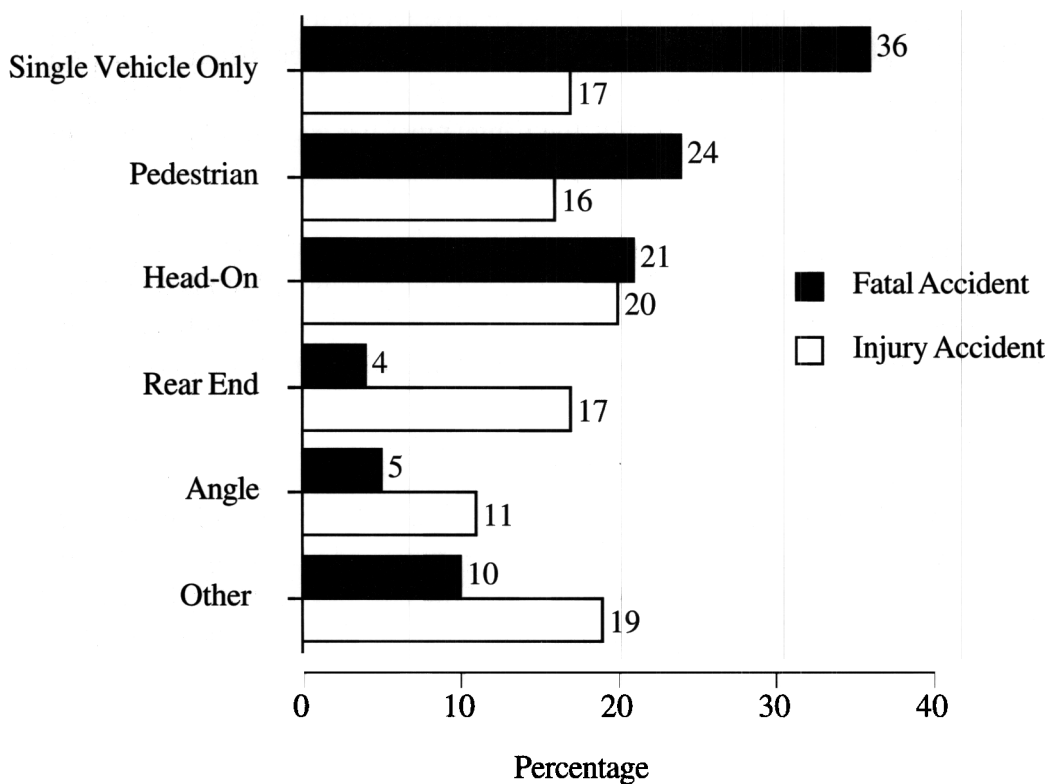


Figure 7: Percentage of Fatal Accidents and Personal Injury Accidents by Primary Collision Type

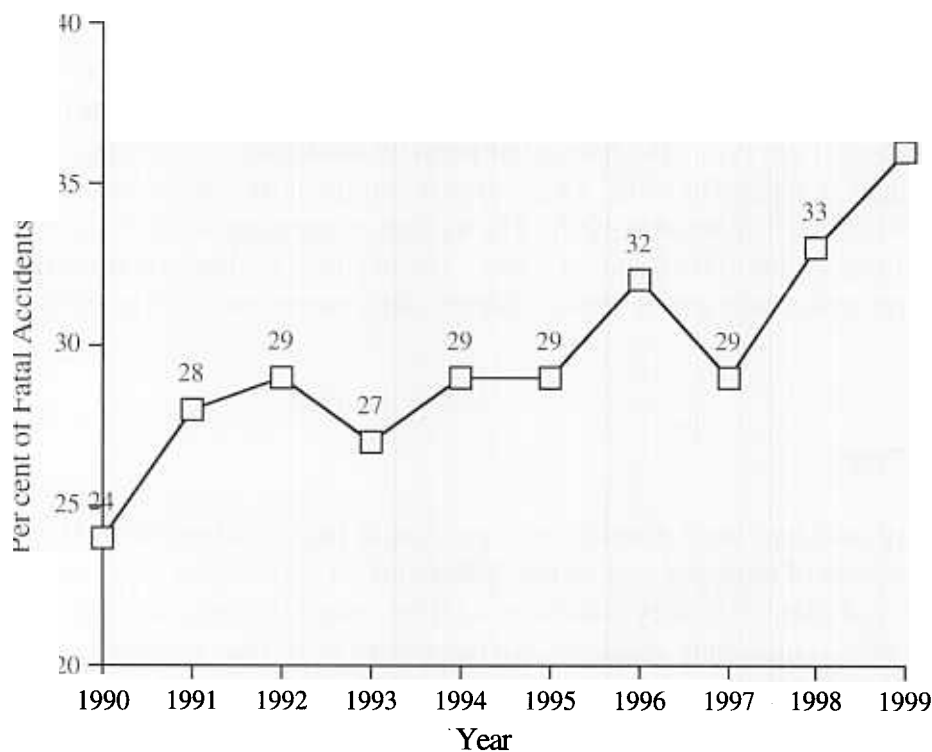


Figure 8: Percentage of Fatal Accidents involving a Single Vehicle Only, 1990-1999

Contributory Factors to Road Accidents

Contributory factors to road accidents in 1999 were broadly unchanged from the 1998 figures. The driver was identified by the investigating Garda as a contributory factor in 81 per cent of accidents. This was followed by the pedestrian in 11 per cent, road in 0.3 per cent, environment in 3 per cent and, finally, the vehicle in 1 per cent of all reported injury accidents in 1999.

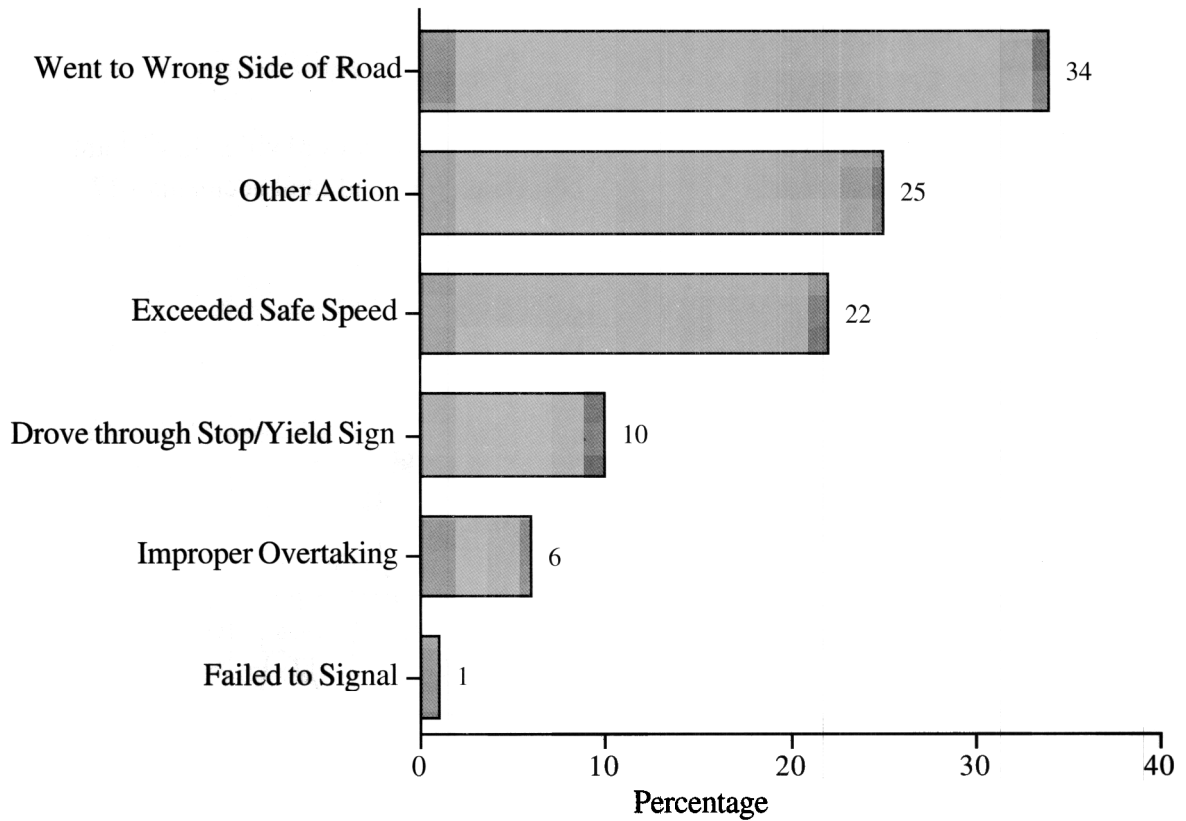
In fatal accidents involving two vehicles the contributory action ‘went to wrong side of road’ was reported by the investigating Garda in 34 per cent of accidents which is unchanged from the 1998 figures. The contributory action ‘exceeded safe speed’ was reported in 22 per cent of accidents in 1999 which is a decrease of 5 per cent on the 27 per cent reported in 1998.

Accident Costs

By applying consumer price index increases to the 1998 accident costs, it is estimated that the cost of a fatal accident in 1999 was £922,680, while serious and minor injury accident costs are estimated at £114,503 and £10,972 respectively. The cost of a material damage accident is estimated to be £1,195. The total cost of reported road accidents in Ireland in 1999 is estimated to be in the region of £591 million.

International Comparisons

On the basis of road deaths per 100,000 population, Ireland’s rate at 12.4 in 1998, the latest year for which international comparative data are available is ranked ninth out of the 15 Member States of the European Union.



**Figure 9: Two Vehicle Fatal Accidents in 1999
Classified by Contributory Action**

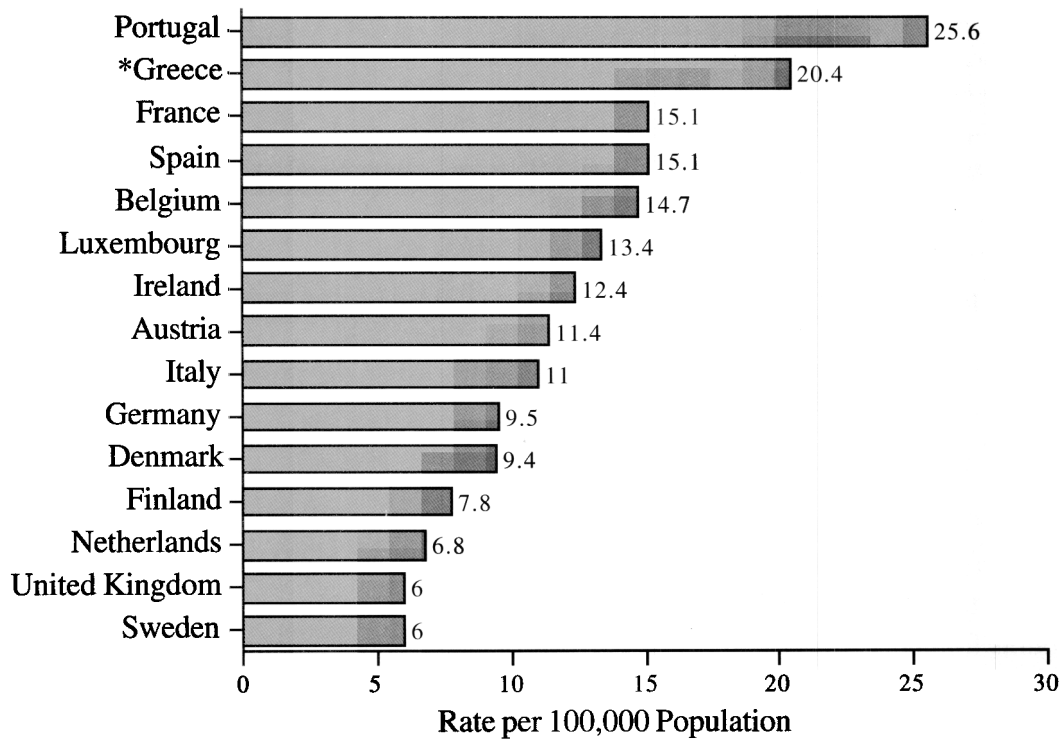


Figure 10: European Union Fatality Rate per 100,000 population, 1998

* 1997 data