

One in four road deaths in Ireland is work-related, study shows

March 22 2017, by Dominic Martella

Nearly a quarter of all road traffic fatalities in Ireland are work-related, according to a new report published by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

Of these deaths, 85 per cent are of bystanders while the remaining 15 per cent are of workers themselves.

This is the first time the scale of work-related [road](#) traffic collisions and the associated fatalities have been comprehensively identified.

To conduct the study, researchers from University College Dublin analysed the coroner records on all road traffic fatalities in Ireland over a four-year period (2008-2011). The coroner files include a wealth of information in post-mortem reports, toxicology reports, police reports, and depositions and witness statements.

A total of 833 of the 915 deaths from [road traffic accidents](#) recorded during the period were available to the study (93 per cent). 193 of these deaths (23 per cent were identified by the researchers as work-related meaning that a worker, work activity or work process was involved in the collision. A truck driver was involved in 99 of the 193 accidents.

Of the 193 work-related fatalities, 29 were of people who were engaged in work activity at the time of the collision; 45 were of bystanders where work activity was a primary contributor to the collision; and 119 were of bystanders where work activity was not a direct contributor to the

collision.

Cases were classified as work-related only if direct evidence in the files indicated it. In cases where there was no evidence of work-relatedness, the case was deemed not work-related.

The researchers identified three key groups at risk from work-related road traffic fatalities: those who are driving for work; those who work on the side of the road; and non-workers (bystanders) whose deaths are associated with a work-related driving activity.

"The most striking depositions are those in which drivers of large vehicles were largely unaware of the collision with a pedestrian or a cyclist, until they were halted by a witness further on in their journey," said Professor Anne Drummond from the UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin, who led the study team.

"These situations could almost certainly be reduced by introducing measures to increase visibility in and around sections of large working vehicles traditionally known as "blind spots" and improving the awareness among pedestrians and cyclists of such blind spots," she added.

"With increasing volumes of traffic, including work related traffic, these findings should be of real concern to road safety, [public health](#), occupational health and regulatory authorities," said Professor Drummond.

The results of this study provide a benchmark for both future recording of data on work-related road traffic fatalities and national and employer level strategies for prevention and intervention strategies.

Kate Field, Head of Information and Intelligence at IOSH, said: "Work-related road traffic fatalities are a matter of serious public health concern and have an impact on the individual, family, and society as a whole. This is one of the main reason why IOSH, through University College Dublin, funded this research.

"This research will hopefully lead to an improvement in the reporting of fatal work-related road [traffic](#) accident statistics, helping to highlight the importance of reliable sources of notification through coroner's, police or regulatory authorities records to avoid under-reporting and misreporting practices."

More information: "Fatal collisions on the road and safety and health" can be downloaded at www.iosh.co.uk/roadfatalities

Provided by University College Dublin

Citation: One in four road deaths in Ireland is work-related, study shows (2017, March 22)
retrieved 5 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-03-road-deaths-ireland-work-related.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.