

THE SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES IN IRELAND

Press Release

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Road safety: success of penalty points not maintained

Analysis of road deaths to be published shortly by the Society of Actuaries in Ireland

While there was a significant reduction in road accident fatalities in Ireland following the introduction of penalty points in 2002, the death rate subsequently increased again six months later. If the rate of deaths per car had been maintained at the level achieved immediately after the introduction of penalty points, there would have been a total of 255 fewer deaths since then, or about 78 fewer deaths per annum. This is one of the points made in an analysis of road deaths in Ireland to be published shortly by the Society of Actuaries in Ireland.

The actuarial analysis points out that Irish road fatalities have been on a downward trend for many years. “The downward trend is somewhat masked by the relatively strong growth in population, and very strong growth in car ownership. The number of deaths per car has fallen by almost 70% over the last twenty-five years.” However, there has been a reversal in that trend since 2004. 2003 saw the lowest number of deaths for over forty years, and this is commonly attributed to the introduction of penalty points in late 2002. Since 2003, both the absolute number of fatalities and the number of deaths per car have risen. Even in 2003, however, the number of deaths per car in Ireland was 70% higher than in the UK. In fact, Ireland appears to be lagging about 10 years behind the UK. “This shows just how far we have to go to match EU best practice”.

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