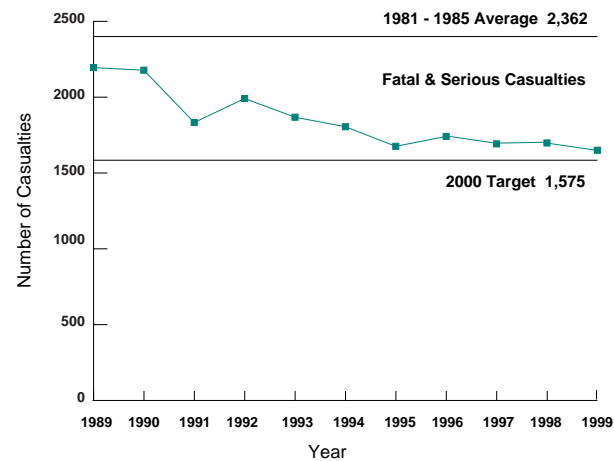


THE YEAR 2000 CASUALTY REDUCTION TARGET

In 1989 the Government set a target to reduce the total number of people killed and seriously injured on Northern Ireland's roads by one-third by the end of the year 2000. This target was based on the average number of fatal and serious casualties recorded in the years 1981-1985. The average over this five-year period was 2,362; therefore the target for the year 2000 was set at 1,575. The RUC, working in partnership with other responsible agencies and departments, is committed to achieving this target.

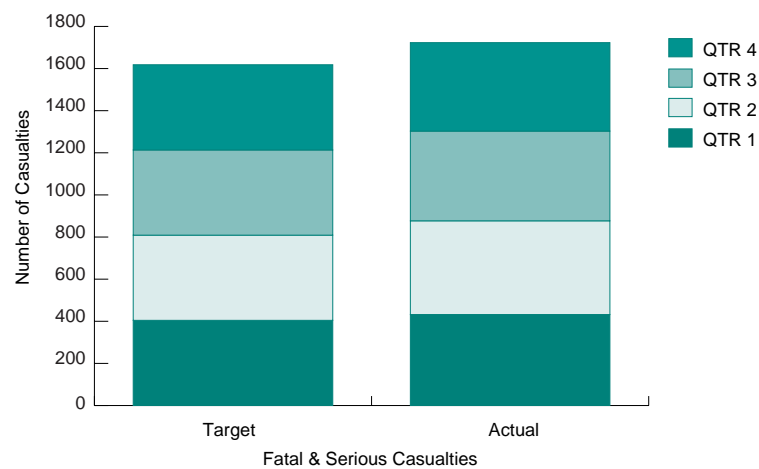
FIGURE 3: THE YEAR 2000 TARGET - FATAL & SERIOUS CASUALTIES 1989-1999



PROGRESS TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000 TARGET DURING 1999/00

In order to maintain progress towards the Year 2000 target, the number of fatal and serious casualties in Northern Ireland as a whole during the 1999/00 financial year should not have exceeded 1,618. During 1999/00 deaths and serious injuries due to road traffic accidents in fact totalled 1,723.

FIGURE 4: THE YEAR 2000 TARGET - FATAL AND SERIOUS CASUALTIES DURING 1999/00, BY QUARTER



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Prepared in accordance with the 'Official Statistics Code of Practice'



ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS
NORTHERN IRELAND
1999/00



INTRODUCTION

This bulletin provides a statistical summary of the road traffic injury accidents reported to the police during the 1999/00 financial year (i.e. 1st April 1999 - 31st March 2000) and includes comparative data (where appropriate) for 1998/99. The bulletin also contains an update on progress towards the Year 2000 casualty reduction target.

CASUALTIES

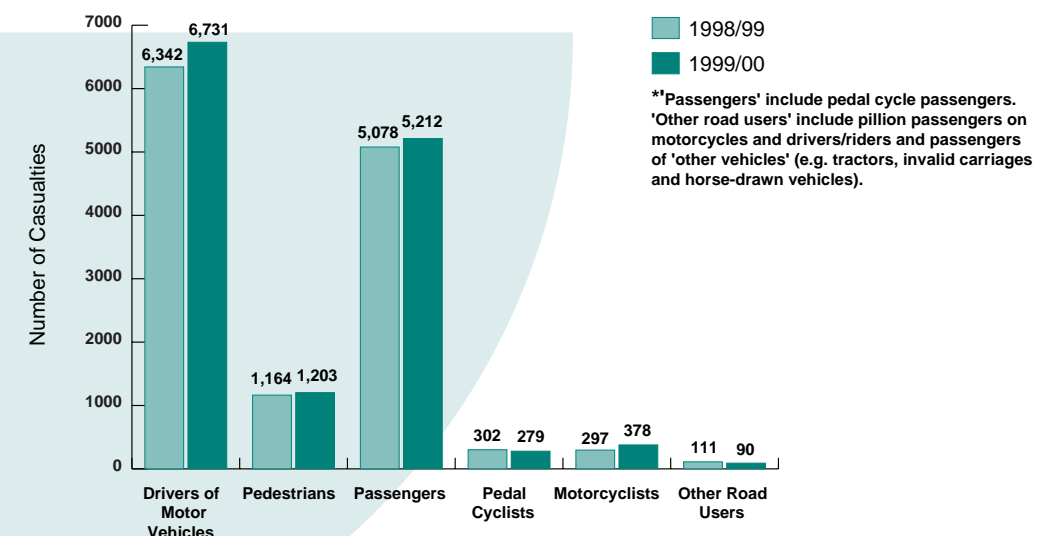
During 1999/00 a total of 13,893 people were killed or injured on Northern Ireland's roads. This represents an increase of 4.5% on 1998/99 (13,294) and is 10.4% higher than in 1997/98 when the casualty total was 12,581.

The increase in total casualties during 1999/00 was largely accounted for by a substantial rise in the number of slight injuries. The number of persons slightly injured rose by 4.2%, from 11,682 in 1998/99 to 12,170 during the current period. Over the same period there was a rise of 7.6% in the number of people who received serious injuries, from 1,462 to 1,573. The number of people killed as a result of road traffic accidents remained unchanged from 1998/99 at 150.

CASUALTIES BY ROAD USER TYPE

- Drivers were the single largest category of road user to become casualties during 1999/00 - the total of 6,731 driver casualties in 1999/00 compared with 6,342 in 1998/99, an increase of 6.1% (Figure 1). The number of drivers killed rose from 53 to 71.
- The second largest category was passengers, of whom 5,212 were casualties during 1999/00, an increase of 2.6% on the 1998/99 total (5,078). Twenty-nine passengers were killed in 1999/00 compared with 42 in 1998/99.
- A total of 1,203 pedestrians were casualties in road accidents during 1999/00, an increase of 3.4% on the 1,164 during the previous year. Pedestrian fatalities remained unchanged at 40.
- The number of pedal cyclists killed and injured fell by 7.6% from 302 in 1998/99 to 279 in 1999/00. There were no pedal cyclist fatalities in 1999/00 compared with 5 in 1998/99.
- The number of motorcyclist casualties rose from 297 in 1998/99 to 378 in 1999/00, a rise of 27.3%. The number of motorcyclists killed decreased from 9 to 8.

FIGURE 1: CASUALTIES BY ROAD USER TYPE, 1998/99 and 1999/00*



*Passengers include pedal cycle passengers. 'Other road users' include pillion passengers on motorcycles and drivers/riders and passengers of 'other vehicles' (e.g. tractors, invalid carriages and horse-drawn vehicles).

CHILD CASUALTIES

The number of children (under 16) killed and injured in road accidents fell from 1,874 in 1998/99 to 1,767 in 1999/00, a decrease of 5.7%.

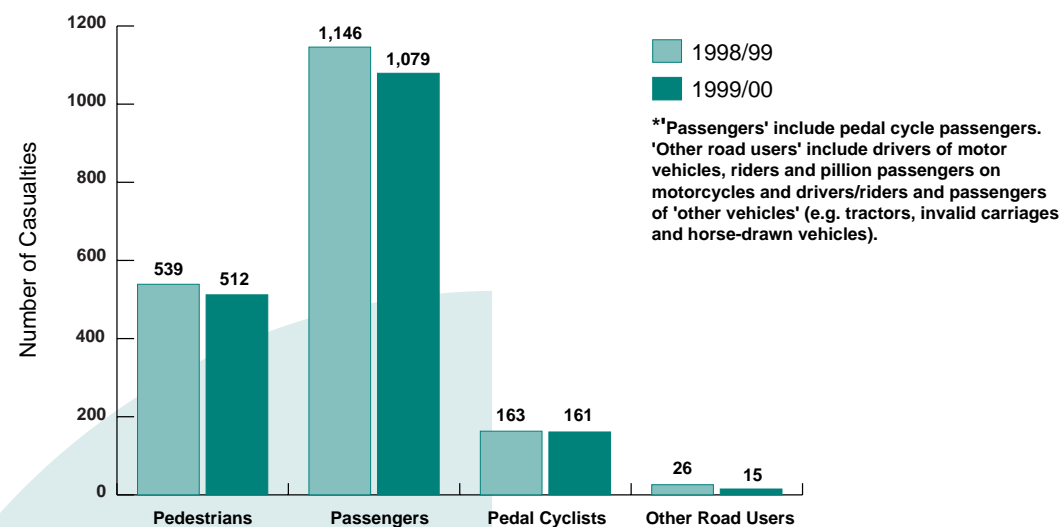
The number of children killed as a result of road traffic accidents increased by 5 to 20. There was a decrease of 7.8% in the number of children who were seriously injured (from 218 in 1998/99 to 201 in 1999/00). A further 1,546 children sustained slight injuries, a decrease of 5.8% on 1998/99 (1,641).

Among children, the largest single casualty class during 1999/00 was passengers (61.1% of the total), followed by pedestrians (29%) and pedal cyclists (9.1%).

Children are particularly vulnerable as pedestrians. This is highlighted by the fact that 42.6% of all pedestrian casualties during 1999/00 were children. Thirteen of the twenty children killed during 1999/00 were pedestrians.

Between 1998/99 and 1999/00 the number of child passenger casualties fell by 5.8% (from 1,146 to 1,079) while pedestrian casualties fell by 5% (from 539 to 512). Over the same period, child pedal cyclist casualties fell by 1.2% from 163 to 161 (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2 : CHILD CASUALTIES BY ROAD USER TYPE, 1998/99 and 1999/00*



ACCIDENTS

The number of road traffic injury accidents increased from 7,460 in 1998/99 to 7,827 in 1999/00, a rise of 4.9%. Children were involved in 17.9% of accidents (1,402) in 1999/00 compared with the previous year when 19.7% (1,472) of road traffic injury accidents involved children.

A substantial proportion of the injury accidents that occur in Northern Ireland are single vehicle accidents - defined as those including one vehicle of any type, with no other vehicle or pedestrian involved. During 1999/00, there were 826 accidents of this kind, which resulted in 31 deaths. Single vehicle accidents represented just over a tenth (10.6%) of all injury accidents in 1999/00 but accounted for more than a fifth (20.7%) of all road user deaths. During 1998/99, there were 806 single vehicle accidents and 35 people killed. Excessive speed and driver/rider alcohol or drugs were the main causes of single vehicle accidents during 1998/99 and 1999/00.

ACCIDENTS IN BUILT-UP AND OTHER AREAS

Roads in built-up areas are regarded as those with a speed limit of 40 mph or less. Roads in 'other areas' are those with a speed limit over 40 mph up to a maximum of 70 mph.

During 1999/00, 4,748 accidents (60.7% of the total) occurred on roads with a speed limit of 40 mph or less, i.e. in built-up areas. This compares with a figure of 4,529 accidents (60.7%) in 1998/99. Fatal accidents are more likely to occur on the faster rural roads. Accidents on roads in built-up areas accounted for 57% (7,922) of all casualties and for 41 deaths, whereas accidents on roads with a speed limit above 40 mph accounted for 43% (5,971) of all casualties and for 109 deaths.

CAUSES OF ROAD ACCIDENTS

In 1999/00 the most common cause of accidents was 'inattention or attention diverted', which resulted in 1,687 accidents (21.6% of the total) followed by 'excessive speed having regard to the conditions' which resulted in 1,021 accidents (13.0% of the total).

General carelessness continues to be a feature of road user behaviour in Northern Ireland, particularly among drivers. This observation can be supported by the number of accidents in which the following factors were regarded as the principal cause - 'inattention', 'emerging from a minor road/driveway without care', 'turning right without care', 'overtaking without care' and 'driving too close'. In total, these and other carelessness factors associated with drivers accounted for 4,780 accidents (61.1% of the total) in which there were 8,751 casualties, including 47 deaths.

TABLE 1 : MOST COMMON PRINCIPAL FACTORS IN ROAD TRAFFIC INJURY ACCIDENTS 1999/00

Factor	Total Accidents	Killed	Seriously Injured	Slightly Injured	Total Casualties
Inattention	1,687	14	156	2,838	3,008
Emerging from minor road/driveway without care	1,044	9	189	1,690	1,888
Excessive speed having regard to conditions	1,021	38	310	1,688	2,036
Alcohol or drugs (all road users)	577	34	181	857	1,072
Turning right without care	426	5	96	763	864
Overtaking without care	345	8	91	544	643
Pedestrian heedless of traffic	339	14	90	279	383
Driving too close	281	-	22	495	517

WHAT CAUSES ROAD DEATHS?

The main causes of road traffic accident fatalities in 1999/00 were 'excessive speed having regard to the conditions' and 'alcohol or drugs'. Thirty-eight of the 150 deaths during 1999/00 occurred in accidents in which the principal factor was excess speed. A further 34 deaths occurred in accidents in which the principal factor was alcohol or drug consumption (by drivers/riders, passengers or pedestrians). The equivalent figures for 1998/99 were 41 and 37 respectively.

ACCIDENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN

A large proportion of the 1,402 accidents during 1999/00 in which there were child casualties were caused by the behaviour of drivers. The most common causes of accidents involving child casualties, in which drivers were responsible, were 'inattention' (236 accidents), 'emerging from minor road/driveway without care' (166 accidents) and 'excessive speed' (134 accidents). Seven of the 20 children killed during 1999/00 were passengers in motor vehicles.

The majority of accidents in which child pedestrians were killed or injured were caused by the factors 'pedestrian heedless of traffic' (168 accidents) and 'walking or running while movement masked' (142 accidents).