

## Operation “Slow Down”

From 7am on Friday 31st May to 7am on Saturday 1st June, An Garda Síochána, along with other stakeholders, will run Operation “Slow Down”. The objectives of the Operation are to raise awareness of the dangers of inappropriate and excessive speed, reduce the number of speed related collisions, and therefore save lives and reduce injuries on our roads.

For the past seven years, there has been a year on year decrease in the number of road fatalities in Ireland. However, as we move into the second half of 2013, there have been 11 more fatalities on our roads than at this time last year. This brings to 75, the number of people killed in a road traffic collision to date.

Based on collision data to date in 2013 over three quarters (78%) of fatalities have been a driver, passenger or motorcyclist. Similarly more than one third (37%) of fatalities have occurred on Thursdays and Fridays. Excessive or inappropriate speed is a significant contributory factor in road traffic collisions.

Garda Assistant Commissioner Gerard Phillips, in co-operation with other stakeholders nationwide including the Road Safety Authority, Departments of Transport Tourism and Sport, Justice and Equality, and Health, National Roads Authority, National Transport Authority, Health and Safety Authority and local authorities, is appealing to members of the public to:-

### *Slow down and save lives*

Assistant Commissioner Phillips, speaking today stressed:-

“We are asking all drivers to make a conscious decision this Friday to “**Slow Down**” to help save lives. Wherever you see a speed limit sign, please remember it is the maximum that you may travel at on that road, but only when conditions are perfect. When you are faced with adverse weather, road or traffic conditions, the most effective way to keep safe is to slow down and give yourself more time to adapt to all that is happening around you. That speed limit is not a target that must be achieved. We are appealing to all vehicle drivers and riders to keep within the speed limits, and when necessary, slow down. The time lost by reducing your speed by 5 or 10 km/h on a long journey is insignificant, but the increase in road safety terms to you and all around you is very significant.”

Assistant Commissioner Phillips continued:-

“We particularly wish to thank all the companies, organisations and departments that are supporting An Garda Síochána and the RSA with this important safety initiative. The massive level of support is indicative of the desire and necessity to always keep Road Safety to the forefront of all our minds. Last year’s Slow Down day in July proved that the public can easily change their driver behaviour to make our roads safer, so we appeal again to all drivers and riders to support us, not just for one day but every day after that too.”

Mr. Noel Brett, CEO, Road Safety Authority said:-

“Inappropriate or excessive speed continues to be the number one killer behaviour on our roads. It plays the biggest role in causing collisions and increases the severity and the outcome of a crash.”

Mr. Brett added that:-

“According to independent research conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes on behalf of the RSA in 2012, just over half of drivers say it is unacceptable to break the speed limit. This is very welcome. However, one in every ten drivers said it’s ok to break the speed limit by 10km/h or more, although the number of people in this group is dropping year on year. Of concern is the one third of drivers who believe it is acceptable to break the speed limit by up to 10km/h. These drivers need to understand that breaking the speed limit by such margins can have devastating consequences. For example if a pedestrian is hit at 50km/h the chance of survival is fifty fifty, the toss of a coin. If the same pedestrian is hit at 60km/h nine out of ten will die. We need to realise that a car driven at any speed has the potential to become a lethal weapon, that’s the laws of physics.”

Each Garda Division will have an area locally where members will be available to give road safety advice and distribute leaflets. Garda members who are not responding to emergency calls will be leading by example - reducing their speed, and driving at speeds appropriate to the prevailing conditions.

Public and private sector fleet operators have been asked to participate in the initiative by circulating employees with the key message to “**Slow Down**” and, whether driving for business or private purposes, to always drive within the speed and at a speed that is safe for the conditions.

There will be highly visible speed checkpoints on national primary and secondary roads, carried out by local members and the Garda Traffic Corps, and also by GoSafe vans.

#### June Bank Holiday Garda Appeal:-

Assistant Commissioner Phillips concluded:-

“Operation “Slow Down” is only part of the June Bank Holiday Garda activities. 26 people were tragically killed in the month of June 2012, the highest of any month since October 2010. 6 people were killed over last years June Bank Holiday alone. We do not want that repeated ever again. Slowing down saves lives, it’s as simple as that. We are appealing to all road users to play their part in keeping themselves and all road users as safe as possible. We want every person to enjoy the holiday weekend and to exercise caution whether you are travelling or staying local”

Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Leo Varadkar TD said:

“Last year’s June bank holiday weekend saw six lives lost and a further 12 people seriously injured. There is always a risk associated with driving at the weekend, but bank holiday weekends are riskier still. The roads are busier, and communities will be staging festivals across the country. Many people will be cycling or walking, and motorcyclists are particularly vulnerable. I appeal to all road users to take extra care this June bank holiday.”

The Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly TD, said:-

"Our hospitals provide excellent care and we have excellent staff who save lives every day. We are improving patient safety standards every day. But that is no consolation for the families of those who die in road traffic collisions or those who survive but with serious or traumatic injuries. Driving safely and within the speed limits reduces the demands on our emergency services and improves public health generally. Safer driving on our roads encourages more people to walk or cycle and this leads to improved health and wellbeing and an improved environment. So I would encourage everyone to think of your health this weekend - and beyond - and "slow down".

#### **Note to Editors**

This initiative aims to raise general awareness of speeding and will encourage drivers to reduce speed at all times, not just for the 24 hour period of this initiative. To achieve a permanent change of driver behaviour a small reduction in speed will save lives. We are identifying this 24 hour period and notifying the public that Garda speed detection activity will be intense. We are asking drivers to respond by strictly keeping to the speed limits and reducing their speed in adverse road, weather or traffic conditions.

### Road Deaths by Day of Week – 2013 to date

Day	2013
Monday	8
Tuesday	7
Wednesday	10
Thursday	14

Friday	14
Saturday	12
Sunday	10

### Road User deaths per category 2013 to date

Road User Type/Age	TOT	%
Pedestrian	12	16
Driver	42	56
Passenger	10	13
Motorcyclist	7	9
Pillion Passenger	0	0.0
Pedal Cyclist	4	5
Unknown	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	

### Year to Date Road Traffic Fatalities by County

County	Fatalities
Carlow	2
Cavan	2
Clare	1
Cork	4
Donegal	4
Dublin	6
Galway	7
Kerry	4
Kildare	6
Kilkenny	2
Limerick	3
Louth	1
Mayo	5
Monaghan	3
Offaly	2
Roscommon	2
Sligo	3
Tipperary	8
Waterford	3
Westmeath	1
Wexford	4
Wicklow	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

## June Bank Holiday 2010 to 2012

Detail	2010	2011	2012
Fatalities (people)	3	1	6
Fatal collisions	3	1	5
Serious injuries (people)	6	12	11
Serious injury collisions	3	8	4
MAT Checkpoints	1,034	1,229	874
MAT Breath tests	16,648	13,572	7,645
Intoxicated while driving incidents	233	198	172

All figures are current as of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and are provisional, operational and subject to change.

### Results for Operation Slow Down - July 2012

Operation Slow Down was conducted over 24 hours from 7am Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July to 7am Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

Over 72,000 vehicles were monitored by GoSafe resulting in a rate of detection 1 in 466. The rate of detection for the previous 5 days was 1 in 242.

During Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July there were 929 fixed charge notices issued for speeding

- 633 non-intercept (GoSafe and Garda operated)
- 296 intercept (Garda only)

During Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July there were 873 fixed charge notices issued for speeding

- 606 non-intercept (GoSafe and Garda operated)
- 267 intercept (Garda only)

The **Supporting Safer Communities Campaign** 28<sup>th</sup> May-3<sup>rd</sup> June, including the Bloom Festival in the Phoenix Park incorporates Road Safety as a key message.