

Payout for injury claims over €65m

Denise Clarke

MORE THAN €65m was paid out for accidents in public places over a two-year period, with women accounting for more than twice as many awards as men.

Over half (56pc) of public liability accidents took place in privately-owned establishments, while slips, trips and falls accounted for the vast majority (67pc) of personal injuries. The total value of awards made in the 24 months to December 2008 was €65.4m.

The average award was €22,865, while over half the awards were for amounts of less than €20,000 – typically for sprains, bruises, fractures and lacerations.

Women accounted for 70pc of the 2,860 awards during this period – over twice the number of male claimants.

However, this is a direct reversal of data for workplace accidents, where women account for just 30pc of awards.

Almost one in four (24pc) of accidents occurred in a retail outlet, one in five (19pc) in a pub/nightclub or restaurant and 13pc in leisure facilities.

Awards made against local

authorities amounted to 27pc and a further 6pc involved transport and utility services.

Patricia Byron, chief executive of InjuriesBoard.ie said the factors which give rise to accidents in public places are many and varied.

Prevention

"It is timely for public and private sector organisations alike to review the measures they have in place to prevent accidents across retail, hospitality, leisure and public spaces," she said.

"Accident prevention is always important and ensuring your customers enjoy a safe environment can save money in the long run. Consumers must also take responsibility for accident prevention and be vigilant to the risks they face."

Other causes of injuries included being struck by a falling or flying object (11pc) injured by machinery (5pc), burns/scalding (2pc) and food poisoning (1pc).

Many victims sustained at least two injuries. Sprains (40pc) are the most common injury, followed by bruising (32pc), fractures (29pc) and lacerations (25pc).

Half of all awards went to people over the age of 45.