

Personal injuries cases increase 4%

Dan Collins

THE number of new personal injuries cases dealt with by the semi state Injuries Board has jumped 4% this year.

Workplace accident claims fell slightly, reflecting rising unemployment, it was claimed yesterday.

In the first nine months of the year the figure for accidents in the workplace dropped 3% on the same period in 2008, according to InjuriesBoard.ie

Chief executive Patricia Byron said: "It is probably a reflection of the current economic climate that workplace accident claims in this period are down 3% on the same period last year".

In the first six months of the year, €105 million was paid for 4,402 personal injury claims, with the average pay-out totalling €23,932.

The highest sum awarded was €493,902 and the lowest was €1,000. Crashes accounted for 73% of awards, public liability cases 16% and accidents in the workplace around 11%.

Ms Byron said the volume of cases being dealt with by the board has levelled off after a steady build-up in the five years since 2004 when the board was established.

The data indicates 88% of awards made by the board are for less than €38,000, which is in line with figures for court awards.

The average time taken by InjuriesBoard.ie to make an assessment is just under 7 months.

The average award made by the board in the first six months of 2009 was €23,392, which was 1.6% down on the average for the same period in 2008.

"In the first nine months of 2009, we have seen a modest increase of less than 4% in the volume of new claims...Motor and public liability claims are up by 6% and 3% respectively" Ms Byron said.

By the middle of this year, the Injuries Board was well on track to deliver total cost savings for the year of over €100m - €40, in direct savings plus €60m by facilitating early settlements.