

RSA observational study 2016 – Misuse of fog lights



Research Objective

To determine the incidence of drivers of all vehicle types driving on Irish roads using fog lights inappropriately, and therefore presenting a road safety risk.

Methodology

This study was conducted by Amárach Research on behalf of the RSA in October/November 2016. The study was conducted at the roadside at 95 sites: (36 urban and 59 rural) observing over 39,000 vehicles. Cars, rigid goods vehicles (RGVs), semi-articulated goods vehicles (SAGVs) and buses were observed from Monday to Friday during the morning, afternoon and evening.

It is recommended that fog lights be used only at times of fog and falling snow. As part of the study, the weather was also recorded to ascertain when fog lights are misused.

Key Findings

- Approximately one in ten (11%) vehicles observed used their fog lights incorrectly (14% in 2015).
- The lowest levels of fog light misuse were recorded amongst car drivers (10%) with SAGVs displaying the highest levels of fog light misuse (16%).
- The improper use of fog lights is most common on national secondary roads (17%) with this behaviour least common on urban residential roads (4%).
- Drivers on rural roads recorded a higher incidence of incorrect use of fog lights at 11%, compared to 9% on urban roads.
- The likelihood of drivers using their front fog lights ‘only’ (7%) is higher than rear fog light usage (1%).

2016	Total N=39,672	Cars N=32,651	Rigid Goods Vehicles N=3,465	Semi- Articulated Vehicles N=2,586	Buses N=970
No fog lights on	89% (86%)	90% (87%)	89% (84%)	84% (77%)	85% (82%)
Front only	7% (8%)	7% (8%)	6% (9%)	10% (11%)	9% (9%)
Rear only	1% (2%)	1% (2%)	1% (2%)	1% (3%)	2% (1%)
Both front & rear	2% (4%)	2% (4%)	4% (6%)	5% (10%)	3% (8%)
Total fog light misuse	11%(14%)	10%(13%)	11%(16%)	16% (23%)	15% (18%)

() denotes 2015 findings