



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Library Service Briefing Note

Paper 111/10

17th August 2010

NIAR 335-10

Suzie Cave

The Road Safety Authority in the Republic of Ireland

Background

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is an official statutory body, formed in September 2006 following the passing of the Road Safety Authority Act 2006. It is the primary road safety organisation in Ireland and is principally funded by, and responsible to, the Department of Transport. According to a statement on the website, its mission is to “reduce the numbers of deaths and injuries on Irish roads and make them safe for all users”¹

Since the 2006 Act, functions were transferred to the RSA from the Department of Transport, the National Roads Authority and the National Safety Council, making it the first time in Ireland that activities associated with road safety are handled by a single statutory body².

¹<http://www.rsa.ie/Utility/About-Us/Key-facts/> also see: RSA’s Road Safety in Ireland- Who Does What?

<http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Press%20Office/RSAWhodoesWhatWEB.pdf>

² <http://www.rsa.ie/Utility/About-Us/Our-structure/>

Mission, Objectives and Key functions

As stated on their website, the aim of the RSA is to “save lives and prevent injuries by reducing the number and severity of collisions on the road”³ The objectives of the authority is to provide a safe environment for all roads users and promote the efficient use of the road network.

Key Functions:

- Developing and implementing information and education campaigns to increase awareness of road safety and promote safer driving
- Improving vehicle standards
- Establishing and monitoring a standard for driver instruction
- Overseeing the system of driver licensing and undertaking certain enforcement activities
- Working with stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated response and ensure our collective resources are used wisely and efficiently
- Undertaking accident and road safety research in order to develop measures and recommendations to improve road safety
- Advising the Minister for Transport on road safety policy
- Producing road safety strategy documents and monitoring their implementation

The functions of the RSA are carried out under different 4 directorates:

1. Driver Testing and Licensing:

This directorate is responsible for:

- Delivery of the driver testing service;
- Regulation of driving instruction;
- Oversight of driver licensing regime;
- Oversight of delivery of driver theory test service; and
- Management of penalty points system.

2. Road Safety, Research and Driver Education:

The role of this directorate is to raise awareness of road safety, educate road users and conduct research into road safety issues. One of the main elements is to liaise with all stakeholders signed up to the Road Safety Strategy to ensure that road safety initiatives are achieved.

³ <http://www.rsa.ie/Utility/About-Us/What-we-do/>

3. Standards and Enforcement

The main function of this directorate is to ensure that national and EU vehicle standards and road safety legislation are complied with, which includes:

- Type approval and regulation of the entry into service of new vehicles and the regulation of vehicles in use on roads.
- Enforcing EU and national road transport legislation on tachographs, driver's rules, Working Time Directive and licencing of road haulage and passenger operations.
- Overseeing the Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Scheme with specific focus on quality and integrity, and assist the An Garda Síochána on roadside roadworthiness checks of commercial vehicles.
- Administering the National Car Testing Service project agreement and monitoring the performance of the contractor on behalf of the State.
- Administering the Digital Tachograph Card issuing scheme on behalf of the State.

4. Corporate Services:

Corporate Service provides support functions, systems and structures to the RSA. Its functions include:

- Finance;
- Human Resources;
- Information technology;
- Quality;
- Customer care;
- Estate management; and
- Communications and public relations.

This directorate also deals with business and organisational planning, corporate governance including internal audit (the Director of Corporate Services is the Secretary to the RSA Board.)

Information supplied by the RSA gave the approximate Annual Current Expenditure per Directorate:

1. Driver Testing and Licensing	- € 12m
2. Road Safety, Research and Driver Education	- € 12m
3. Standards and Enforcement	- € 5.5m
4. Corporate Services.	- € 8m

For more information, refer to the RSA's Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2008 in the *Annual Report 2008*⁴

⁴RSA, *Annual Report 2008* http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/About%20Us/RSA_Annual_Report_2008.pdf (p60-64)

RSA's Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012⁵

RSA aims to reduce collisions, road deaths and injuries on Irish roads by 30%, bringing Ireland into line with countries considered to have the safest roads in the world, such as Sweden, Netherlands and the UK. The strategy focuses on delivering major improvements in road safety by utilising internal resources and using external stakeholders. The RSA plans to achieve this reduction by adopting a four pillar approach:

Education

- Targeted safety campaigns in schools
- Safety campaigns within wider society
- Training scheme for vocational drivers

Enforcement

- Driver testing and licensing
- Road haulage industry
- Testing regimes for motor vehicles

Engineering

- Contribute to EU rules on vehicle standards
- Assist National Roads Authority with road design

Evaluation

- Road safety research
- Measuring effectiveness of road safety initiatives

According to the Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012, economic consultants Goodbody, estimated that the total expenditure on the Government's first Road Safety Strategy was €169 million.⁶

For more information visit <http://www.rsa.ie>

⁵ RSA, Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012 http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Road%20Safety/RSA_Strategy_ENG_s.pdf

⁶ RSA, Road Safety Strategy 2007-2012 http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Road%20Safety/RSA_Strategy_ENG_s.pdf (p.72)