



**An  
Phríomh-Oifig  
Staidrimh**

Central  
Statistics  
Office

# **Standard SIMS Report: Vehicle Licensing**



# **Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) Report**

## **For**

# **Vehicle Licensing**

This documentation applies to the reporting period:  
**2022**

Last edited:  
24/11/2022



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## 2. Introduction

The release titled 'Vehicles licensed for the first time' provides detailed monthly and annual information on the number of vehicles licensed for the first time in the Republic of Ireland.

It commenced in January 1993 and replaced the series previously published as 'Particulars of vehicles registered and licensed for the first time'.

In January 1993, separate systems for vehicle registration and licensing were introduced. The Office of the Revenue Commissioners became responsible for the compilation of vehicle registrations while the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government retained responsibility for vehicle licensing. In January 2008, responsibility for vehicle licensing was transferred to the Department of Transport.

Data is collected at the time of first licensing by the Department of Transport (previously Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport) via their network of motor tax offices. This administrative data is then used by CSO to produce the monthly and annual releases. Data is collected and presented on the variables type of vehicle, fuel, make, emission band, size class, new/second-hand status, and county of licensing for each vehicle licensed.

## 3. Contact

<b>Contact Organisation:</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>Contact Organisation Unit:</b>	Transport Section
<b>Contact Name:</b>	Ms. Nele van der Wielen Ms. Noreen Dorgan
<b>Contact person function:</b>	Statistician
<b>Contact Mail address:</b>	Skehard Road, Cork, T12 X00E, Ireland
<b>Contact email address:</b>	transport@cso.ie
<b>Contact Phone Number:</b>	Ms. Van der Wielen: +353 21 4535379 Ms. Dorgan: +353 21 4535260
<b>Contact Fax Number:</b>	

## 4. Metadata Update

### 4.1. Metadata last certified

24/11/2022

### 4.2. Metadata last posted

30/11/2022

### 4.3. Metadata last update

24/11/2022



## 5. Statistical Presentation

### 5.1. Data Description

The main purpose of the Vehicle Licensed for the First Time publication is to provide detailed monthly and annual information on the number and types of vehicles licensed for the first time in the Republic of Ireland.

The following classification variables are reported on in the publication:

- Number of private cars licensed by make, licensing authority, fuel, engine capacity, new/second-hand indicator, emission band
- Number of goods vehicles licensed by make, licensing authority, fuel, un laden weight, new/second-hand indicator
- Number of motorcycles licensed by make, licensing authority, fuel, engine capacity, new/second-hand indicator,
- Number of other vehicle classes licensed by make, licensing authority, fuel, engine capacity, new/second-hand indicator
- Number of new vehicles by type and fuel
- Number of new and second-hand vehicles by type of vehicle

#### Vehicle Licensing vs Vehicle Registration

Vehicle registration data has not been published on the CSO PxStat since June 2010.

Registration and licensing figures may differ in a given month for a number of reasons, some of which are outlined below:

- Vehicles which under the previous system would have been licensed in the latter part of a particular month may not now be licensed until a later month because of the time lapse between registration and first licensing.
- Registered vehicles which are not used in a public place (e.g. tractors for use exclusively on the land) may not need to be licensed.

The question is often asked, which reflects better vehicle sales, licensing figures or registration figures? In practice, on a monthly basis, the licensing data is probably a better reflection of sales. In some cases, a vehicle may be registered by a dealership in advance of a sale. Whereas, typically, vehicles are only licensed at the point of sale. However, if a vehicle is purchased towards the end of a month, the buyer may wish to defer collecting and licensing it until the start of the following month. So the issue is not clear-cut.

### 5.2. Classification System

The Vehicle Licensing release uses a number of in-house and general EU classifications.

- An example of an in-house classification is Tran.Fuel\_Code which is a fuel type classification that lists 16 types of fuel that vehicles are powered by. In practice, there are mainly seven of those fuel types in use.
- An example of a general EU Classification would be NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) which is a geographical classification of which level 4 identifies Irish counties. Results are classified by licensing authority from which data can be extracted to a NUTS level 4. Each county has one licensing authority.
- Motor tax charges are determined on the basis of CO2 emission level (using seven CO2 bands) for all new cars registered from 1 July 2008.

### 5.3. Sector Coverage

All Vehicles licensed for use on the public road for the first time in the Republic of Ireland.



## 5.4. Statistical Concepts and definitions

**Private cars:** The term 'private cars' in this release, refers to privately licensed vehicles which include hire, fleet and certain commercial vehicles.

**New and used vehicles:** The term 'new vehicles' refers to new vehicles which are licensed for use in a public place, in this country, for the first time. 'Used vehicles' refers to used vehicles which are licensed for use in a public place, in this country, for the first time. In the main used vehicles are imported.

**Exempt:** The term 'exempt vehicles' in this release, refers to vehicles which are licensed for the first time but are exempt from liability to pay road tax.

Exempt vehicles can be divided into four main categories:

- State-owned
- Diplomatic
- Fire services
- Disabled Drivers

**Electric hybrid:** means a vehicle that derives its motive power from a combination of an electric motor and an internal combustion engine and is capable of being driven on electric propulsion alone for a material part of its normal driving cycle.

**Plug-in electric hybrid:** means a vehicle that derives its motive power from a combination of an electric motor and an internal combustion engine, where the electric motor derives its power from a battery that may be charged from the internal combustion engine and an alternating current (AC) electric mains supply and is capable of being driven on electric propulsion alone for a material part of its normal driving cycle.

## 5.5. Statistical Unit

Data is collected and presented on the number of vehicles licensed for the first time by the variables: vehicle type, fuel, make, size class, emission rating, county of licensing and new/second-hand status.

## 5.6. Statistical Population

The survey population is all vehicles licensed for the first time in a particular time period.

## 5.7. Reference Area

Republic of Ireland.

## 5.8. Time Coverage

1954 to 2022.

## 5.9. Base period

Not applicable.

## 6. Unit of Measure

Number of vehicles is expressed in integer figures. Proportions are expressed as percentages (%).

## 7. Reference Period

2022



## 8. Institutional Mandate

### 8.1. Legal Acts and other agreements

Not applicable.

### 8.2. Data Sharing

Data is collected at the time of first licensing by the Department of Transport (previously Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport) via their network of motor tax offices.

## 9. Confidentiality

### 9.1. Confidentiality – policy

All information supplied to the CSO is treated as strictly confidential. The Statistics Act, 1993 sets stringent confidentiality standards: Information collected may be used only for statistical purposes, and no details that might be related to an identifiable person or business undertaking may be divulged to any other government department or body.

These national statistical confidentiality provisions are reinforced by the following EU legislation: Council Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics for data collected for EU statistical purposes. Further details are outlined in the CSO's Code of Practice on Statistical Confidentiality.

For more information on the CSO confidentiality policy please visit:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lqdp/csodatapolicies/statisticalconfidentiality/>

### 9.2. Confidentiality – data treatment

All data are treated as strictly confidential in accordance with Part V of the Statistics Act, 1993. Detailed tables relating to the first licensing of Agricultural Tractors are not published until the data is 1 year old for confidentiality reasons in accordance with Commission Decision 92/157/EEC as upheld on 29 May 1998.

## 10. Release Policy

### 10.1. Release Calendar

The date of dissemination of all statistics released by CSO can be found in the Release Calendar published in CSO.ie. This calendar is regularly updated.

### 10.2. Release calendar access

The release calendar can be accessed via the CSO website, [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie), or directly from this link:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/releasecalendar/>

### 10.3. User access

In accordance with Principle 6 of the European Statistics Code of Practice all users of CSO statistics have equal access via the CSO website at the same time of 11 am. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

The CSO recognises that in very limited circumstances a business need for pre-release access may be substantiated. Any form of pre-release access is a privilege and a strict CSO pre-release access policy is





adhered to for these special requests. The full pre-release access policy can be accessed at <https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/csopolicyonpre-releaseaccess/>

The various results are published nationally in statistical release format as well as on the CSO website ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)). Selected extracts from the results are posted on the CSO's data dissemination database, PxStat.

## 11. Frequency of Dissemination

Monthly and Annual.

## 12. Accessibility and clarity

### 12.1. News release

Not applicable.

### 12.2. Publications

The most recent publications of the Vehicles Licensed for the first time can be found on the CSO website directly from this link; <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/transport/vehicleslicensedforthefirsttime/>

Historical releases are also available via this link <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/transport/archive/>

### 12.3. On-line database

Vehicle licensing statistics Monthly series <https://data.cso.ie/product/VLFTM>

Vehicle licensing statistics annual series <https://data.cso.ie/product/VLFTA>

Vehicle registration statistics annual series <https://data.cso.ie/product/VRSA>

Vehicle registration statistics Monthly series <https://data.cso.ie/product/VRSM>

#### 12.3.1. AC 1. Data tables - consultations

Not calculated.

### 12.4. Micro-data Access

Not applicable.

### 12.5. Other

An interactive area using data from this release can be found in the CSO's visualization area dedicated to 'Ireland's Top Motors'.

<http://www.cso.ie/en/interactivezone/visualisationtools/irelandstopmotors/>

Detailed tables are provided to the motor industry as requested. A detailed time series of vehicle licensing data is available on the CSO PxStat with one time series available from 1965.

CSO Annual Yearbook:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/statisticalyearbookofireland/>

CSO Annual Transport Omnibus: <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/transport/transportomnibus/>



Vehicle licensing data is also published in the Department of Transport's Annual Report and the annual publication "Irish Bulletin of Vehicle and Driver Statistics" by the same Department.

#### **12.5.1. AC2. Metadata consultations**

Not calculated.

### **12.6. Documentation on Methodology**

Further documentation on the methodology used to compile this publication can be found in the CSO via the following links:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/transport/vehiclelicensing/>

<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/transport/vehiclelicensing/technicalnotemodellingaseasonalbreakfornewprivatecars/>

#### **12.6.1. AC3 – Metadata completeness – rate**

Not calculated.

### **12.7. Quality Documentation**

For more information on the quality of this publication please consult the CSO's Methods page at

<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/transport/vehiclelicensing/>

## **13. Quality Management**

### **13.1. Quality Assurance**

#### **Quality Management Framework**

The CSO avails of an office wide Quality Management Framework (QMF). This framework allows all CSO processes and outputs to meet the required standard as set out in the European Statistics Code of Practice (ESCoP). The QMF foundations are based on establishing the UNECE's Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) as the operating statistical production model to achieve a standardised approach to Quality Management. All and any changes implemented to CSO processes and outputs require adherence to the QMF.

### **13.2. Quality Assessment**

The CSO requires that all produced outputs carry out an annual self-assessment exercise to evaluate the quality of the processes in place to generate disseminated outputs and the products themselves. The latest iteration of this exercise showed that the processes currently used are adequate and the outputs produced meet user requirements.

## **14. Relevance**

### **14.1. User Needs**

The vehicle licensing data is of major relevance for the motor industry as an indicator of how the sector is performing. It is also of particular use and relevance to Government Departments and Agencies in how they implement and monitor policies and recommendations relating to the motor sector of the economy.



#### **14.1.1. Main National Users**

- Motor Industry – to monitor the activity in the sector
- Researchers
- General public
- Government departments and agencies – to monitor the economic and environmental impact of the motor trade

#### **14.1.2. Principal External Users**

Not applicable.

### **14.2. User Satisfaction**

Not measured.

### **14.3. Data Completeness**

Not applicable.

#### **14.3.1. Data Completeness rate**

Not applicable.

## **15. Accuracy and reliability**

### **15.1. Overall accuracy**

As the data is compiled from administrative sources, many of the usual components affecting the accuracy of the statistics do not apply to this release. The following subsections give a more detailed indication of the accuracy of this release.

### **15.2. Sampling Error**

This section is not applicable as the results are based on a census of all vehicles licensed.

#### **15.2.1. A1. Sampling error indicator**

Not applicable.

### **15.3. Non-sampling Error**

Department of Transport provide the most up to date data available. If an error is discovered with the details recorded for any vehicles the correct details are forwarded to the CSO for updating.

#### **15.3.1. Coverage error**

Not applicable as census of all vehicles licensed.

##### **15.3.1.1. A2. Over coverage rate**

Not applicable.

##### **15.3.1.2. A3. Common units – proportion**

Not applicable.



#### **15.3.2. Measurement error**

The licensing data for each vehicle is cross checked by both the VRU and the individual Motor Tax Offices. As a vehicle can only be licensed once on the VRU system the likelihood of any significant measurement errors are small.

#### **15.3.3. Non-Response Error**

This section does not apply as it is a census of all vehicles licensed.

##### **15.3.3.1. Unit non-response rate**

Not applicable.

##### **15.3.3.2. Item non-response rate**

Not applicable.

#### **15.3.4. Processing error**

Edit checks are done on the data file received from VRU to ensure that all codes used are valid and that there is consistency between the various vehicle details given for each vehicle. No processing errors are possible as each variable is cross checked against the classifications used for the variables to ensure it is valid. Any variable that is highlighted as a result of the edit checks carried out on the data is forwarded to VRU for clarification and updated where necessary.

#### **15.3.5. Model assumption error**

Not applicable.

## **16. Timeliness and punctuality**

### **16.1. Timeliness**

Timeliness refers to the time elapsed since the end of the reference period and when the statistics are disseminated. Because the Vehicle Licensing is derived from administrative data sources which received by CSO promptly each month, the timeliness of this release is excellent.

#### **16.1.1. TP1. Time lag – First results**

Provisional results are not published.

#### **16.1.2. TP2. Time lag – Final results**

Monthly results are published within t+10 days after the end of each reference month.  
Annual data is published within t+14 days after the end of the reference year.

### **16.2. Punctuality**

The Vehicle Licensing publication is consistently released according to the date specified in the CSO's advanced release calendar. To date this publication has always been released on time.

#### **16.2.1. TP3. Punctuality – Punctuality - delivery and publication**

0 days.



## 17. Comparability

### 17.1. Comparability – Geographical

The published licensing data is compared with data from other countries to identify if similar trends exist.

#### 17.1.1. CCI. Asymmetry for mirror flow statistics

Not applicable.

### 17.2. Comparability over time

A detailed time series of vehicle licensing data is available on the CSO PxStat with a time series available back to 1965.

Monthly data is compared to the previous month and to the corresponding month in previous year to ensure consistency.

Licensing differs from registration in that a vehicle is licensed when a valid motor tax disc is issued for the first time. Registration occurs when a vehicle gets its licence plate (registration number) for the first time. The licensing process where applicable follows the registration process.

Registration and licensing figures may differ in a given month for a number of reasons some of which are outlined below;

- Vehicles which under the previous system would have been licensed in the latter part of a particular month may not be licensed until a later month because of the time lapse between registration and first licensing.
- Registered vehicles which are not used in a public place (e.g. tractors for use exclusively on the land may not need to be licensed.

#### 17.2.1. Length of Comparable Time series

57 years.

### 17.3. Coherence – cross domain

The published data is compared with registration and industry data.

#### 17.3.1. Coherence – Sub annual and annual statistics

Both annual and monthly releases are based on the same data collected therefore there are no coherence issues.

#### 17.3.2. Coherence with National Accounts

Not applicable.

### 17.4. Coherence – internal

Not applicable.



## 18. Cost and Burden

Estimates of Cost and Burden can be obtained from the Response Burden Barometer

<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/enterprisestatistics/responseburdenbarometer/>

Survey specific information is available via CSO's dissemination database PxStat.

<https://data.cso.ie/product/RBB>

## 19. Data Revision

### 19.1. Data Revision Policy

Published statistics are subject to correction and revision for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons include the receipt of additional information (for example, late survey responses) and updated seasonal factors. Occasional revisions also occur as a result of changes to definitions, methodology, classifications and general updating of statistical series.

It is recognised internationally that the existence of a sound revisions policy maintains credibility in official statistics. The CSO General Revisions Policy, which details how revisions should be managed and communicated to users, outlines the three main types of revisions:

- Planned Routine Revisions
- Planned Major Revisions
- Unplanned Revisions.

One reason for unplanned revisions occurring can be when errors are detected after publication. The 'CSO Error Correction Policy – How to deal with Publication Errors' outlines the steps taken when these errors are detected. As required under Principle 6.3 of the European Statistics Code of Practice, errors detected in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and users are informed. An important step in the process is the documentation and analysis of errors that have occurred and their causes. This allows the CSO to take measures preventing similar errors from occurring in the future and uniformity in dealing with them when they do.

The data revision policy that CSO statistics adheres to can be found via the following link:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/quality/treatmentofrevisions/>

### 19.2. Data Revision Practice

Monthly publications are not revised. Any revisions necessary are contained in the annual publication.

#### 19.2.1. Data Revision – Average size

Not applicable.

## 20. Statistical processing

### 20.1. Source Data

The data is provided by the Department of Transport containing details on the number of private cars, goods vehicles, motor cycles and other vehicles licensed for the first time in each city and county council, classified by make and size, during a given month.

The monthly data file contains the following variables for each vehicle:

- Licensing authority
- Month of first registration
- Registration number
- Simi code
- Make code



- Model
- Tax code (type of vehicle class)
- Fuel type
- New/second hand indicator
- Description
- Un laden weight (for goods vehicles)
- Engine capacity (For private cars and motorcycles)
- Body type
- Colour
- CO2 emissions (gms per km)

Coding is based on classifications used as detailed in 3.11. The data has already been coded as part of the data collection process by the Motor Tax Offices.

#### **20.1.1. Population and sampling frame**

The monthly and annual results are based on a full census, i.e. a file containing all the registered vehicles for a particular month/year which are licensed for the first time received from the Department of Transport.

#### **20.1.2. Sampling design**

The results are based on a full census; therefore, no sampling takes place.

#### **20.1.3. Survey size**

Not applicable.

#### **20.1.4. Survey technique**

The data file is placed in a secure site on the website of the Department of Transport from which it is downloaded by CSO staff each month.

### **20.2. Frequency of data collection**

Monthly.

### **20.3. Data Collection**

Administrative Data is received monthly from the Vehicle Registration Unit (VRU) of the Department of Transport via a secure link to the website of the Department of Transport.

#### **20.3.1. Type of Survey/Process**

Compilation based on administrative data.

#### **20.3.2. Questionnaire (including explanations)**

Not applicable.

#### **20.3.3. Survey Participation**

Not relevant.



#### **20.3.4. Data Capture**

The data received from the Department of Transport is loaded into the Data Management System (DMS), which is an internal IT system, where the data is validated and edited where required.

### **20.4. Data Validation**

Data editing is carried out using the DMS. Edit and validation checks are done on the data file received from VRU to ensure that all codes used are valid and that there is consistency between the various vehicle details given for each vehicle. Duplicate checks are also performed as corrections can be made if a vehicle details were recorded incorrectly during licensing which results in the correct details of a vehicle appearing in the next available monthly file. Any queries that arise are forwarded to VRU for clarification and any subsequent updates are made to the data in the DMS.

### **20.5. Data Compilation**

Outputs are compiled by simple aggregation using SAS (a statistical software package).

#### **20.5.1. Imputation (for Non-Response or Incomplete Data Sets)**

Not applicable.

##### **20.5.1.1. A7. Imputation rate**

Not applicable.

#### **20.5.2. Grossing and Weighting**

Not applicable.

### **20.6. Adjustment**

#### **20.6.1. Seasonal Adjustment**

Seasonal adjustment for each taxation class is conducted using a direct seasonal adjustment approach. However, the overall vehicle totals are estimated using the indirect approach, i.e. the 'Total new vehicles' is derived by adding all the seasonally adjusted new vehicles taxation classes. The main reason for adopting the indirect approach is to attribute the monthly and annual changes in vehicle licensing to each of its taxation classes. Seasonal adjustment models are developed for each series based on unadjusted data spanning from July 1996 to the current period. These models are reviewed on an annual basis; however seasonal factors are updated each month.

The adjustments are completed by applying the X-13-ARIMA model, developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to the unadjusted data. This methodology estimates seasonal factors while also taking into consideration factors that impact on the quality of the seasonal adjustment such as:

- Calendar effects, e.g. the timing of Easter,
- Outliers, temporary changes and level shifts in the series.

Seasonally adjusting the Vehicle Licensing series during the COVID-19 crisis period will be challenging until the scale and shape of its impact on the time series is better understood. The initial seasonally adjusted results might be revised for some months ahead as future observations become available. Users should be aware that there is increased uncertainty around the seasonally adjusted figures during this period.

## **21. Comment**