

European Road Safety Observatory

National Road Safety Profile - Estonia

This document is part of a series of 30 country profiles: one for each member of the EU 27 and three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). The purpose of this series is to provide tables and figures that give an overview of the road safety situation in a specific country. The tables and figures are organized according to a pyramid of road safety information: (1) road safety outcomes, (2) road safety performance indicators, (3) road safety programmes and measures, and (4) structure and culture.

Contract: This document has been prepared in the framework of the EC Service Contract MOVE/C2/SER/2019-100/SI2.822066 with Vias institute (BE) and SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research (NL).

Version 1.0, September 13, 2021

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Referencing: Reproduction of this document is allowed with due acknowledgement. Please refer to the document as follows: European Commission (2021) National Road Safety Profile Estonia. Brussels, European Commission, Directorate General for Transport.

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1 Highlights

Road safety outcomes

- In 2019 a total of 52 people were killed in reported traffic accidents in Estonia.
- Estonia is 10th out of 27 EU countries in terms of the lowest numbers of fatalities per million inhabitants. Prior to 2009, the mortality rate in Estonia was still much higher than the EU average.
- Compared to the EU average, the distribution of fatalities in Estonia show a relatively high proportion of female victims and fatalities that occur on roads with snow or ice. The share of powered two-wheelers is smaller than the EU average.

Road safety performance indicators

- Road infrastructure in Estonia is characterized by relatively high road density compared to the EU average.
- Estonian passenger cars are significantly older than the EU average.

Road safety policy and measures

• Enforcement is more widely perceived as effective in comparison to other EU countries.

2 Road Safety Outcomes

2.1 General risk in traffic

In Estonia, a total of 52 people were killed in reported traffic accidents in 2019. Over the past ten years the number of fatalities decreased by 34%, which is more significant than the decrease in the European Union.

In terms of mortality rate, there were 39 road fatalities per million inhabitants in Estonia in 2019, which is below the EU average (51) and below the rates of all Eastern European countries. Prior to 2009, the mortality rate in Estonia was much higher than the EU average. Between 2007 and 2010 the mortality rate has decreased substantially.

Table 1. Number of road fatalities and serious injuries (2010 and 2019). Source: CARE





Figure 1. Number of road fatalities per million inhabitants (2019). Source: CARE & EUROSTAT



Figure 2. Number of road fatalities (2010-2019). Source: CARE





2.2 Transport modes¹

In 2019, car occupants accounted for only 39% of road traffic fatalities in Estonia. This percentage is smaller than that observed in the European Union as a whole (44%). Cyclists and powered two-wheelers represent only 12% of fatalities in Estonia, while they are 27% in the European Union. Occupants of lorries, heavy goods vehicles, buses and coaches on the other hand, account for 13% which is much more than the EU average (5%). There is also a high share of fatalities for which the transport mode is not known.

Of all vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and powered two-wheelers) in Estonia that were fatally injured, the majority (59%) was involved in a crash with a car. The overall number of fatalities in single vehicle crashes (i.e. only one vehicle and no other road user is involved) in Estonia has decreased a little more than in the European Union (by 25%).

¹For more details about the categories used in this subsection, please see section 6.2 Definitions.



Figure 4. Number of road fatalities by transport mode (2019). Source: CARE

Table 2. Average number of road fatalities by transport mode (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Transport mode	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Pedestrians	23	11	1	5,793	4,767	-18%
Cyclists	0	2	1	2,023	1,991	-2%
Powered two-wheelers	0	4	1	5,058	4,132	-18%
Car occupants	47	23	-51%	13,309	10,445	-22%
Lorries, under 3.5t	/	/	1	898	780	-13%
Heavy goods vehicles	1	3	1	590	408	-31%
Bus/coach occupants	2	1	1	102	98	-4%
Other/unknown	15	12	1	1,119	691	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

Table 3. Average number of fatalities among vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and mopeds) involved in crashes involving cars, buses or coaches, and lorries or heavy goods vehicles (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Crash type	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Crashes involving buses or coaches	2	0	1	258	201	-22%
Crashes involving cars	16	10	1	5,507	4,666	-15%
Crashes involving lorries or heavy goods vehicles	2	3	/	1,721	1,333	-23%

Table 4. Average number of road fatalities in urban areas by transport mode (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Transport mode	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Pedestrians	12	7	1	3,944	3,303	-16%
Cyclists	0	1	1	1,113	1,134	+2%
Powered two-wheelers	0	1	1	2,200	1,595	-28%
Car occupants	3	2	1	2,883	2,164	-25%
Lorries, under 3.5t	/	/	1	149	132	-11%
Heavy goods vehicles	0	0	1	82	31	-62%
Bus/coach occupants	0	1	1	24	27	+12%
Other/unknown	4	2	/	222	260	/
Total	20	15	-25%	10,730	8,837	-18%

Transport mode	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Cyclists	0	0	1	299	381	+27%
Powered two-wheelers	0	1	1	1,746	1,443	-17%
Car occupants	18	9	1	5,905	4,471	-24%
Lorries, under 3.5t	/	/	1	365	288	-21%
Heavy goods vehicles	0	0	1	241	147	-39%
Bus/coach occupants	1	0	/	40	35	-12%
Other/unknown	4	2	1	327	341	/
Total	23	12	/	8,923	7,106	-20%

Table 5. Average number of road fatalities in single vehicle crashes by transport mode (2010-2012 and 2017-2019).Source: CARE

2.3 Age

The distribution of road fatalities across age groups in Estonia is similar to that for the European Union.

Figure 5. Number of road fatalities by age group (2019). Source: CARE





Age	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
<15	2	2	/	744	499	-33%
15 - 17	1	0	/	761	493	-35%
18 - 24	14	4	/	4,399	2,755	-37%
25 - 49	30	23	-23%	10,458	7,915	-24%
50 - 64	24	13	1	5,273	4,891	-7%
65+	18	13	/	6,392	6,559	+3%
Unknown	0	0	1	738	148	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

2.4 Gender

As in the rest of the European Union, the majority of road fatalities in Estonia are male (67%), however their share is somewhat lower than in the European Union (77%). This gender pattern apparent throughout the EU can be explained by differences in relation to frequency of transport use and to behaviour.



Figure 6. Number of road fatalities by gender (2019). Source: CARE

Table 7. Average number of road fatalities by gender (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Gender	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Female	25	18	-28%	6,656	5,453	-18%
Male	64	38	-41%	21,523	17,764	-17%
Unknown	0	0	/	1,310	42	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

2.5 Area

The majority of road fatalities in Estonia occurred on rural roads (67%). This percentage is much higher than in the European Union as a whole. The share of fatalities on urban roads on the other hand is lower than the EU average. There are no motorways in Estonia. Over the past ten years, fatalities show a downward trend on both road types in Estonia, the decrease on rural roads was considerably larger than in the European Union.

Figure 7. Number of road fatalities by road type (2019). Source: CARE



Table 8. Average number of road fatalities by road type (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Road type	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Motorway	/	/	/	2,038	1,969	-3%
Rural	70	41	-41%	15,205	12,200	-20%
Urban	20	15	-25%	10,730	8,837	-18%
Unknown	87	/	/	770	321	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

2.6 Time ²

The distribution of fatalities by day of the week and time of the day is slightly different from the EU average: the country shows a smaller proportion of fatalities that occur in the night-time during the weekend (6%) than in the European Union (11%).



Figure 8. Number of road fatalities by period of time (2019). Source: CARE



Period of time	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Working week - daytime	51	34	-33%	15,404	13,265	-14%
Working week - night-time	7	4	/	2,566	1,980	-23%
Weekend - daytime	23	15	-35%	6,353	5,383	-15%
Weekend - night-time	9	3	/	3,540	2,593	-27%
Unknown	/	/	/	4,071	662	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

2.7 Road conditions

As in the rest of the European Union, the majority of road fatalities in Estonia occur on dry roads. Snow, frost, ice and slush account for 12% of road fatalities, which is higher than in the European Union as a whole. Regarding light conditions, 27% of fatalities occur when it is dark, which is similar to the EU average.





²For more details about the time periods used in this subsection, please see section 6.2 Definitions.

Surface conditions	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Dry	52	37	-29%	21,091	17,711	-16%
Snow, frost, ice, slush	18	6	/	988	442	-55%
Wet, damp	20	10	/	5,636	4,663	-17%
Other/unknown	44	3	/	2,458	446	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

Table 10. Average number of road fatalities by surface conditions (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Figure 10. Number of road fatalities by light conditions (2019). Source: CARE



Table 11. Average number of road fatalities by light conditions (2010-2012 and 2017-2019). Source: CARE

Light conditions	2010 - 2012	2017 - 2019	Trend	EU 2010 - 2012	EU 2017 - 2019	EU trend
Darkness	22	16	-27%	8,918	6,782	-24%
Daylight	67	39	-42%	13,706	11,932	-13%
Twilight	/	/	/	1,498	1,228	-18%
Unknown	0	0	1	5,301	3,908	/
Total	89	56	-37%	28,291	23,133	-18%

3 Road safety performance indicators

3.1 Behaviour of road users

Most of the road safety performance indicators regarding behaviour in traffic are based on self-reported behaviour from an Estonian survey. Self-reported data from other European countries are collected in the ESRA-survey (E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes). The indicators for Estonia cannot be compared to the ESRA-data of other European countries because of differences in methodologies.

Estonian surveys on self-reported behavior lead to the following indicators (data for 2020):

- 27% of drivers report to have been speeding over the speed limit by more than 5 km/h on main roads, 19% on minor roads and 10% in urban areas;
- 3% of drivers have been driving under the influence of alcohol at least once within a year;
- 2% of drivers, 1% of front seat passengers, 13% of rear seat passengers and 52% of bus passengers are not wearing a seat belt;
- 71% of adult cyclists and 21% of children are not wearing a cycle helmet;
- 12% use a hand-held mobile phone while driving.

3.1.1 Speeding

 Table 12.
 Observed speeding.
 Source: ETSC (2017)

	Mean speed (km/h)	Percentage offenders
Rural roads (90km/h)	89	27%

Figure 11. Percentage of car drivers that say they have driven faster than the speed limit outside built-up areas (but not on motorways/freeways) at least once in the last 30 days. Source: ESRA (2018)



3.1.2 Driving under the influence

Figure 12. Percentage of car drivers that say they have driven at least once in the last 30 days when they may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving. Source: ESRA (2018)



3.1.3 Use of protective systems

Figure 13. Percentage of car passengers that say they always wore their seatbelt in the back seat in the last 30 days. Source: ESRA (2018)





Figure 14. Percentage of cyclists that say they always cycled with a helmet in the last 30 days. Source: ESRA (2018)

3.1.4 Distraction

Figure 15. Percentage of car drivers that say they have at least once in the last 30 days talked on a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Source: ESRA (2018)



3.2 Infrastructure

The overall road network in Estonia shows relatively high road density in comparison with the EU average. The indicator for the quality of road infrastructure is based on the judgements made by road users themselves. For Estonia, a score of 4.7 (on a value scale from 1 to 7) is given, which is average compared to other countries.

3.2.1 Road density

Table 13. Road density. Source: EUROSTAT (2017)

	Estonia	European Union
Inside built-up areas	115 km road/1000 km²	150 km road/1000 km²
Outside built-up areas	1187 km road/1000 km ²	609 km road/1000 km²
Total	1303 km road/1000 km ²	942 km road/1000 km ²

3.2.2 Road quality

Figure 16. Perceived quality of the road infrastructure (1 = extremely poor, 7 = among the best in the world). Source: World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey (2017-2018)



3.3 Vehicle fleet

The size of the Estonian vehicle fleet, expressed per 100 inhabitants, is slightly larger than the EU average. Regarding the age of the vehicles, Estonian passenger cars appear to be considerably older than the EU average, with 70% passenger cars over 10 years.

Table 14. Number of registered vehicles per 100 inhabitants. Source: EUROSTAT (2019)

	Estonia	European Union
Lorries	9	7
Road tractors	1	1
Trailers and semi-trailers	9	4
Motorcycles	3	6
Passenger cars	60	54
Motor coaches, buses and trolley buses	0	0

	Estonia	European Union
Percentage of total number of passenger cars		
Less than 2 years	6%	12%
From 2 to 5 years	9%	15%
From 5 to 10 years	15%	21%
From 10 to 20 years	39%	42%
Over 20 years	31%	11%

Table 15. Age of registered passenger cars. Source: EUROSTAT (2019)

4 Road safety policy and measures

4.1 Legislation

National road safety legislation in Estonia reflects the situation in the majority of EU countries with one exception. The alcohol limit for the general population is 0.2 g/l which is stricter than in most EU countries that have a limit of 0.5 g/l.

Table 16. National road safety legislation. Source: WHO (2018)

	Estonia	EU countries
Speed limits for passenger cars	1	
Urban roads	50 km/h	50 km/h: 26; 65 km/h: 1
Rural roads	90 km/h	110 km/h: 2; 100 km/h: 3; 90 km/h: 17; 80 km/h: 4
Motorways	/	No limit1; 140 km/h: 2; 130 km/h: 14; 120 km/h: 6; 100 km/h: 1
Allowed BAC (blood alcohol concentration	n) levels	
General population	0.2 g/l	0 g/l: 2; 0.2 g/l: 3; 0.3 g/l: 1; 0.4 g/l: 1; 0.5 g/l: 19; 0.8 g/l: 1
Novice drivers	0.2 g/l	0 g/l: 7; 0.1 g/l: 1; 0.2 g/l: 12; 0.3 g/l: 2; 0.5 g/l: 4; 0.8 g/l: 1
Professional drivers	0.2 g/l	0 g/l: 6; 0.1 g/l: 1; 0.2 g/l: 10; 0.3 g/l: 2; 0.5 g/l: 7; 0.8 g/l: 1
Seatbelt requirement		
Drivers	Yes	Yes: 27; No: 0
Front passengers	Yes	Yes: 27; No: 0
Rear passengers	Yes	Yes: 27; No: 0
Transport of children		
Child restraint required	Use of an appropriate safety system (CRS or seat belt) based on the height or weight of the child	Up to 150 cm: 13; Up to 135 cm: 3; Up to 10 yrs: 1
Children in front seat of passenger cars	Not restricted	Prohibited under 10 yrs: 1; Prohibited under 12 yrs o 135 cm: 1; Prohibited under 150 cm: 1; Prohibited under 135 cm: 1; Allowed in a child restraint: 22; Not restricted: 1
Children passengers on motorcycles	Prohibited under 12 yrs	Not restricted: 9; Prohibited under certain age/height 18
Motorcycle helmets	J	
Applies to driver	Yes	Yes: 27; No: 0
Applies to passengers	Yes	Yes: 27; No: 0
Applies to all roads	Yes	Yes: 27; No: 0
Applies to all engines	Yes	Yes: 25; No: 2
Helmet fastening required	Yes	Yes: 18; No: 9
Standard referred to and / or specified	Yes	Yes: 19; No: 8
Mobile phone restriction		
Applies to hand-held phone use	Yes	Yes: 26; No: 1
Applies to hands-free phone use	No	Yes: 0; No: 27

4.2 Enforcement

According to an international respondent consensus, in which the effectiveness of road safety enforcement is measured on a ten-point scale, Estonia scores above the EU average for almost all legislation surveyed.

Table 17. Effectiveness of enforcement according to an international respondent consensus (scale = 0-10). Source:WHO (2018)

	Estonia	European average
Speed legislation	7	6.8
Drink-driving legislation	8	7
Seatbelt legislation	7	7
Child restraint system legislation	8	7
Motorcycle helmet legislation	9	8

4.3 Road infrastructure

 Table 18. Infrastructure-related policy. Source: WHO (2018)

	Estonia	EU countries
Audits or star rating required for new road infrastructure	Partial	Yes: 10 Partial: 17
Inspections / star rating of existing roads	Yes	Yes: 26 No: 1
Design standards for the safety of pedestrians / cyclists	Yes	Yes: 25 Partial: 2 No: 0
Investments to upgrade high risk locations	Yes	Yes: 20 No: 7
Policies & investment in urban public transport	No	Yes: 23 No: 4
Policies promoting walking and cycling	Yes	Yes: 21 Subnational: 3 No: 3

4.4 Post-crash care

Table 19. Policy related to post-crash care. Source: WHO (2018)

	Estonia	EU countries
Trauma registry	None	National: 13 Subnational: 4
		Some facilities: 0 None: 7
National assessment of emergency care system	No	Yes: 9 No: 18
Provider training and certification - Prehospital providers -	No	Yes: 19 No: 6
Formal certification pathway		
Provider training and certification - Nurses - Post graduate courses in emergency and trauma care	Yes	Yes: 21 No: 5
Provider training and certification - Specialist doctors - Emergency medicine	Yes	Yes: 21 Subnational: 0

5 Structure and culture

5.1 Country characteristics

Population density in Estonia is below the EU average, and its population is mainly settled in cities. Its GDP per capita is below that of the European Union.

Table 20. Country characteristics. Source: EUROSTAT and IRTAD

	Estonia	European Union
Population-related data (2020)		
Population (2020)	1328976	447319916
Population density (inhabitants/km ²)	29	106
% Children (0-14)	16%	15%
% Adults (15-64)	64%	64%
% Elderly (65+)	20%	21%
Urbanization (2019)		<u> </u>
% living in cities	61%	38%
% living in suburbs and towns	9%	34%
% living in rural areas	30%	28%
Economic data		
GDP per capita (EUR, 2020)	20442.0	29768.3
Unemployment rate (2020)	7%	7%
% GDP dedicated to road spending (2019)	0.9%	0.6%

5.2 Structure of road safety management

Table 21. Road safety management structure. Source: National sources

Key functions	Key actors	
	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications	
Formulation of national road safety strategy	The Governments: responsible for setting targets	
	Estonian Transport Agency (ETA): responsible for the	
	formulation and the development of the national RS strategies	
Monitoring of the road safety development	ETA	
Improvements in road infrastructure	ETA: national roads	
Improvements in road innastructure	Local governments: local roads	
Improvement in vehicles	Motor Vehicle Registration Centre of ETA: driver licensing and	
	motor vehicles registration activities	
Improvement in road user education	Police and ETA	
improvement in road user education	Ministry of Education and Research	
	ETA (National)	
Publicity campaigns	Police and Border Guard Board	
	Regional and local authorities: regional and local campaigns.	
Enforcement of traffic laws	Police and Border Guard Board	
	The Ministry of Health	
	Research: e.g. Tallinn Technical University, the University of	
	Tartu, the University of Tallinn, Tallinn University of Applied	
Other relevant actors	Sciences	
	The Ministry of Justice	

6 Notes

6.1 Data sources

CARE

(Community database on Accidents on the Roads in Europe) All information in part 1 of this document (road safety outcomes) is based on data in the CARE database. The European average is based on the average of the 27 EU countries. Date of extraction: 26th of March, 2021. There may be small discrepancies between the CARE data presented in the report and the accident data published in national reports.

ESRA (E-Survey of Road Users' Attitudes)

The European average is the average of 20 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) https://www.esranet. eu/en/

ETSC (European Transport Safety Council)

Car safety data was retrieved from https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/PIN-Flash-30-Final.pdf Data about speeding was retrieved from https://www.etsc.eu/pinflash36

IRTAD (International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group)

Data is retrieved from the OECD database: https://stats.oecd.org/ Date of extraction: 7th of August 2020

WHO (World Health Organization)

The data are retrieved from the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety that was published in 2018. The European average is based on the average of the 27 EU countries. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en/

World Economic Forum

Data is retrieved from http://reports.weforum.org/pdf/gci-2017-2018-scorecard/WEF_GCI_2 017_2018_Scorecard_EOSQ057.pdf

6.2 **Definitions**

Accident / Crash

Any accident involving at least one road vehicle in motion on a public road or private road to which the public has right of access, resulting in at least one injured or killed person (Source: UNECE/ITF/Eurostat Glossary). Note: the definition of "injury" varies considerably among EU countries thus affecting the reliability of cross country comparisons.

Bicycle

Vehicle with at least 2 wheels, without engine. In some cases it can also use electric power.

Bus or Coach

Bus: passenger-carrying vehicle, most commonly used for public transport, having more than 16 seats for passengers. Coach: passenger-carrying vehicle, having more than 16 seats for

passengers. Most commonly used for interurban movements and tourist trips. To differentiate from other types of bus, a coach has a luggage hold separate from the passenger cabin.

CARE EU Average and aggregated numbers

In the second section "Road safety outcomes", we provide EU averages and aggregated figures based on the most recent figures available (2019). However, as some countries have not yet provided their official data for that year, we have produced the EU averages and aggregated data by imputing figures based on data from previous years. The aggregated EU averages and figures in this report may therefore differ slightly from the aggregated averages and figures for 2019 that will be published in the future.

Fatal crash

Crash with at least one person killed regardless the injury severity of any other persons involved.

Fatalities

Total number of persons fatally injured within 30 days of the road crash; correction factors applied when needed. Confirmed suicide and natural death are not included.

Lorry, under 3.5 tonnes

Goods vehicle under 3.5t maximum gross weight. Smaller motor vehicle used only for the transport of goods.

Pedestrian

Person on foot. Included are occupants or persons pushing or pulling a child's carriage, an invalid chair, or any other small vehicle without an engine. Also included are persons pushing a cycle, moped, roller-skating, skateboarding, skiing or using similar devices. Does not include persons in the act of boarding or alighting from a vehicle. (Source: UNECE/ITF/Eurostat Glossary and CADAS Glossary) Unilateral pedestrian crashes (e.g. pedestrian falls) are excluded.

Powered two-wheelers

Driver or passenger of either a moped (two or three wheeled vehicle equipped with engine size of maximum 50cc and maximum speed that does not exceed 45 km/h. A moped can also have an electric motor. Speed pedelecs and electric powered bicycles that offer pedal assistance up to 45 km/h, also belong to this category of vehicles.) or a motorcycle (motor vehicle with two or three wheels, with an engine size of more than 50 cc. A motorcycle can also have an electric motor.).

Seriously injured (at least 30 days)

The CARE database includes the number of persons seriously injured who have been hospitalised for at least 24 hours. An alternative source is MAIS (Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale) which is a globally accepted trauma scale used by medical professionals. The injury score is determined at the hospital with the help of a detailed classification key. The score ranges from 1 to 6, with levels 3 to 6 considered as serious injuries.

Working week – Daytime

Monday to Friday 6.00 a.m. to 9.59 p.m.

Working week - Night-time

Monday 10 p.m. to Tuesday 5.59 a.m. Tuesday 10 p.m. to Wednesday 5.59 a.m. Wednesday 10 p.m. to Thursday 5.59 a.m. Thursday 10 p.m. to Friday 5.59 a.m.

Weekend - Daytime

Saturday to Sunday 6.00 a.m. to 9.59 p.m.

Weekend - Night-time

Friday 10 p.m. to Saturday 5.59 a.m. Saturday 10 p.m. to Sunday 5.59 a.m. Sunday 10 p.m. to Monday 5.59 a.m.