

road safety issues

July 2003

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1998–2002 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and to identify possible ways to reduce the number of road deaths and injuries in the Ruapehu District.

In 2002, the Ruapehu District experienced an overall increase in the number of motor vehicle crash casualties compared with 2001. During the five-year period 1998–2002, 22 people were killed and 104 seriously injured in road crashes. Eighty percent of these crashes occurred on the open road with the occupants of cars and vans making up 86 percent of all casualties.

Between 1998 and 2002, over 70 percent of rural crashes involved drivers losing control of a vehicle. A number of these loss of control crashes involved speed too fast for conditions as a contributing factor and the percentage of speed-related crashes in the region has been increasing over the past three years to 25 percent. Crashes in the district involving drink-driving made up over 18 percent of all crashes between 1998 and 2002.

The estimated social cost of crashes in the Ruapehu District in 2002 was \$26.4 million, an overall decrease from the previous year despite an increase in the social cost of crashes on the state highway network.

Both national and local road safety issues are identified below with the specific issues for the Ruapehu District considered in detail overleaf.

Major road safety issues

Ruapehu District

Speed
Alcohol
Loss of control

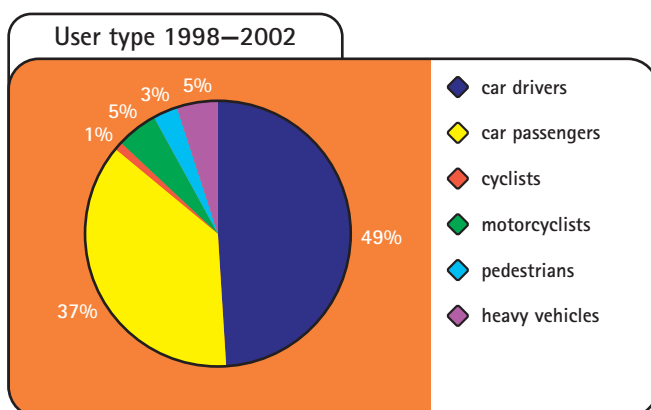
Nationally

Speed
Alcohol
Failure to give way
Restraints

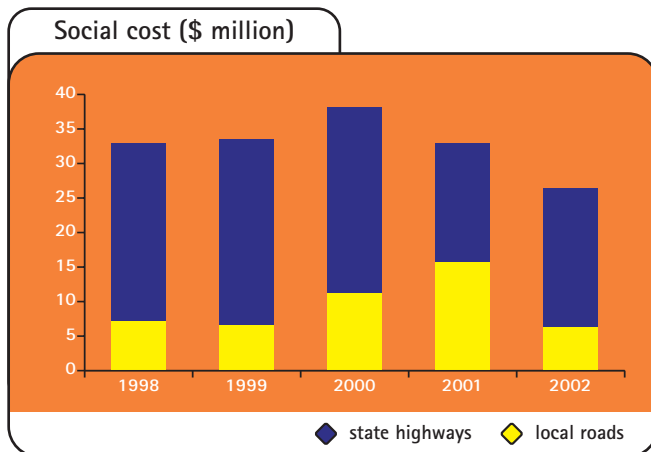
2002 road trauma for Ruapehu District

Deaths	2
Serious casualties	18
Minor casualties	87
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Fatal crashes	2
Serious injury crashes	14
Minor-injury crashes	54
Non-injury crashes	125

Road casualties 1998–2002



Estimated social cost of crashes*



* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2002 prices.

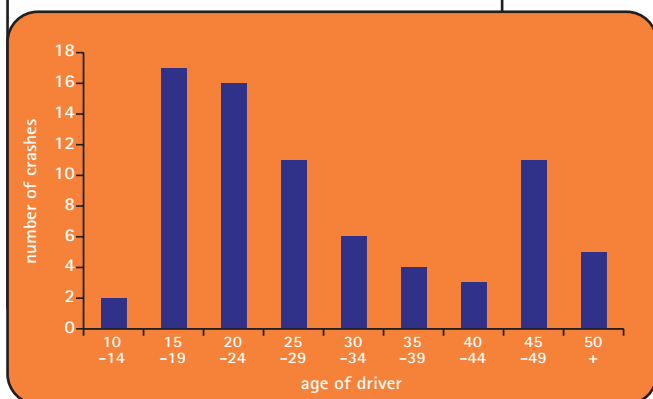
Speed

Although not necessarily the cause of a crash, speed too fast for conditions was a contributory factor in a quarter of all injury crashes in the Ruapehu District between 1998 and 2002. Speed is likely to increase the severity of a crash (32 percent of speed-related crashes resulted in death or serious injury). It can also increase the stopping distance if emergency braking is needed, causing a crash to occur which would have otherwise been avoided.

Eighty-two percent of speed-related crashes occurred in rural areas with 62 percent of all speed-related crashes occurring on the state highway network – 33 percent occurred on SH 4.

Almost 60 percent of speed too fast for conditions crashes involved a 15 to 29 year old driver and almost 70 percent of these drivers were male. Speed-related crashes were evenly spread throughout the day with the exception of 5 pm to 6 pm when there was a noticeable peak in such crashes.

Age of speed-related crash casualties 1998–2002



Recommended actions

- Support enforcement campaigns aimed at speed control, especially during high-risk times such as 5 pm to 6 pm.
- Encourage increased enforcement of speed limits in rural areas.
- Deliver education programmes targeted at young male drivers.
- Conduct crash reduction studies of known black spots and routes.



Alcohol

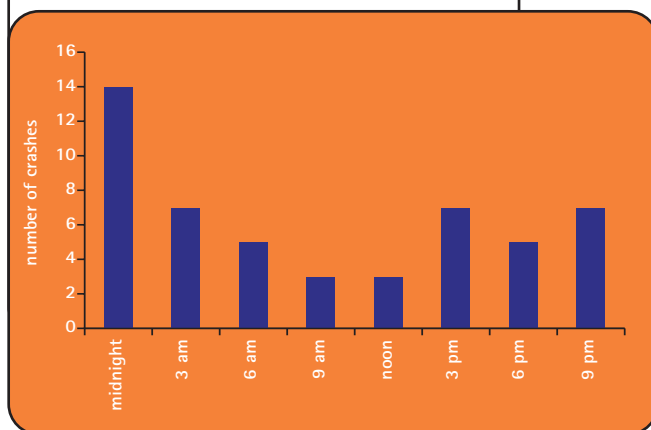
Unlike other crash causes, drink-driving is a choice that is made by a driver before getting into a vehicle. In 18 percent of injury crashes between 1998 and 2002 in the Ruapehu District, drivers had made the decision to drink and drive.

Over 70 percent of alcohol-involved crashes were on rural roads and 38 percent of them also involved speed too fast for conditions.

Drivers in the 15 to 29 year old age range were involved in over 60 percent of the drink-driving crashes and just under two thirds of all alcohol-related crashes involved male drivers.

Almost a third of drink-driving crashes in the Ruapehu District happened during the early morning hours of Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Overall, 56 percent occurred in the weekend.

Alcohol-related crashes by time of day 1998–2002



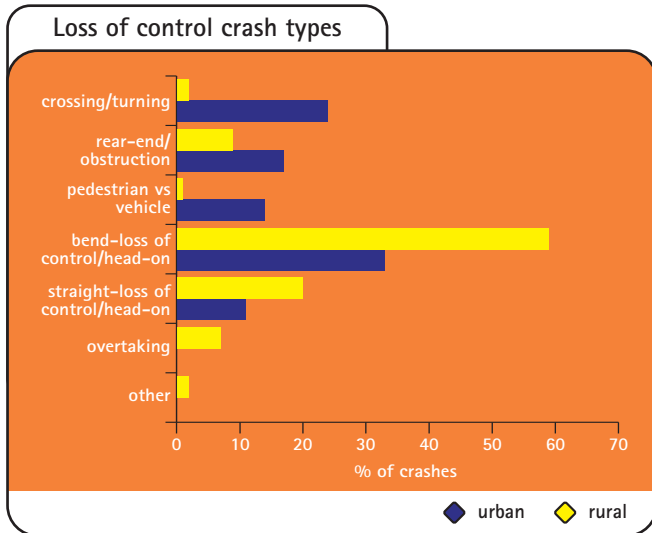
Recommended actions

- Continue to support drink-driving strategic enforcement campaigns, especially on rural roads and at night.
- Encourage community education and advertising campaigns targeting young male drivers.
- Conduct crash studies to determine whether road improvements can help.
- Continue to support the Police's risk targeted patrol planning.
- Support the use of roving roadblocks and the booze bus in the district.
- Encourage campaigns aimed at rural communities.



Loss of control

In the Ruapehu District, 224 injury crashes between 1998 and 2002 were due to drivers losing control of a vehicle. While such crashes often involved contributory factors such as speed too fast for conditions and/or alcohol, almost 60 percent of the loss of control crashes involved neither of these factors.



Road issues were identified as contributory factors in over a third of these crashes with just over half of them due to the road being slippery because of rain, frost or ice.

Loss of control crashes can result in either a head-on collision with another vehicle or the vehicle leaving the road. Less than 20 percent of the loss of control crashes resulted in a head-on collision. Most of the remaining crashes resulted in a vehicle striking a roadside object. Twenty-three percent of the loss of control crashes resulted in a cliff or bank being struck, and a further 17 percent resulted in a fence being struck.

Recommended actions

- Support campaigns on adjusting drivers' speed for different driving conditions.
- Investigate ways to reduce the number of crashes into cliffs, banks and fences.
- Investigate sites where neither speed nor alcohol has played a part in the crashes. Signage, road markings or surface faults could be identified.

New Zealand Road Safety Programme

Reducing road trauma involves a multi-pronged approach, which includes education, engineering and enforcement. The New Zealand Road Safety Programme (NZRSP) is the primary planning and funding programme for road safety activity undertaken by the New Zealand Police, the LTSA and community groups. Transfund New Zealand provides funding to Transit New Zealand and local authorities for roading projects through its National Land Transport Programme.

Community Road Safety Programme

Through the Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) the NZRSP provides funding for community development and community programmes to support road safety and to bring about positive and sustainable changes in community attitudes and behaviours. CRSP funding of community development aims to encourage local involvement and ownership of road safety issues. This year's review of the programme initiates a re-focus of effort and funding into community development. This involves working with and within different communities of people to assist them in becoming aware of their own local road safety issues and developing solutions to achieve better road safety outcomes.

There is a community development general fund allocation for the Manawatu Wanganui Region of \$271,500, as well as a community development dedicated fund of \$61,500. Road Safe Central, the inter-agency group responsible for regional road safety, has developed a road safety action plan for 2003/2004, where projects and initiatives will be developed and funding will be allocated to them during the year.

CRSP programmes are established, community-based road safety initiatives, which meet community needs. They address road safety issues and enhance road safety in the community, eg Safe with Age, child restraints and driver licence schemes. The LTSA's general and dedicated programme allocation for the Manawatu Wanganui Region is \$178,000. The LTSA allocates funds upon application.

Road policing

Police enforcement hours to support community projects are now allocated to police community services hours rather than to individual projects. The delivery of these hours to support community projects will need to be negotiated by the road safety co-ordinator.

In 2003/2004, the Police are funded to deliver 9,000 hours of road policing in the Ruapehu District (the same as in 2002/2003) as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	7,280
Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events	1,310
School road safety education	210
Police community services	200

Road environment

The Ruapehu District has an allocation for minor safety projects on local roads in Transfund New Zealand's National Land Transport Programme 2003/2004.

Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in the Ruapehu District, please refer to the 1998 to 2002 Road Safety Data Report or the LTSA Crash Analysis System, or contact the people or organisations listed below:

Contacts

Land Transport Safety Authority Regional Manager Darryl Harwood Phone 06 350 1889	Transit New Zealand Regional Manager Errol Christiansen PO Box 345, Wanganui Phone 06 345 4173
Road Safety Engineer Dave Curson Phone 06 356 5016 ext. 6505	Accident Compensation Corporation Injury Prevention Consultant Brigid Crowley PO Box 435, Wanganui Phone 06 349 0416
CRSP Regional Liaison Officer Barbara Broederlow Phone 06 350 1899	

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