

road safety issues

Ruapehu District

Land Transport New Zealand has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 2001–2005 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues in the Ruapehu District.

The number of people killed or injured on the road network in the Ruapehu District reduced from 107 in 2004 to 83 in 2005. These deaths and injuries last year were the result of 44 injury crashes; a reduction from 64 in 2004. There were three deaths in 2005 compared to six in 2004.

Occupants of cars were the largest casualty group, accounting for 86 percent of all road user casualties. Female casualties aged 15–19 years were significantly higher than national and similar authorities averages.

In the five-year period from 2001–2005, 37 percent of urban injury crashes involved crossing and turning movements. Eighty-eight percent of rural injury crashes involved drivers losing control of their vehicle.

Crash rates for July, August and September between 2001 and 2005 were approximately 30 percent higher than the national and similar authorities averages. In 2005, the estimated social cost of crashes in the Ruapehu District was \$28 million.

Both national and local road safety issues are identified below. Specific issues relating to the Ruapehu District are considered overleaf. National issues are discussed on the back page.

Major road safety issues

Ruapehu District

Loss of control

Speed

Road factors

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2005 road trauma for Ruapehu District



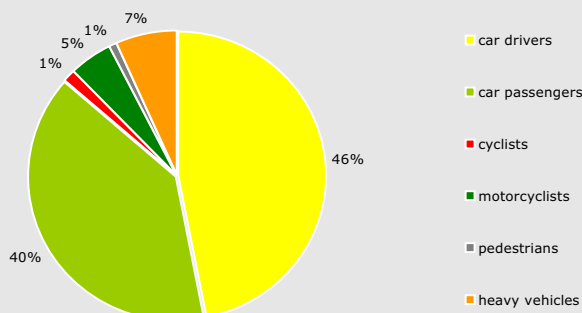
Deaths	3
Serious casualties	22
Minor casualties	58



Fatal crashes	3
Serious injury crashes	17
Minor injury crashes	24
Non-injury crashes	117

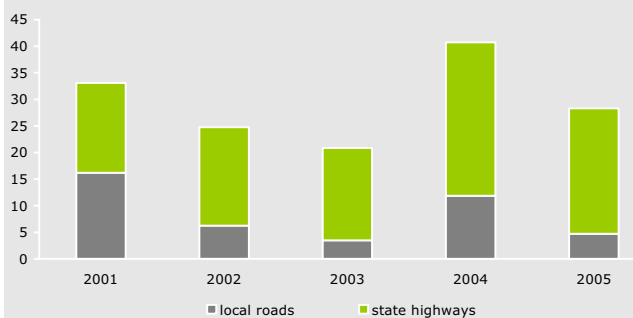
Road casualties 2001–2005

User type 2001–2005



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)



* 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 2005 prices.

Loss of control

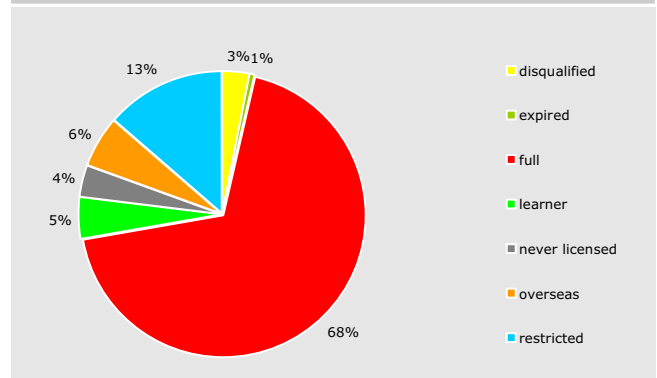
Between 2001 and 2005, over 80 percent of injury crashes in the Ruapehu District involved a driver losing control of their vehicle either on a bend or on a straight road. In rural areas, two-thirds of injury crashes involved drivers losing control on a bend. This was significantly higher than for other similar districts and for all of New Zealand. An additional 22 percent of rural injury crashes involved drivers losing control on a straight. All 18 deaths in the Ruapehu District during the last five years involved loss of control. There were an additional 71 serious casualties and 213 minor casualties during this time involving loss of control.

Loss of control crashes can result in either a head-on collision with another vehicle or the vehicle leaving the road, potentially resulting in a collision with a roadside object. This may increase the severity of a crash.

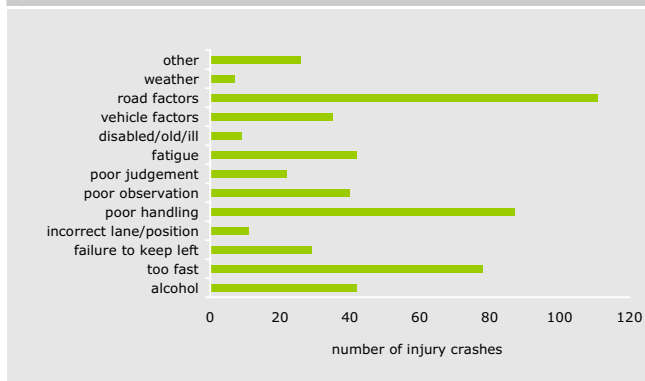
The most common roadside hazards hit in the Ruapehu District in loss of control crashes were cliffs, banks, fences, trees and ditches.

Travelling too fast for the conditions, alcohol, poor handling, poor observation and fatigue were the main contributory factors in loss of control injury crashes over this five-year period.

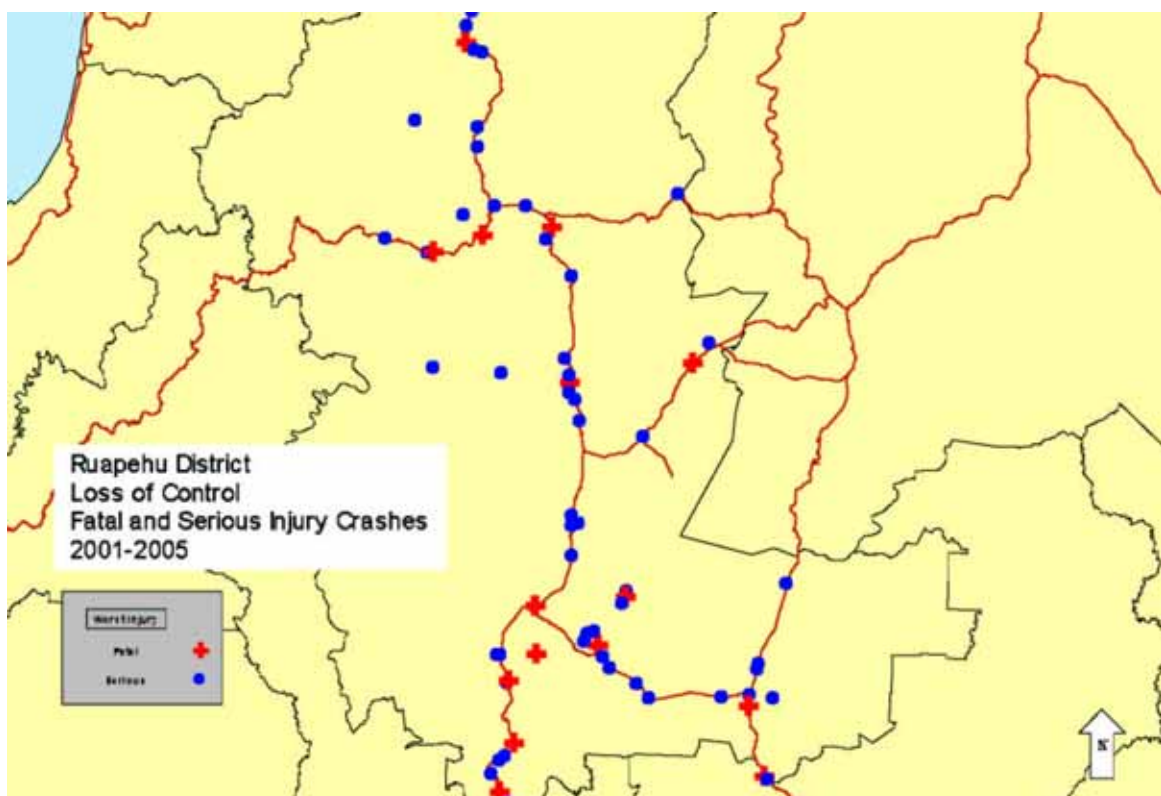
Licence status in loss of control injury crashes 2001–2005



Factors in loss of control injury crashes 2001–2005



From 2001 to 2005, young drivers in the 15–19 and 20–24 year age groups were involved in the highest number of loss of control crashes. Where driver licence details were recorded, more than a quarter of drivers losing control of their vehicles did not hold a full licence.



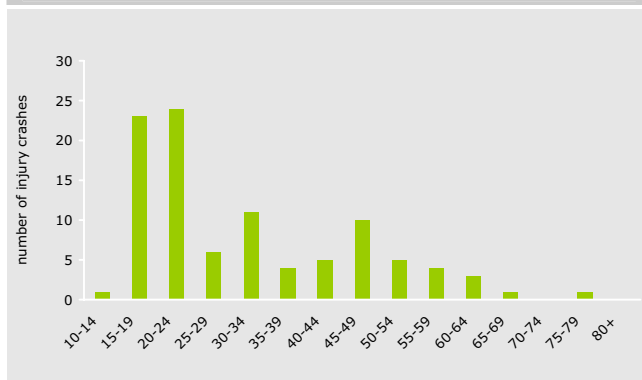
Speed

The faster drivers go, the more likely they are to crash and the greater the risk of injury or death.

From 2001–2005, excessive speed was a factor in 29 percent of injury crashes in the Ruapehu District, compared with 17 percent of injury crashes nationally over the same period. Eighty-five percent of speed-related injury crashes were in rural areas and 15 percent in urban areas.

Three-quarters of drivers involved in speed-related injury crashes between 2001 and 2005 were male. Male drivers aged 15 to 19 years were involved in 15 percent of speed-related injury crashes and males aged 20 to 24 years were involved in 21 percent. Eight percent of speed-related injury crashes involved a female driver aged 15 to 19 years.

Driver age in speed-related injury crashes 2001–2005

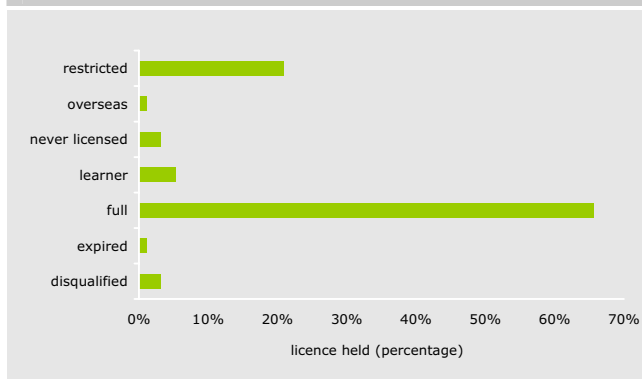


Alcohol was found to be a factor in 22 percent of speed-related injury crashes in the Ruapehu District between 2001 and 2005.

Thirty-two percent of drivers involved in speed-related injury crashes between 2001 and 2005 did not hold a full drivers licence.

Forty-five percent of speed-related injury crashes occurred at night and 42 percent occurred during wet conditions.

Licence status in speed-related injury crashes 2001–2005

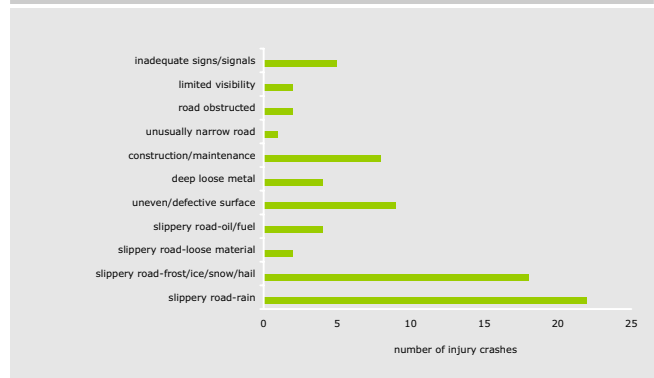


Road factors

Road factors contributed to 22 percent of all injury crashes in the Ruapehu District between 2001 and 2005. Road factors include:

- a slippery road surface due to rain, frost, ice, loose metal on seal, oil and fuel, defective surface etc
- a road obstructed due to a slip, subsidence or flooding
- visibility limited by a curve or crest in the road
- deep loose metal on an unsealed road
- an uneven road surface
- a road surface under construction or maintenance
- inadequate signs and signalling
- an unusually narrow road.

Road factor causes in injury crashes 2001–2005



Between 2001 and 2005, road factors contributed to three fatal crashes and 12 serious injury crashes in the Ruapehu District.

Eighty-eight percent of injury crashes where road factors were identified as a cause occurred on sealed roads and 94 percent occurred in rural areas.

Twenty-two of the 64 injury crashes in the Ruapehu District between 2001 and 2005 where road factors were identified as a contributing factor involved a slippery road due to rain and a further 29 involved a slippery road due to other causes. Eight injury crashes involved a road surface under construction or maintenance and five involved poor signage and signalling.

Forty-eight percent of injury crashes where road factors were identified as a cause occurred on a weekend.

Factors relating to driver behaviour including driving too fast for the conditions, poor handling, poor observation, poor judgement and alcohol commonly feature in the Ruapehu District injury crashes involving road factors.

National issues

Speed

The faster drivers go, the more likely they are to crash and the greater the risk of serious injury or death. Speed was a particular issue on rural roads in the Ruapehu District from 2001–2005.

During this period, speed too fast for the conditions was a factor in 29 percent of injury crashes in the Ruapehu District, which was higher than for all roads in New Zealand, and similar authorities.

Alcohol

Alcohol has a big effect on the way people drive. People that drink and drive (with a blood alcohol level over 80 mg per 100 ml) are three times more likely to be involved in a crash than a sober driver.

Between 2001 and 2005, alcohol was identified as a factor in 14 percent of injury crashes on roads in the Ruapehu District.

Failure to give way

While most failure to give way crashes result in non-injury or minor injury crashes, many can have serious consequences. Six percent of injury crashes on roads in the Ruapehu District between 2001 and 2005 involved drivers failing to give way.



Restraints

Wearing a safety belt reduces your chance of death or serious injury in a crash by 40 percent. Whether you sit in the front or the back seat, the risk of serious or fatal injury is virtually the same.

Results from the 2005 national restraint wearing survey showed that the national average of front seat safety belt wearing for adults was 95 percent, compared to 93 percent for the Ruapehu District.

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