

# road safety issues

## Tararua 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 Tararua District.**

One hundred and six people were killed or injured in road crashes in the Tararua District during 2005. This was the highest number of casualties for seven years. The number killed or seriously injured almost doubled from 18 in 2004 to 33 in 2005. The increase was mainly associated with crashes in the rural area.

Car occupants were the main casualty group comprising 80 percent of all road-user casualties from 2001–2005. At nine percent, motorcyclists are the next largest group followed by pedestrians at five percent.

Seventy-nine percent of injury crashes in the Tararua District from 2001–2005 occurred in the rural area, and over 60 percent of these involved a driver losing control of their vehicle on a bend. Sixty-eight percent of crashes in the urban area occurred at an intersection or driveway.

The estimated social cost of crashes in the Tararua District was \$32 million in 2005.

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

### Major road safety issues

#### Tararua District

Rural crashes

Loss of control on bends

General issues

#### Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



### 2005 road trauma for Tararua District



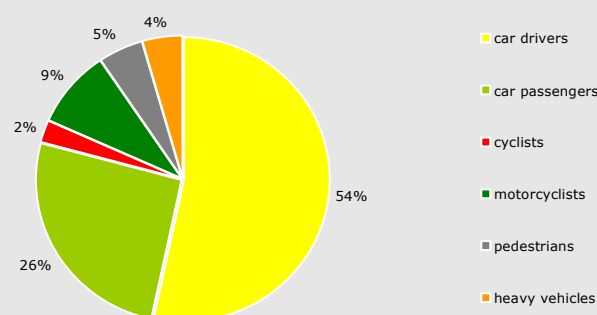
Deaths	5
Serious casualties	28
Minor casualties	73



Fatal crashes	3
Serious injury crashes	20
Minor injury crashes	40
Non-injury crashes	130

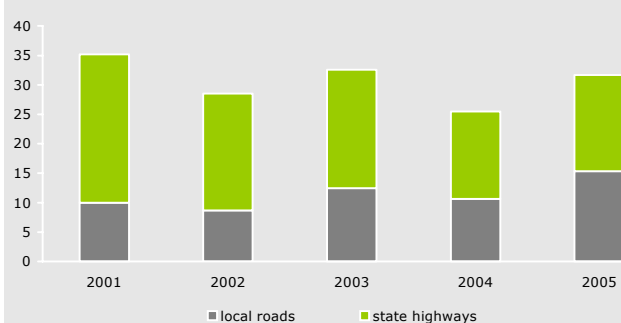
### Road casualties 2001–2005

#### 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.

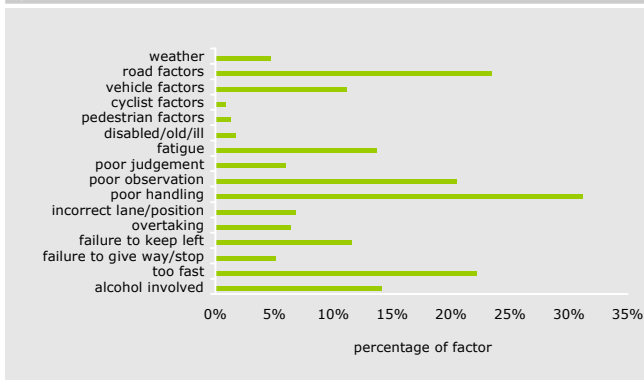
## Rural crashes

Three-quarters of injury crashes in the Tararua District between 2001 and 2005 occurred on rural roads. Over this five-year period, there were 234 injury crashes on rural roads resulting in 103 deaths or serious injuries, and 246 minor injuries.

Cars were involved in 72 percent of crashes and 24 percent involved a van or ute. Sixteen percent of crashes involved trucks and 11 percent involved motorcycles.

Sixty-two percent of rural crashes involved drivers losing control of their vehicle on a bend. Another 16 percent lost control or had a head-on crash on the straight. Eight percent crashed while overtaking and seven percent involved a rear-end crash or a collision with an obstruction. Most occurred during daylight hours (68 percent) and in dry conditions (71 percent).

### Contributing factors in rural crashes 2001–2005



The most common driver factor contributing to injury crashes in rural areas was poor handling (31 percent) and the number of crashes involving this factor has been increasing since 2000. Other common factors were speed (22 percent) and poor observation (21 percent). Historically, fatigue has been a factor in around five rural injury crashes per year. However, in 2005 there were 12 crashes where fatigue was attributed as a factor. This issue should be monitored to ensure a trend is not developing.

Road factors were recorded in 24 percent of rural injury crashes (55 crashes). Factors associated with a slippery surface (rain, frost, oil, etc) accounted for over half the road factors. Other common road factors related to the road surface (loose metal, road under maintenance, unusually narrow road) and limited visibility (by curve, crest, bank or trees); each comprising 20 percent of road factors used.

Less than 60 percent of drivers involved in rural injury crashes had a full licence. A quarter of drivers were on a learner or restricted licence. Approximately 70 percent of rural crashes involved a collision with a fixed object. While this proportion is comparable with that for similar authorities, it is higher than that for the rest of New Zealand.

## Loss of control on bends

Half the injury crashes in the Tararua District between 2001 and 2005 involved a driver losing control of their vehicle on a bend. Over this five-year period, there were 156 injury crashes resulting in 12 deaths, 62 serious injuries and 165 minor injuries.

Crash and casualty numbers for loss of control on bend crashes have been increasing since 2000.

### Loss of control on bends 1996–2005



Ninety-two percent of loss of control on bend crashes occurred on rural roads – these were evenly split between local roads and state highways.

Sixty-nine percent of injury crashes involving loss of control on bends involved a vehicle hitting a roadside object; the most common were fences, ditches, banks, cliffs and poles. Eight people died and 50 were seriously injured in crashes involving roadside objects.

A third of loss of control on bend crashes occurred on a wet/icy road surface, compared to 28 percent for all crashes in the Tararua District. Thirty-seven percent of loss of control on bend crashes occurred at night, compared to 31 percent for all crashes.

Poor handling was identified as a contributory factor in 32 percent of loss of control on bend crashes between 2001 and 2005. Thirty-two percent involved speed (too fast for the conditions) and 19 percent involved alcohol.

Road factors were involved in 29 percent of loss of control on bend crashes. The most common road factors were slippery due to rain, slippery due to loose material on seal or the road being unusually narrow. Thirty-six percent of the loss of control on bend crashes happened in the weekend. Seventeen percent occurred between midnight and 7 am and 22 percent occurred between 2 pm and 5 pm.

The majority of the vehicles involved in loss of control on bend crashes were cars, with vans/SUVs featuring in 22 percent of the crashes, trucks in 13 percent and motorcycles in 12 percent. Sixty-five percent of those injured in loss of control on bend crashes were male, and 70 percent of the drivers injured were male. Thirty-four percent of the drivers injured in these crashes were aged 15–24 years.

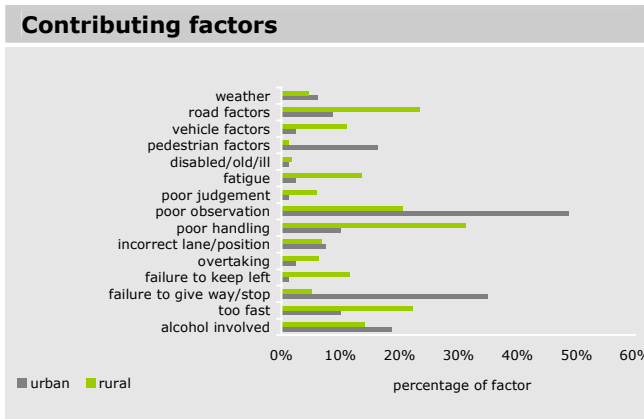
## General issues

Small crash numbers and general improvements in crash trends have made identification of additional specific issues difficult. The following areas warrant monitoring and/or action to prevent them from becoming issues in the future.

### Driver skills

Several common contributing factors associated with crashes in the Tararua District relate to poor driver skills. Poor observation is a factor in almost 50 percent of urban and 20 percent of rural injury crashes. This factor has been associated with 87 injury crashes between 2001 and 2005.

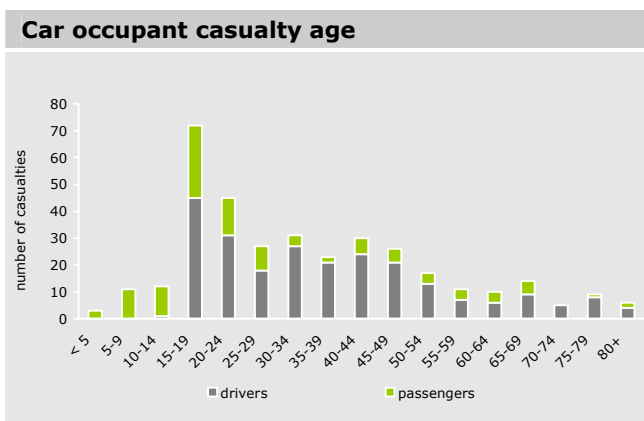
Poor handling was a factor in around a third of rural crashes resulting in 73 injury crashes over the last five years. The number of rural crashes with poor handling as a factor has been increasing since 2000.



### Young drivers

A third of car occupants injured were aged between 15 and 25 years. This equates to 76 driver and 41 passenger casualties aged 15–25 years injured over this five-year period.

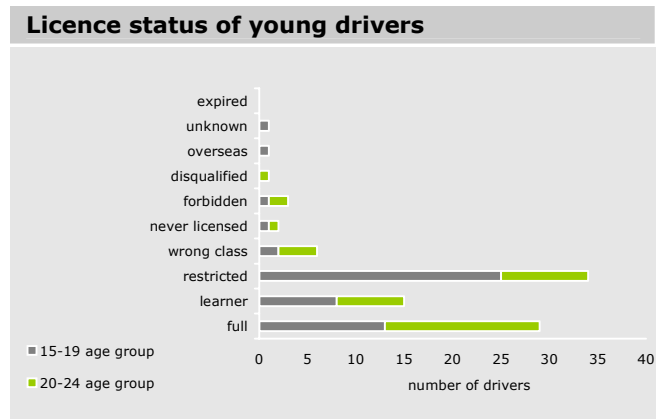
While the proportions are similar to other authorities and the rest of New Zealand, young drivers are a significant component of the Tararua District's crash problem. A third of these crashes occurred at night and approximately half occurred in the weekend.



### Licence status

Overall two-thirds of the 299 drivers involved in injury crashes had a full licence. Twenty percent held either a learner or restricted licence. The remainder held overseas licences, had the wrong class of licence or an expired licence, or had been forbidden to drive or had never been licensed.

Naturally the proportion of young drivers on a learner or restricted licence is expected to be higher. However, the number of these drivers involved in injury crashes is a concern. Seventy percent of drivers aged 15–19 years (35 drivers) and 58 percent of those aged 20–25 years (22 drivers) had a learner or restricted licence.



### Motorcyclists

Motorcyclist casualties are over-represented in Tararua District, particularly in the rural areas where 31 have been injured between 2001 and 2005. However, casualty numbers have reduced over the past two years and motorcyclist casualties are following a slight downward trend.

### Pedestrians

In urban areas, pedestrian casualties are over-represented when compared to similar authorities and the rest of New Zealand. Twenty pedestrians were injured in urban areas between 2001 and 2005. While only one pedestrian was injured in 2005, this area needs to be monitored to ensure the downward trend continues.

## National issues

### Speed

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

Between 2001 and 2005, speed too fast for the conditions was a factor in 19 percent of injury crashes in the Tararua District.

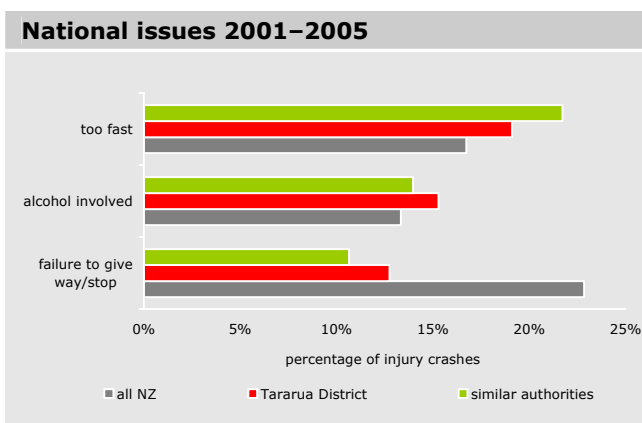
### Alcohol

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 15 percent of crashes in the Tararua 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. Thirteen percent of crashes on roads in the Tararua District between 2001 and 2005 involved drivers failing to give way, which is higher than for all of New Zealand and similar authorities. Twenty-four percent of these crashes resulted in a fatal or serious injury.



## 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 was 95 percent, compared to 92 percent for the Tararua District.

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