



briefing notes - road safety issues

Far North District

Land Transport New Zealand has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 2002–2006 period.

The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and be a resource to identify possible ways to reduce the number of road deaths and injuries in Far North District.

This report is the eighth road safety report for Far North District. All the material unless otherwise stated in this report applies to both local roads and to Transit New Zealand (Transit NZ) roads.

In each new report one year's data is added to a five year block and the oldest dropped so it is unlikely that the core issues would change radically from report to report.

The issues chosen for this report are drawn from either the most common crash types, those that appear over-represented when Far North District is compared to similar local bodies or those with high social cost (high numbers of fatal and serious crashes mainly). We have included a brief overview of crashes in the district.

We encourage local bodies to use their free access to the Ministry of Transport's Crash Analysis System to delve deeper into the highlighted issues.

Major road safety issues		2006 road trauma	
Far North District		Casualties	Far North District
Bends		Deaths	12
Alcohol		Serious casualties	60
Speed		Minor casualties	260
Road factors			
Nationally		Crashes	Far North District
Speed		Fatal crashes	12
Alcohol		Serious injury crashes	45
Failure to give way		Minor injury crashes	169
Restraints		Non-injury crashes	326

Overview

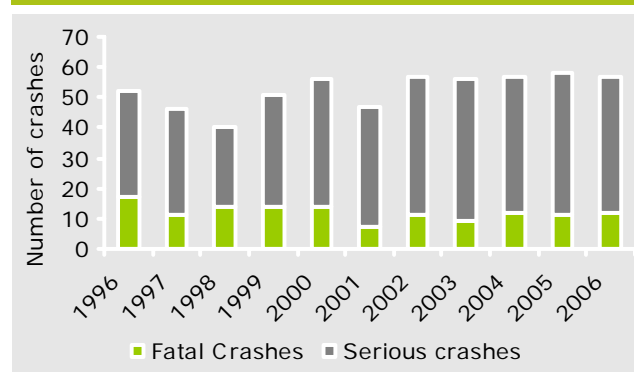
In 2006 on local roads in Far North District there were 96 injury crashes and 181 non-injury crashes. In addition there were 130 injury crashes and 145 non-injury crashes on Transit NZ roads, both as reported by the New Zealand Police.

The table below shows the number of injuries resulting from 2006 crashes by rural or urban areas for both local and Transit NZ roads (rural is defined as an area with a speed limit of 80km/h or more).

Casualties by injury type 2006				
	Fatalities	Serious injuries	Minor injuries	Total
Rural	12	55	199	266
Urban	0	5	61	66
Total	12	60	260	332

Fatalities and serious injuries in the district have remained relatively stable over the last five years.

Fatal and serious crashes 1996 to 2006



Fatal and serious crashes

Crash type or contributory cause 2002	Percentage fatal or serious crashes of this type or contributory cause
Lost control at bend	57%
Lost control on straight	17%
Alcohol	32%
Too Fast	35%
Crashes in the dark	42%
Road factors	17%

Further information about 2002 to 2006 injury and non-injury crashes on local roads:

- Worst month December, best February and September
- Worst day Friday, best Monday and Tuesday
- 25 percent on wet roads
- 34 percent at night
- 21 percent at intersections
- Social cost of crashes in 2006 \$47m
- 44 percent of at fault drivers or part fault held a full NZ licence (injury crashes)

Further information about 2002 to 2006 injury and non injury crashes on Transit NZ roads

- Worst month December, best September
- Worst day Saturday, best Monday
- 32 percent wet road
- 34 percent night time
- 22 percent at intersections
- Social cost of crashes in 2006 \$62m
- 52 percent of at fault drivers or part fault held a full NZ licence (injury crashes)

It has been observed nationally that there is a growing group of drivers who have not been exiting the graduated licence system and who are choosing to stay on restricted licences. This is making it increasingly difficult to distinguish drivers who are truly inexperienced from those that should have moved to a full licence. As a consequence it is more difficult to target educational material.

This is certainly true in Far North District with as few as 51 percent of at fault drivers in injury crashes being the holder of a full driving licence.

Driver licence status Far North District 2006	Percentage of total 'at fault' drivers (New Zealand value in brackets)
Full	51.3 (58.4) %
Learner	9.7 (9.5) %
Restricted	14.8 (17.6) %
Never licenced	3.6 (2.2) %
Disqualified	4.6 (1.7) %
Overseas	8.6 (4.2) %
Expired	0.5 (0.5) %
Other / unknown	7.1 (5.6) %

Crashes at bends

Between 2002 and 2006 fifty five percent of all injury crashes in Far North District occurred at bends. These crashes resulted in 45 fatalities, 186 serious injuries and 659 minor injuries.

Crash numbers rose in 2003 and have remained fairly constant for the past four years.

Crashes at bends 2002 to 2006				
Crash year	Fatal crashes	Serious crashes	Minor crashes	Total
2002	7	30	46	83
2003	6	25	102	133
2004	9	21	97	127
2005	6	27	69	102
2006	9	27	88	124
Total	37	130	402	569

Most crashes at bends involved a driver losing control of their vehicle and either running off the road or colliding with another vehicle.

After drivers lose control their vehicles often crash into roadside hazards such as ditches, banks, poles or trees. Hitting these objects can result in a relatively minor off-road event turning into something far more serious.

The three most common roadside hazards struck in injury crashes in Far North District were cliffs or banks (117), trees (112) and fences (97) from a total of 549 objects struck.

Main characteristics of injury crashes at bends	
Crash characteristic	Percentage of crashes
Single vehicle	75 %
Alcohol	31 %
Excessive speed for the conditions	39 %
Road factors	25 %
Poor handling	29 %
Rural road	88 %
Wet road	30 %
Night time	41 %

At fault driver licence status 2006

Driver Licence status, bend related injury crashes, at fault drivers in Far North District	Percentage of total at fault drivers in bend related crashes (New Zealand value in brackets)
Full	47.3 (51.1) %
Learner	8.0 (10.7) %
Restricted	17.0 (17.9) %
Never licenced	5.3 (4.1) %
Disqualified	7.1 (2.8) %
Overseas	7.1 (5.6) %
Expired	0 (0.9) %
Other / unknown	8.0 (6.8) %

Further information about injury crashes on bends (2002 to 2006) on local roads in Far North District:

- 14 deaths, 78 serious injuries and 317 minor injuries
- 73 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "lost control turning right"
- Most common age group 15-19 years
- 38 percent of crashes involved alcohol
- Worst month December, best September
- Worst day of week Saturday, best Tuesday
- Worst time period 3pm-6pm

Further information about injury crashes on bends (2002 to 2006) on Transit NZ roads in Far North District:

- 31 deaths, 108 serious injuries and 342 minor injuries
- 71 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "lost control turning right"
- Most common age group 15-19 years
- 25 percent involved alcohol
- Worst month December, best September
- Worst day of week Saturday, best Wednesday
- Worst time period 3pm-6pm

Alcohol

Alcohol affects the way people drive. Studies show that the risk of being involved in a crash increases rapidly as a driver's blood alcohol level rises. A driver over the legal limit (80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood) is three times more likely to be involved in a crash than a sober driver.

Contrary to popular opinion, people with high blood alcohol levels are more likely to be injured or killed in a crash than sober drivers in the same crash and if injured, they are also more likely to encounter complications in their recovery.

In New Zealand for the 12 months to December 2006, alcohol-affected drivers contributed to 31 percent of all fatal crashes and 15 percent of all injury crashes.

In the Far North District, alcohol was a factor in 27 percent of injury crashes in 2006, a small decrease from 2005, and decreasing against the national trend. However it is important to note that the Far North District has an alcohol involvement in injury crashes which is almost double the national rate.

There were 261 alcohol-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Alcohol crashes			
Crash year	Open road	Urban road	Total
2002	31	9	40
2003	41	11	52
2004	43	13	56
2005	36	15	51
2006	47	15	62
Total	198	63	261

The key crash locations of alcohol related crashes occurring between 2002 and 2006 are shown on the map on the following page.

From the beginning of 2007 Land Transport NZ has been adding driver factor codes to all non-injury crashes for the northern region.

This will allow the Police and other agencies to target alcohol related crashes more quickly and with even more geographic accuracy than ever before.

At fault driver licence status

Driver Licence status, alcohol related injury crashes, at fault drivers in Far North District 2006	Percentage of total at fault drivers in alcohol related crashes (NZ value in brackets)
Full	49.0 (41.6) %
Learner	9.4 (15.8) %
Restricted	15.0 (20.8) %
Never Licenced	5.6 (4.6) %
Disqualified	9.4 (6.2) %
Overseas	1.8 (1.0) %
Expired	0 (1.4) %
Other / unknown	9.4 (8.2) %

Further information about alcohol related injury crashes in Far North District on local roads 2002 to 2006:

- 12 deaths, 44 serious injuries and 154 minor injuries
- 73 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "loss of control on bend"
- 11 percent at intersections
- 30 percent urban
- 20 percent wet road
- 67 percent night time
- Worst month February, best October
- Worst day of week Sunday, best Monday

Further information about alcohol related injury crashes in Far North District on Transit NZ roads 2002 to 2006:

- 21 deaths, 46 serious injuries and 121 minor injuries
- 81 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type 'loss of control on bends'
- 8 percent at intersections
- 17 percent urban
- 28 percent wet road
- 73 percent night time
- Worst month October, best June and August

Speed

Nationally, speed is one of the major contributing factors to road crashes. For the 12 months to the end of December 2006, excessive speed contributed to around 31 percent of fatal crashes and 16 percent of injury crashes.

During 2006, nationally there were 1,839 injury crashes where the driver was travelling too fast for conditions.

Reducing speeds to appropriate levels is an important road safety goal. Excessive speed increases the likelihood of a crash occurring by reducing the time available for drivers to respond to hazardous situations and it also leads to more serious injuries. Research has shown that a one km/h reduction in mean speeds can produce up to a three percent reduction in injury crashes.

In the Far North District, excessive speed was a factor in 24 percent of all injury crashes in 2006.

There were 274 speed-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Males represented 75 percent of at fault drivers in speed related crashes.

Speed related crashes					
Speed related injury crashes	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Urban	4	18	13	8	12
Rural	21	55	53	50	40
Total	25	73	66	58	52

Age and sex of at fault drivers			
Drivers at fault in speed related injury crashes (2002- 2006)	Male	Female	Total
15 - 19 years	64	17	81
20 - 24	37	14	51
25 - 29	11	6	17
30 - 39	47	12	59
40 - 49	22	8	30
50 - 59	8	6	14
60 - 69	2	0	2
70+	2	0	2
Total	193	63	256

At fault driver licence status	
Driver Licence status, speed related injury crashes, at fault drivers Far North District (2002 – 2006)	Percentage of total at fault drivers in speed related crashes (New Zealand 2006 value in brackets)
Full	35.3 (43.0) %
Learner	12.3 (15.3) %
Restricted	22.3 (22.5) %
Never Licenced	10.0 (4.5) %
Disqualified	6.3 (4.1) %
Overseas	4.1 (3.7) %
Expired	0.7 (0.5) %
Other / unknown	8.9 (6.2) %

Further information about speed related injury crashes in Far North District on local roads (2002 to 2006):

- 10 deaths, 57 serious injuries and 157 minor injuries
- Most common crash type “lost control on bend”
- 88 percent mid-block
- 24 percent wet road
- 52 percent night time
- Worst month December, best August and March
- Worst day of week Sunday, best Tuesday

Further information about speed related injury crashes in Far North District on Transit NZ roads (2002 to 2006):

- 27 deaths, 54 serious injuries and 154 minor injuries
- Most common crash type “lost control on bend”
- 88 percent mid-block
- 38 percent wet road
- 48 percent night time
- Worst month December, best April and May
- Worst day Saturday, best Monday

Road Factors

A safe road environment incorporates numerous design principles, appropriate geometric design standards, good delineation under all conditions, adequate surface skid resistance and a roadside free of unforgiving hazards. It should also serve the safety needs of all vehicles and road users.

Road factors that contribute to crashes include those that affect the way a driver reacts to the driving conditions, such as

- a slippery road surface
- obstructions on the road, such as slips
- limited visibility
- signs, signals and/or road markings being damaged or in poor condition.

Nationally, road factors were a contributing factor in 12 percent of injury crashes in 2006, with slippery road surfaces being the key factor.

In the Far North District, "road factors" were a contributing factor in 17 percent of injury crashes in 2006.

There were 209 road factor related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Road factors have been predominantly a rural issue in the Far North District as illustrated in the table below.

Road factor crashes					
Road factor related injury crashes	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Urban	4	7	3	2	6
Rural	25	55	51	23	33
Total	29	62	54	25	39

Road factors in injury crashes

Number of occasions Police reported this factor 2002 to 2006	Local road	Transit NZ road
Slippery road	24	70
Road surface in poor condition	56	42
Road obstructed	2	5
Visibility limited	22	13
Signs or signals (needed or faulty)	2	3
Markings (needed or faulty)	2	1
Street lighting	1	5
Islands or markings	0	0

Further information about road factor related injury crashes in Far North District on local roads (2002 to 2006):

- 2 deaths, 25 serious injuries and 123 minor injuries
- Most common crash type loss of control at bend
- 10 percent at intersections
- 11 percent urban
- 31 percent wet road
- 27 percent night time
- Worst month January, best July

Further information about road factor related crashes in Far North District on Transit NZ roads (2002 to 2006):

- 8 deaths, 26 serious injuries and 156 minor injuries
- Most common crash type loss of control at bend
- 9 percent at intersections
- 10 percent urban
- 57 percent wet road
- 28 percent night time
- Worst month December, best July and September

National Issues

This section contains some brief information on the key national road safety issues as measured in Far North District. They may have been covered elsewhere in this document or not be a specific issue.

Speed

“Too fast” was recorded in 27 percent of injury crashes in the district in the last five years resulting in 37 deaths and 424 injures. Speed as a factor in crashes is reducing in the district.

Seventy nine percent of speed-related crashes were “loss of control at a bend” crashes. Alcohol and poor handling were the other driver factors often associated with speed.

At fault male drivers aged 15 to 19 were the most highly represented of the five year age bands in speed-related crashes.

Alcohol

Alcohol was involved in 25 percent of injury crashes in the district in the last five years resulting in 33 deaths and 365 other injuries. The number of injury crashes involving alcohol is increasing.

Twenty four percent of alcohol crashes were in urban areas of the district.

Speed and poor handling were the other factors often associated with alcohol.

Failure to give way

Failure to give way or stop was reported in just nine percent of all reported injury crashes for the last five years resulting in three deaths and 144 other injuries.

Sixty one percent of at fault drivers were male.

Restraints

The Ministry of Transport conducts surveys of restraint use. The results of these surveys are at a regional level, and may not be fully appropriate to a Territorial Authority.

The results are obtainable from the Ministry of Transport website.

<http://www.transport.govt.nz/belts-index/>

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