

road safety issues

Kaikoura District

Land Transport New Zealand has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 2000–2004 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues in the Kaikoura District.

Over the last five years, the number of injury crashes in the Kaikoura District has been increasing; 22 crashes resulted in 33 casualties in 2004 compared with 18 crashes and 23 casualties in 2003. Eighty-five percent of injury crashes in the Kaikoura District during 2000–2004 occurred on the state highway.

Car/van occupants were the main casualty group between 2000 and 2004. Truck occupants were the third largest casualty group making up 18 percent of all road user casualties.

The majority of injury crashes between 2000 and 2004 in the Kaikoura District involved a driver losing control of a vehicle on the open road. Excessive speed, poor handling and fatigue were also common factors in many crashes.

The total social cost of crashes in the Kaikoura District amounted to over \$20 million in 2004 compared with \$3 million in 2003. This was due primarily to the five deaths and 10 serious injuries in 2004.

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

Major road safety issues

Kaikoura District

Loss of control

Trucks

Fatigue

Speed

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2004 road trauma for Kaikoura District



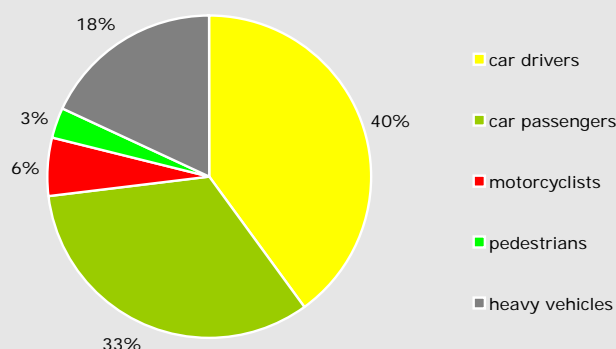
Deaths	5
Serious casualties	10
Minor casualties	18



Fatal crashes	4
Serious injury crashes	7
Minor injury crashes	11
Non-injury crashes	38

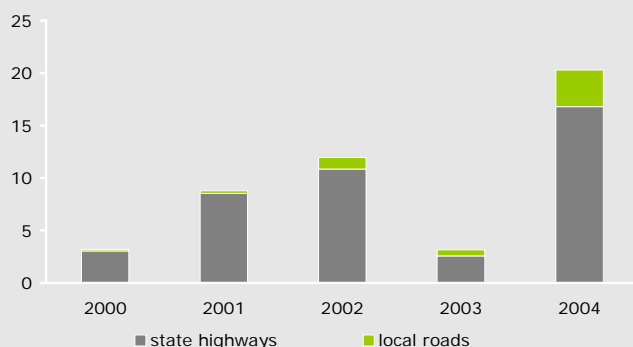
Road casualties 2000–2004

User type 2000–2004



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)



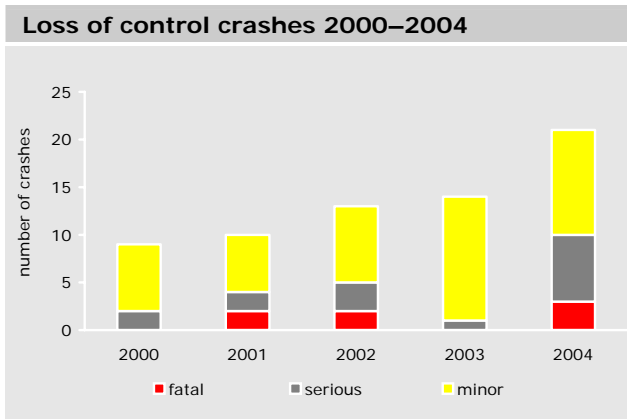
*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2004 prices.

Loss of control

The most common type of crash in the Kaikoura District between 2000 and 2004 involved a driver losing control of their vehicle, either on a bend or straight section of road. Over this five-year period, there were 67 crashes (84 percent) resulting in 22 deaths and serious injuries and a further 45 minor injuries. Of these 67 injury crashes, 96 percent occurred on the open road.

Loss of control can result in either a head-on collision with another vehicle or a vehicle leaving the road and potentially colliding with a roadside object, which may increase the severity of a crash. Ninety-five percent of injury loss of control crashes on rural roads in the Kaikoura District involved a vehicle hitting at least one roadside object, the most common being a cliff or bank. Of these crashes, four were fatal and 17 caused serious injury.

Fifty-seven (85 percent) loss of control crashes occurred on rural state highways in the Kaikoura District.



Driving too fast for the conditions was identified as a contributory factor in 40 percent of loss of control crashes, with poor handling reported in 30 percent and fatigue in 24 percent of these crashes.

The majority of road users injured were car occupants, although truck occupants accounted for 16 percent of casualties. Fifteen percent of drivers held an overseas licence.

Thirty percent of the loss of control crashes took place between noon and 3 pm, and almost half occurred in the summer and holiday months of November, December and January.

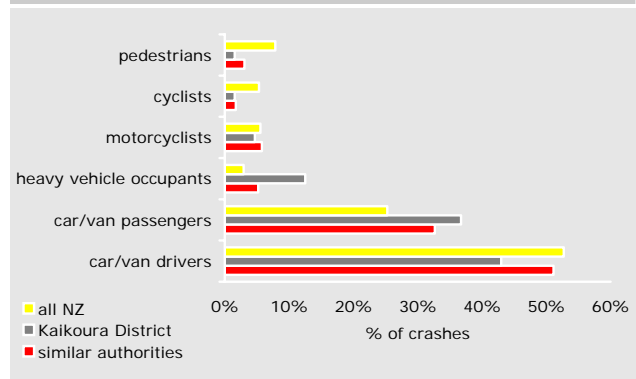
Trucks

Twenty-two percent of injury crashes in the Kaikoura District between 2000 and 2004 involved a truck, resulting in 16 casualties (or 13 percent of all casualties in the district). Of these crashes, 89 percent occurred on the state highway, and all occurred on roads outside of the main urban area.

All of the truck crashes resulted from a driver losing control of their vehicle and having a head-on collision or the vehicle leaving the road. Of these, 89 percent lost control on a bend.

Half of the truck injury crashes (nine) in the Kaikoura District between 2000 and 2004 involved a vehicle hitting at least one roadside hazard and of these, two hit guard railing. Of crashes involving roadside hazards, one was fatal, one resulted in serious injury and seven in minor injuries.

Road user casualties 2000–2004



Drivers accounted for 88 percent of truck crash casualties in the Kaikoura District; all were male. Of those male truck occupants injured, half were aged 35 to 44 years.

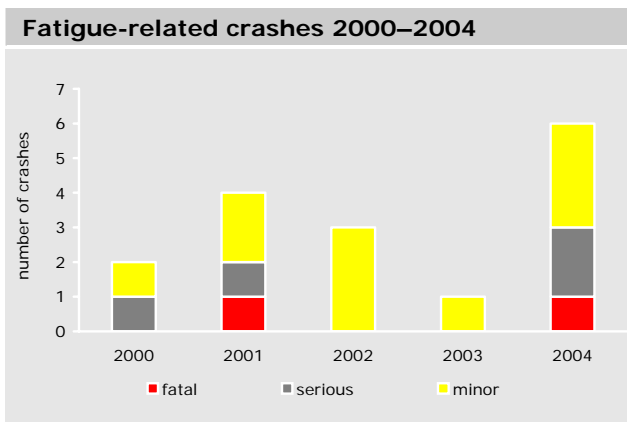
Travelling at a speed too fast for the conditions was identified as contributing to almost half of the truck crashes in the Kaikoura District between 2000 and 2004, while 30 percent involved poor handling and 11 percent recorded poor judgement. Fatigue was recorded in five percent of truck crashes.

Sixty-one percent of truck crashes occurred in darkness, and all of these occurred on the state highway. One third of the crashes occurred between midnight and 9 am.

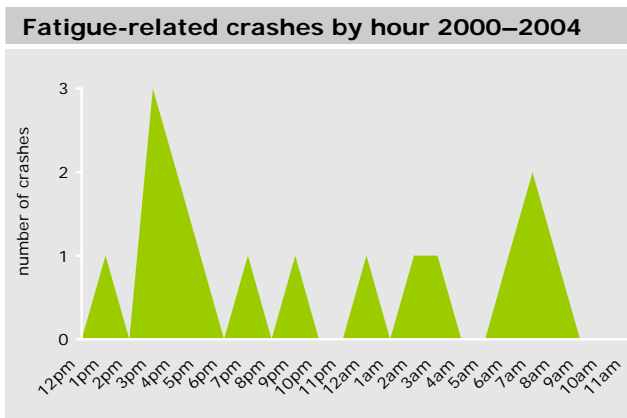
Fatigue

Staying alert is crucial for safe driving. Fatigued drivers may have slower reaction times, putting themselves and others in danger when they encounter unusual, unexpected or emergency situations. Identification of the presence and effects of driver fatigue is subjective; drivers are often unaware they have lost concentration or are unwilling to admit it. It is generally under-reported in crash statistics. However, fatigue was recorded as a factor in 20 percent of injury crashes in the Kaikoura District from 2000 to 2004. This proportion of crashes was significantly higher than for similar authorities or for all of New Zealand.

Drivers on SH 1 passing through the Kaikoura District are at risk of becoming fatigued because of the long distances they are likely to be travelling, and/or because of commitments to ferry sailings. Indeed, all but one of the 16 fatigue-related crashes in the five-year period occurred on SH 1 and all of these occurred in the rural area.



The 16 crashes resulted in 27 casualties – two fatalities, four serious injuries and 21 minor injuries. Almost all were car passengers but one was an occupant in a truck.



The body clock is programmed to make us feel sleepy in the early hours of the morning and during the mid-afternoon. During 2000–2004 in the Kaikoura District, the number of crashes involving fatigue, while small, appeared to be highest at these times.

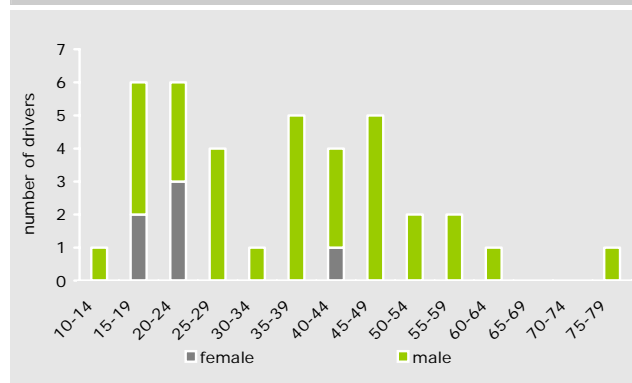
Speed

Travelling at a speed too fast for the conditions was a factor in 32 injury crashes (39 percent) in the Kaikoura District between 2000 and 2004, resulting in 43 injuries including four fatalities and seven serious injuries. Over this period, excessive speed was the highest reported contributing factor for crashes, significantly higher than for all of New Zealand and for similar authorities.

The number of speed-related crashes has been increasing in the last five years. Over three quarters of these crashes occurred on the state highway, and of these, most were in the rural area (96 percent).

The majority of the high-speed crashes in the Kaikoura District resulted from loss of control on a bend.

Age and gender in speed-related crashes 2000–2004



Although the majority of road users injured in speed-related crashes were in cars, one quarter were truck occupants and nine percent were a rider or passenger on a motorcycle.

The majority of drivers in speed-related crashes were male (84 percent) and of these, 24 percent held a learner or restricted licence. Of all drivers involved, 22 percent held an overseas licence. It should be noted, however, that these drivers were not necessarily all at fault and/or speeding. Where the address of the driver was known, almost two thirds were from outside of the Kaikoura District.

Forty-four percent of speed-related crashes happened on a weekend, and 44 percent during the summer months from December through till March. Fifty-six percent occurred during the hours of darkness.

Speed

The faster drivers go, the more likely they are to crash and the greater the risk of serious injury or death. Between 2000 and 2004, travelling too fast for the conditions was a factor in 39 percent of injury crashes in the Kaikoura District. This was higher than both the national average and for similar local authorities. Crashes involving speed has been identified as a significant local issue in the Kaikoura District.

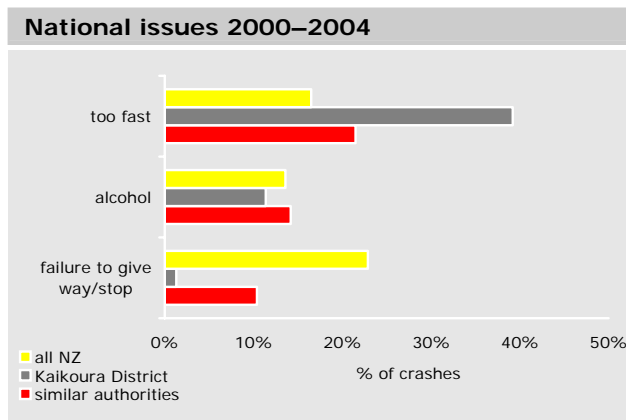
Alcohol

Alcohol has a big effect on the way people drive. People who 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 2000 and 2004, alcohol was identified as a factor in 11 percent of crashes on roads in the Kaikoura District, which was lower than for all of New Zealand and for similar authorities.

Failure to give way

While most failure to give way crashes result in non-injury or minor injuries, failing to give way can have serious consequences. Between 2000 and 2004 only one percent of crashes on roads in the Kaikoura District involved drivers failing to give way, which was significantly lower than for all of New Zealand and for similar authorities.



Restraints

Wearing a safety belt reduces the chance of death or serious injury in a crash by 40 percent. Whether in the front or the back seat, the risk of serious or fatal injury if not wearing a safety belt is virtually the same.

Results from the 2004 national restraint wearing survey showed that the national front seat safety belt wearing rate was 94 percent. The corresponding figure for the Kaikoura District was 92 percent.

Contacts

Land Transport New Zealand

Ian Hunter

Partnership Manager Central

See contact details at bottom of the page.

Road Safety Co-ordinator

Mike Kennedy

Kaikoura District Council

PO Box 6

Kaikoura

Phone 03 319 5026

Transit New Zealand

Barry Stratton

PO Box 1479

Christchurch

Phone 03 366 4455

New Zealand Police

Hugh Flower

Tasman District HQ

Private Bag 39

Bridge Street

Nelson

Phone 03 546 3840



Central Regional Office
Master Builders House
234–242 Wakefield Street
PO Box 27249
Wellington

Telephone 04 931 8900
Fax 04 931 8929

www.landtransport.govt.nz