

road safety issues

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1999–2003 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues on the state highway network in the Transit New Zealand (TNZ) Wanganui East Region. This region covers the Rangitikei, Manawatu, Horowhenua and Tararua Districts and Palmerston North City.

The number of people killed or injured on state highways in this region decreased from 326 in 2002 to 292 during 2003. These deaths and injuries resulted from 202 injury crashes, a slight reduction from 204 in 2002. Occupants of cars and vans were the largest casualty group between 1999 and 2003. Despite a downward trend in the number of pedestrian and motorcyclist casualties over the last 10 years, these two groups were above the New Zealand average on urban roads.

Within the region, the most frequent crash types involved drivers losing control of their vehicles on rural roads and crashes at intersections on urban roads. Poor driver skills relating to judgement, observation or handling techniques, were common contributing factors to injury crashes. A higher percentage of drivers involved in injury crashes during 2003 held learner or restricted licences when compared with previous years.

Both regional and national issues are identified below with the specific issues for the region considered in detail overleaf.

Major road safety issues

TNZ Wanganui East Region

Intersections

Loss of control

Fatigue

Speed

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2003 road trauma for TNZ Wanganui East Region



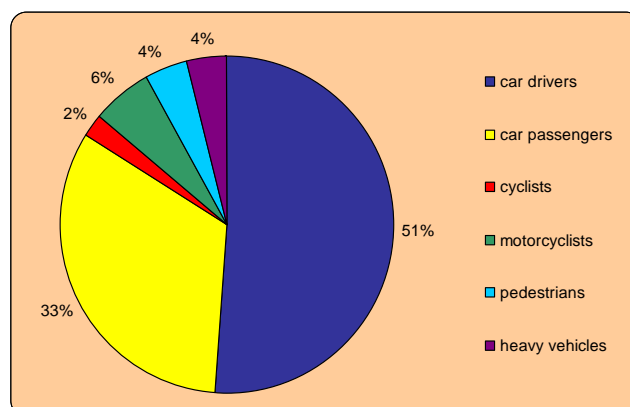
Deaths	14
Serious casualties	59
Minor casualties	219



Fatal crashes	12
Serious injury crashes	42
Minor injury crashes	148
Non-injury crashes	396

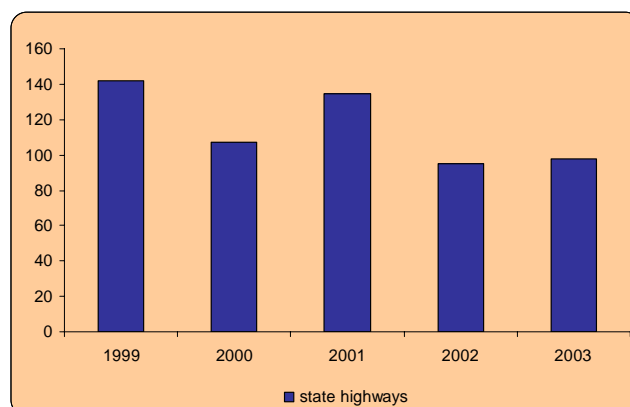
Road user casualties 1999–2003

User type 1999–2003



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)

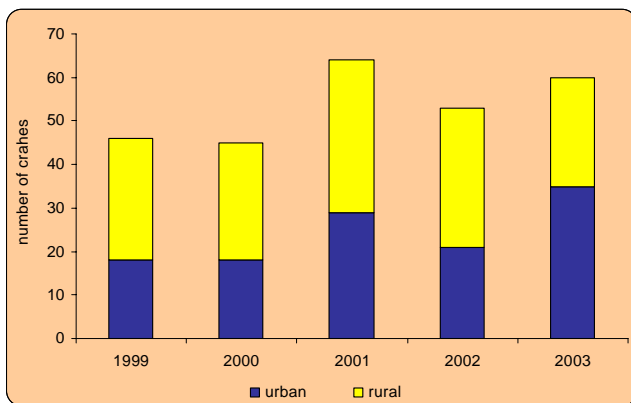


*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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

Intersections

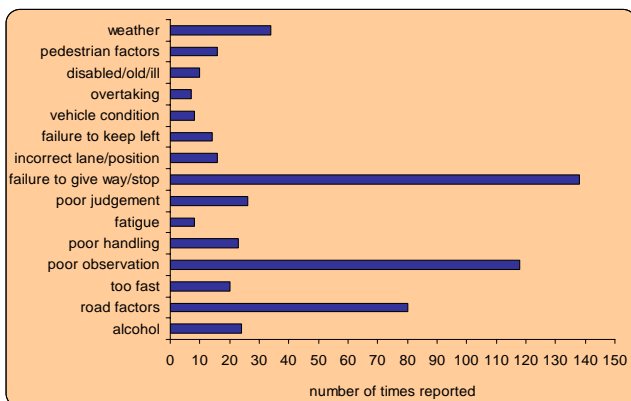
Injury crashes at intersections made up two thirds of the reported urban state highway injury crashes in the TNZ Wanganui East Region during 2003. There has been an upward trend in the number of these crashes on urban roads in this region since 2000. The percentage of injury crashes occurring at urban road intersections was higher than the national state highway average in 2001 and 2003. In the past 10 years, rural road intersection crashes have remained fairly constant at between 17 and 23 percent of all injury crashes.

Number of injury crashes at intersections



Failure to give way or stop and poor observation were the two most common crash factors contributing to intersection injury crashes in the region.

Factors contributing to intersection crashes 1999–2003

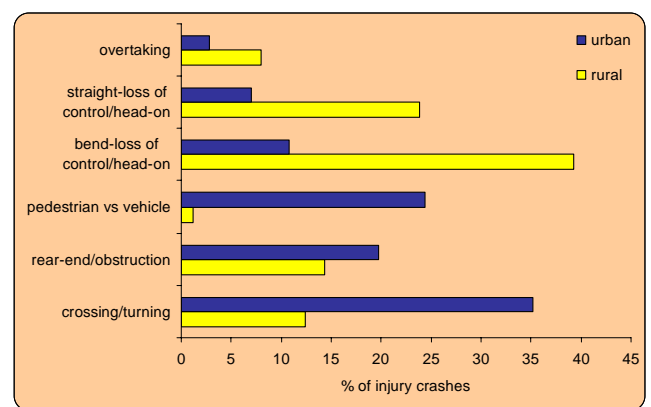


Forty nine percent (506) of injury and non-injury crashes reported at intersections in the TNZ Wanganui East Region involved a collision between vehicles making a crossing or turning movement while 23 percent (232) involved a rear-end collision.

Loss of control

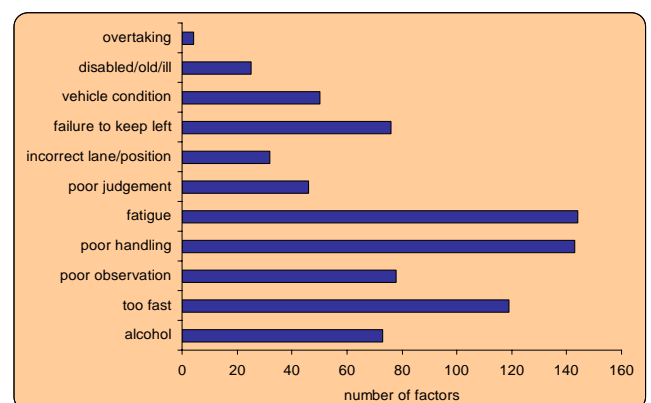
From 1999 to 2003, 63 percent of injury crashes on rural state highways in the TNZ Wanganui East Region involved a driver losing control of a vehicle. The number of loss of control injury crashes reported each year since 1999 has remained fairly constant with an annual average for the region of 105. Loss of control crashes remain the most common injury crash movement type on rural state highways in the region. A total of 103 was recorded in the TNZ Wanganui East Region during 2003, a small decrease from 108 in 2002.

Crash movement types 1999–2003



Poor handling, fatigue and travelling at a speed too fast for the conditions were the main contributing factors in loss of control injury crashes over the five years from 1999 to 2003.

Driver factors contributing to loss of control injury crashes 1999–2003



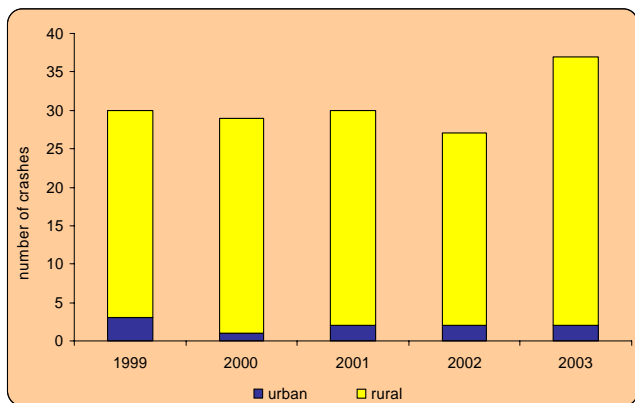
Young drivers in the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups were involved in the highest number of loss of control crashes, with drivers aged under 35 being involved in approximately half the reported crashes of this type. Where licence types were recorded, nearly one quarter of the drivers losing control of their vehicles did not hold a full licence.

Zzzz Fatigue

Staying alert is crucial for safe driving. Fatigued drivers may have slower reaction times, therefore putting themselves and others in danger when they encounter unusual, unexpected or emergency situations.

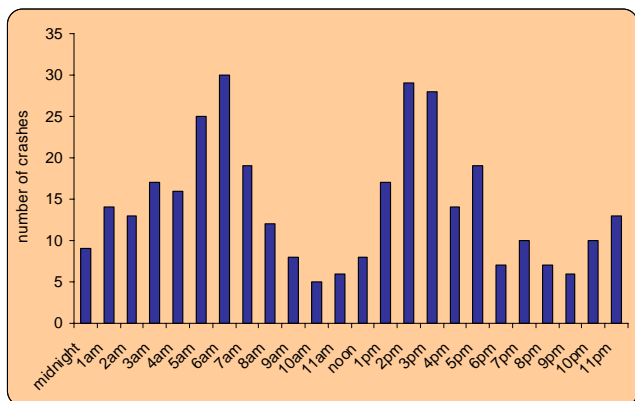
Identification of the effects and presence of driver-fatigue is subjective and is generally considered to be under-reported. However, fatigue was still recorded to be a contributing factor in just under one fifth (143) of all crashes causing injury on the rural state highways within this region during the period 1999 to 2003. This percentage is significantly higher than the average level for all New Zealand state highways.

Injury crashes involving fatigue



Combinations of long periods of driving, insufficient rest stops and driving at certain times of the day are all known to contribute to driver fatigue and crashes. The human brain has an in-built clock that co-ordinates the daily cycle. The clock is programmed to make us feel sleepy in the early hours of the morning and during the mid-afternoon. The number of crashes involving fatigue appears to be highest at these times within the TNZ Wanganui East Region over the 1999–2003 period.

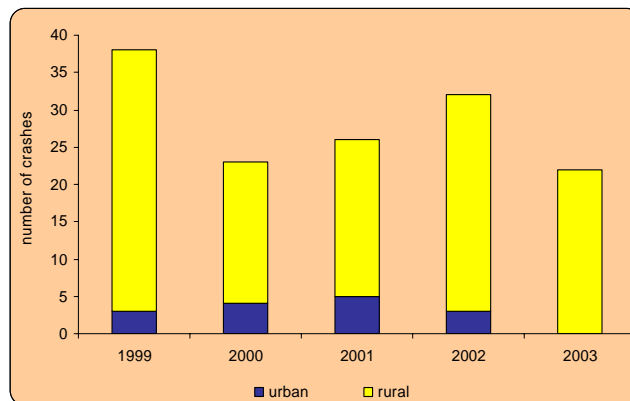
Fatigue-related crash times



80 Speed

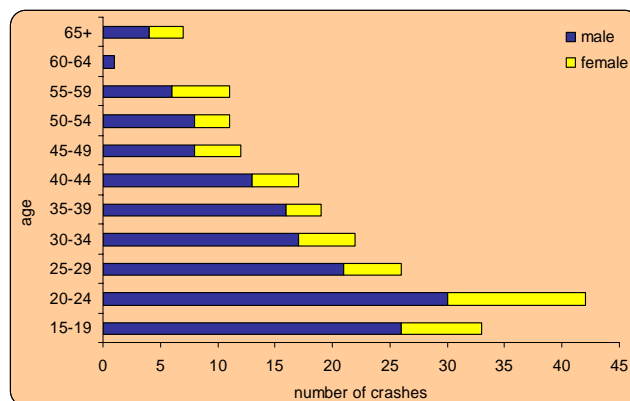
Driving at a speed too fast for the conditions was one of the main contributing factors in rural road injury crashes in the TNZ Wanganui East Region for the period 1999 to 2003. Excessive speed can be attributed to 126 (16 percent) of rural road injury crashes and 15 (seven percent) of urban road injury crashes over the five-year period. The level of involvement that speed has in injury crashes on rural and urban state highways within this region is, however, significantly lower than the national average.

Speed-related injury crashes

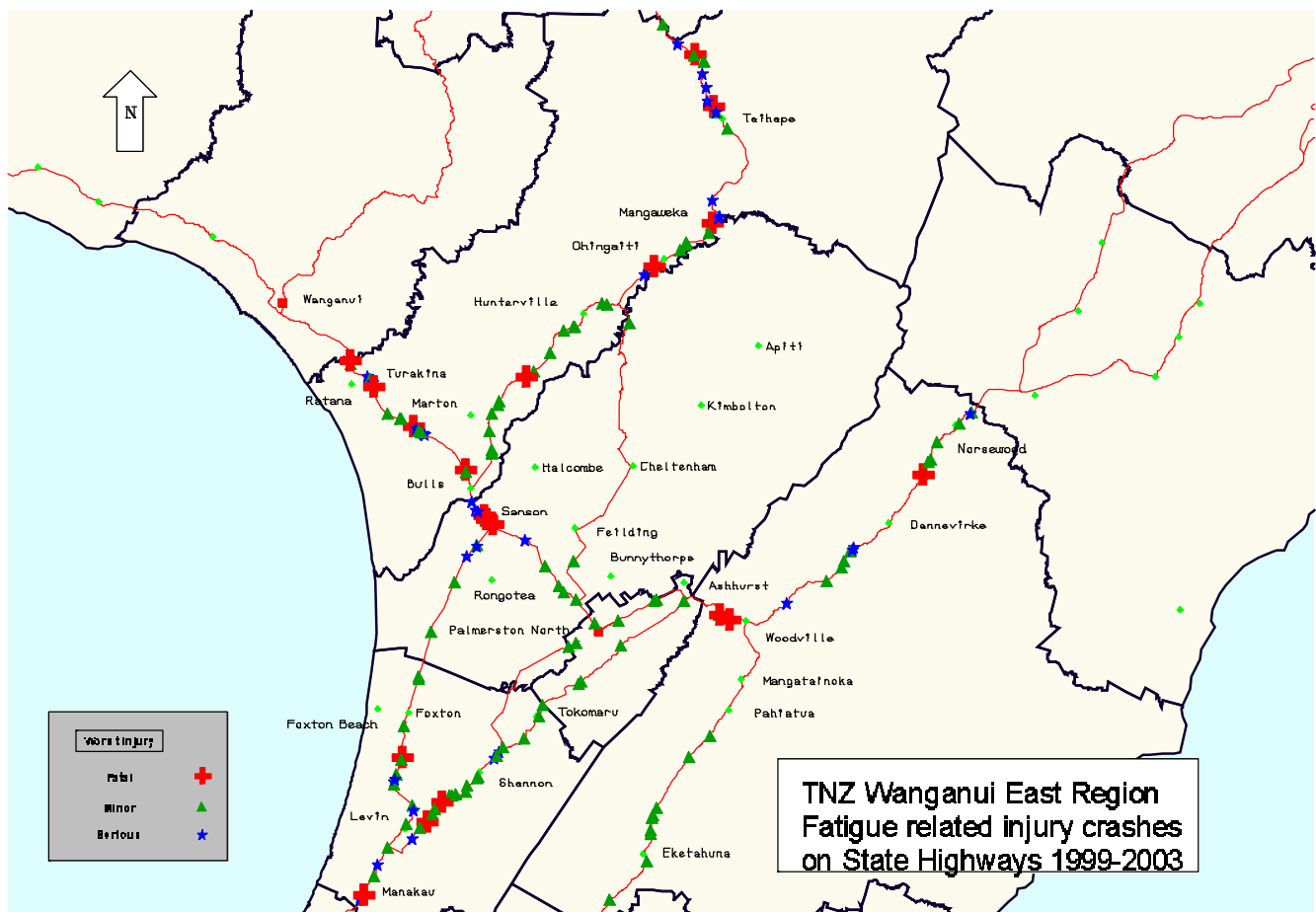


Speed was more likely to be a contributing factor in crashes for young drivers than for older drivers. From 1999 to 2003, approximately half the crashes where speed was a factor involved a driver under the age of 30.

Age of drivers in speed-related crashes 1999–2003



Vehicle speed is a major determinant of the outcome of a crash. Research has shown that as speed increases, the likelihood of a crash also increases. Higher speeds will result in more severe injuries in the event of a crash.



Contacts

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