

road safety issues

Transit New Zealand East Wanganui Region

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 key road safety issues on the state highway network in the Transit New Zealand (TNZ) East Wanganui Region. This region covers the Rangitikei, Manawatu, Tararua and Horowhenua Districts and Palmerston North City.

The number of people killed or injured on the road network in the TNZ East Wanganui Region decreased substantially from 292 in 2003 to 203 in 2004. These deaths and injuries last year were the result of 140 injury crashes, a reduction from 202 in 2003.

From 2000 to 2004, occupants of cars and vans were the largest casualty group. Despite a downward trend in the number of pedestrian, cyclist and motorcyclist casualties over the last 10 years, pedestrian casualties on state highways were significantly above the averages for all of New Zealand and similar regions.

Within the region, the most frequent type of crash movements were loss of control on rural roads and those connected with driving through intersections on urban roads.

Poor driver skills related to judgement, observation or handling techniques were regularly recorded as contributing factors in injury crashes.

An increasing percentage of the drivers involved in injury crashes held learner or restricted licences (15 percent in urban crashes and 19 percent in rural crashes during 2004).

Major road safety issues

TNZ East Wanganui Region

- Intersections
- Loss of control
- Fatigue
- Vulnerable road users

Nationally

- Speed
- Alcohol
- Failure to give way
- Restraints



2004 road trauma for Transit New Zealand East Wanganui Region



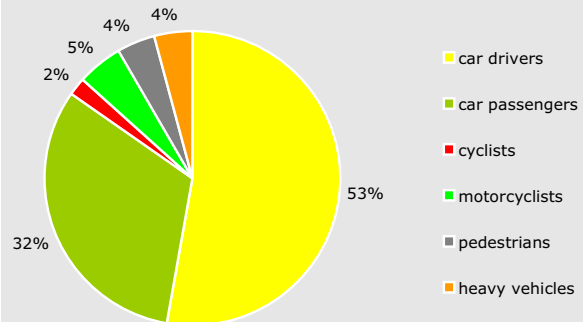
Deaths	14
Serious casualties	38
Minor casualties	151



Fatal crashes	11
Serious injury crashes	31
Minor injury crashes	98
Non-injury crashes	356

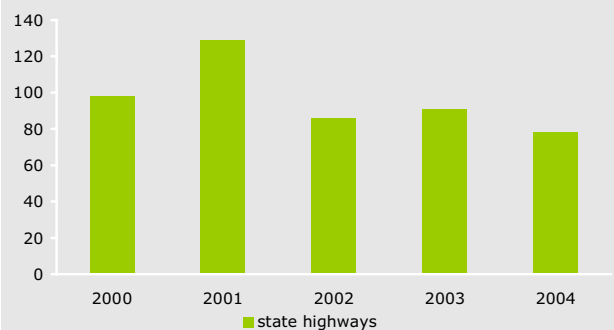
Road casualties 2000–2004

User type 2000–2004



Estimated social cost of crashes*

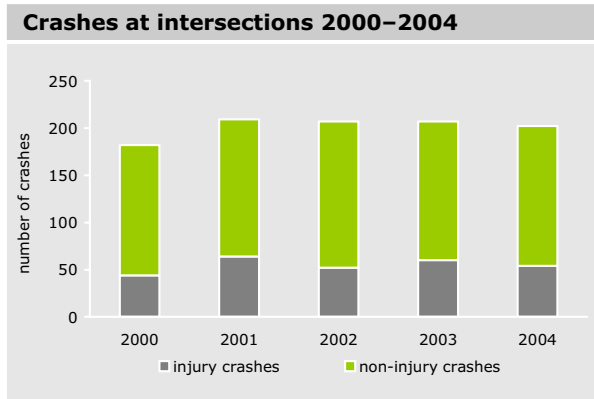
Social cost (\$ million)



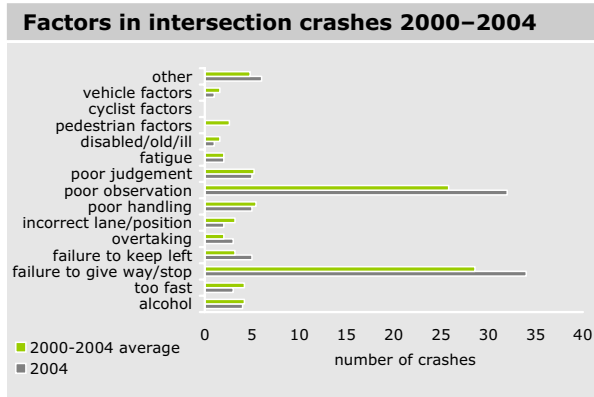
*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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

Intersections

Injury crashes at intersections made up 62 percent of the reported urban road injury crashes in 2004 and 28 percent in the rural environment. Following the increase in the number of these crashes on urban roads in the TNZ East Wanganui Region in 2003, there was a reduction in 2004. The percentage of injury crashes occurring at urban road intersections has been higher than for similar authorities and the national average for the last two years. At rural road intersections, the percentage of these crashes recorded during 2004 was the highest for the last 10 years.



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



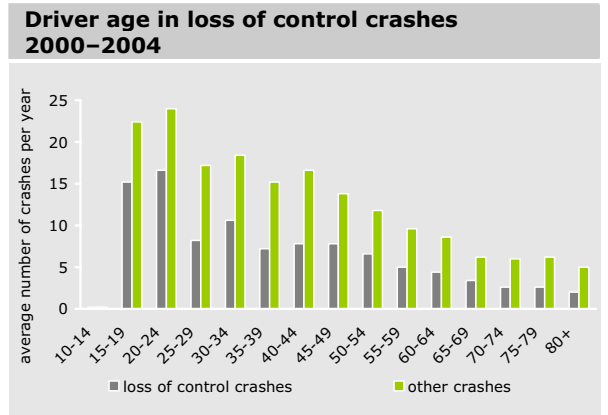
During the five years from 2000 to 2004, 50 percent (501) of the injury and non-injury crashes reported at the intersections in the TNZ East Wanganui Region involved a collision between vehicles making a crossing or turning movement while 22 percent (217) involved a rear-end collision. Loss of control contributed to 21 percent (216) of these crashes.

Loss of control

From 2000 to 2004, 62 percent (443) of injury crashes on the rural roads in the TNZ East Wanganui Region involved a driver losing control of a vehicle. The number of these crashes occurring on bends each year had been decreasing since 2002. A substantial reduction in the overall numbers was recorded for 2004 although loss of control crashes were still the most common injury crash type on rural roads in the region. A total of 67 were recorded on all roads in the TNZ East Wanganui Region during 2004, a decrease from 103 in 2003.



Travelling too fast for the conditions, fatigue, poor handling and poor observation were the main contributory factors in loss of control injury crashes over the five years 2000–2004.



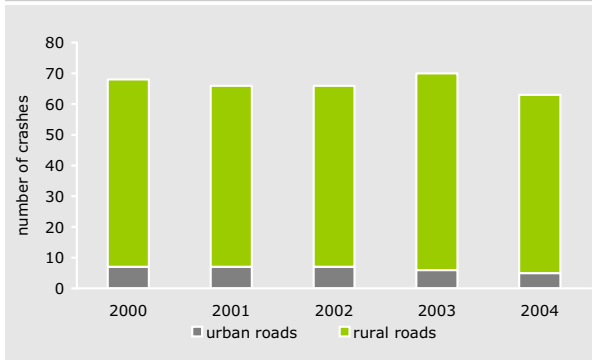
From 2000 to 2004, young drivers in the 20–24 year age group were involved in the highest number of loss of control crashes, with drivers aged less than 30 being involved in 40 percent of the injury crashes of this type reported. Where licence types were recorded, 29 percent of the drivers losing control of their vehicles did not hold a full licence.

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.

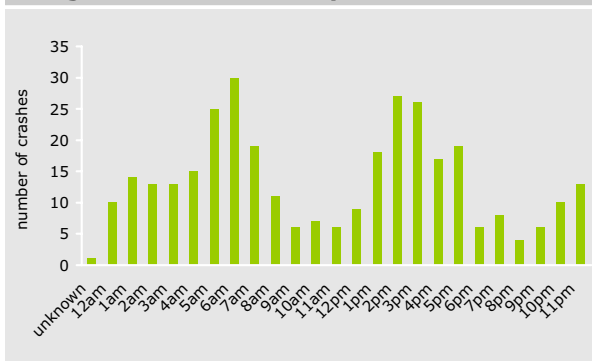
Identification of the effects and presence of driver fatigue are subjective and are generally considered to be under-reported by the Police. However, fatigue was recorded as a contributing factor in just under 20 percent (137) of all the crashes causing injury on the rural state highways within this region during the period 2000 to 2004. This percentage was above the average for all New Zealand state highways and the national average.

Fatigue-related crashes 2000–2004



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 to crashes. The human brain has an in-built clock that co-ordinates daily cycles. 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 appeared to be highest at these times within the TNZ East Wanganui Region over the 2000–2004 five-year period.

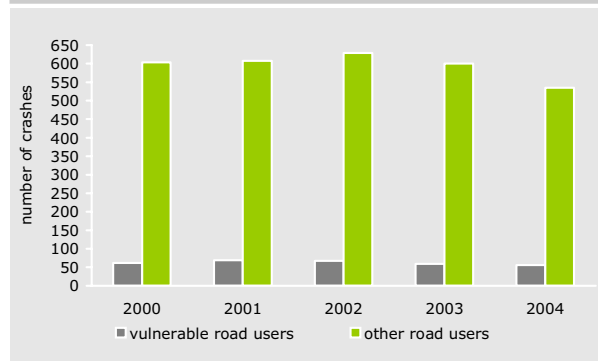
Fatigue-related crashes by hour 2000–2004



Vulnerable road users

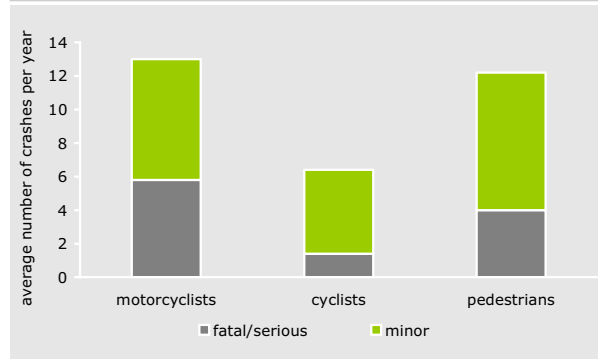
Travel in the TNZ East Wanganui Region is dominated by occupants of light and heavy vehicles, such as cars and trucks, but motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians also use the roads. These vulnerable road users account for only a small proportion of the road user population and distance travelled on the roading network but have experienced approximately 11 percent of the injuries from crashes over the five years from 2000 to 2004.

Vulnerable road user crashes 2000–2004



Generally, vulnerable road users have less protection than vehicle drivers and passengers. Therefore the injuries sustained by these road users are often more severe. Within the TNZ East Wanganui Region during recent years, approximately 35 percent of injured vulnerable road users experienced fatal or serious injuries compared with 28 percent of other injured road users.

Vulnerable road user injury severity 2000–2004



Approximately 57 percent of the injuries incurred by vulnerable road users occurred within urban speed limits (70 km/h and less) and 43 percent within rural speed limits (greater than 70 km/h). Fifty-eight percent of vulnerable road user injury crashes in the urban environment occurred at intersections and 42 percent at mid-block locations, whereas less than 20 percent of rural vulnerable road user injuries occurred at intersections.



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