

# road safety issues

**T**he 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 West Region. This region covers the New Plymouth, Stratford, South Taranaki, Ruapehu and Wanganui Districts.

The number of people killed or injured on state highways in this region decreased from 374 in 2002 to 357 during 2003. Road deaths and injuries last year were the result of 231 injury crashes, a slight reduction from 236 in 2002.

Occupants of cars and vans were the largest casualty group between 1999 and 2003. There was a downward trend in the number of cyclist and motorcyclist casualties over the last 10 years and an upward trend for pedestrians. These three groups of vulnerable road users make up 12 percent of the total road user casualties.

Within the region, the most frequent crash types were loss of control on rural roads and crashes at intersections on urban roads.

Poor driver skills relating to judgement, observation or handling techniques, were regularly recorded as 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 West Region

- Intersections
  - Loss of control
  - Fatigue
  - Speed
- Nationally
- Speed
  - Alcohol
  - Failure to give way
  - Restraints



## 2003 road trauma for TNZ Wanganui West Region

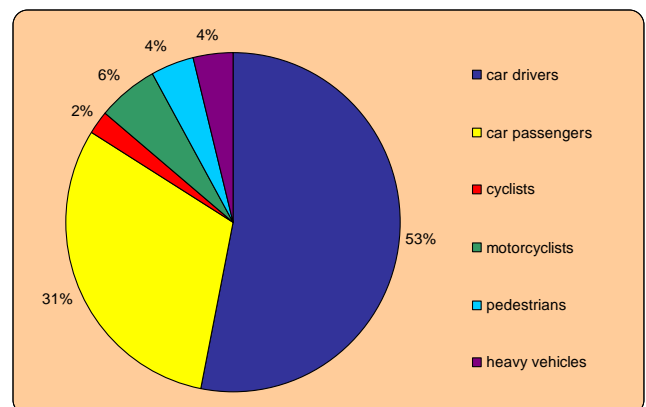
♀	Deaths	12
	Serious casualties	69
	Minor casualties	276



Fatal crashes	9
Serious injury crashes	46
Minor injury crashes	176
Non-injury crashes	374

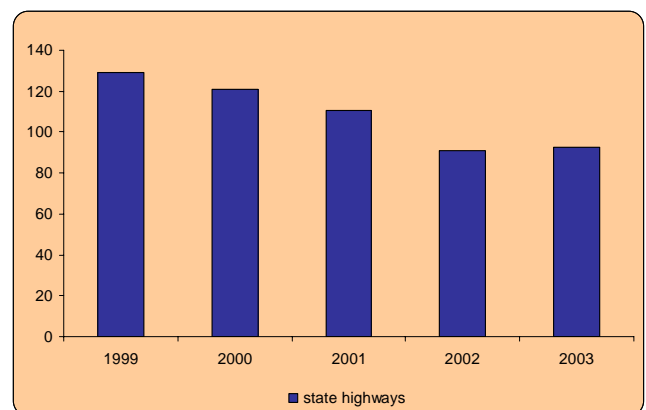
## Road user casualties 1999–2003

### User type 1999–2003



## Estimated social cost of crashes\*

### Social cost (\$ million)

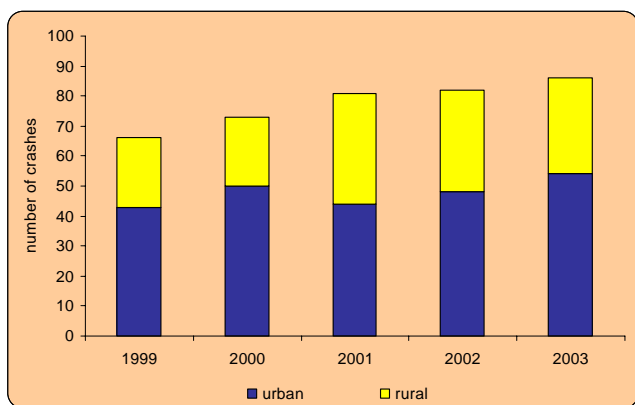


\*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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

## Intersections

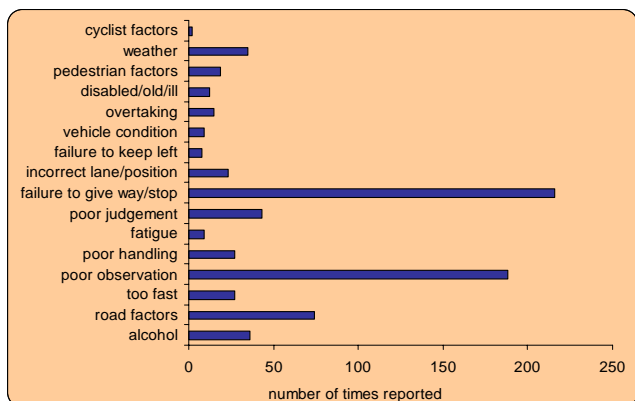
Injury crashes at intersections made up two thirds of reported urban state highway injury crashes in the TNZ Wanganui West Region during 2003. There has been an upward trend in the percentage of these crashes on urban roads in this region in the last 10 years. The percentage of injury crashes occurring at urban road intersections was higher than the national state highway average since 1995. At rural road intersections, the percentage that these crashes contribute to all injury crashes has shown an upward trend for the last 10 years.

### 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 district.

### Factors contributing to intersection crashes 1999–2003

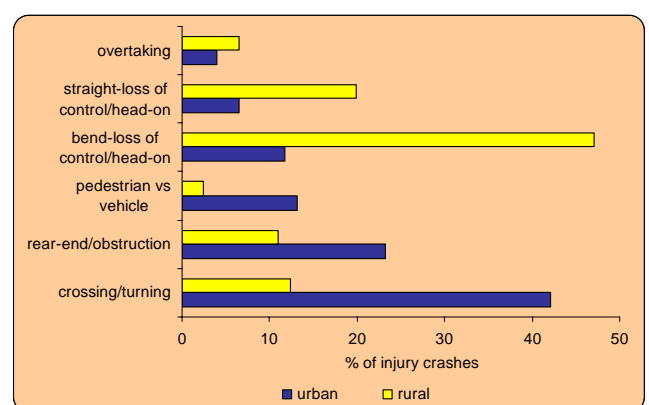


Forty-nine percent (565) of injury and non-injury crashes reported at intersections in the TNZ Wanganui West Region involved collisions between vehicles making a crossing or turning movement, while 24 percent (277 crashes) involved a rear-end collision.

## Loss of control

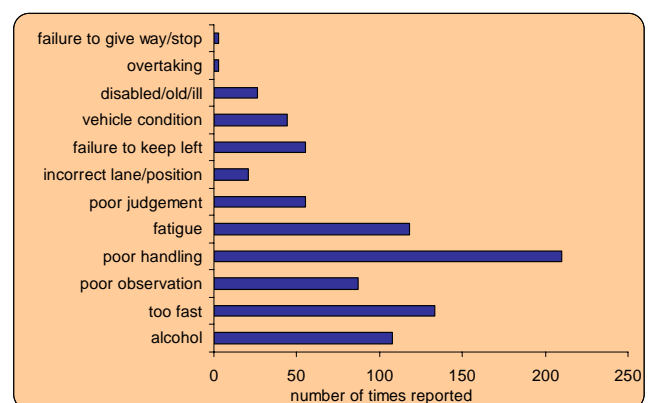
From 1999 to 2003, 67 percent of injury crashes on rural state highways in the TNZ Wanganui West Region involved a driver losing control of a vehicle. The number of loss of control injury crashes on bends on rural state highways reported each year since 2000 has been increasing. Loss of control remains the most common injury crash type on rural state highways in the region. A total of 124 loss of control crashes was recorded for the TNZ Wanganui West Region during 2003, an increase from 114 in 2002.

### Crash movement types 1999–2003



Poor handling, driving at a speed too fast for the conditions, fatigue and alcohol 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



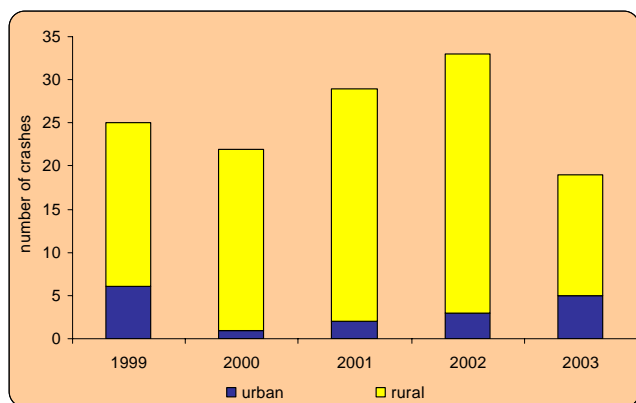
Drivers in the 15 to 19 and 25 to 29 age groups were involved in the highest number of loss of control crashes with drivers under 35 being involved in over half of the reported crashes of this type. Where licence types were recorded, over one quarter of the drivers losing control of their vehicles did 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.

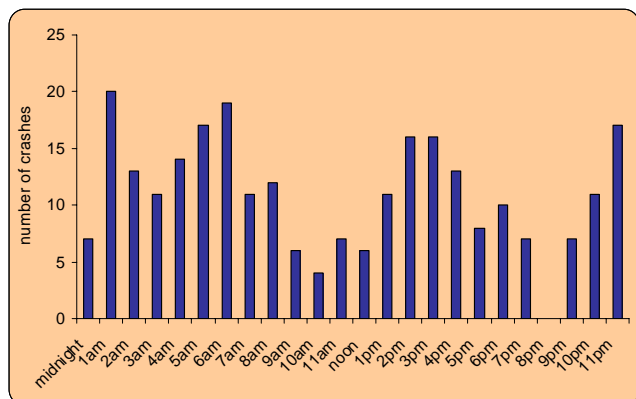
Identification of the effects and presence of driver fatigue is subjective and is generally considered to be under-reported. However, fatigue was still recorded as a contributing factor in just under 15 percent (111) of all crashes causing injury on rural state highways in this region during the period 1999 to 2003. This percentage is higher than the average level for all New Zealand state highways.

### Injury crashes involving fatigue



A combination 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 appears to be highest at these times within the TNZ Wanganui West Region over the 1999–2003 period.

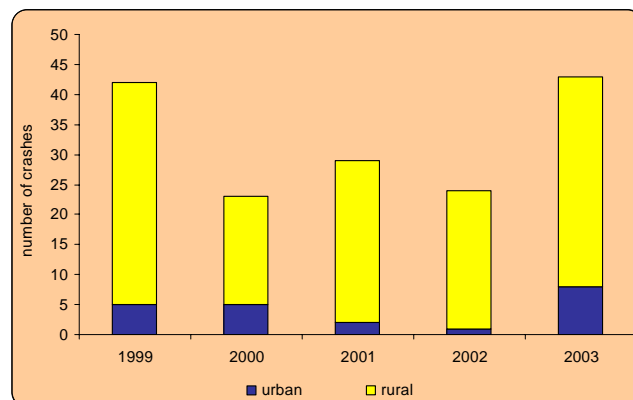
### Fatigue-related crash times



## 80 Speed

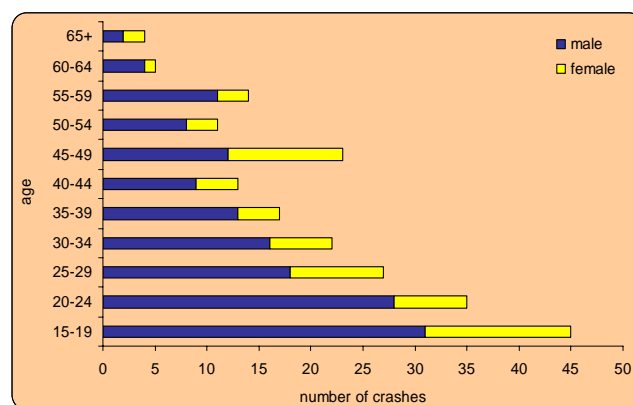
From 1999 to 2003, driving at a speed too fast for the conditions was one of the main contributing factors in rural state highway injury crashes in the TNZ Wanganui West Region. Speed can be attributed to 140 (18 percent) of rural road injury crashes and 21 (six percent) of urban road injury crashes over these five years. However, the level of involvement that speed played in injury crashes on rural and urban state highways within this region is, however significantly lower than the national average.

### Speed-related injury crashes

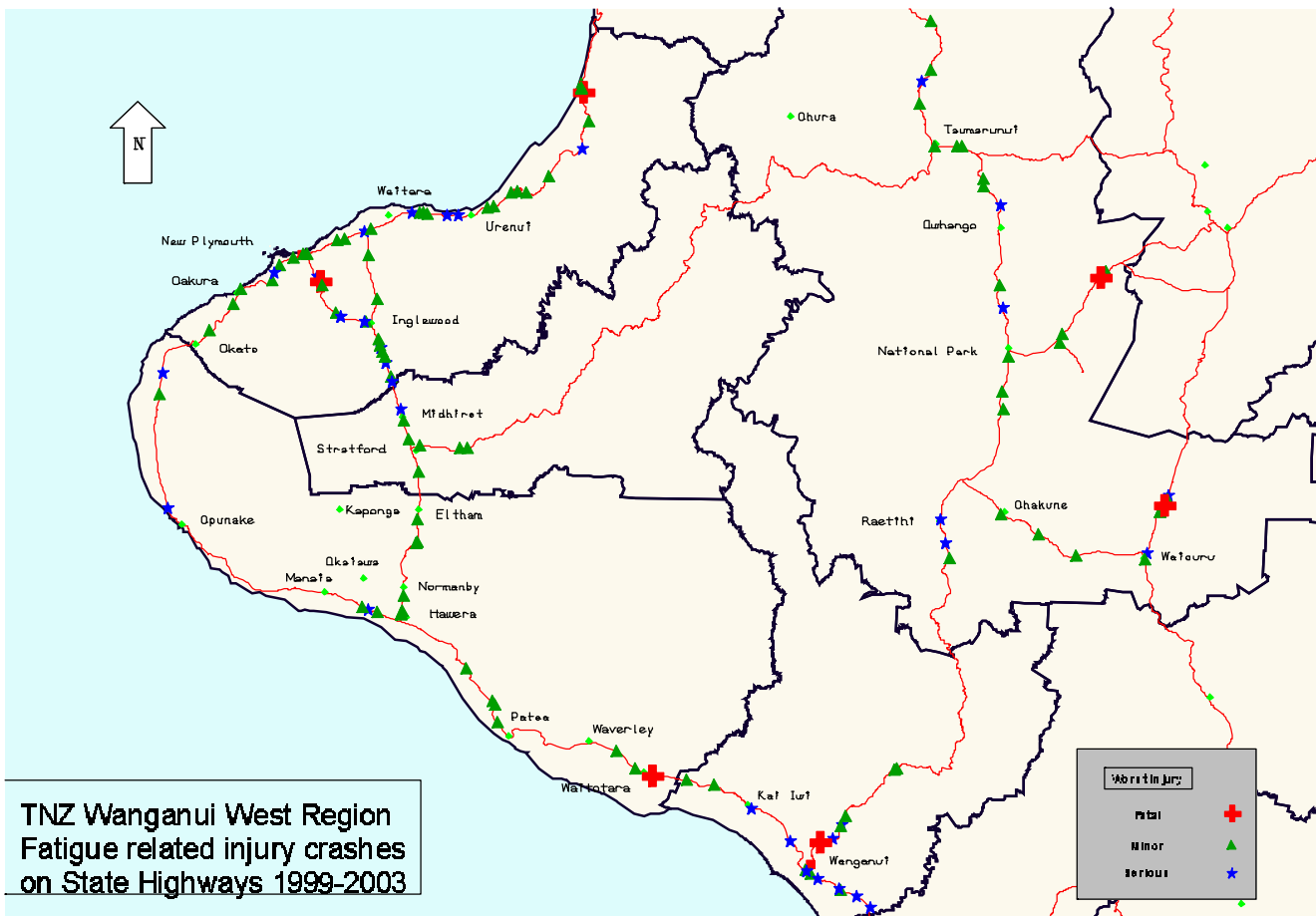


Speed was more likely to be a contributing factor in crashes for young drivers than for older drivers. Approximately half the crashes during the five years from 1999 to 2003 where speed was a factor involved a driver under the age of 30.

### 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

Land Transport Safety Authority  
Regional Manager, Darryl Harwood  
Road Safety Engineer, Dave Curson  
Regional Education Advisor, Barbara Broederlow  
See LTSA staff contact details at bottom of page

Road Safety Co-ordinators  
New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki  
Manaaki Oranga Ltd – Bryan Kyle  
Maru Wehi Hauora  
PO Box 5112, New Plymouth.  
Phone 06 759 7300

Wanganui  
Horizons Regional Council (Roadsafe Central)  
Jude Pene-Jones  
PO Box 515, Wanganui  
Phone 06 349 1710

Ruapehu  
Horizons Regional Council (Roadsafe Central)  
Phoebe Montgomery  
PO Box 194, Taumarunui  
Phone 07 895 5209

Transit New Zealand  
Regional Manager, Errol Christiansen  
PO Box 345, Wanganui  
Phone 06 345 4173

New Zealand Police  
Strategic Traffic Manager, Inspector Neil Wynne  
Central District Headquarters  
Private Bag 11-040, Palmerston North  
Phone 06 351 3600

Accident Compensation Corporation  
Wanganui and Ruapehu – Brigid Crowley  
PO Box 435, Wanganui, Phone 06 349 0416  
New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki  
Kath Forde  
Private Bag, New Plymouth  
Phone 06 759 0700

Palmerston North Regional Office  
Corner Ashley and Ferguson Streets  
PO Box 1947, Palmerston North  
Phone 06 953 6296, Fax 06 953 6203  
[www.ltsa.govt.nz](http://www.ltsa.govt.nz)