

road safety issues

July 2003

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 1998–2002 period. The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and to identify possible ways to reduce the level of road deaths and injuries in the Eastern Waikato Area (Thames–Coromandel, Hauraki and Matamata–Piako Districts).

'The data contained in these reports gives us a good picture of the level of trauma that has been happening on our roads over the past five years. However, lives are saved through the commitment of road safety partners who are focusing collaboratively on why road crashes occur, and then working with communities and industry to address these issues. Road safety partnerships have been instrumental in achieving the road safety gains made to date on our roads. Commitment to the strengthening of road safety partnerships will be essential if we are to achieve the 2010 road trauma targets.'

Glenn Bunting
LTSA Regional Manager
Waikato and Bay of Plenty

Major road safety issues

Eastern Waikato Area

Poor observation

Speed

Drink-driving

Restraints and helmets

Nationally

Speed

Drink-driving

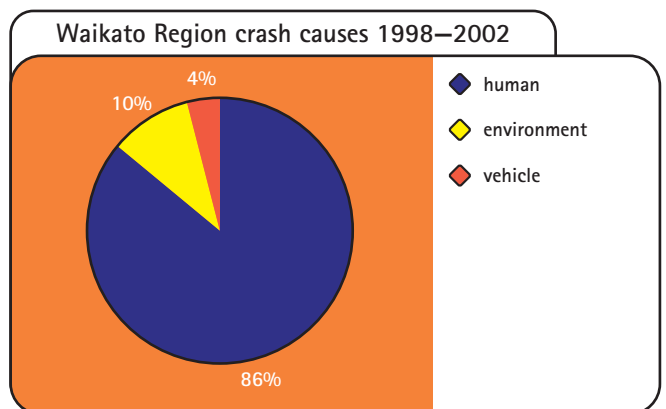
Failure to give way

Restraints

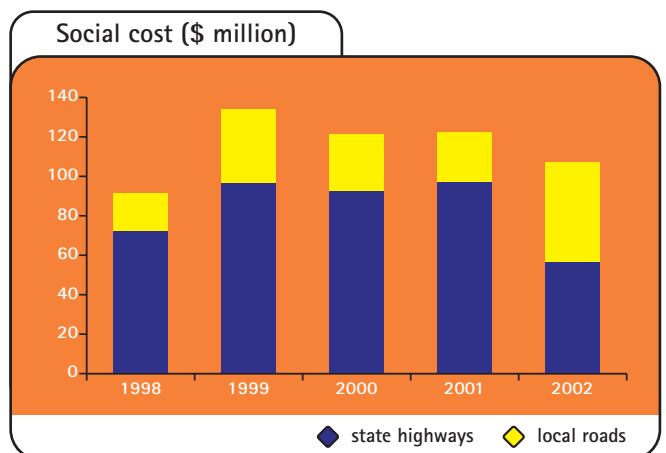
2002 road trauma for Eastern Waikato Area

Deaths	12
Serious casualties	55
Minor casualties	233
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Fatal crashes	11
Serious injury crashes	44
Minor-injury crashes	143
Non-injury crashes	350

Regional crash causes 1998–2002



Estimated social cost of crashes*

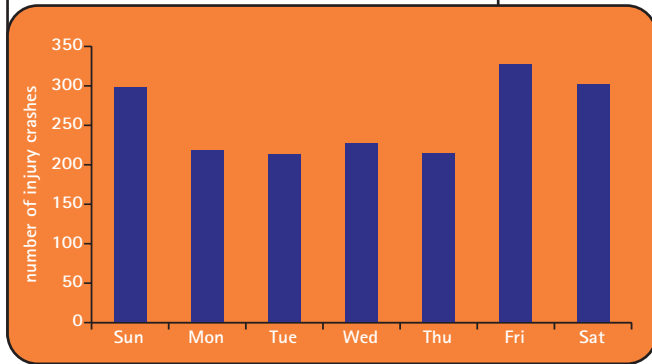


* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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

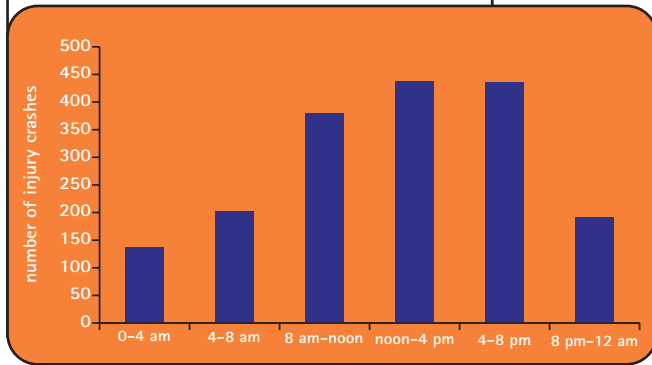
When crashes occurred

Crashes resulting in injury can occur at any time, but in the Eastern Waikato Area between 1998 and 2002, Friday and noon–4 pm were the worst periods.

Day of week for crashes 1998–2002



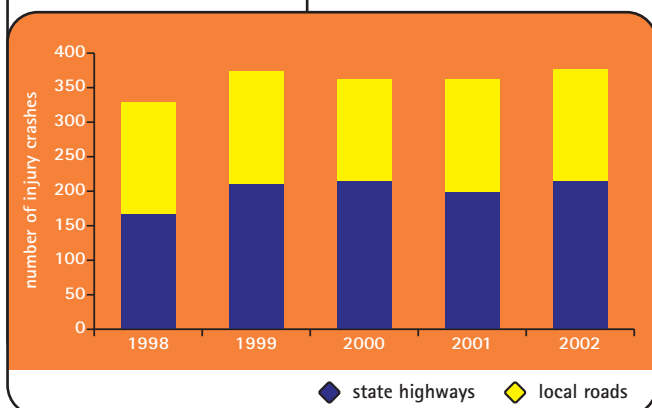
Time of day for crashes 1998–2002



Where crashes occurred

During the 1998–2002 period, approximately 87 percent of fatal crashes (where one or more people were killed) and 73 percent of injury crashes occurred on rural roads. In rural areas there is a greater chance of a fatal crash occurring than in an urban area, due to the higher speed limits.

Location of crashes



Who was involved in crashes

Between 1998 and 2002, 1,609 people were injured on Eastern Waikato Area roads. Drivers accounted for 52 percent of people injured and passengers 31 percent.

Other key road-user groups represented among those injured in this period included motorcyclists (six percent), cyclists (two percent) and pedestrians (four percent).

Licence status of all drivers involved in injury crashes in 2002

Licence status	Urban crashes	Rural crashes
Full licence	55%	62%
Learner or restricted	18%	15%
No or wrong licence	14%	6%
Forbidden or disqualified	3%	1%
Overseas	1%	5%
Unknown	9%	11%

Ethnicity status of all drivers involved in injury crashes in 2002

The collection of ethnicity information commenced in late 2001 via the traffic crash reports completed by the New Zealand Police.

In 2002, the largest ethnic group involved in crashes in the Eastern Waikato Area was New Zealand European. However, when considering the ethnicity of those involved in crashes in the Eastern Waikato Area compared with all New Zealand and with similar areas, the following ethnic group was over-represented in 2002:

- Samoan in rural areas.

Ethnicity status	Urban crashes	Rural crashes
NZ European	60%	60%
NZ Maori	26%	17%
Cook Islander	3%	1%
Samoan		7%
Tongan		1%
Asian	11%	8%
Other		6%



Poor observation

Poor observation includes:

- inattention or failing to notice, eg failing to notice traffic lights while driving home on 'autopilot' and thinking about what to cook for tea
- attention being diverted, eg being distracted by children in the back seat
- not seeing or looking for another road user until too late, eg not checking behind when changing lanes, or experiencing near misses at intersections.

Nationally, not seeing or looking for other parties until too late was the third highest contributing factor in injury crashes in 2002. The total social cost of these crashes was \$552 million.

Failure to see or look for another road user until too late caused 2,128 crashes in 2002 – a greater number of crashes than those caused by either speeding or drink-driving.

In the Eastern Waikato Area, poor observation was a factor in 27 percent of injury crashes in 2002, a decrease from 2001, and decreasing against the national trend.

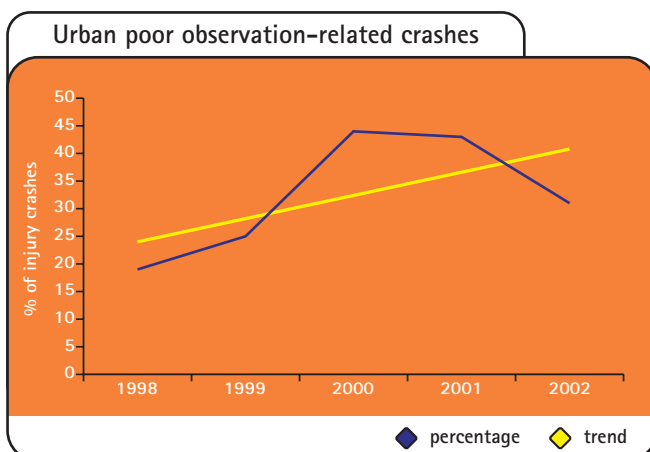
There were 238 injury crashes relating to poor observation reported in the last five years.

Poor observation was predominantly an urban issue in the Eastern Waikato Area in 2002 and was a factor in 31 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit lower than 70 km/h. Poor observation has decreased as a factor on urban roads over the last three years, with the number of injury crashes falling from 19 in 2001 to 18 in 2002.

The majority (37 percent) of poor observation crashes occurred at intersections.

Poor observation is a challenging issue for all road safety groups to address. In particular, thought needs to be given to ways to address:

- complacency of drivers
- looking but not seeing
- roading networks that contain surprises for the inattentive driver.



80 Speed

Speed includes not only exceeding the speed limit, but also driving too fast for the condition of the road. No matter how good drivers think they are, speeding significantly increases the chances of crashing and serious injury or death.

- A child struck in a suburban street by a car travelling at 10 km/h over the speed limit will be killed.
- Driving at 100 km/h in light rain requires the same stopping distance as driving at 120 km/h on a sunny day.

Nationally, speed is the major contributing factor to fatal road crashes. Crashes involving excessive speed tend to be more severe and, therefore, the associated social cost is much higher.

In 1,509 crashes during 2002, the driver was travelling too fast for the conditions, resulting in a total social cost of \$768 million. Drivers travelling at excessive speed accounted for around 20 percent of open road crashes.

In the Eastern Waikato Area, speed was a factor in 24 percent of injury crashes in 2002. This was an increase from 2001 and increasing against the national trend.

There were 191 speed-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

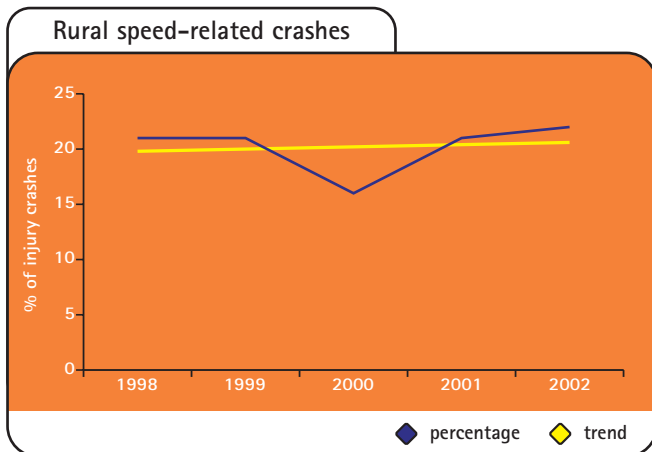
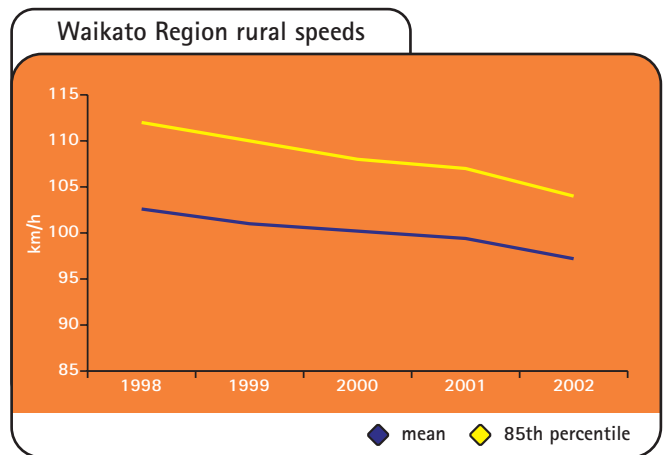
Speed was predominantly a rural issue in the Eastern Waikato Area in 2002 and was a factor in 22 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit greater than 70 km/h. Most roads in the Waikato were built for 80 km/h speeds and cannot be driven on safely at the open road maximum of 100 km/h.

Speed has increased as a factor on rural roads over the last three years, with the number of injury crashes rising from 27 in 2001 to 30 in 2002.

Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2002 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that:

- 35 percent of drivers said that they enjoyed driving fast on the open road
- 14 percent of drivers agreed that there was little chance of a crash when speeding if they were careful
- 33 percent of drivers thought that the risk of being caught speeding was small
- 80 percent thought that enforcing the speed limit helped to lower the number of road deaths.

Speed surveys are undertaken annually throughout the country by the LTSA and it is pleasing to see that nationally both urban and rural speeds are continuing to decrease. The following graph illustrates the results of surveys undertaken in the Waikato Region over the last five years:





Drink-driving

Alcohol affects the way people drive. Studies repeatedly show that the risk of crashing increases as a driver's blood alcohol level increases. Contrary to popular opinion, people with a high blood alcohol level are more likely to be injured or killed in a crash than those who have not consumed alcohol. If injured, they are also more likely to encounter complications in their recovery.

For every 100 drink-drivers or riders killed in road crashes, 59 of their passengers and 36 other road users die with them.

Nationally, alcohol was the second highest contributing factor in road crashes during 2002 with these crashes resulting in a total social cost of \$701 million. In past years, over 40 percent of fatal crashes and over 20 percent of all reported injury crashes featured one or more drivers affected by alcohol.

For the 12 months to December 2002, alcohol-affected drivers contributed to 25 percent of all fatal crashes and 13 percent of all injury crashes.

In the Eastern Waikato Area, alcohol was a factor in 17 percent of injury crashes in 2002, the same as in 2001.

There were 166 alcohol-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Alcohol was predominantly an urban issue in the Eastern Waikato Area in 2002 and was a factor in 20 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit lower than 70 km/h.

Alcohol has increased as a factor on urban roads over the last three years, with the number of injury crashes rising from eight in 2001 to 12 in 2002.

Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2002 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that:

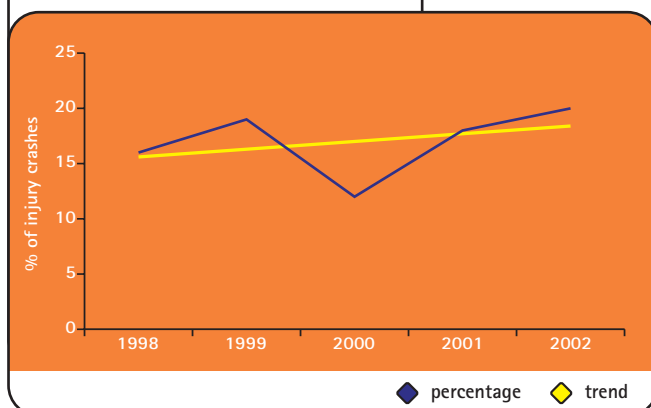
- 11 percent of drivers now agreed that there was not much chance of a crash when driving after drinking if they were careful
- 35 percent of drivers believed that the overall risk of being caught drinking and driving was small
- 76 percent believed compulsory breath testing helped to lower the number of road deaths.

A small group of regular high-risk drink-drivers make up only one percent of all drivers on the road at night and weekends, but are responsible for nearly half the crash deaths at that time.

Last drink surveys are completed by New Zealand Police officers at the time of processing drink-drivers. The information from these surveys is used in a number of ways and includes assisting:

- liquor licensing assessment groups to identify at-risk premises
- the New Zealand Police to target their activities to the risk factor
- health authorities to target their activities and to monitor the impacts of any legislation changes.

Urban alcohol-related crashes





Restraints and helmets

Front seat safety belt use – adults

Wearing rates	2002
Nationally	92%
Waikato Region	94%
Waikato Police District	96%

Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2002 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that 35 percent of those surveyed thought that the chance of an adult being caught not wearing a safety belt when driving was very or fairly likely.

Rear seat safety belt use – adults

Wearing rates	2002
Nationally	81%
Waikato Region	76%
Waikato Police District	76%
Eastern Waikato Area	81%

Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2002 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that 14 percent of those surveyed thought that the chance of an adult being caught not wearing a safety belt as a rear seat passenger was very or fairly likely.

Cycle helmets

Wearing rates	2003
Nationally	89%
Waikato Region	93%
Waikato Police District	94%

Since becoming compulsory in 1994, cycle helmet use has increased substantially from wearing rates of 60–65 percent in 1992/1993. In 2003, the helmet wearing rate of 89 percent was still significantly lower than the 94–96 percent wearing rates observed since 1995.

Child restraint use

Wearing rates	2002
Nationally	86%
Waikato Region	89%
Waikato Police District	88%
Eastern Waikato Area	92%

Responses from the Waikato Region to the 2002 Public Attitudes Survey indicated that 32 percent of those surveyed thought that the chance of being caught if a child under five in a back seat was not in a child restraint was very or fairly likely.

Partnerships

The LTSA works closely with many road safety partners at national, regional and local levels. These include government departments, enforcement agencies, territorial local authorities, health authorities and local service providers.

Road safety partnerships

Last year, seven road safety partnership groups were formed within the Waikato and Bay of Plenty Regions. These groups replicate the membership of the National Road Safety Committee at a local level.

The partnership group members collaboratively agree on the road safety risks, objectives and targets, while monitoring and reviewing road safety progress as detailed in the partners' road safety action plans.

- Road controlling authorities and regional councils develop annual community road safety action plans outlining the road safety issues and areas of risk, objectives, actions and management systems for their community education and road environment activities.
- The New Zealand Police develop quarterly road policing action plans that are used as the basis for weekly/monthly risk targeted patrol plans for frontline staff.

In February, a summary of road safety activities undertaken by road safety partners during 2002 for three of the seven areas was produced in the form of *Road safety partnerships*.

The response from those who received *Road safety partnerships* was supportive and indicated that the summary was useful and clearly identified how partners can work collaboratively in road safety activities.

Community Road Safety Programme

Community development

The Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) has been developed over the last 12 years on the basis that community involvement in, and ownership of, road safety issues is essential to the success of any country's road safety strategy.

Community development for road safety is the process of identifying, and working with and within, different communities of people to assist them with becoming aware of their own local road safety issues.

Communities are supported in developing and implementing their own informed solutions to these issues through planning and co-ordination, provision of accurate and relevant road safety information and accessing funding.

Community road safety activities for 2003/2004

Funding from the CRSP for the Eastern Waikato Area for the 2003/2004 year is proposed as follows:

Community development

Community fund/activity

Road safety programmes

Safe with Age

Driver licensing

Safe driving

CAAP – sober driving

Co-ordinated activity

Kidsafe Week/National Bike Wise Week

The Waikato Regional Council will also be involved in the following projects across the region to complement the work undertaken at a local level:

Road safety programmes

Road safety icon

Advertising

The open road

Road Safety to 2010

In September 2002, the Minister of Transport announced the government's new road safety goals of achieving no more than 300 fatalities and 4,500 hospitalisations per annum by 2010. A substantial work programme was put in place to begin working towards these goals, much of it to be led in a collaborative manner by the LTSA.

The LTSA projects included in this package are:

- safety management systems (SMS) – development and promotion of the use of SMS within road controlling authority (RCA) operations
- road network performance – development of road classification, targets and measures
- Crash Analysis System (CAS) – made available for use by externals
- pedestrians and cyclists – development of a safety framework
- pedestrians and cyclists – development and promotion of best practice standards and guidelines
- safe routes – development of operational policy and guidelines for activities
- Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) – implementation of review recommendations
- novice driver – pilot of a competency-based training and assessment programme, and a programme to encourage increased on-road driving practice with informal supervision by parent or caregiver
- driver education – campaign to reduce the number of crashes involving failure to give way
- heavy vehicles – development of a safety strategy
- truck compliance – survey of key compliance risk areas
- administrative penalties – review of penalties to enhance their safety focus and effectiveness
- performance measurement – increased surveys of speed and restraint usage
- travel surveys – provision of up-to-date travel information
- regional strategy devolution – development and promotion of strategic road safety planning guidelines for local government
- RoadSense – Ata Haere – an approach that aims to increase the amount of safety taught in schools
- agency safety assessment – analysis of current programmes, and identification of potential areas for improvement.

Updates on the progress of these projects can be obtained from either the LTSA website or the nearest LTSA Regional Office.

New Zealand Road Safety Programme

Road policing

As part of the development of the 2004/2005 New Zealand Road Safety Programme (NZRSP), the process by which New Zealand Police resources were allocated is being reviewed.

'In 2002, 39 people were killed on Waikato Police District roads. For the families of these people this was a great and tragic loss. However, 2002 saw the lowest number of road deaths on Waikato Police District roads since records began. This was attributed to the high profile created by the Waikato Highway Patrol and supported by strategic traffic units within the district, and also through significant co-operation from the travelling public.

The only way we can continue to drive down the number of road deaths is through strict enforcement of trauma-promoting offences, continued co-operation of the travelling public and working with our partners in the territorial local authorities, Transit New Zealand and the LTSA.

If we continue to share the same vision we can reduce further the level of road carnage in our district.'

Superintendent Kelvin Powell
District Commander
Waikato Police District
New Zealand Police

Assistance from the LTSA

The LTSA Hamilton Regional Office is able to assist in road safety activities such as:

- the development of safety management systems
- crash reduction studies
- safety audits
- crash data provision and analysis
- general road engineering advice
- general road safety advice
- community development
- community programmes.

The LTSA website also contains road safety information, including electronic copies of this report and all of the others that have been produced for the country. We encourage you to visit this site: www.ltsa.govt.nz

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