

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 Waitomo District.

‘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

Waitomo District

Road factors
Speed
Fatigue
Restraints and helmets

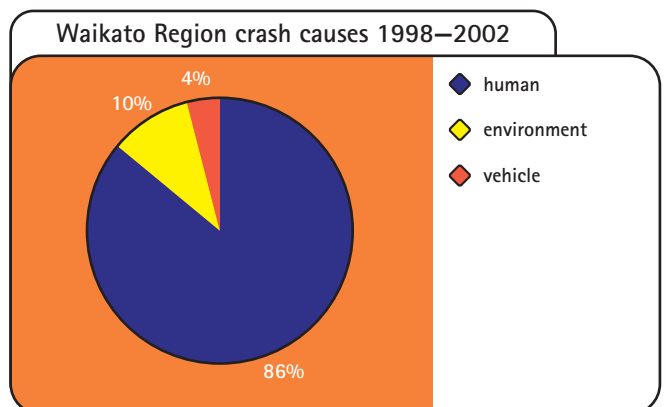
Nationally

Speed
Drink-driving
Failure to give way
Restraints

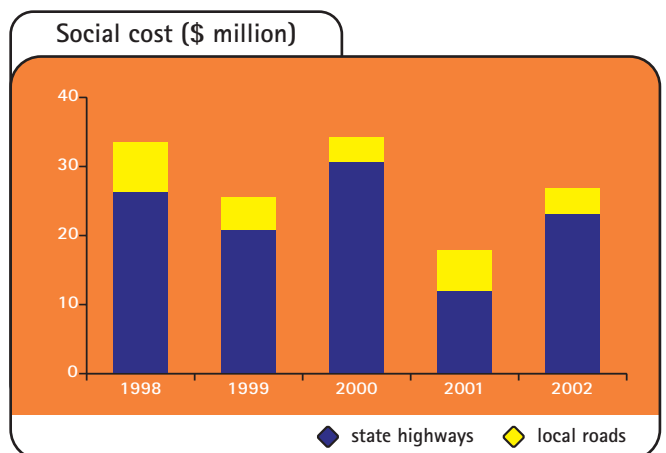
2002 road trauma for Waitomo District

Deaths	2
Serious casualties	13
Minor casualties	58
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Fatal crashes	2
Serious injury crashes	12
Minor-injury crashes	39
Non-injury crashes	76

Regional crash causes 1998–2002



Estimated social cost of crashes*

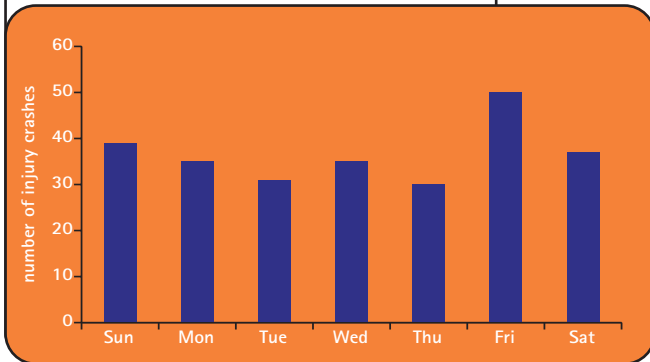


* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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

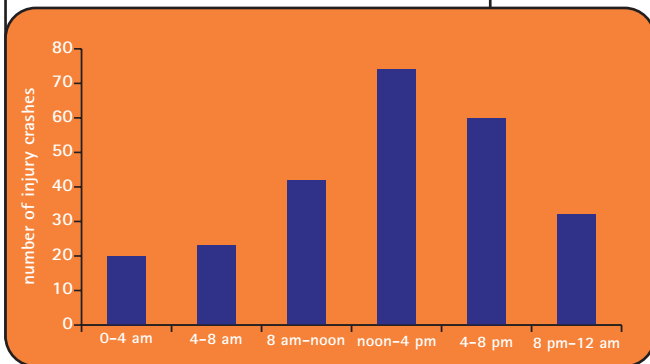
When crashes occurred

Crashes resulting in injury can occur at any time, but in the Waitomo District between 1998 and 2002, Friday and noon-4 pm were the worst periods.

Day of week for crashes 1998-2002



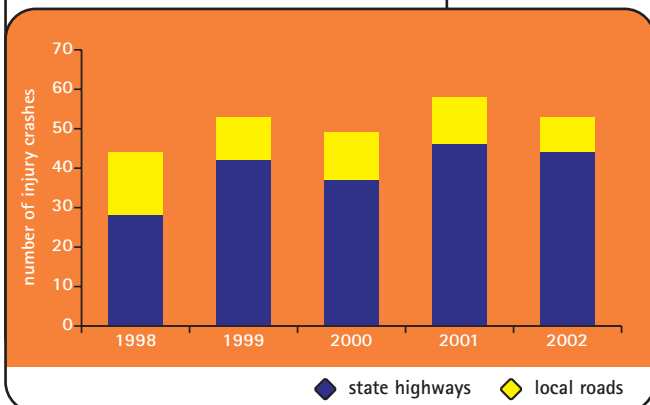
Time of day for crashes 1998-2002



Where crashes occurred

During the 1998-2002 period, approximately 94 percent of fatal crashes (where one or more people were killed) and 82 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 1998-2002



Who was involved in crashes

Between 1998 and 2002, 373 people were injured on Waitomo District roads. Drivers accounted for 54 percent of people injured and passengers 28 percent.

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

Licence status of all drivers involved in injury crashes in 2002

Licence status	Urban crashes	Rural crashes
Full licence	37%	71%
Learner or restricted	26%	10%
No or wrong licence	21%	8%
Overseas	5%	6%
Unknown	11%	5%

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 Waitomo District was New Zealand European. However, when considering the ethnicity of those involved in crashes in the Waitomo District compared with all New Zealand and with similar districts, the following ethnic groups were over-represented in 2002:

- New Zealand Maori in both urban and rural crashes
- other groups in urban areas.

Ethnicity status	Urban crashes	Rural crashes
NZ European	64%	55%
NZ Maori	27%	33%
Asian		10%
Other	9%	2%



Road factors

A safe road environment incorporates numerous design principles, appropriate geometric design standards, good delineation under all conditions, adequate surface skid resistance and a roadside free of unforgiving hazards. It should serve the safety needs of all vehicles and road users.

Road factors that contribute to crashes include those that affect the way a driver reacts to driving conditions such as:

- a slippery road surface
- obstructions on the road such as slips
- limited visibility
- signs, signals and/or roadmarking being damaged or in poor condition.

Nationally, road factors were a contributing factor in eight percent of injury crashes in the 1998–2002 period, with slippery road surfaces and limited visibility being the two key conditions.

In the Waitomo District, road factors featured in 21 percent of injury crashes in 2002, a decrease from 2001, and decreasing against the national trend.

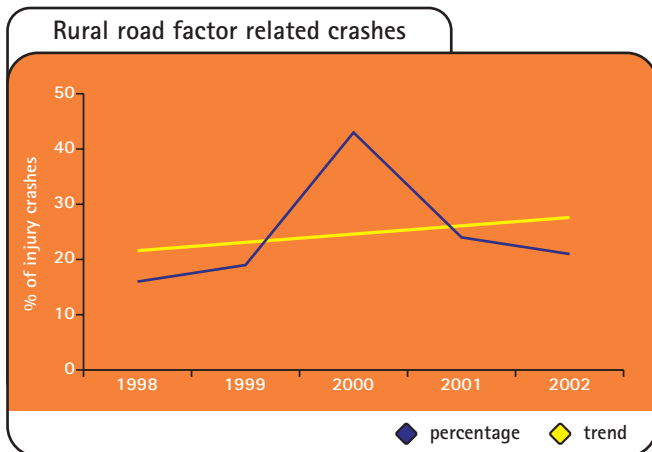
There were 58 road factor related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

Road factors were predominantly a rural issue in the Waitomo District in 2002 and featured in 21 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit greater than 70 km/h.

Road factors have decreased as a factor on rural roads over the last three years, with the number of injury crashes falling from 12 in 2001 to nine in 2002.

The road factors involved in crashes in the Waitomo District over the last five years were:

	1998–2002
Slippery road	36
Road surface in poor condition	15
Road obstructed	1
Visibility limited	10
Signs and signals in poor condition	3



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 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 account for around 20 percent of open road crashes.

In the Waitomo District, speed was a factor in 21 percent of injury crashes in 2002. This was an increase from 2001, and increasing against the national trend.

There were 49 speed-related injury crashes reported in the last five years.

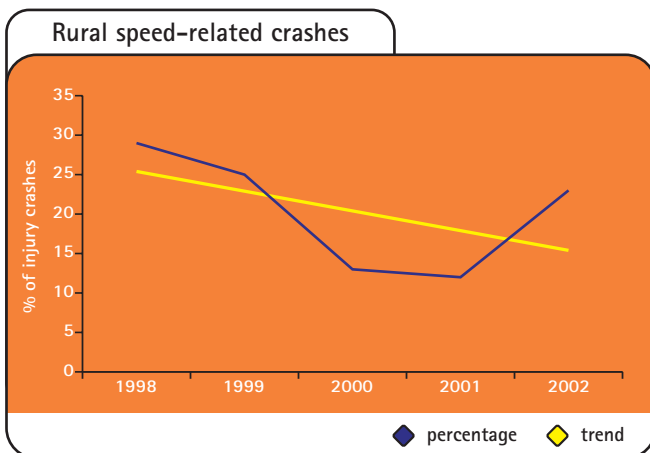
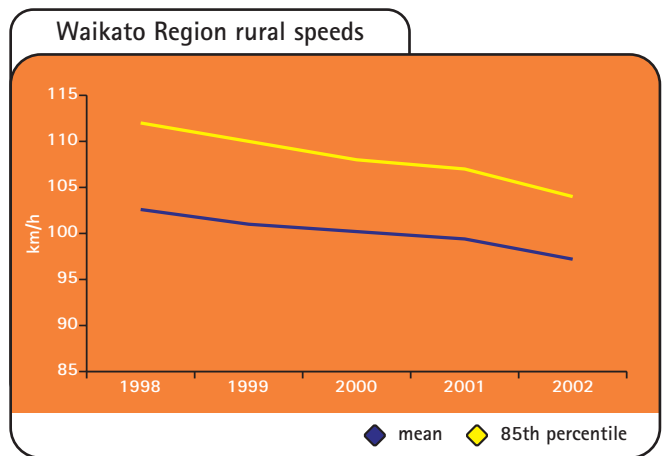
Speed was predominantly a rural issue in the Waitomo District in 2002 and was a factor in 23 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit greater than 70 km/h. Most roads in the Waikato were built for 80 km/h speeds and cannot be driven safely at the open road maximum of 100 km/h.

Speed has fluctuated as a factor on rural roads over the last five years, with the number of injury crashes rising from six in 2001 to 10 in 2002.

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

- 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:



Fatigue

Fatigue is the term used to describe when a person becomes drowsy, tired or even falls asleep, and it can be as a result of a number of causes including:

- a long trip
- a lack of sleep
- exhaust fumes
- working long hours before driving
- exceeding driving hours (for commercial drivers).

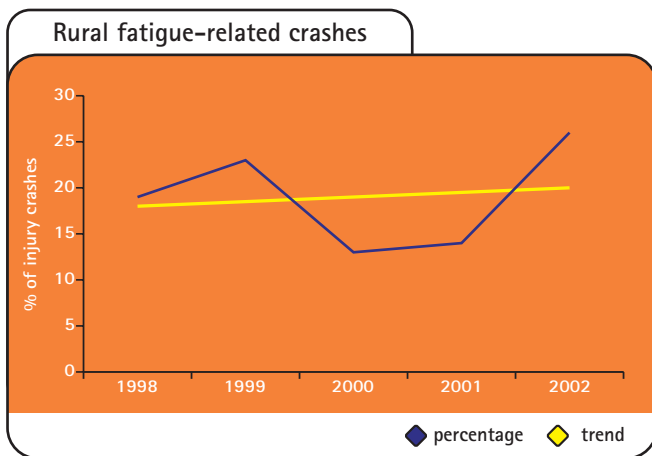
Nationally, fatigue was the sixth highest contributing factor in injury crashes in 2002 and contributed to 589 crashes with a total social cost of \$275 million.

In the Waitomo District, fatigue was a factor in 21 percent of injury crashes in 2002, an increase from 2001, and increasing in line with the national trend.

There were 42 injury crashes relating to fatigue reported in the last five years.

The majority (83 percent) of fatigue crashes occurred on state highways.

Fatigue was predominantly a rural issue in Waitomo District in 2002 and was a factor in 26 percent of the injury crashes occurring on roads with a speed limit greater than 70 km/h. Fatigue has fluctuated as a factor on rural roads over the last five years, with the number of injury crashes rising from seven in 2001 to 11 in 2002.



Crashes resulting from fatigue can occur at any time, but in the Waitomo District between 1998 and 2002, Sunday and noon-4 pm were the worst periods.

Any one crash will normally have several contributing factors, and in the Waitomo District 24 percent of fatigue crashes also involved alcohol and drugs.

Key age groups who were at fault in fatigue-related crashes in the Waitomo District were 20 to 24 and 30 to 34 year olds.



Restraints and helmets

Front seat safety belt use – adults

Wearing rates	2002
Nationally	92%
Waikato Region	94%

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%

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%

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%

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

The Waikato Regional Council will 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 road safety taught by 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 either from 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 focusing on 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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