

road safety issues

Greater Wellington 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 this report is to highlight road safety issues on the road network in the Greater Wellington Region.

The past five years have shown a slight upward trend in crash numbers in the region. This trend continued with an increase in crashes and casualties in 2004 compared with 2003.

The estimated social cost of crashes in the region in 2004 amounted to \$269 million.

While vehicle occupants made up 70 percent of all casualties, vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists made up a considerable proportion of casualties when compared with similar regions.

Loss of control remains the principal crash type in the region, while 38 percent of crashes occurred at intersections.

Driver skills such as poor handling, not seeing other road users, bad judgement and insufficient control of the vehicle were the main contributory factors noted in the crashes.

Both local and national road safety issues are identified below with specific issues for the region outlined in detail overleaf and national issues covered on the back page.

Major road safety issues

Greater Wellington Region

- Loss of control
- Vulnerable road users
- Intersections
- Driver skills

Nationally

- Speed
- Alcohol
- Failure to give way
- Restraints



2004 road trauma for Greater Wellington Region



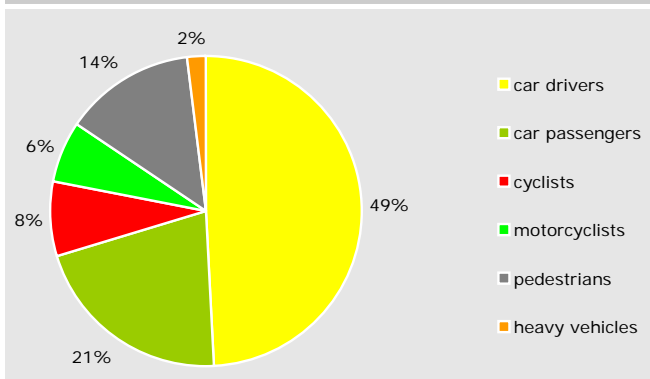
Deaths	32
Serious casualties	184
Minor casualties	933



Fatal crashes	24
Serious injury crashes	160
Minor injury crashes	682
Non-injury crashes	2496

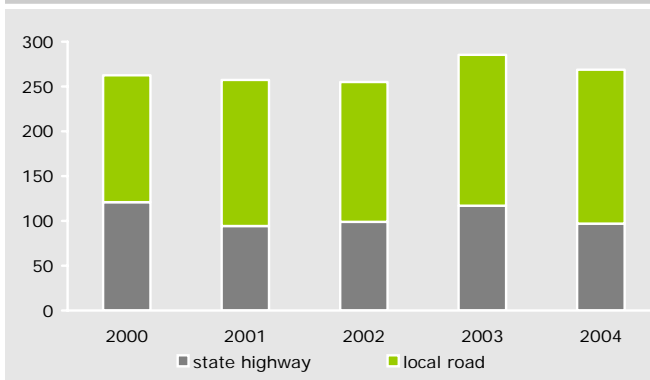
Road casualties 2000–2004

User type 2000–2004



Estimated social cost of crashes*

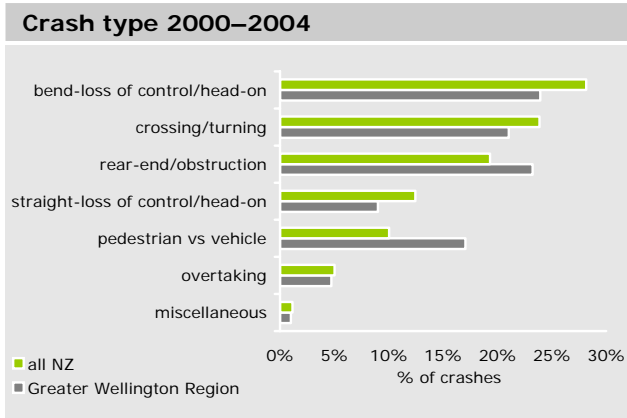
Social cost (\$ million)



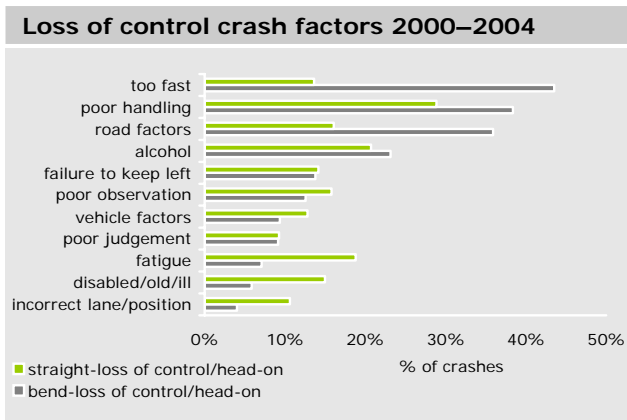
*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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

Loss of control

Drivers losing control of their vehicle, either on a straight road or on a bend, resulted in the most common type of crash in the region between 2000 and 2004. These crashes represented 33 percent of the region's crashes (24 percent on bends and nine percent on straight sections of road).



While the percentage of these crashes was not above national levels, it is appropriate to try to reduce their occurrence because they represent such a large proportion of reported injury crashes.



Poor handling of the vehicle, alcohol, fatigue, excessive speed and slippery road conditions were all contributory factors in loss of control crashes.

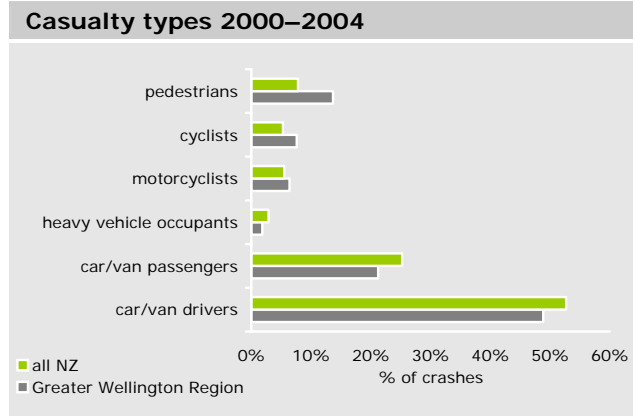
Crash distribution in the Greater Wellington Region 2000–2004

	rural	urban
state highway	29.1%	4.5%
local roads	21.3%	45.1%

These loss of control crashes were distributed as indicated in the above table between urban and rural environments and between local and state highway road networks.

Vulnerable road users

Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists were notable in the casualty numbers for the region between 2000 and 2004.



When vulnerable road users were involved in a crash their injuries tended to be more severe, as indicated in the percentages of injury severity.

Injury severity for vulnerable road users 2000–2004

	fatal	serious	minor
cyclist	0%	19%	81%
motorcyclist	3%	34%	63%
pedestrians	2%	23%	75%
all casualties	3%	16%	81%

Almost half of all pedestrian incidents involved the pedestrian stepping into the roadway without looking for vehicles and 30 percent had drivers failing to look for or give way to pedestrians.

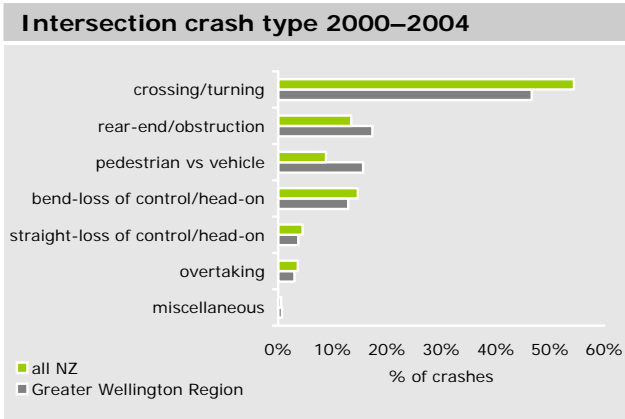
In crashes involving cyclists, common findings included other road users failing to look for them (14 percent) and/or failing to give way to them (30 percent).

The main factors contributing to motorcycle crashes were travelling too fast for the conditions (nine percent), losing control when turning (five percent) and losing control when braking (seven percent).

Intersections

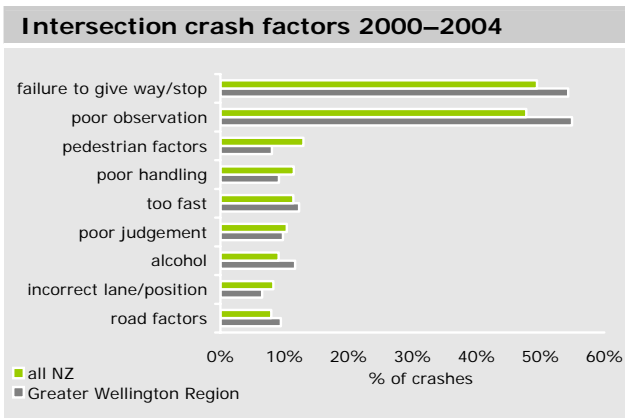
Crashes at intersections accounted for over 40 percent of urban and 20 percent of rural crashes in the region between 2000 and 2004.

Crossing and turning manoeuvres were the main crash type at intersections, followed by rear-end/obstruction related incidents.



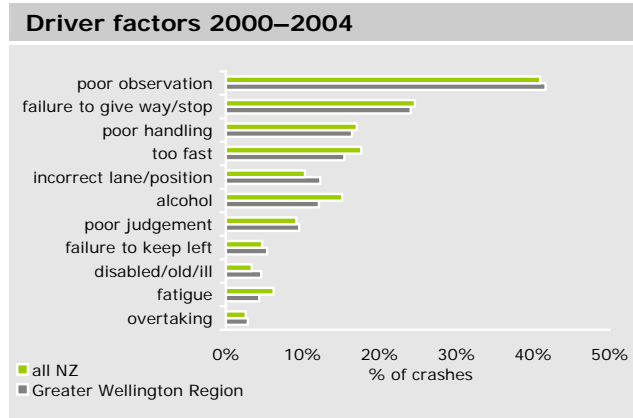
Intersection crashes occurred principally in the major urban areas of the region.

The major factors associated with intersection crashes were failure to give way (49 percent), along with poor observation for the presence of other vehicles (48 percent).

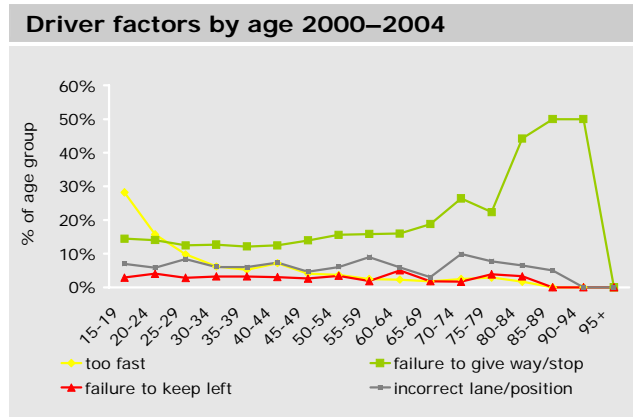


Driver skills

Control of the vehicle is an inherent requirement of driving. It requires that the driver concentrate on the task to prevent mistakes that may result in a crash.



The above chart indicates that a significant number of crashes were the result of drivers not paying attention to the conditions around them, leading to inappropriate decisions.



Some driver skill factors in crashes may vary in relation to driver age. Young drivers tended to be in crashes involving travelling too fast for the conditions, while a greater proportion of older drivers were involved in crashes where failure to give way or stop was a factor.

Speed

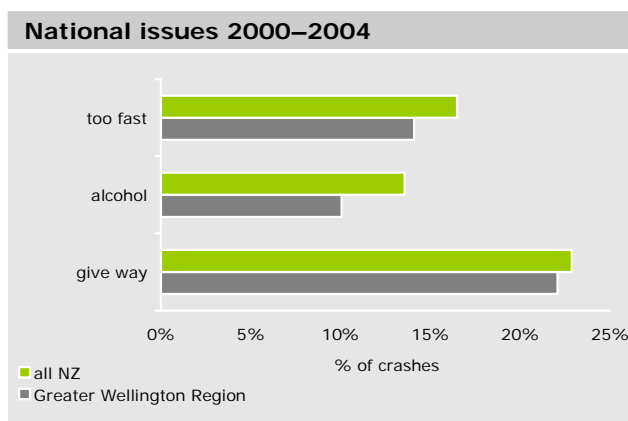
The faster drivers go, the more likely they are to crash and the greater the risk of serious injury or death. Excessive speed was a factor in 17 percent of all injury crashes reported in New Zealand and this figure increased to 34 percent for fatal crashes and 22 percent for serious injury crashes. Excessive speed was a reported factor in 15 percent of injury crashes in the Greater Wellington Region between 2000 and 2004.

Alcohol

Alcohol has a big effect on the way people drive. Overall, approximately 12 percent of injury crashes in the Greater Wellington Region between 2000 and 2004 involved alcohol as a contributory factor compared with 15 percent of injury crashes for all New Zealand. It is notable that for the region, alcohol-related crashes occurred largely after dark and during weekends.

Failure to give way

Overall, between 2000 and 2004, 22 percent of all crashes in the Greater Wellington Region involved a vehicle failing to give way, which was below the national figure of 23 percent. However, failing to give way has been identified as a problem at intersections within the region.



Restraints

Wearing a safety belt reduces the chance of death or serious injury in a crash by 40 percent.

Seatbelt surveys in 2004 indicated that 94 percent of drivers in the Greater Wellington Region were observed wearing a restraint. This compares favourably with 94 percent for all of New Zealand.

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