

road safety issues

The 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 in the Wellington Region.

Overall, there was a slight increase in the number of crashes reported in the Wellington Region in 2003 compared with 2002. However, there was a 15 percent increase in rural casualties.

While car occupants (70 percent) remain the greatest proportion of the region’s casualties, pedestrian casualties, at 14 percent, were above the national level. Pedestrian casualties in the 20 to 39 and 50 to 64 year age groups were higher than the national average. A significant number of pedestrian crashes occurred in urban areas of the region. However, numbers are reducing. Cyclist casualties have been high over the last two years but are reducing overall. Cyclist casualties in the 20 to 39 year age group were higher than national levels.

Loss of control crashes, either on bends or straight roads were the major crash type in the region and crashes at intersections were a major concern. Poor driving skills continue to be a major cause of crashes, with poor observation, failure to give way and poor positioning on the road being the most commonly cited factors.

Both local and national road safety issues are identified below. The specific issues for the Wellington Region are considered in detail overleaf, while national issues are outlined on the back page.

Major road safety issues

Wellington Region



- Pedestrians**
- Cyclists**
- Intersections**
- Loss of control**

Nationally

- Speed**
- Alcohol**
- Failure to give way**
- Restraints**

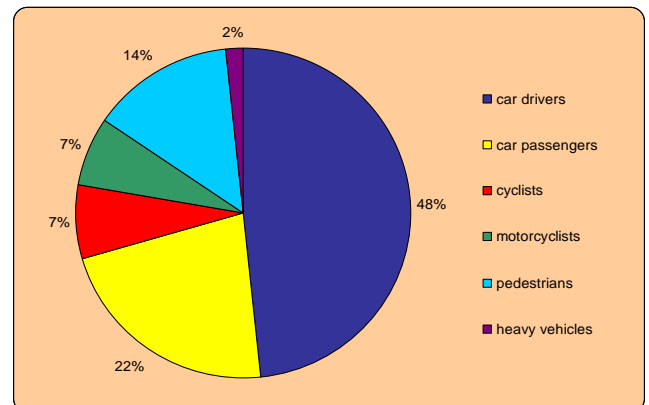


2003 road trauma for Wellington Region

	Deaths	34
	Serious casualties	178
	Minor casualties	899
<hr/>		
	Fatal crashes	31
	Serious injury crashes	148
	Minor injury crashes	644
	Non-injury crashes	2,193

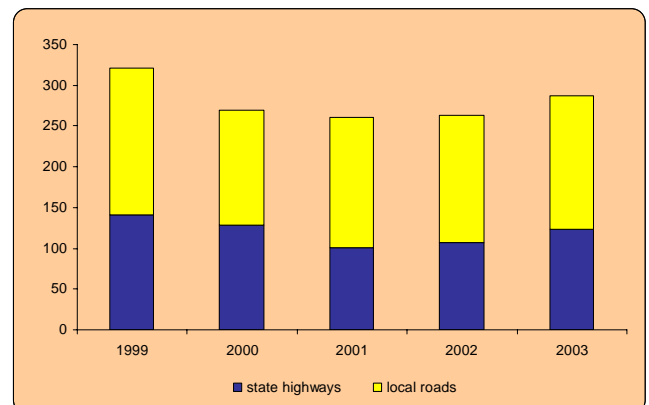
Road casualties 1999–2003

User type 1999–2003



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)



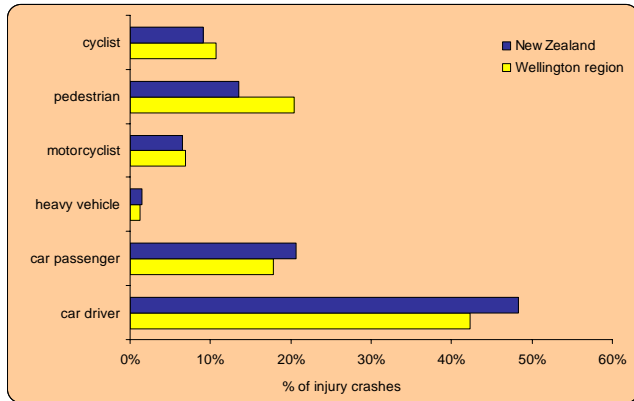
*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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



Pedestrians

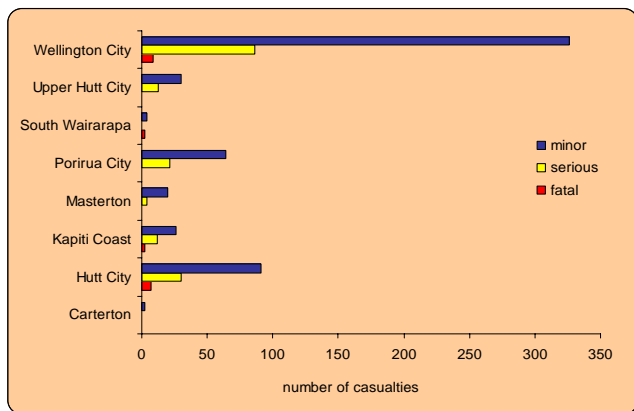
Fourteen percent of the region's casualties were pedestrians who were significantly over-represented as casualties within the urban areas of the Wellington Region.

Urban road-user casualties 1999–2003



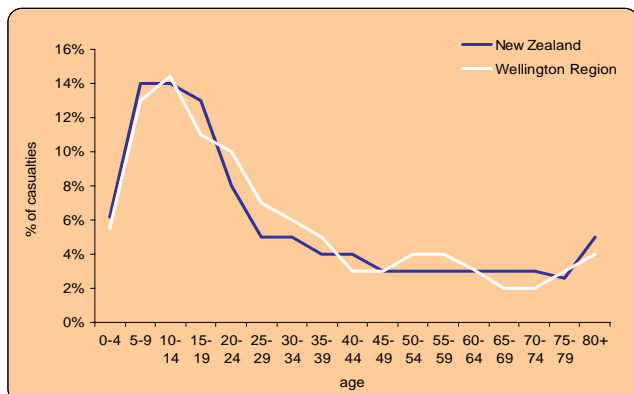
Most of these crashes (56 percent) occurred in Wellington City, with 17 percent in Hutt City and 11 percent in Porirua City.

Pedestrian casualties by location and injury severity 1999–2003



While pedestrians in the 20 to 39 year age group were over-represented, the majority of the casualties (44 percent) were less than 19 years old.

Age distribution of pedestrian casualties 1999–2003



Seventy percent of pedestrian crashes involved crossing a roadway without looking for approaching traffic. However, in 20 percent of crashes, drivers had not checked for pedestrians and in 14 percent, drivers failed to give way at a pedestrian crossing.

Thirty-eight percent of pedestrian crashes occurred at intersections.



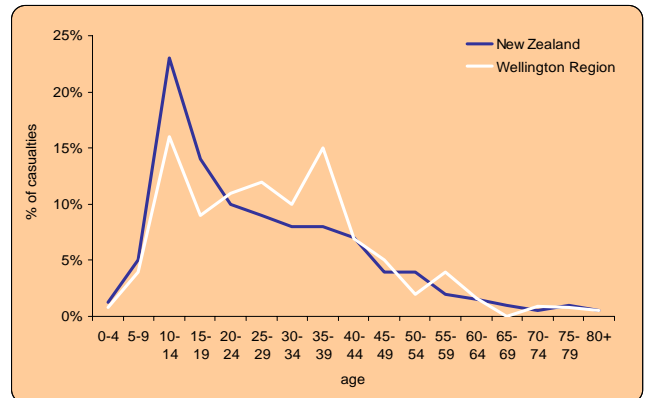
Cyclists

Casualties resulting from crashes between cyclists and motor vehicles accounted for approximately seven percent of the region's casualties.

Recent travel surveys conducted by the LTSA indicate that while motorcycling remains the most risky travel mode, the injury risk to cyclists is three times that of a vehicle occupant and eight times that of a pedestrian when considering trips, distance or time as a measure of exposure to risk.

Examination of the age profile of cyclist casualties indicates that those aged 20 to 39 years were over-represented in the statistics.

Age distribution of injured cyclists



Factors relating to cyclist crashes showed that 33 percent of drivers failed to give way or stop and 43 percent did not check for or misjudged the movement of other traffic.

Factors contributing to cyclist crashes were failure to give way or stop (10 percent), overtaking on the left (five percent) and riding on the footpath (nine percent).

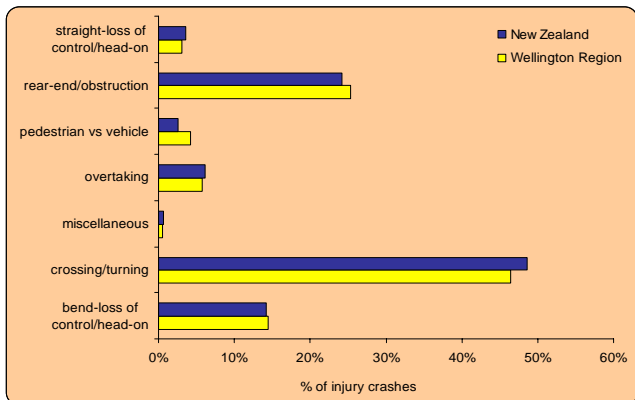
Fifty-three percent of cycle crashes occurred at intersections.

Intersections

Between 1999 and 2003, crashes at intersections accounted for 40 percent of the reported crashes in the Wellington Region. This is slightly lower than the national average of 43 percent.

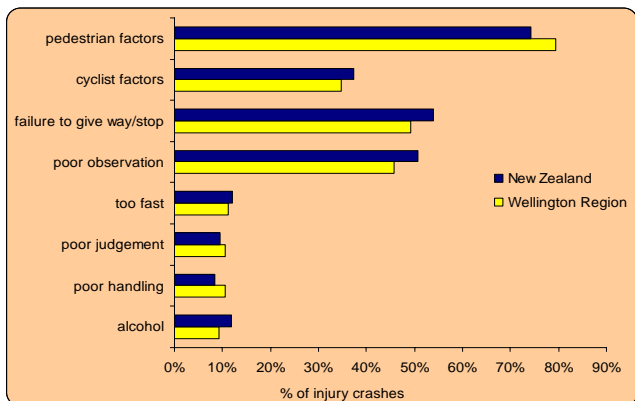
The types of crashes that occurred at intersections were predominantly crossing/turning manoeuvres.

Intersection crash types



The factors involved in these crashes were principally drivers failing to give way or stop (49 percent) and poor observation of other road users (46 percent). Seventy-nine percent of intersection crashes involved pedestrians and 35 percent involved cyclists.

Intersection crash factors 1999–2003

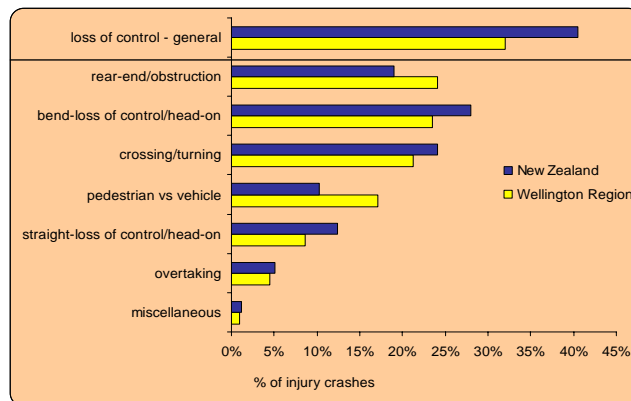


The most common type of crash at intersections was loss of control, followed by rear-end/obstruction crashes.

Loss of control

Drivers losing control of their vehicle either on a straight road or on a bend was the most common type of crash in the Wellington Region. This type of crash can lead to a head-on collision. These crashes represented 32 percent of the region's crashes, 23 percent on bends and nine percent on straight sections of road.

Loss of control crash types 1999–2003



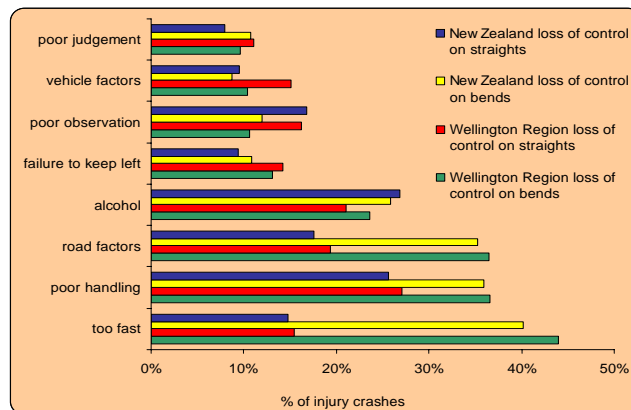
While the proportions of these crashes were not higher than national levels, they represented a large number of the reported crashes in the region.

Poor handling of the vehicle was a factor on both straight sections of road (27 percent) and at bends (37 percent).

On straight roads, alcohol (21 percent) was the predominant contributing factor to crashes followed by driving too fast for the conditions (15 percent) and road factors, such as rain and slippery conditions (19 percent).

On bends, driving too fast for the conditions (44 percent) was the predominant contributing factor to crashes followed by road factors (36 percent) and alcohol (24 percent).

Loss of control crash factors 1999–2003



Speed

The faster drivers go, the more likely they are to crash, and the greater the risk of serious injury and death.

Speed was a reported factor in 16 percent of injury crashes in the Wellington Region between 1999 and 2003. This was just below the New Zealand average of 17 percent.



Alcohol

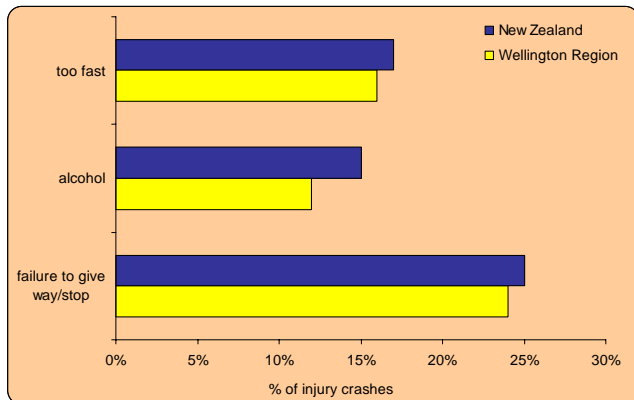
Alcohol has a big effect on the way people drive. Overall, approximately 12 percent of injury crashes in the Wellington Region between 1999 and 2003 involved alcohol as a contributory factor compared with 15 percent for all of New Zealand.



Failure to give way

Between 1999 and 2003, 23 percent of all crashes in the Wellington Region involved a vehicle failing to give way. This was lower than the figure of 24 percent for all of New Zealand.

National issues 1999–2003



Restraints

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

Safety belt surveys in 2003 indicated that 91 percent of drivers in the Wellington Region were wearing a restraint compared with the national average of 92 percent.

Contacts

Land Transport Safety Authority

Demetra Kennedy

Regional Manager

See LTSA contact details at bottom of page

Greater Wellington Regional Council

Manager Access Planning

101 Wakefield Street

PO Box 11 646

Wellington

Phone 04 384 5708

New Zealand Police

Strategic Traffic Manager

Wellington Central

Cnr Victoria and Harris Streets

PO Box 693

Wellington

Phone 04 381 2000

Wellington Regional Office
234–242 Wakefield Street
PO Box 27 249, Wellington
Phone 04 931 8900, Fax 04 931 8929
www.ltsa.govt.nz