

# *briefing notes - road safety issues*

## *Westland District*

Land Transport New Zealand has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported crash data and trends for the 2003–2007 period.

The intent of the report is to highlight the key road safety issues and be a resource to help identify possible ways to reduce the number of road deaths and injuries in Westland District.

This report is the ninth road safety report for Westland District. All the material unless otherwise stated in this report applies to both local roads and to Transit New Zealand (Transit NZ) roads.

In each new report one year's data is added to a five year block and the oldest dropped so it is unlikely that the core issues would change radically from report to report.

The issues chosen for this report are drawn from either the most common crash types, those that appear over-represented when Westland District is compared to similar local bodies or those with high social cost (high numbers of fatal and serious crashes mainly). We have included a brief overview of crashes in the district.

We encourage local bodies to use the free access to the Ministry of Transport's Crash Analysis System to delve deeper into the highlighted issues.

### Major road safety issues

#### Westland District

Bends

Speed

Alcohol

Overseas drivers

#### Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints

### 2007 road trauma

#### Casualties

	Westland District
Deaths	4
Serious casualties	11
Minor casualties	32

#### Crashes

	Westland District
Fatal crashes	4
Serious injury crashes	8
Minor injury crashes	19
Non-injury crashes	61

## Overview

In 2007 on local roads in Westland District there were six injury crashes and 21 non-injury crashes. In addition there were 25 injury crashes and 40 non-injury crashes on Transit New Zealand (Transit NZ) roads, both as reported by the New Zealand Police.

The table below shows the number of injuries resulting from the 31 injury crashes, by rural or urban areas for all roads, (rural is defined as an area with a speed limit of 80km/h or more).

Casualties by environment 2007				
	Fatalities	Serious injuries	Minor injuries	Total
Rural	4	10	27	41
Urban	0	1	5	6
Total	4	11	32	47

The annual numbers of fatal and serious injury crashes in the district have fluctuated over the last ten years, and there is no obvious trend in the numbers. The annual numbers of minor and non-injury crashes increased from 71 in 1998 to 120 in 2005 and decreased to 80 in 2007.

Crash trends				
Year	Fatal crashes	Serious injury crashes	Minor injury crashes	Non-injury crashes
1998	3	10	20	51
1999	2	9	10	54
2000	3	6	17	53
2001	4	11	23	51
2002	7	7	24	65
2003	4	6	29	53
2004	4	6	16	85
2005	2	11	27	93
2006	1	16	28	63
2007	4	8	19	61

## Injury crashes 2003 - 2007

Crash type or contributory cause 2003 to 2007	Local Road Percent of injury crashes	Transit Road Percent of injury crashes
Alcohol	33%	13%
Too fast	50%	27%
Straight—lost control crash	25%	20%
Bend—lost control crash	60%	56%
Crossing / turning crash	8%	8%
Road factors	18%	16%
Vulnerable road users (Percent of casualties)	5%	11%
1, Pedestrians	2%	1%
2, Cyclists	0%	2%
3, Motorcyclists	3%	8%

Further information about 2003 to 2007 injury and non-injury crashes on local roads:

- Worst month January
- Worst day Saturday
- 24 percent on wet roads
- 44 percent at night
- 20 percent at intersections
- Social cost of crashes in 2007 was \$1.6m

Further information about 2003 to 2007 injury and non-injury crashes on Transit NZ roads

- Worst month February, March
- Worst day Friday
- 46 percent on wet roads
- 23 percent at night
- 7 percent at intersections
- Social cost of crashes in 2007 was \$21.8m

## Alcohol

Alcohol affects the way people drive. Studies show that the risk of being involved in a crash increases rapidly as a driver's blood alcohol level rises.

A driver over the legal limit (80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood) is three times more likely to be involved in a crash than a sober driver.

Contrary to popular opinion, people with high blood alcohol levels are more likely to be injured or killed in a crash than sober drivers in the same crash and if injured, they are also more likely to encounter complications in their recovery.

In New Zealand for the 12 months to December 2007, alcohol-affected drivers contributed to 29 percent of all fatal crashes and 13 percent of all injury crashes.

Nationally, there were 7376 alcohol-related fatal and injury crashes reported in the last five years.

In Westland District, in the last five years, alcohol was a factor in 20 percent of injury crashes and in 11 percent of reported non-injury crashes

Over the last five years the involvement of alcohol impaired drivers in crashes in Westland District has not reduced in either the urban or the rural areas.

Lost control on a bend accounted for 61 percent of all alcohol related crashes followed by Lost control on a straight road which accounted for an additional 26 percent of alcohol crashes.

The drivers most likely to be at fault in alcohol related injury crashes in the District are males (86 percent). The most common age group is the 20 - 24 years age group (34 percent) but drivers from other age groups are also represented.

Alcohol crashes			
Crash year	Open road	Urban road	Total
2003	7	5	12
2004	6	5	11
2005	8	4	12
2006	8	2	10
2007	7	5	12
Total	36	21	57

Further information about alcohol related injury crashes in Westland District on local roads 2003 to 2007:

- 3 deaths, 4 serious injuries and 12 minor injuries
- 92 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "Lost control on a bend"
- 18 percent at intersections
- 46 percent urban
- 21 percent wet road
- 86 percent night time
- Worst month January, June, October
- Worst day of week Thursday, Friday, Saturday
- Worst times 9 pm - 3 am

Further information about alcohol related injury crashes in Westland District on Transit NZ roads 2003 to 2007:

- 2 deaths, 5 serious injuries and 20 minor injuries
- 81 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "Lost control on a bend"
- 3 percent at intersections
- 28 percent urban
- 34 percent wet road
- 86 percent night time
- Worst month April, September, October
- Worst day of week Saturday
- Worst times midnight - 3 am

## Crashes at bends

Between 2003 and 2007 56 percent of all crashes in Westland District occurred at bends. These crashes resulted in 6 fatalities, 33 serious injuries and 122 minor injuries.

The annual number of crashes at bends increased from 2003 to 2005, and has since decreased. There were two fatal and six serious injury crashes in 2007.

Crashes at bends 2003 to 2007				
Crash year	Fatal crashes	Serious crashes	Minor crashes	Non-injury crashes
2003	1	2	13	29
2004	1	3	11	41
2005	1	6	22	47
2006	1	9	16	39
2007	2	6	15	37
Total	6	26	77	193

Most crashes at bends involved a driver losing control of their vehicle and either running off the road or colliding with another vehicle.

After drivers lose control their vehicles often crash into roadside hazards such as ditches, banks, poles or trees. Hitting these objects can result in a relatively minor off-road event turning into something far more serious.

The three most common roadside hazards struck in injury crashes in Westland District were upright banks (22), over banks (17) and trees (15) from a total of 104 objects struck.

Main characteristics of injury crashes at bends	
Crash characteristic	Percentage of crashes
Single vehicle	81%
Alcohol	17%
Excessive speed for the conditions	45%
Road factors	20%
Poor handling	57%
Rural road	94%
Wet road	45%
Night time	28%

Further information about injury crashes on bends (2003 to 2007) on local roads in Westland District :

- 2 deaths, 4 serious injuries and 26 minor injuries
- 82 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "Lost control turning right"
- Most common age group 20-24 years
- 36 percent of crashes involved alcohol
- Worst month November
- Worst day of week Sunday
- Worst time period 9 pm - midnight

Further information about injury crashes on bends (2003 to 2007) on Transit NZ roads in Westland District:

- 4 deaths, 29 serious injuries and 96 minor injuries
- 66 percent of at fault drivers were male
- Most common crash type "Lost control turning left"
- Most common age group 30-39 years
- 13 percent of crashes involved alcohol
- Worst month February
- Worst day of week Tuesday
- Worst time period midday - 3 pm

On local road bends most of the crashes involved young male drivers and over one third involved alcohol.

On State highway bends more female drivers were involved and there was a lower proportion involving alcohol.

## Speed

Nationally, speed is one of the major contributing factors to road crashes. Reducing speeds is an important road safety goal. Excessive speed increases the likelihood of a crash occurring by reducing the time available for drivers to respond to situations and it leads to more serious injuries. Research has shown that a one km/h reduction in mean speed can produce a three percent reduction in injury crashes.

Between 2003 and 2007 32 percent of injury crashes in Westland involved travelling too fast for the conditions. These crashes resulted in 6 fatalities, 23 serious injuries and 66 minor injuries.

Speed related crashes					
Speed related crashes	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Rural	20	10	28	23	25
Urban	3	2	3	6	5
Total	23	12	31	29	30

In urban areas of the district in 2006 and 2007 the number of reported speed related crashes was about double the previous three years. There is no apparent trend in the numbers of rural crashes.

The most common speed related crash is one when in a driver loses control on a right hand bend. The second most common crash is when a driver loses control on a left hand bend.

The other causes commonly contributing to speed related crashes were:

- Poor handling,
- Alcohol
- General errors of judgement

## Age and sex of at fault speeding drivers

Drivers at fault in speed related injury crashes (2003- 2007)	Male	Female	Total
15 - 19 years	4	1	5
20 - 24	13	3	16
25 - 29	6	17	23
30 - 39	4	3	7
40 - 49	2	0	2
50 - 59	3	0	3
60 - 69	0	0	0
70+	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	32	24	56

Males represented 80 percent of at fault drivers in speed related crashes.

Further information about speed related injury crashes in Westland District on local roads (2003 to 2007):

- 4 deaths, 11 serious injuries and 45 minor injuries
- Most common crash type "Lost control on bends"
- 65 percent mid-block
- 18 percent wet road
- 63 percent night time
- Worst month March, June
- Worst day of week Sunday
- Worst time 6 pm - midnight

Further information about speed related injury crashes in Westland District on Transit NZ roads (2003 to 2007):

- 2 deaths, 16 serious injuries and 42 minor injuries
- Most common crash type "Lost control on bend"
- 100 percent mid-block
- 58 percent wet or icy road
- 26 percent night time
- Worst month March, November
- Worst day of week Saturday
- Worst time Midday - 6 pm

## Overseas drivers

In Westland District between 2003 and 2007 there were 65 injury crashes that involved overseas drivers. These crashes resulted in 3 fatalities, 22 serious injuries and 85 minor injuries.

These drivers include both tourists and New Zealand residents driving on an overseas licence.

In 2005 there was the highest number of injury crashes involving overseas drivers in the last five years. Three quarters of the overseas driver crashes were minor injury crashes.

### Injury crashes involving overseas drivers

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Fatal	1	2	0	0	0
Serious	0	2	5	5	3
Minor	9	3	16	9	10
Total	10	7	21	14	13

In Westland District, Lost control accounted for 80 percent of all crashes involving overseas drivers. Over three quarters of these were on bends. The crash factors most often reported in crashes with overseas drivers were Poor handling, Speed and Poor observation.

Males drivers of all ages made up 68 percent of at fault drivers in these crashes.

The home locations of the drivers were: -

Australia	6
Europe	14
North America	9
Asia	13
United Kingdom	9

Further information about the 65 injury crashes involving overseas drivers in Westland District 2003 to 2007:

- The most common crash type was "Loss of control on a bend"
- 77 percent at intersections
- 12 percent at night
- 40 percent in wet or icy conditions
- Worst month February
- Worst day of week Tuesday, Thursday
- Worst times midday - 6 pm

## National issues

This section contains some brief information on the key national road safety issues as measured in Westland District. They may have been covered elsewhere in this document or not be a specific issue.

### Speed

In Westland District, "Too fast" was recorded in 57 fatal and injury crashes in the district in the last five years resulting in 6 deaths and 89 injuries. Speed as a factor in crashes is not reducing in the district.

86 percent of all speed-related crashes were Lost control on a bend. Poor handling was the other driver factor most often associated with speed in injury crashes.

71 percent of at fault drivers in these injury crashes were males. The most common ages of these drivers were between the ages of 20 to 24 years .

### Alcohol

In Westland District, alcohol was involved in 30 fatal and injury crashes in the district in the last five years resulting in 5 deaths, and 41 other injuries. The number of injury crashes involving alcohol is not reducing.

63 percent of all alcohol crashes were in rural areas of the district. 61 percent of these were Lost control on a bend. Speed was the other factor often associated with alcohol in injury crashes.

86 percent of at fault drivers in these injury crashes were males. The most common ages of these drivers were between the ages of 20 to 24 years .

### Failure to give way

In Westland District, failure to give way or stop was reported in 13 injury crashes during the last five years resulting in 25 injuries.

Poor observation was the driver factor most often associated with failure to give way.

71 percent of at fault drivers in these injury crashes were males. All ages of these drivers were represented.

### Restraints

The Ministry of Transport conducts surveys of restraint use. The results of these surveys are at a regional level, and may not be fully appropriate to a Territorial Authority. The results are obtainable from the Ministry of Transport website.

<http://www.transport.govt.nz/belts-index/>

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