

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 number of road deaths and injuries in the Transit New Zealand (TNZ) Wanganui West Region. This region covers the New Plymouth, Ruapehu, South Taranaki, Stratford and Wanganui Districts.

The number of people killed or seriously injured on state highways in the region decreased from the previous year to 64 in 2002. However, the total number of injury crashes increased slightly.

Between 1998 and 2002, 68 percent of injury crashes occurred on the open road in the region. Sixty-five percent of rural crashes involved drivers losing control of a vehicle. While the percentage of speed-related crashes in the region has decreased over the past 10 years to 16 percent, current speed enforcement, education and engineering programmes should be continued to ensure an ongoing reduction in the number and severity of crashes. Alcohol-related crashes had also been declining but still made up over 13 percent of all crashes between 1998 and 2002. A third of all crashes in the region occurred at intersections.

The estimated social cost of crashes on the state highway network in the TNZ Wanganui West Region in 2002 was \$91.4 million.

Both national and local road safety issues are identified below with the specific issues for the region considered in detail overleaf.

Major road safety issues

TNZ Wanganui West Region

Loss of control

Intersections

Poor observation

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2002 road trauma for TNZ Wanganui West Region



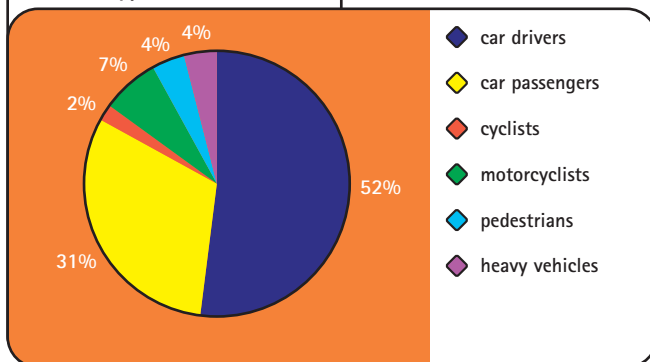
Deaths	10
Serious casualties	54
Minor casualties	310



Fatal crashes	9
Serious injury crashes	44
Minor-injury crashes	183
Non-injury crashes	378

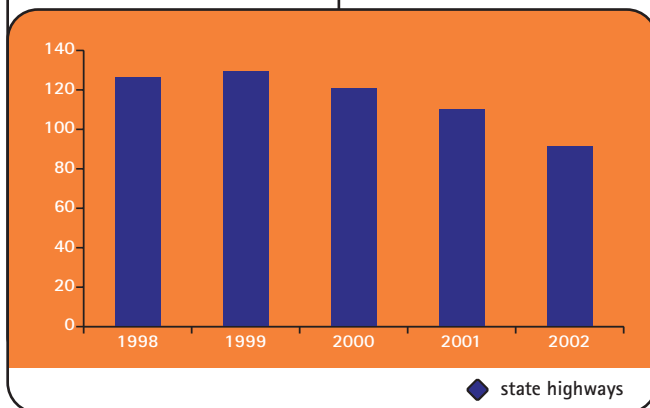
Road casualties 1998–2002

User type 1998–2002



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)

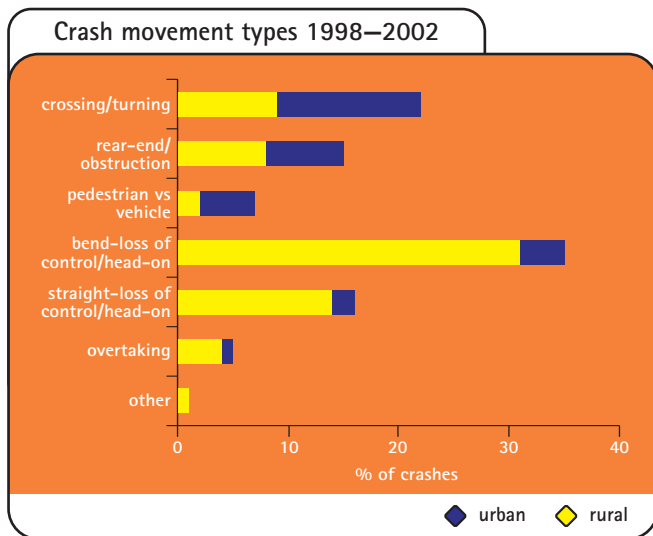


* The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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



Loss of control

On the state highway network in the TNZ Wanganui West Region between 1998 and 2002, 51 percent of all injury crashes involved a driver losing control of a vehicle. Two thirds of these occurred on a bend. Ninety percent of loss of control crashes on state highways occurred on the open road.



Less than half of all loss of control crashes involved speed and/or alcohol as factors. However, other factors that contributed to loss of control crashes included fatigue and slippery road surfaces. Twenty-five percent of these crashes were due to road factors and, of them, just under a third were due to the road being slippery because of rain.

Loss of control crashes can result in either a head-on collision with another vehicle or the vehicle leaving the road. Collisions with roadside objects after a vehicle has left the road can increase the severity of a crash. Vehicles striking a roadside object were most likely to hit a cliff, bank or fence, enter a ditch or go over a bank.

Recommended actions

- Support campaigns on adjusting drivers' speed for different driving conditions.
- Investigate ways to reduce the number of crashes into roadside hazards.
- Investigate sites where neither speed nor alcohol has played a part in the crash. Signposting, road markings or surface faults could be identified.

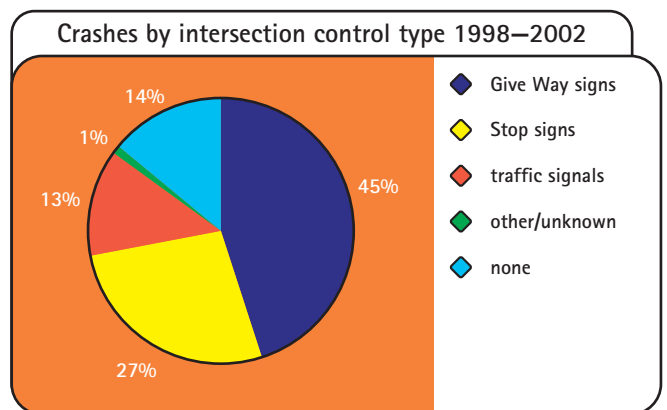


Intersections

Intersections are particularly dangerous locations because vehicles must pass through conflict points. Traffic controls assist the movement of vehicles through intersections by indicating right of way (Give Way and Stop signs) or by fully controlling movements (traffic lights).

On the state highway network in the TNZ Wanganui West Region, one third of all injury crashes occurred at intersections. Fifty-five percent of these crashes were due to drivers either failing to give way or stop, or displaying poor observation skills. This could include drivers not seeing another vehicle or misjudging the speed of an approaching vehicle.

Approximately half of the crashes occurred at Give Way controlled intersections, while a further quarter of these crashes occurred at Stop controlled intersections.



Recommended actions

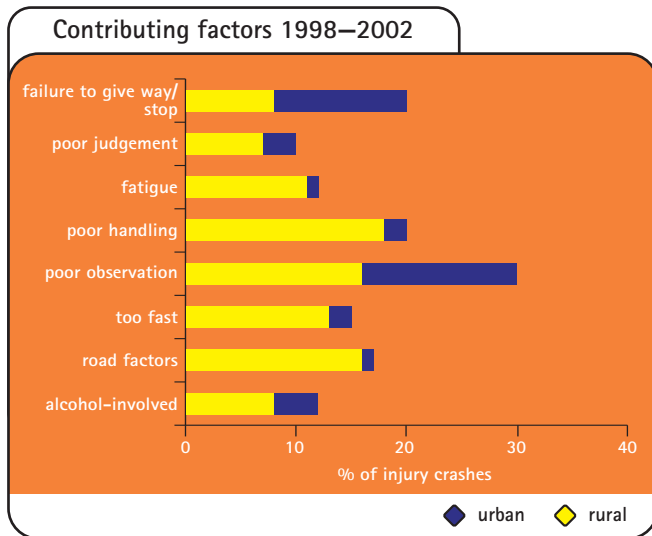
- Encourage enforcement campaigns targeting drivers who fail to stop or give way.
- Support campaigns on the need to give way at intersections.
- Encourage education programmes to address driving at an appropriate speed, keeping a safe distance, signalling when turning or changing direction/lane, choosing a safe gap, and looking out for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Conduct a safety audit/survey of intersection controls and visibility.
- Review programme of intersection improvements.



Poor observation

Poor observation skills by drivers were recorded as being a factor in 30 percent of all injury crashes on state highways in the TNZ Wanganui West Region between 1998 and 2002.

Sixty-five percent of rural crashes involving poor observation occurred at mid-block locations. This compares with two thirds of urban crashes involving poor observation as a contributory factor at intersections.



At mid-block locations, drivers often did not check for other vehicles when changing lanes, failed to notice other vehicles slowing, or had their attention diverted for various reasons. One third of all crashes in the region between 1998 and 2002 with poor observation as a contributory factor involved a collision with the rear end of a vehicle or some other obstruction.

Recommended actions

- Conduct crash reduction studies for areas, routes and black spots.
- Carry out road safety audits for sight distances and controls at intersections.
- Support education/publicity campaigns aimed at increasing driver awareness.

New Zealand Road Safety Programme

Reducing road trauma involves a multi-pronged approach, which includes education, engineering and enforcement. The New Zealand Road Safety Programme (NZRSP) is the primary planning and funding programme for road safety activity undertaken by the New Zealand Police, LTSA and community groups. Transfund New Zealand provides funding to Transit New Zealand and local authorities for roading projects through its National Land Transport Programme.

Community Road Safety Programme

Through the Community Road Safety Programme (CRSP) the NZRSP provides funding for community development and community programmes to support road safety and to bring about positive and sustainable changes in community attitudes and behaviours. CRSP funding of community development aims to encourage local involvement in and ownership of road safety issues. This year's review of the programme initiates a re-focus of effort and funding into community development. This involves working with and within different communities of people to assist them in becoming aware of their own local road safety issues and developing solutions to achieve better road safety outcomes.

There is a community development general fund allocation for the Taranaki Region of \$130,500, as well as a community development dedicated fund of \$19,250. The inter-agency group responsible for regional road safety will develop a road safety action plan for 2003/2004, where projects and initiatives will be developed and funding will be allocated to them during the year.

There is also a community development general fund allocation for the Manawatu Wanganui Region of \$271,500, as well as a dedicated fund of \$61,500. Road Safe Central, the inter-agency group responsible for regional road safety, has developed a road safety action plan for 2003/2004, where projects and initiatives will be developed and funding will be allocated to them during the year.

CRSP programmes are established, community-based road safety initiatives, which meet community needs. They address road safety issues and enhance road safety in the community, eg Safe with Age, child restraints and driver licence schemes. The LTSA's general and dedicated programme allocation for the Taranaki Region is \$72,250 and \$178,000 for the Manawatu Wanganui Region. The LTSA allocates funds upon application.

Road policing

Police enforcement hours to support community projects are now allocated to police community services hours rather than to individual projects. The delivery of these hours to support community projects will need to be negotiated by the road safety co-ordinator.

In 2003/2004 the Police are funded to deliver 72,455 hours of road policing in the TNZ Wanganui West Region (the same as in 2002/2003) as follows:

Project	Police hours
Strategic – alcohol/drugs, speed, restraints and visible road safety enforcement	58,200
Traffic management including crash attendance, incidents, emergencies and events	10,790
School road safety education	2,130
Police community services	1,335

Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in the TNZ Wanganui West Region, please refer to the 1998 to 2002 Road Safety Data Report or the LTSA Crash Analysis System, or contact the people or organisations listed below:

Contacts

Land Transport Safety Authority Regional Manager Darryl Harwood Phone 06 350 1889	Transit New Zealand Regional Manager Errol Christiansen PO Box 345, Wanganui Phone 06 345 4173
Road Safety Engineer Dave Curson Phone 06 356 5016	Accident Compensation Corporation (Taranaki Region) Injury Prevention Consultant Kath Forde 22-28 Molesworth Street New Plymouth Phone 06 759 0700
CRSP Regional Liaison Officer Barbara Broederlow Phone 06 350 1899	Accident Compensation Corporation (Wanganui and Ruapehu) Injury Prevention Consultant Brigid Crowley PO Box 435, Wanganui Phone 06 349 0416
See LTSA staff contact details at the bottom of the page	
Road Safety Co-ordinator (Wanganui and Ruapehu) Judith Pene-Jones Public Health Unit Private Bag 3003, Wanganui Phone 06 348 1779	
New Zealand Police Strategic Traffic Manager Inspector Neil Wynne Private Bag 11-040 Palmerston North Phone 06 351 3600	

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