

# road safety issues

## Kaipara District

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

The Kaipara District is among a group of authorities with lower populations and higher proportions of crashes on their rural roads. In the Kaipara District, 78 percent of crashes occurred on the open road and the severity was higher than for urban authorities.

The social cost attributed to crashes in the Kaipara District was \$39 million in 2004, equating to over \$2,100 per resident. Both fatal and serious crash numbers increased in 2004, reaching a level of 48 crashes per 10,000 population compared with a national figure of 25.

Crashes on the state highway network in the Kaipara District made up 62 percent of the total number, although crashes reported on the local roads increased significantly in 2004.

Attitudes to road safety are able to be changed if there is a community desire to reduce risk. Working together to develop solutions can have a significant impact on changing attitudes and improving road safety within Kaipara District communities.

### Major road safety issues

#### Kaipara District

- Loss of control on curves
- Alcohol
- Speed
- Road and environment factors

#### Nationally

- Speed
- Alcohol
- Failure to give way
- Restraints



### 2004 road trauma for Kaipara District



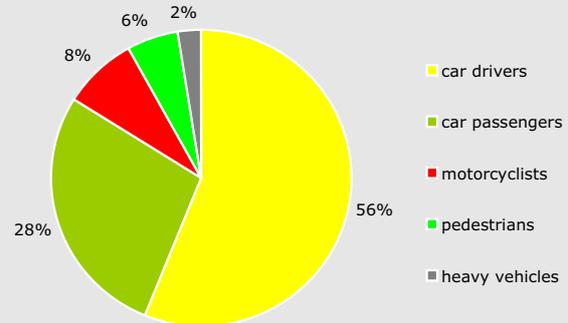
Deaths	5
Serious casualties	22
Minor casualties	92



Fatal crashes	5
Serious injury crashes	19
Minor injury crashes	62
Non-injury crashes	110

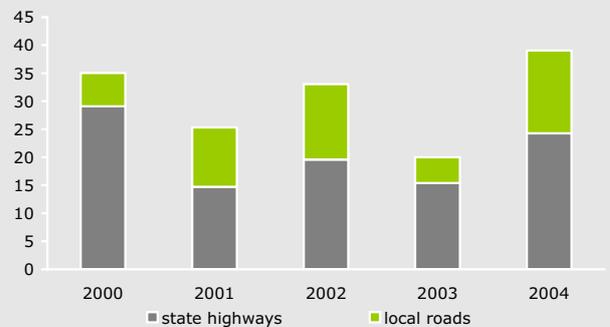
### Fatal and serious casualties

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 on curves

In 2004, there were over 50 injury crashes in the Kaipara District due to loss of control on a curve. This crash type accounts for the majority that occur each year, making up 65 percent of open road crashes in 2004, compared with a national figure of 46 percent. The number reported on the open road effectively doubled in 2004.

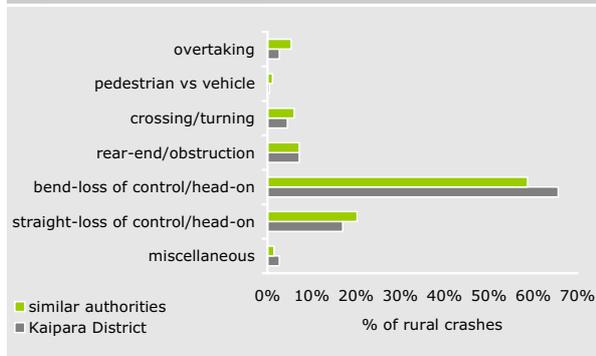
In urban areas it was the same crash type that dominated, making up nearly 32 percent of urban crashes, compared with less than 16 percent nationally or 24 percent in similar authorities.

All loss of control crashes (including on curves and straight roads) accounted for 72 percent of the crashes in the district and 82 percent of the serious injury and fatal crashes.

Driver, environmental and vehicle factors contributed to these crashes. Travelling too fast for the conditions was a factor in 22 percent of open road crashes. Alcohol, poor handling, poor judgement and fatigue were also common factors contributing to crashes. Road or environmental factors contributed to 28 percent of the open road crashes. Crashes on unsealed roads accounted for 55 percent of the crashes on local rural roads. Forty percent of open road crashes were on wet roads.

Drivers aged from 15 to 45 years were more commonly involved in loss of control crashes in the Kaipara District than other age groups.

### Open road crash type 2000–2004



The Kaipara District also recorded a higher than average number of crashes where vehicle factors were mentioned. These were often worn tyre tread and/or punctures and blowouts.

Loss of control crashes can be addressed at three levels:

- what happens just before a crash
- what happens during the crash that contributes to how severe the crash is
- what happens after the crash that can affect the degree of harm caused.

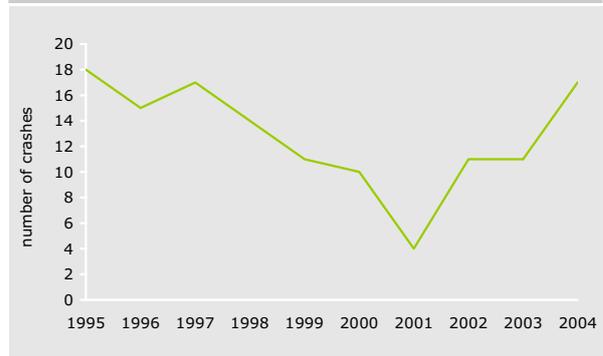
Road safety partner agencies and the community working together to address the problem at all levels will be an effective way of making improvements.

## Alcohol

Compared with the other regions in New Zealand, Northland had the highest proportion of crashes where drivers were affected by alcohol (20 percent) and the highest proportion resulting in serious injury and fatal crashes (32 percent).

For the Kaipara District, the number of crashes involving alcohol increased in 2004. On the open road, the proportion of crashes that involved alcohol had been reducing gradually but were still above the national average. Alcohol as a factor in urban crashes has increased, with a sharp rise in 2004.

### Alcohol-related crashes 1995–2004



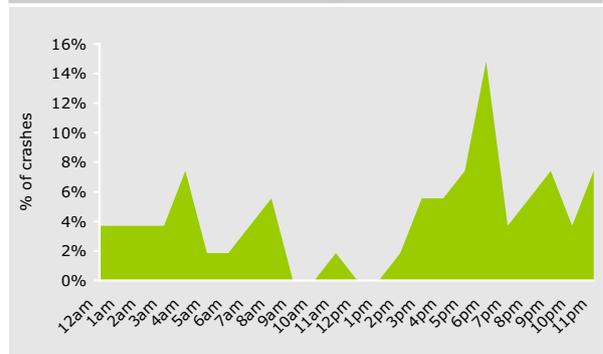
Alcohol was the most common factor in loss of control crashes, contributing to 70 percent of the crashes.

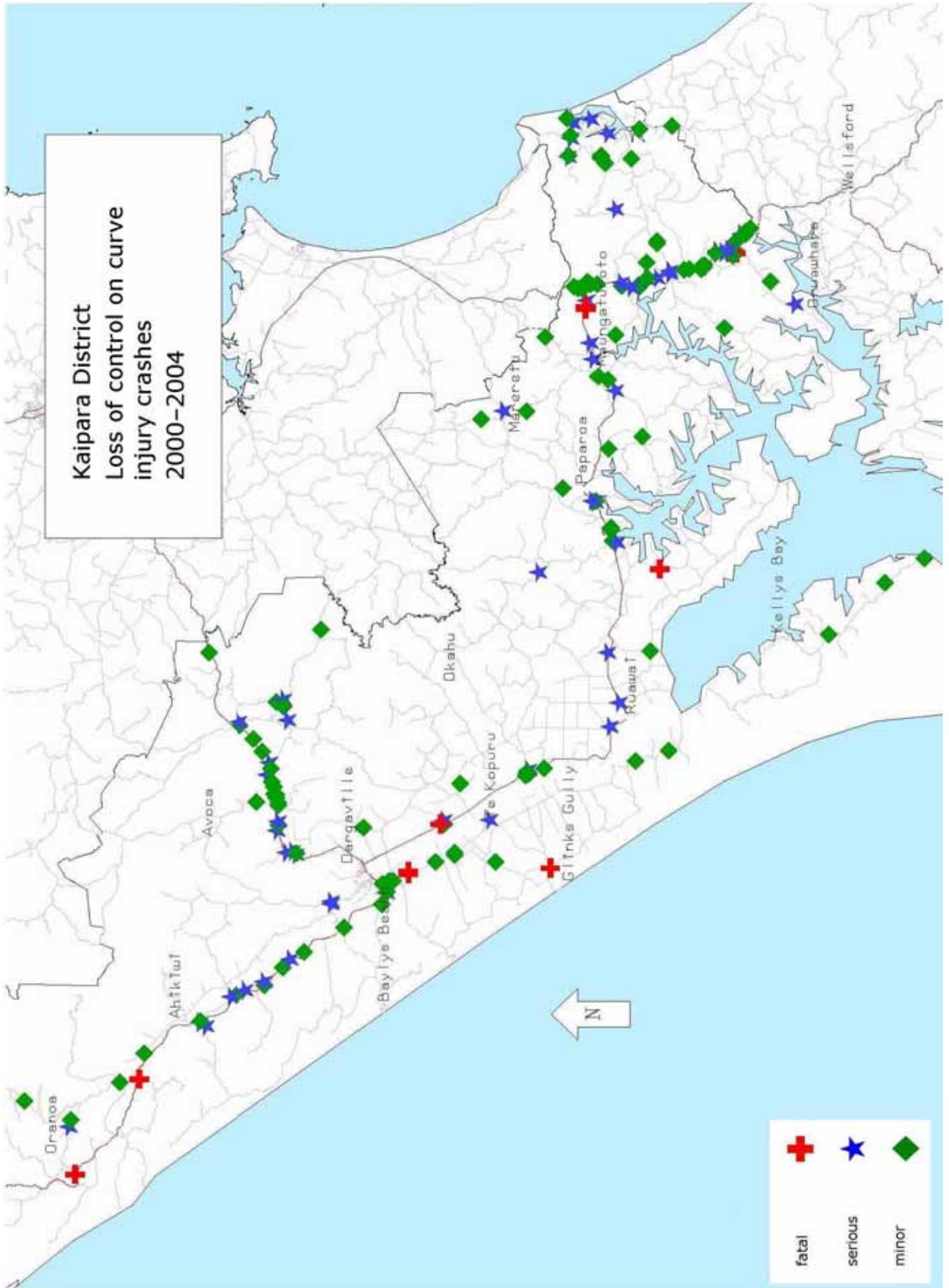
Drink-driving was a problem on its own but further compounded by other road safety issues identified in this report, for example alcohol was often combined with excessive speed, especially around the Dargaville and Maitahi areas.

Alcohol-related crashes occurred throughout the week but increased over the weekend from Friday through to Sunday. Nearly 70 percent were at night, with the highest proportion occurring earlier in the evening.

Most alcohol-affected drivers in crashes were male and driver ages were spread across a wide range from 15 years onwards.

### Alcohol-related crashes by hour 2000–2004





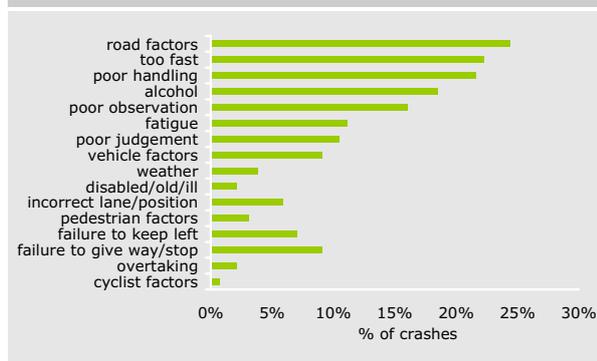


## Speed

Speed, or travelling too fast for the conditions, was a common contributing factor in both urban and rural crashes in the Kaipara District. Excessive speed was a major factor in the district's high level of loss of control crashes and in 2004 there was a clear rise in speed factors in reported crashes. Excessive speed is also often found in combination with other factors such as alcohol, poor handling and poor judgement.

Excessive speeds contributed to 22 percent of the open road crashes and 22 percent of the urban crashes. In other similar authorities, the urban speed factor made up less than 16 percent.

**Common crash factors 2000–2004**



Areas of speed-related crashes are evident on the state highways east of Dargaville, south of Maungaturoto and north towards Kaihu. On local roads, the Pouto Road and the Mangapai area feature prominently.

Excessive speed is a common factor in road crashes across Northland. In Northland urban areas, 13 percent of vehicles travel over 60 km/h and five percent travel over 100 km/h on rural roads. However, there are many situations where 50 km/h is too fast in an urban environment and where 100 km/h is too fast on a rural road. Appropriate speed will often be less than the speed limit in situations such as poor weather or light, heavy traffic flow, presence of pedestrians or cyclists, tight alignment or uneven road surface.

Higher speeds, especially in unsuitable conditions, can lead to loss of control on rural roads, less chance of regaining control if the vehicle skids and a higher severity of injury to the vehicle occupants if the vehicle leaves the road or collides with another vehicle.

In urban areas, higher speeds make it difficult to judge distances of approaching vehicles, which can lead to collisions at intersections and driveways. High speeds with close following distances can contribute to rear-end crashes.

High speeds on wet road surfaces mean that the distance required to stop increases significantly.

If vehicles are travelling at similar speeds, the traffic flow is smoother and it is easier to judge gaps and to predict vehicle movements.

## Road and environment factors

Road and environment factors can contribute to crashes, particularly those that involve loss of control. Road factors were the most common contributing factor in open road crashes in the Kaipara District and were also over-represented in urban crashes. Road factors reported in open road crashes increased in 2004.

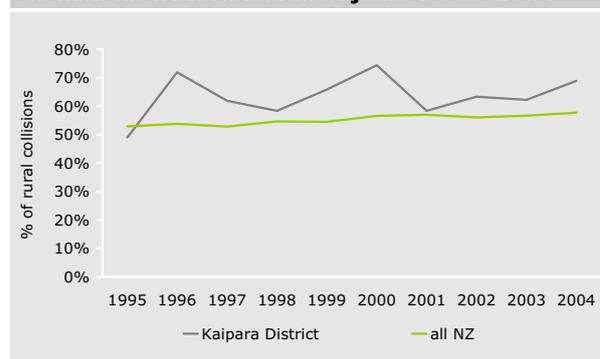
Crashes on a wet road surface accounted for over 40 percent of crashes in the Kaipara District. A slippery surface can be due to rain, loose material on the sealed surface, an unsealed road surface, a worn or polished surface, mud, oil or other contaminants on the road.

Unsealed roads in the Kaipara District recorded 20 percent of open road crashes compared with a steep rise to 55 percent when only the Kaipara District local authority roads are considered. There were 14 casualty crashes reported on unsealed local rural roads in 2004.

Roadwork sites commonly have unsealed or slippery road surfaces. It is important that they are well managed to warn motorists of the specific hazards present and have approved traffic management plans in place.

Crashes on the open road in the Kaipara District where vehicles hit roadside objects jumped to nearly double in 2004. Nearly 70 percent of open road crashes resulted in a vehicle hitting a roadside object. If a vehicle leaves the road, hitting roadside objects can contribute to the severity of injuries sustained. Narrow road widths and narrow shoulders mean limited space for recovery if a driver loses control and vehicles may hit ditches, cliffs or other solid objects when they leave the road.

**Collisions with roadside objects 1995–2004**



Failure to use safety belts increases the severity of injuries suffered when a vehicle leaves the road and hits a solid object. The Kaipara District recorded a lower use of safety belts than the Far North or Whangarei Districts for front seat and rear seat occupants. Use of child restraints has improved but 16 percent of children are still unrestrained.

## Road environment

The Land Transport New Zealand crash reduction monitoring database shows that works implemented as a result of crash reduction studies have reduced crashes at the study sites. Since the programme of crash reduction studies started, crashes at the study sites have reduced by 34 percent nationally and by 62 percent in the Kaipara District (75 percent at state highway sites and 33 percent at local road sites).

Analysis of the crashes at all completed sites should be undertaken regularly to ensure that safety has been improved and sites re-examined if no improvement has occurred. Regular crash reduction studies should be undertaken to continue the reduction of crashes.

## Where to get more information

For more specific information relating to road crashes in the Kaipara District, please refer to the 2000 to 2004 road safety data report, the Land Transport New Zealand crash analysis system or contact the office listed opposite.

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