

road safety issues

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has prepared this road safety issues report. It is based on reported traffic crash data and trends from 2003 and the 1999–2003 period. The intent of the report is to highlight key road safety issues in the Rangitikei District.

The number of road users injured on Rangitikei District roads during 2003 was 95. Although this number was an improvement on the previous year when 100 casualties were reported, the number of injury-causing crashes increased slightly from 55 in 2002 to 58 in 2003. The effect of these statistics is reflected in the estimated social cost of traffic crashes in the Rangitikei District which remained static from 2002 to 2003, at approximately \$40 million.

Reducing road trauma involves a multi-pronged approach, which includes education, engineering and enforcement. A combination of these initiatives should be used to address the major road safety issues affecting the nation as a whole and local areas. In recent years, the major road safety issues for New Zealand have included speed, alcohol, failure to give way and the lack of safety belt use.

Over 90 percent of the roads in the Rangitikei District are rural roads with speed limits greater than 70 km/h. This characteristic feature of the Rangitikei District roading network influences the type and nature of crashes occurring in the district, with those involving loss of vehicle control or excessive speed the most common. The contribution of driver fatigue to crashes has also been identified as a major road safety issue locally.

Major road safety issues

Rangitikei District

- Loss of control
- Speed
- Fatigue

Nationally

- Speed
- Alcohol
- Failure to give way
- Restraints

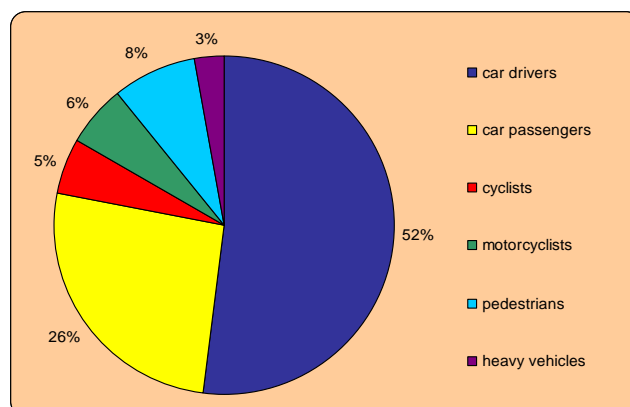


2003 road trauma for Rangitikei District

♀	Deaths	5
	Serious casualties	15
	Minor casualties	75
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🚗	Fatal crashes	4
	Serious injury crashes	13
	Minor injury crashes	41
	Non-injury crashes	108

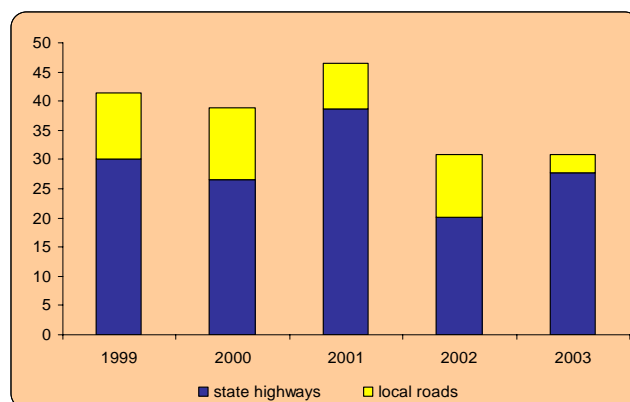
Road user casualties 1999–2003

User type 1999–2003



Estimated social cost of crashes*

Social cost (\$ million)



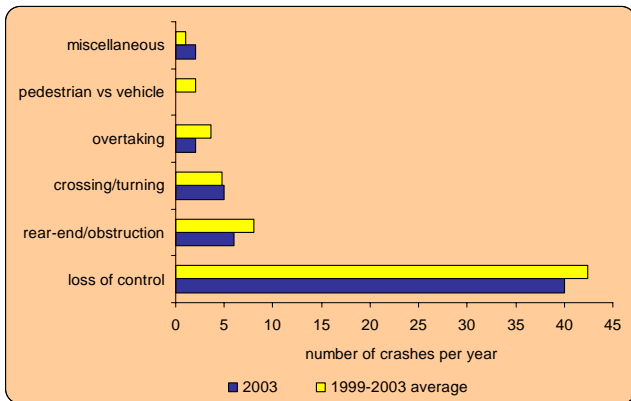
*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are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



Loss of control

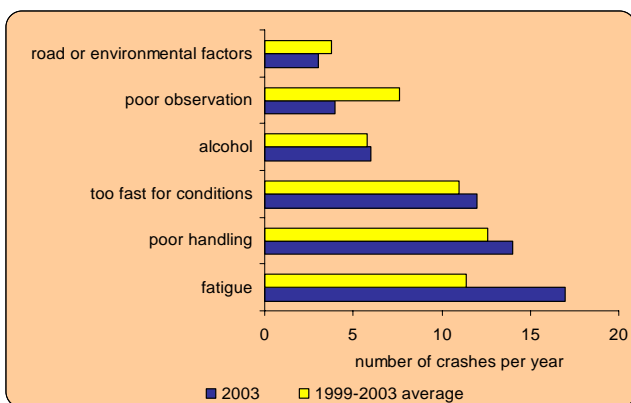
In 2003 in the Rangitikei District, the number of crashes involving drivers losing control of their vehicle was 108, with 40 of those causing injuries to road users. These numbers appear relatively steady when compared with previous years. Loss of control remains the most common crash type within the Rangitikei District, accounting for over 60 percent of all crashes in the district in recent years. It is a major road safety issue.

Movements involved in injury crashes



Between 1999 and 2003, poor handling was the leading recorded contributor to loss of control injury crashes within the Rangitikei District. In 2003 alone, fatigue was the most commonly recorded factor. Driving too fast for the conditions has also been identified as contributing to loss of control injury crashes in recent years.

Factors involved in loss of control injury crashes

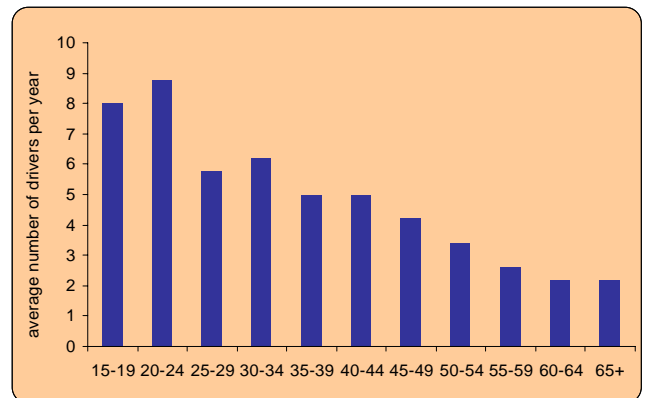


A high proportion of loss of control crashes in the Rangitikei District was due to poor driving skills, especially by drivers in the 15 to 24 year age group.

The most recent New Zealand Travel Survey, undertaken in 1997/1998, described the average distances driven by road users within different age groups. This survey indicates that New Zealand drivers aged between approximately 25 and 49 years drive the longest distances on an annual basis.

The graph indicates the involvement of a relatively high number of younger drivers (aged from 15 to 24 years) in loss of control injury crashes, over the 1999–2003 period.

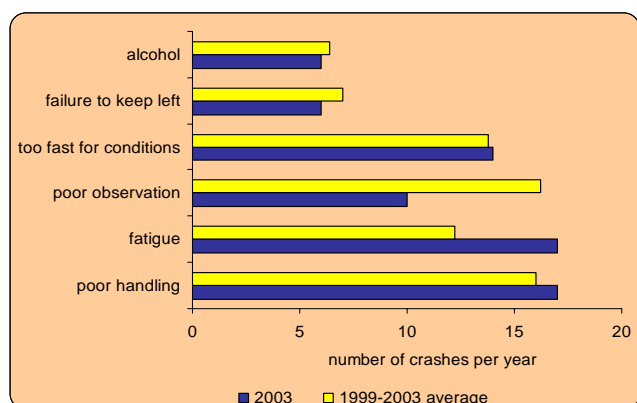
Age of drivers involved in loss of control injury crashes 1999–2003



80 Speed

The Official New Zealand Road Code states that drivers must drive at a speed suitable for conditions up to a maximum set by the prevailing speed limit. Drivers need to use their judgement to adjust their speed to safely accommodate aspects such as loose material on the road surface or poor weather. Despite this, inappropriate speed, defined as too fast for the conditions is identified as a major road safety issue both nationally, and locally in the Rangitikei District.

Factors involved in injury crashes



During 2003, driving at a speed too fast for the conditions was highlighted as a factor in 35 crashes in the Rangitikei District, with 14 of these crashes causing injuries to road users. Over the 1999–2003 period, excessive speed was recorded in an average of 40 crashes per year, of which 14 were injury crashes. Clearly, inappropriate speed is a common factor in many crashes.

Excessive speed was identified as a contributing factor in 25 percent of all reported injury crashes in the Rangitikei District during 2003. This proportion was slightly higher than the 22 percent average rate observed over the full five-year period.

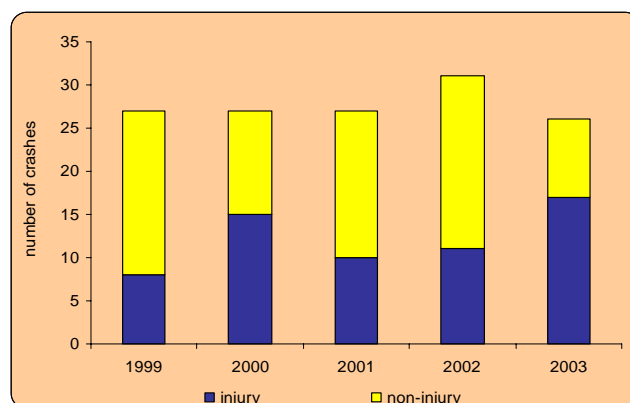
Excessive speed is likely to increase the severity of a crash. Forty percent of crashes involving excessive speed in 2003 resulted in injuries to road users, whereas 35 percent of recent crashes in the Rangitikei District incurred injuries.

Zzzz Fatigue

Staying alert is crucial for safe driving. Fatigued drivers may have slower reaction times, putting themselves and others in danger when they encounter unusual, unexpected or emergency situations.

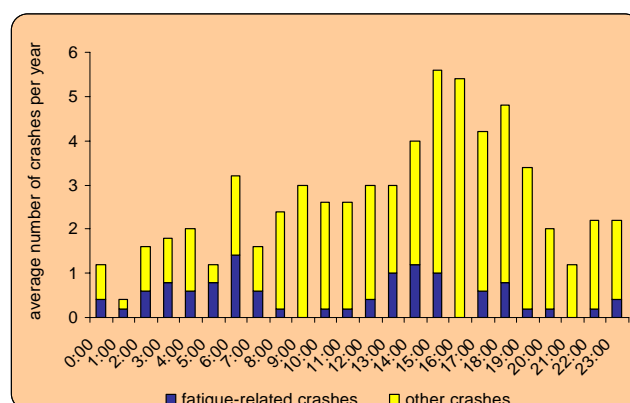
Identification of the effects and presence of driver fatigue is subjective and generally considered to be under-reported in crash statistics. However, fatigue was still recorded as a contributing factor in approximately 20 percent of Rangitikei District’s injury crashes over the 1999–2003 period. This rate was more than 30 percent during 2003.

Crashes involving fatigue



The human brain has an in-built clock that co-ordinates daily cycles. The clock is programmed to make us feel sleepy in the early hours of the morning and during the mid-afternoon. Between 1999 and 2003 in the Rangitikei District, the number and proportion of crashes involving fatigue appear to be highest at these times.

Time of injury crashes 1999–2003



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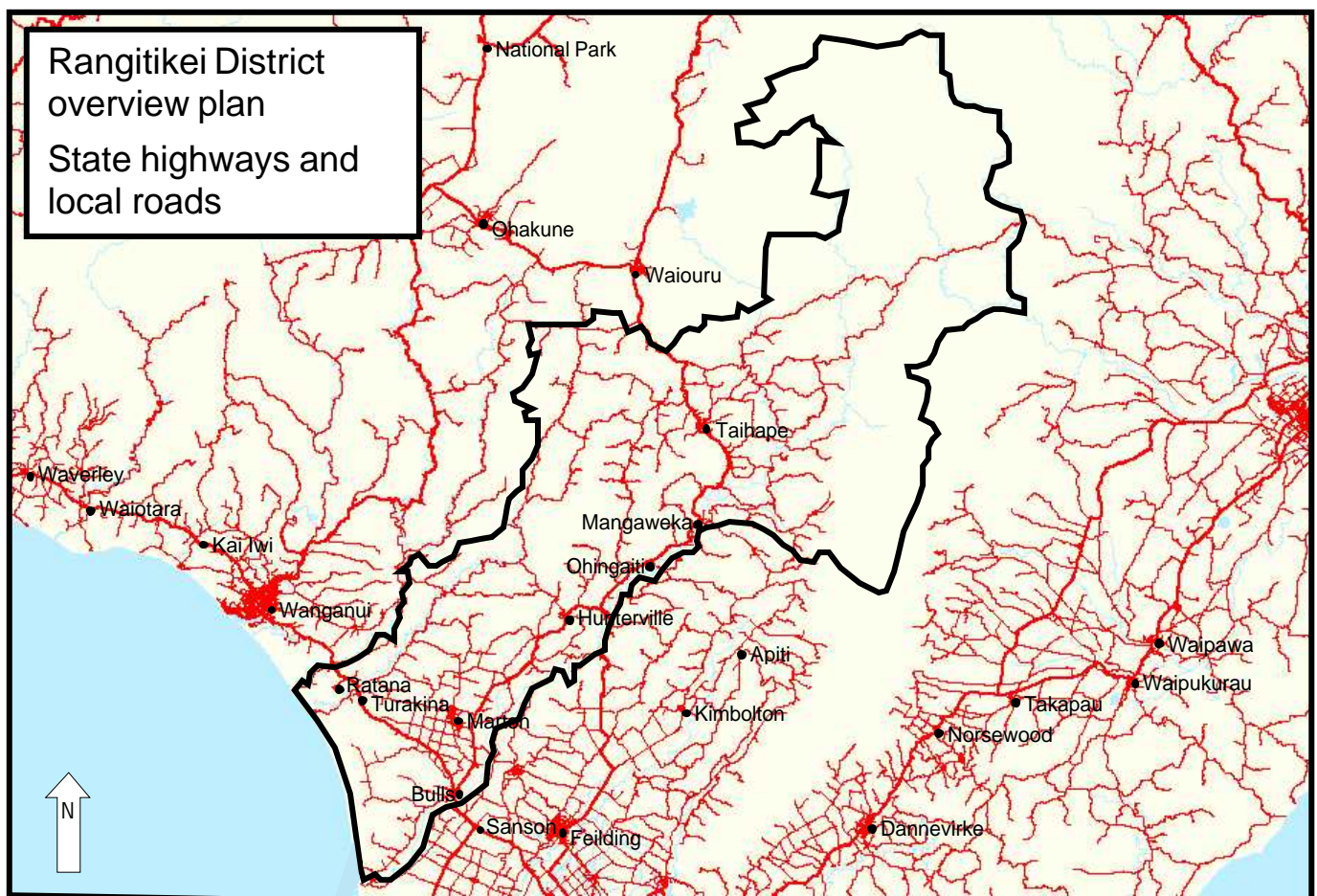
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