

road safety issues

Ruapehu 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 in the Ruapehu District.

There were 107 road users injured on Ruapehu District's roads during 2004, 15 more than was recorded in 2003. There were four more fatalities and an additional 10 seriously injured casualties compared with 2003.

While the proportion of speed-related crashes has reduced, it is still an issue in the Ruapehu District – over one quarter of crashes were attributed to excessive speed in 2004. One quarter of crashes were attributed to road factors, such as a slippery surface, while 76 percent of injury crashes were caused by the driver losing control of their vehicle.

It is noted that the estimated social cost of traffic crashes in the Ruapehu District during 2004 was \$37.2 million, an increase from the 2003 figure of \$21.6 million. Between 2000 and 2004, 70 percent of the social cost can be attributed to crashes on the state highway.

Both local and national road safety issues are identified below. Details of specific issues for the Ruapehu District are considered overleaf, while details of national issues are outlined on the back page.

Major road safety issues

Ruapehu District

Speed

Road factors

Loss of control

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2004 road trauma for Ruapehu District



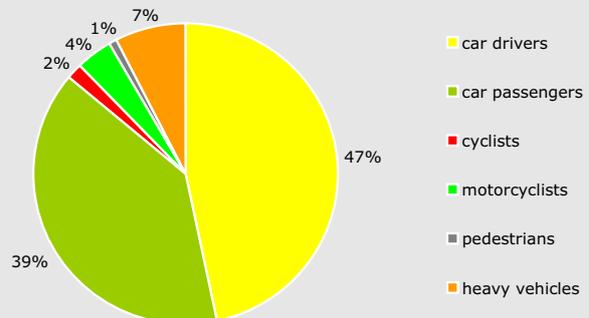
Deaths	6
Serious casualties	25
Minor casualties	76



Fatal crashes	6
Serious injury crashes	17
Minor injury crashes	41
Non-injury crashes	135

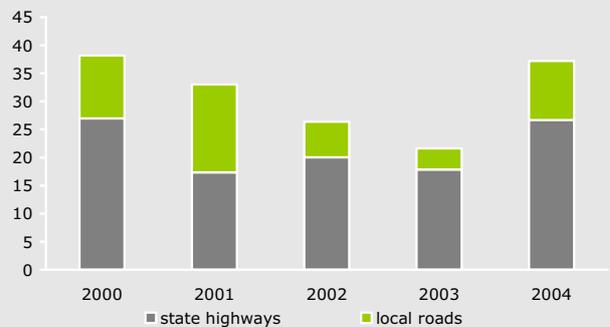
Road casualties 2000–2004

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.

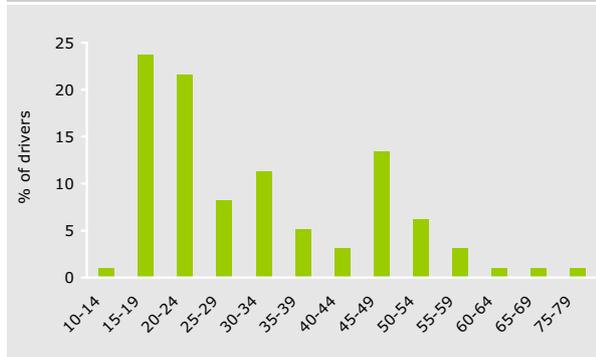
Speed

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

Excessive speed was a factor in 27 percent of crashes in the Ruapehu District from 2000 to 2004, compared with 17 percent of crashes nationally over the same period. Eighty-three percent of speed-related crashes were in urban areas and 17 percent in rural areas.

Of those drivers involved in speed-related crashes, 75 percent were male. Males aged 15 to 19 years were involved in 22 percent of the crashes and 20–24 year old males were involved in 23 percent of crashes. Of females, 29 percent were aged 15 to 19 and a further 17 percent were aged 20 to 24. Ten percent of 45–49 year old males and 25 percent of females in the same age group were involved in speed-related crashes.

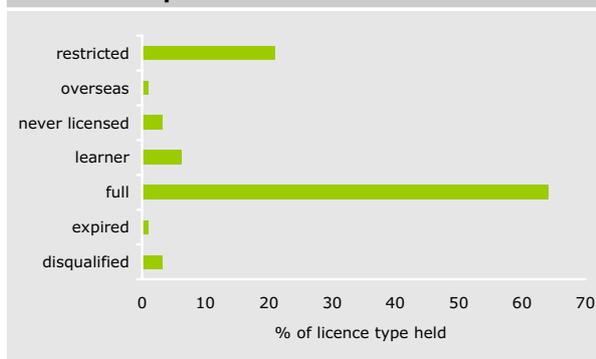
Driver age in speed-related injury crashes 2000–2004



Alcohol was found to be a factor in 23 percent of speed-related crashes.

From 2000 to 2004, of all drivers involved in crashes where speed was a contributing factor, 57 percent held a full driving licence and 30 percent held learner or restricted licences.

Licence in speed-related crashes 2000–2004

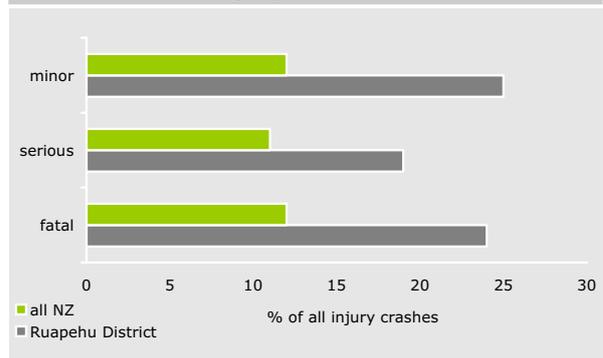


Road factors

Road factors contributed to one quarter of injury crashes in the Ruapehu District. Road factors include:

- a slippery road surface after rain, frost, ice, etc
- a road obstructed due to a slip or subsidence
- visibility limited by a curve or crest
- deep loose metal on unsealed roads
- a road surface under construction or maintenance
- inadequate signs.

Road factors in injury crashes 2000–2004



Between 2000 and 2004, road factors contributed to five fatal crashes, which equates to 24 percent of all fatal crashes in the Ruapehu District. Throughout New Zealand, road factors accounted for just 12 percent of all fatal crashes. Road factors contributed to 20 percent of serious crashes and 27 percent of minor crashes in the Ruapehu District.

Of injury crashes where road factors were identified, 88 percent were on sealed roads. Wet roads contributed to 44 percent of crashes while a further 22 percent occurred when there was snow or ice on the road. Forty percent of crashes occurred during the hours of darkness.

Thirty-nine percent of road factor injury crashes between 2000 and 2004 took place on SH 4 while 14 percent occurred on SH 1. One quarter of crashes occurred on local roads.

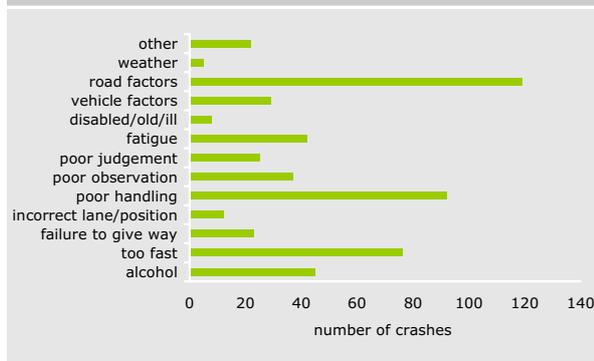
Excessive speed was a contributing factor in 40 percent of road factor crashes, while poor handling was a factor in 25 percent of injury crashes.

Loss of control

Between 2000 and 2004, over three quarters of injury crashes in the Ruapehu District involved a driver losing control of their vehicle either on a bend or on a straight road. This can result in a head-on collision with another vehicle or the vehicle leaving the road. Of these injury crashes, 74 percent were on bends and 26 percent occurred on a straight road.

Road factors were identified as contributing to almost half of all loss of control crashes in rural areas while 36 percent were attributed to poor handling of the vehicle. Excessive speed accounted for 28 percent of rural crashes. The main contributing factors in urban areas were alcohol and speed.

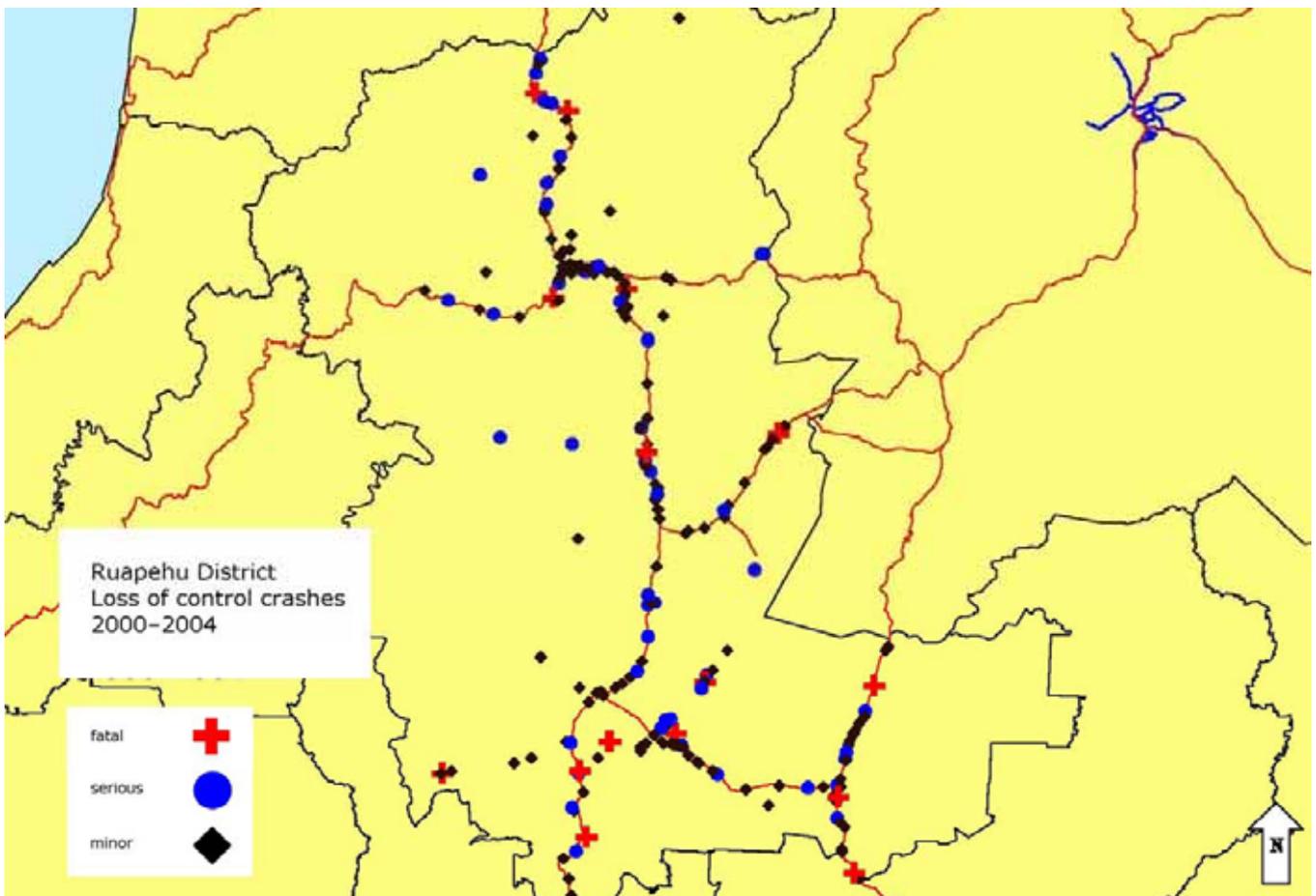
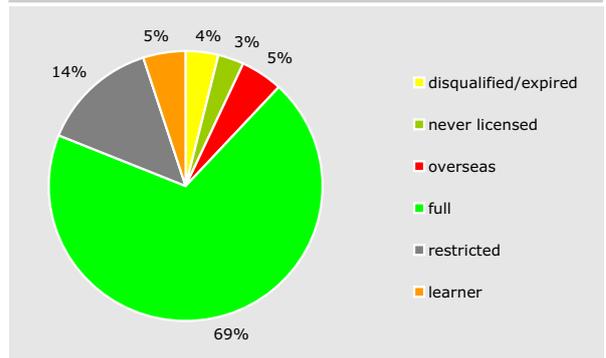
Factors in loss of control crashes 2000–2004



Forty-two percent of crashes occurred during the hours of darkness. Three quarters of crashes occurred on state highways, and 57 percent of these occurred on SH 4. The map below shows the location of loss of control crashes from 2000 to 2004.

In 2004, of drivers involved in loss of control crashes, 80 percent held full driving licences while 19 percent held a learner or restricted licence.

Licence status in loss of control injury crashes 2000–2004



Alcohol

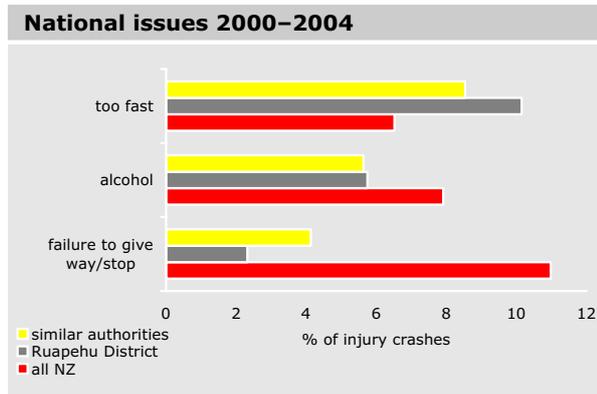
Drivers with a blood alcohol level over the legal limit (80 mg per 100 ml) are three times more likely to be involved in a crash than a sober driver.

From 2000 to 2004, alcohol was a factor in 47 injury crashes in the Ruapehu District and accounted for 15 percent of all injury crashes. Crashes where alcohol was a contributing factor led to seven fatalities.

Failure to give way

Failure to give way at intersections is the third largest cause of death and injury crashes on New Zealand roads.

Twenty injury crashes in the Ruapehu District between 2000 and 2004 involved a vehicle failing to give way. This accounted for six percent of all injury crashes.



Restraints

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

Results from a 2004 survey showed that throughout New Zealand 94 percent of front seat adults wore safety belts. In the Ruapehu District, the seatbelt wearing rate was 93 percent. Potentially, one fatality during 2004 could have been prevented had a seatbelt been worn at the time of crash.

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