

road safety issues

Taranaki Region

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 Taranaki Region, which covers the New Plymouth, Stratford and South Taranaki local authorities.

The number of injury crashes in the Taranaki Region has decreased from a high of 314 crashes in 2003 to 275 in 2004. Fatalities and serious casualties, however, have both been increasing during the period 2000–2004. The estimated social cost of crashes in the Taranaki Region in 2004 was \$112 million.

Over 40 percent of crashes involved drivers losing control of their vehicle, particularly in rural areas. Crashes at intersections were also common, with a large proportion of these occurring in the urban areas of the Taranaki Region. Car drivers were the largest casualty group involved in road crashes, with an increased involvement of learner and restricted licence holders in the last five years.

Vulnerable road users, ie motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians, accounted for 19 percent of all casualties from 2000 to 2004 in the Taranaki Region.

Both national and local road safety issues are identified below. Specific issues relating to the Taranaki Region are considered overleaf. National issues are discussed on the back page.

Major road safety issues

Taranaki Region

Loss of control

Intersections

Vulnerable road users

Novice drivers

Nationally

Speed

Alcohol

Failure to give way

Restraints



2004 road trauma for Taranaki Region



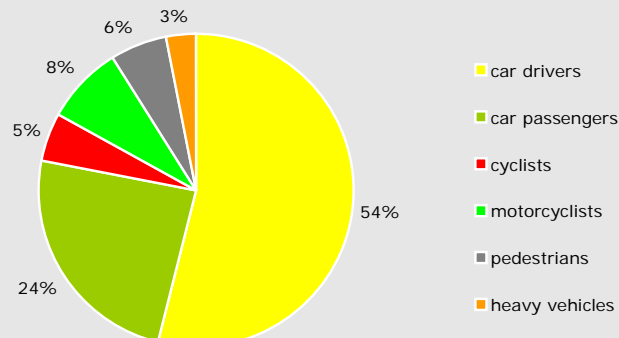
Deaths	15
Serious casualties	84
Minor casualties	298



Fatal crashes	13
Serious injury crashes	65
Minor injury crashes	197
Non-injury crashes	482

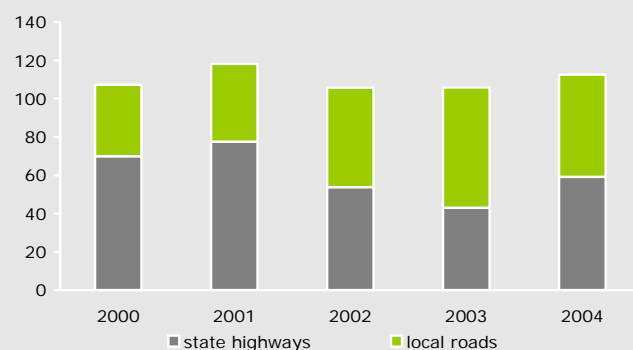
Road casualties 2000–2004

User type 2000–2004



Estimated social cost of crashes*

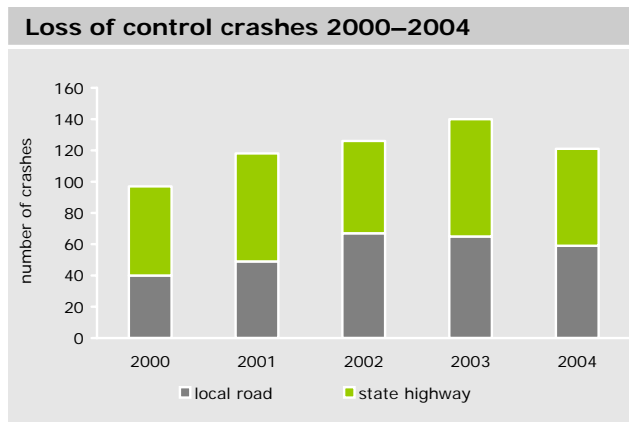
Social cost (\$ million)



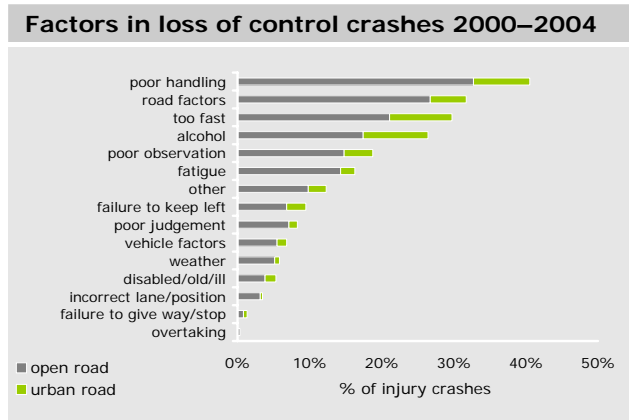
*The estimated social cost includes loss of life or life quality (estimated by the amount New Zealanders are prepared to pay to reduce their risk of fatal or non-fatal injury), loss of output due to injuries, medical and rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, and property damage. These costs are expressed at June 2004 prices.

Loss of control

The most common type of injury crash in the Taranaki Region resulted from a driver losing control of a vehicle. Between 2000 and 2004 there were 602 loss of control crashes, accounting for 20 percent of urban crashes and 64 percent of rural crashes. There has been an upward trend in the number of these crashes over the last five years.



Forty-one percent of the loss of control crashes involved some form of poor handling on the part of the driver. The road surface being slippery due to rain, ice or roadworks was also a common factor, along with excessive speed and alcohol.

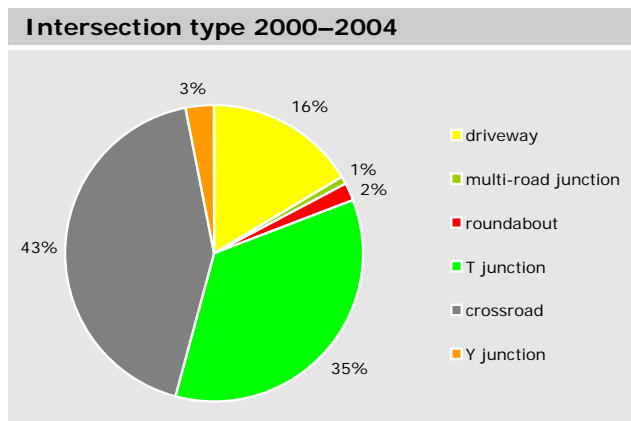


Loss of control crashes can result in either a head-on collision with another vehicle or a vehicle leaving the road and colliding with a roadside object. This can increase the severity of a crash. The most commonly hit objects in loss of control crashes in the Taranaki Region included fences (28 percent), cliffs or banks (20 percent), other vehicles (18 percent) and posts or poles (14 percent).

Intersections

From 2000 to 2004, there were a total of 707 crashes (or 50 percent of all crashes) at intersections and driveways in the Taranaki Region. Of these, 116 (16 percent) occurred at private driveways and accesses, resulting in a total of 19 deaths and 145 serious injuries.

Crashes at intersections and driveways made up 70 percent of all urban and 30 percent of all rural injury crashes in the Taranaki Region between 2000 and 2004. Fifty-six percent of intersection crashes in the urban area occurred on local roads (as opposed to state highways).



The main types of intersection crashes involved a collision between vehicles making either a crossing or turning movement (55 percent), or a vehicle being hit from behind (16 percent) – for instance, when in a queue waiting to pass through an intersection.

The majority of intersection or driveway crashes occurred at crossroads (43 percent) or T junctions (35 percent) in the Taranaki Region between 2000 and 2004. Twenty-eight percent of T junction crashes occurred at a location without any formal traffic control such as Give Way or Stop signs and markings.

Twenty-five percent of all road users injured in intersection crashes were pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists. Cyclists and motorcyclists, in particular, were prominent in crashes at roundabouts. Fifty-seven percent of all casualties at roundabouts were a cyclist or motorcyclist when compared with other types of intersection, although crash numbers for roundabouts were small.

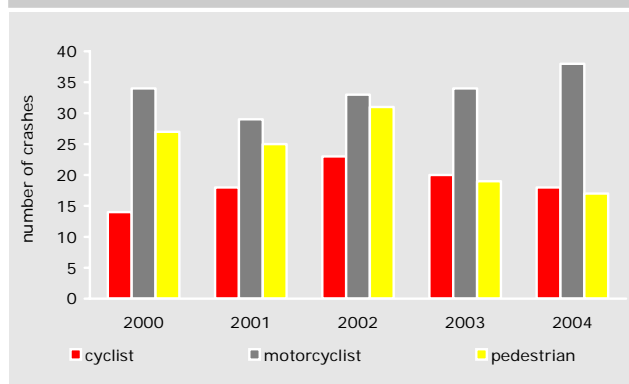
Thirty-one percent of intersection crashes occurred between 3 pm and 6 pm, with three quarters of the crashes occurring on a weekday.

Vulnerable road users

For this report, vulnerable road users have been defined as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Over the 2000 to 2004 period, there were a total of 355 crashes (or 25 percent) which involved a vulnerable road user in the Taranaki Region. This should be viewed in the context of the *New Zealand Transport Strategy*, which promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.

Motorcyclists made up 44 percent of these casualties, 31 percent were pedestrians and 25 percent were cyclists. Thirty-six percent of vulnerable road users were killed or seriously injured.

Vulnerable road user casualties 2000–2004



From 2000 to 2004, 47 percent of motorcycle crashes occurred on local roads in the urban areas in the Taranaki Region. Seventy-eight percent of these occurred at an intersection or driveway. A quarter of all motorcyclist casualties were aged between 15 and 19 years and a further 25 percent were aged 35 to 44 years. Forty-three percent of motorcyclists involved in crashes were killed or seriously injured. The main factors in motorcycle crashes were poor observation, failure to give way and poor handling. Excessive speed and alcohol also featured in a number of crashes.

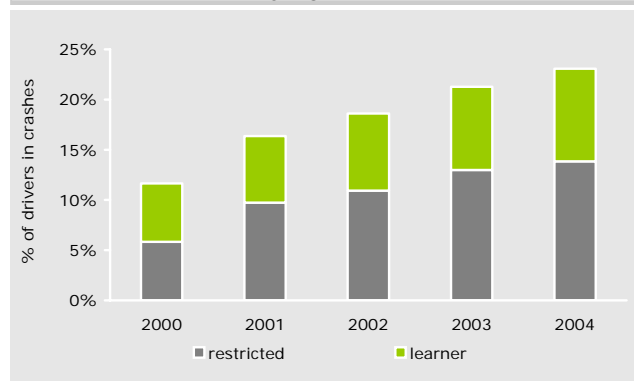
Fifty-seven percent of pedestrian casualties occurred on local roads (as opposed to state highways) in the Taranaki Region. Most of the pedestrian casualties were injured away from a formal pedestrian crossing or a raised island. Forty percent of pedestrian casualties were between five and 19 years old and a further 20 percent were aged over 60 years. The majority of pedestrian casualties occurred in the urban area.

Fifty-seven percent of cyclist injuries happened on local roads in the urban area, and 73 percent of these occurred at a driveway or intersection. In urban areas, the main contributory factors in cycle crashes were failure to give way/stop, poor observation and using an incorrect lane or position. Poor observation was the main factor in rural areas. Fifty-three percent of cyclist casualties in the Taranaki Region were aged between 10 and 19 years and the majority of these were male.

Novice drivers

Between 2000 and 2004, 18 percent of the drivers involved in injury crashes were inexperienced, driving on a learner or restricted licence. There has been a steady upward trend over that period, with 23 percent of drivers involved in crashes in 2004 being novice drivers.

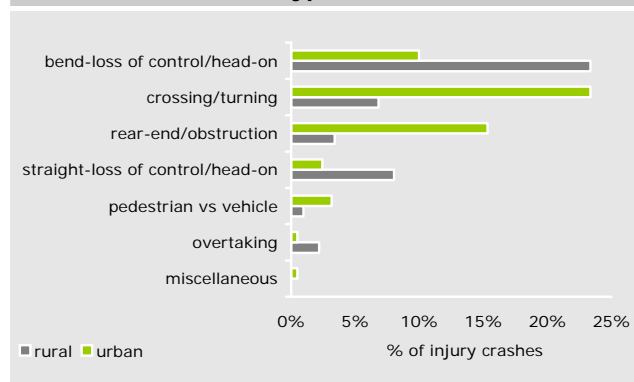
Novice drivers in injury crashes 2000–2004



The most common type of crash involving a novice driver was loss of control on a bend, more often in the rural environment.

In the urban environment, crashes involving crossing or turning movements, for instance at intersections or driveways, were the most common crash type.

Novice driver crash type 2000–2004



Common contributing factors for novice driver crashes were:

- excessive speed (16 percent)
- alcohol or drugs (14 percent)
- failure to give way (13 percent).

Speed

The faster drivers go, the more likely they are to crash and the greater the risk of serious injury or death. During the period 2000–2004, travelling too fast for the conditions was a factor in 15 percent of injury crashes in the Taranaki Region. This percentage was lower than for all of New Zealand and for similar authorities.

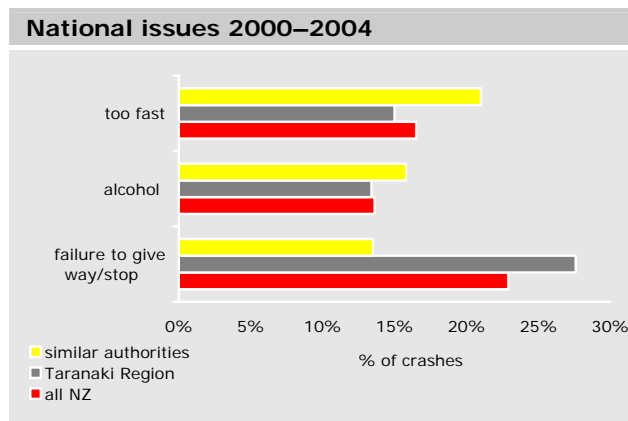
Alcohol

Alcohol has a big effect on the way people drive. People who drink and drive (with a blood alcohol level over 80 mg per 100 ml) are three times more likely to be involved in a crash than a sober driver.

Between 2000 and 2004, alcohol was identified as a factor in 13 percent of crashes in the Taranaki Region, which was lower than for all of New Zealand and for similar authorities.

Failure to give way

While most failure to give way crashes result in non-injury or minor injury crashes, failure to give way can have severe consequences. Between 2000 and 2004, 28 percent of crashes in the Taranaki Region involved drivers failing to give way, resulting in 17 deaths and 85 serious injuries. Intersection crashes, often involving failure to give way, have been identified as a local issue in the Taranaki Region.



Restraints

Wearing a safety belt reduces the chance of death or serious injury in a crash by 40 percent. Whether in the front or the back seat, the risk of serious or fatal injury if not wearing a safety belt is virtually the same.

Results from the 2004 national restraint wearing survey showed that the national average of front seat safety belt wearing was 94 percent, compared with 92 percent for the Taranaki Region.

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