

In Dunedin, Lower Hutt, and Hamilton the numbers of accidents per 10,000 head of population decreased, but increases were recorded in six other centres. Auckland has the highest accident rate on the basis of population, Wellington and Palmerston North being second and third respectively. The relatively larger volume of street traffic in the centres is, of course, a factor which greatly increases the accident exposure risk, but the rate per 10,000 head of population is high, both in Palmerston North and Wanganui. In Christchurch, where large numbers of cycles are on the roads, one-half of the total number of accidents were collisions between motor-vehicles and cyclists. Nearly half the pedestrian accidents for New Zealand occurred in the Auckland and Wellington urban areas.

CLASSIFICATION OF ACCIDENTS ACCORDING TO MONTH, DAY, AND HOUR.—As is usually the case, pedestrian casualties were heavier during the winter months from May to September. Experience in the past has shown that there is also a tendency for accidents involving bicycles to increase during the winter months, although the 1949 figures do not show this to any extent. A statistical analysis of the accident figures over a period of ten years which was made recently shows a fairly wide degree of relative variation from month to month, but some semblance of a pattern can nevertheless be traced. Accidents appear to be most numerous during the months of May, April, June, and March, in order of importance—in other words, during the late autumn and winter months. It is hoped that further research on this and other topics of importance will be possible during the year.

DAILY AND HOURLY OCCURRENCE OF ACCIDENTS.—An analysis of the figures for 1949 shows that the accidents were distributed on the days of the week as follows:—

Day.	Percentage of Total Number of Accidents.			
Monday	..	..	..	13·4
Tuesday	..	..	..	11·9
Wednesday	..	..	..	11·8
Thursday	..	..	..	12·5
Friday	..	..	..	17·2
Saturday	..	..	..	20·6
Sunday	..	..	..	12·6
				100·0

More accidents occurred on Friday and Saturday than on any other days of the week. Friday, generally speaking, is the busiest day of the week for commercial traffic, while on Saturday and Sunday few commercial vehicles—in other words, light and heavy trucks are in use, and private cars, taxis, and other passenger-vehicles predominate on the roads.

TIME OF OCCURRENCE.—A classification of the accidents according to the hour of the day shows that the highest hourly concentration of accidents from Monday to Friday is between the hours of 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. This is explained largely by the fact that the busiest two-hour period during both summer and winter, as evidenced by a survey made some years ago, is the two-hour period between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., when the volume of traffic rises rapidly to a peak, falling quickly during the next two-hour period. On Saturdays the highest concentration of accidents is between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. On Sundays, accidents tend to be spread more or less evenly between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., if those occurring between 12 midnight and 1.0 a.m. are excluded.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACCIDENTS.—An analysis has been made of the latest statistics in an effort to apportion the over-all responsibility for the 4,092 accidents which occurred during 1949–1950.