

Of the 776 accidents in which motor-cyclists were involved in 1949, motor-cyclists were at fault in approximately 55 per cent. of the cases. Arrayed in order of their importance, the six main causes were :—

	Percentage of All Motor-cycle Accidents.			
Failure to yield right of way	19·4
Excessive speed	16·0
Inattention on the part of the rider	9·4
Skidding	6·3
Passing or overtaking negligently	5·6
Failure to keep left	3·5

It is clear, therefore that the majority of motor-cycle accidents where the motor-cyclists were to blame were the direct result of human failure on the part of motor-cyclists. The fact that many riders of these machines are comparatively young no doubt is an influencing element. Fifty per cent. of motor-cyclists involved in accidents during 1949 were not more than twenty-one years of age. The conclusion is inescapable that the motor-cycle is a vehicle presenting many hazards for mature and competent riders, and for those riders who have an insufficient sense of responsibility or are of unstable temperament the danger is infinitely greater.

AGES OF DRIVERS OF VEHICLES.—The ages of drivers of motor-vehicles, excluding motor-cycles, show a fairly wide variation, and it is not possible to assign a marked incidence to any particular age group. One driver involved in an accident was a child of twelve years of age who was using his parents' car without authority, two were fifteen years of age, while eight were over the age of eighty years.

GENERAL.—The Department maintains complete records of all accidents involving death or injury, these being based on standardized accident reports made by the police. Full use is made of punched-card statistical equipment in the tabulation and the analysis of the statistical data, and valuable assistance has been received from the Census and Statistics Department. Providing staffing conditions permit, it is proposed during the current year to undertake studies of topics, such as exposure risk and accident costs, on lines which have been followed overseas.

B. NEW ZEALAND ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL

Two meetings were held during the year, in June and October. The following is a brief summary of the major topics discussed :—

ACCIDENTS TO PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN.—It was recommended that an intensive six months' publicity campaign be instituted to assist in reducing the number of accidents involving young children as pedestrians or as tricyclists.

AIR-BRAKES ON BUSES.—Immediate action was taken as the result of the Council's recommendations regarding the air-brake system on certain passenger-buses.

CYCLES.—Approval was given to the Department's system of cycle inspections at schools.

The Council recommended that double-banking on cycles be discouraged.

Recommendations were made regarding a further investigation into compulsory tail-lamps on cycles in place of reflectors.

DRIVER-TESTING CLINIC.—The Council recommended that the question of the establishment of a driver-testing clinic be held over pending further investigations and research.

LEVEL CROSSINGS.—Recommendations were made regarding warning devices, visibility, and the protective measures at railway level crossings. The Department, in co-operation with the Railways Department, is continuing with action in this regard.

MARKER LIGHTS.—Following exhaustive tests, it was decided that the present blue marker lights on outsized vehicles were adequate and that no recommendation be made to change the colour of these lights.