



Safekids New Zealand  
Advocacy Guide:

## Working with local government to prevent Driveway Run Over Injuries



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# Safekids New Zealand Advocacy Guide:

## Working with local government to prevent Driveway Run Over Injuries

### About this guide

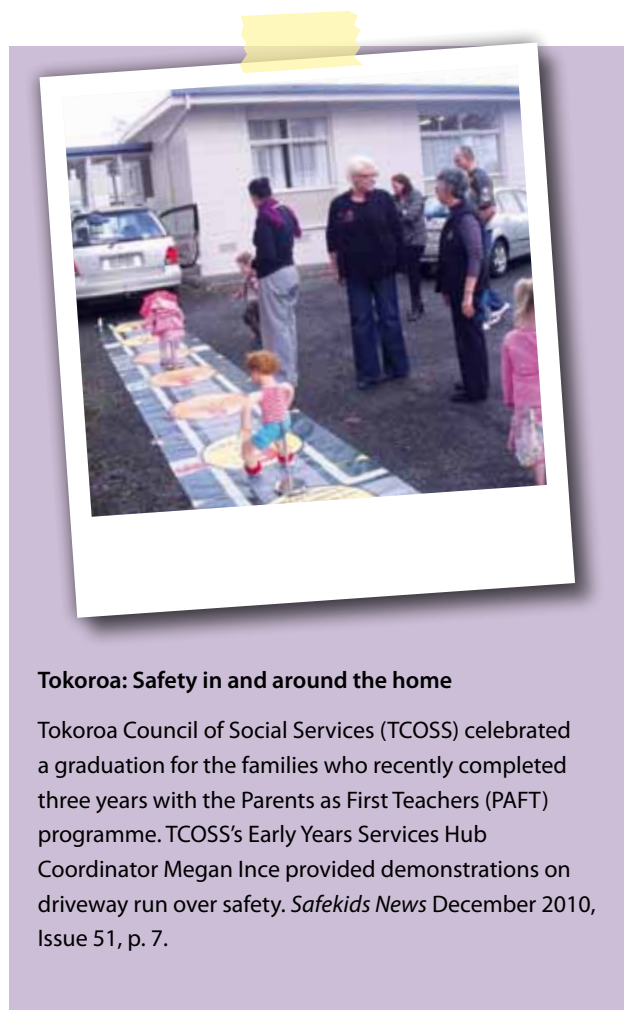
Keeping kids safe is a shared responsibility between families, communities, organisations, and decision makers.

Local governments are very well placed to effectively prevent driveway run over injuries to children. This is because they can include driveway safety information within their District Plans, Annual Plans and other documents. Council's Annual Plans outline spending and District Plans provide guidance and rules on land use. These documents guide the rules and standards used to control development of land within a district.

The purpose of this document is to guide you as an individual, coalition member, community group, or organisation about how to shape your local governments' decisions. Together we can ensure children's driveway safety is given consideration by local government policy and practice.

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#### **Tokoroa: Safety in and around the home**

Tokoroa Council of Social Services (TCOSS) celebrated a graduation for the families who recently completed three years with the Parents as First Teachers (PAFT) programme. TCOSS's Early Years Services Hub Coordinator Megan Ince provided demonstrations on driveway run over safety. *Safekids News* December 2010, Issue 51, p. 7.

## Driveway run over key facts

- On average, five children a year are killed by cars driving on private driveways in New Zealand.
- Within the Auckland region at least one child every two weeks is hospitalised overnight with injuries from this cause.
- Injuries sustained as a result of driveway run overs include tearing and crush trauma to the child's head and neck, and crush injuries to their chests, abdomens and limbs.
- The driver is often an adult who is related, or known, to the child.
- The incident typically occurs when a young child is driven over by a vehicle moving on private land (forwards and backwards).
- Drive-over injuries are known to occur in other places such as paddocks and carparks, but these are less frequent.
- There is a strong relationship between driveway injuries and age, with children injured in this way being most frequently between the ages of 0 to 4.

## What increases the risk of a driveway run over?

Research has identified three main factors which increase the risk of a child being run over. These are: Human, vehicle design, and property design (built environment) factors.



### Community Owning the Driveway Message

With driveway run over injuries in the headlines in the past months, the West Coast Coalition led by ACC's Cathy Blincoe, Plunket's Jody Fahey and Road Safety Coordinators Marg Bradley and Ivan Wilson organised a driveway run over activity at the local mall, with the goal of educating the community about child safety around cars.

"With the support of the Council and the businesses, we closed off the street and invited people to experience a reversing vision demonstration where they saw how difficult it can be to see children behind the car," said West Coast Road Safety Coordinator Ivan Wilson. *Safekids News* June 2010, Issue 49, p. 11.

| Human factors  | Vehicle design factors  | Property design and built environment risk factors  |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Safety practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separating the areas of play from areas of vehicle movement</li> <li>• checking where the children are before you move the vehicle</li> <li>• supervision of young children around moving vehicles</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a young child may not know that they are in danger when a vehicle moves towards them</li> <li>• driver awareness of their vehicles' visibility blind zones</li> </ul> | <p><b>Visibility blind zones</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The driver cannot see objects or people (i.e young children) under a certain height</li> <li>• Some vehicles have been consistently identified as being over-represented in driveway run overs BUT;</li> <li>• <b>ALL</b> vehicles have visibility blind zones in both forwards and rearwards directions</li> </ul> | <p><b>High levels of risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• driveways exiting onto quiet or less busy road (such as a cul-de-sac or local road)</li> <li>• properties with multiple parking spaces</li> <li>• shared driveways with more frequent car movements</li> <li>• driveway length greater than 12 metres</li> <li>• No safe place for children to play</li> </ul> |

## What is the role of local government in child safety?

Local governments have strategic control over many aspects of the physical and social environment in which New Zealand children live. They have responsibility for:

- community well-being and development
- public health and safety issues
- infrastructure including roading and transport, and maintenance of parks facilities
- recreation and cultural services
- resource management including land use, planning and development control.

Providing suitable resources are available, local government have a number of roles to help maintain the wellbeing of children in the local community. These include:

Leading, regulating, providing, funding, facilitating, as a source of information and influence, and as an advocate

## What roles can Councils play to improve driveway safety for children?

As a leader directed by the Local Government Act (2002) a local authority is required to prepare and adopt an Annual Plan for each financial year. These Plans guide the rules and standards used to control many aspects of the physical and social environment in which New Zealand children live.

Local government also has a regulatory role for the development and use of land within a district. This comes under the Resource Management Act 1991 ("RMA") and requires that Territorial Authorities promote sustainable management by "... managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in a way ... which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety ... ." (Section 5(2)). (Safekids NZ, 2011, page 7.)

Through local government roading and transport responsibilities they may also:

Fund vehicle visibility campaigns to improve their communities' awareness of vehicles visibility blind zones.

Act as a source of information and influence, an advocate, or facilitate activities to raise and maintain awareness of human, vehicle and property design factors known to increase the risk of driveway run overs.

## How can you influence what Councils do to improve driveway safety?

Since the 1989 local government reforms, public participation has been emphasised as part of local government planning and decision-making process. There are a number of ways your comments or concerns can be presented to Council.

- Talk to your local Councillor or Community board member
- Make a submission to Council Annual Plans
- If you are making a submission talk to your local Councillor or Community board member before the submission is presented.
- Invite them to the driveway kit demonstrations – get media to cover event.

You can also Mail, Fax, or Email you local Council your comments or concerns.

The mechanism to achieve environmental change – that is the regulatory role Council plays in control of the use of land, is through the Council District Plan.

## Looking out for the draft Annual Plans

You will need to keep an eye on your Council's website for the draft Annual Plan. Throughout New Zealand this is from February through to May each year.

Each Plan will be laid out slightly differently. The sections of the Plans related to housing design and use of land will have different headings. Some examples include (but are not limited to): urban development, environmental management, development and regulatory services or activities.

**Children, like all individuals and groups, have the right to input into the planning and decision making processes. You can use the information in this guide to improve specific council policies that relate to improving driveway safety for children, since they are not able to do this for themselves.**

## Step by step guide through Annual Plan process

An Annual Plan must be adopted before the commencement of the year to which it relates. Local government works to a July/June financial year. The Local Government Act therefore requires plans to be approved prior to 30 June.

### September through to February

| What Councils are doing                 | What you can do  |
|---|--|
| Preparing the draft Council Annual Plan | You can place proposals before a council's officers for consideration of inclusion in the preliminary draft. The further the development of the plan has progressed the less possible it becomes that a proposal will receive consideration for inclusion in the next Plan |

### February through to May

| What Councils are doing                                      | What you can do   |
|--|---|
| Councils will release the Draft Plan for public consultation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep an eye on your Council website for the draft annual plan then;</li> <li>2. <b>MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION!!</b> Use the downloadable submission template referred to on page 5 of this guide.</li> <li>3. Always offer to speak to your submission (take kids with you as these attract media response)</li> <li>4. Include issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position of garages</li> <li>• Landscaping</li> <li>• Site layout</li> <li>• Separate pedestrian access</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |

### May through to June

| What Councils are doing                                     | What you can do   |
|---|---|
| Council considers submissions and approves the Annual Plan. | Look for evidence of your submission in the final version of the plan. Make note of what has or hasn't been adopted into the plan. If you need to, begin the process again! |

## Your Council's District Plan

Your council's District plan provides guidance and rules on land use. The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) allows anyone to seek changes to district or regional plans through a request for a private plan change. Requests for private plan changes enable innovative proposals to be tested through the RMA process, and allow applicants to initiate change without waiting for a plan review. Part II of the First Schedule of the RMA sets out procedural matters for local authorities to follow in dealing with requests for plan changes.

An applicant can request a private plan change at any time, but a change can only be made to an operative plan. When it receives a request for a plan change, a council must decide whether to adopt a plan change, accept it as a private plan change, convert it to a resource consent, or reject it.

If the private plan change is accepted there will be calls for public consultation. If you would like more help and advice in relation to this consultation process - aiming to improve driveway safety - please contact Safekids New Zealand at [www.safekids.org.nz](http://www.safekids.org.nz)

## References

Safekids New Zealand (2011) *Safekids New Zealand position paper: Child driveway run over injuries*. Auckland: Safekids New Zealand.

Local Government New Zealand. [www.lgnz.co.nz/lg-sector/role/index.html](http://www.lgnz.co.nz/lg-sector/role/index.html)

Quality Planning: [www.qualityplanning.org.nz/plan-development/private-plan-changes.php](http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/plan-development/private-plan-changes.php)

## Information about how to download a draft submission

For an easily downloadable Council Annual Plan driveway injury prevention submission template, go to:

[www.safekids.org.nz/index.php/ps\\_alias/driveway-submission-template](http://www.safekids.org.nz/index.php/ps_alias/driveway-submission-template)

The submission template includes both a draft cover letter and a draft submission which includes relevant, detailed information about the prevention of driveway run over injury.

Download the template and fill in your name and organisation details. Add relevant local information – for instance particular local issues.

Deliver the completed submission in your preferred way and be prepared to speak to it or to answer any questions about the submission.

If you need help contact Safekids New Zealand at [www.safekids.org.nz](http://www.safekids.org.nz) or email [Infocentre@safekids.org.nz](mailto:Infocentre@safekids.org.nz).



**Plunket and Road Safe Nelson kick started the region's drive to create awareness on child driveway run over injuries with the unveiling of Safekids' driveway run over awareness mat.**

Nelson Mayor Aldo Miccio and Tasman Mayor Richard Kempthorne said the possibility of running over a child was something they were hyper-aware of, but even with that consciousness they were shocked they couldn't see the life-sized models of children behind the vehicle. Photo by the Nelson Mail, *Safekids News* March 2011, Issue 52, p. 10.



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