

New Zealand Guardian Insights Report 2025-26

AutoSense
DRIVING SAFETY 

Understanding fatigue
and distraction trends
across New Zealand fleets

 **seeing
machines** | **GUARDIAN**

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Introduction

Every day, thousands of New Zealanders get behind the wheel for work while managing the often invisible effects of fatigue and distraction.

At AutoSense, we work closely with organisations across New Zealand and Australia to help manage these risks through technology, operational insight and practical support. Through this work, we see firsthand the challenges facing fleet operators and drivers every day.

AutoSense is proud to be New Zealand's exclusive distributor of Guardian by Seeing Machines. This New Zealand Guardian Insights Report 2025–26 draws on human-verified driving data from **6,098** vehicles equipped with Guardian technology, travelling more than **485 million kilometres** across New Zealand roads during the **year ending 31 March 2026**. The report also includes comparative analysis from the previous 12 months to help identify emerging trends and changing risk patterns.

The findings provide important insight into the evolving nature of driver fatigue and distraction risk across the commercial fleet sector. While the

volume of verified events increased during the period, this also reflects the growing capability of technology to identify early-stage risk behaviours that may previously have gone undetected.

Importantly, these fatigue and distraction events are not isolated to overnight freight operations or long-haul driving. They are occurring during everyday journeys, often during peak commuting periods when commercial vehicles and the public are sharing increasingly busy roads.

The report reinforces an important point: while technology plays a vital role in improving road safety outcomes, effective risk management also requires leadership, education and ongoing driver engagement.

By continuing to share insights and practical learnings across the industry, we believe New Zealand has an important opportunity to improve safety outcomes for fleet operators, drivers and all road users.

Thank you for joining us on our mission to create safer journeys for all road users.

Charles Dawson
CEO, AutoSense

“Real-world driving data gives the transport industry an opportunity to better understand, anticipate and reduce fatigue and distraction risk.”



Charles Dawson

The data behind the insights

This report is based on real-world driving data gathered exclusively from within New Zealand. It reflects everyday operational driving across New Zealand roads during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2026.

Guardian by Seeing Machines is the industry leading driver monitoring technology used by transport and logistics operators globally, designed to detect fatigue and distraction risk in real time.

These risk events are human-verified by analysts at the Guardian Centre, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure consistency and accuracy in classification.

The dataset is drawn from 6,098 vehicles operating across 842 fleets, representing more than 485 million kilometres driven and over 10.5 million operating hours on New Zealand roads during the reporting period.

To provide context and identify emerging trends, results are also compared with the prior 12-month period.

To ensure the insights in this report are meaningful, a data normalisation approach has been applied to monthly event data. Monthly results are adjusted for distance travelled and presented per 10,000 kilometres driven. This enables fair comparison across periods with different levels of fleet activity and ensures the insights reflect changes in risk behaviour rather than differences in scale.

For day-of-week and time-of-day analysis, kilometre data is not available at that level of detail. These views are therefore presented as a percentage of total incidents, highlighting when events occur within the overall distribution.

To year ended 31 March, 2026

6,098
vehicles

485,786,013
kilometres travelled

10,518,012
hours driven

842
fleets

1,017,726
events captured*

*Events captured include fatigue, distraction, field of view, acceleration, overspeed and manual recordings triggered by drivers.



At a glance

For the year ending 31 March 2026, **1,017,726 driving events** were recorded across New Zealand, **up 5% on the prior 12-month period**.

Overview of event types

Guardian uses advanced algorithms to detect when a driver is fatigued or distracted. When an event is identified, drivers receive real-time in-vehicle alerts designed to support safer driving in the moment. The data is then transmitted for review, where it is human-verified by analysts at the Guardian Centre, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure consistent classification and accuracy.

26,903 
Fatigue Events

+46% on prior period

Fatigue events

Fatigue events are classified as microsleeps, drowsiness, yawning or criteria not met. Microsleeps are identified using a 1.5-second threshold.

From late 2025, enhanced fatigue detection capability in Gen 2 and Gen 3 Guardian devices — including early drowsiness detection — increased the system's ability to identify fatigue-related events that may previously have gone undetected.

83,244 
Distraction Events

+72% on prior period

INCLUDING

14,980 
Instances Of Mobile
Phone Use

-16% on prior period

Distraction Events

Distraction events are confirmed by trained analysts and categorised as long glance away, mobile phone use, other distraction, or criteria not met. A 4-second threshold is used to identify long glance events, while all visible mobile phone use is recorded.

From July 2025, enhanced distraction detection capability across New Zealand fleets increased the identification of distraction events, particularly in non-mobile phone categories.

Machine-identified "attention sharing" events are excluded from the validated detection metrics presented in this report; a definition of this measure is provided on page 7.

Fatigue overview



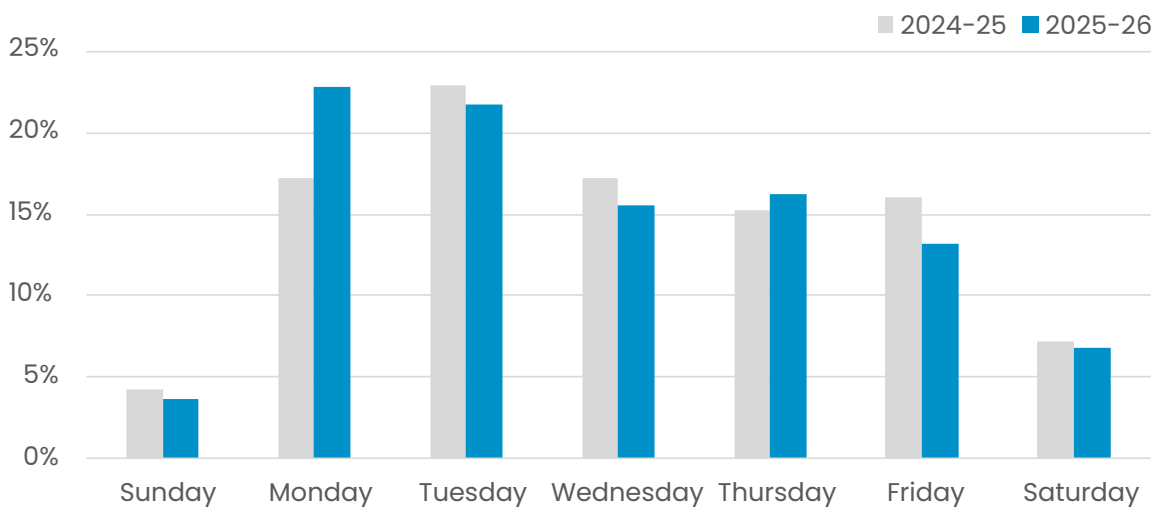
26,903
Verified events



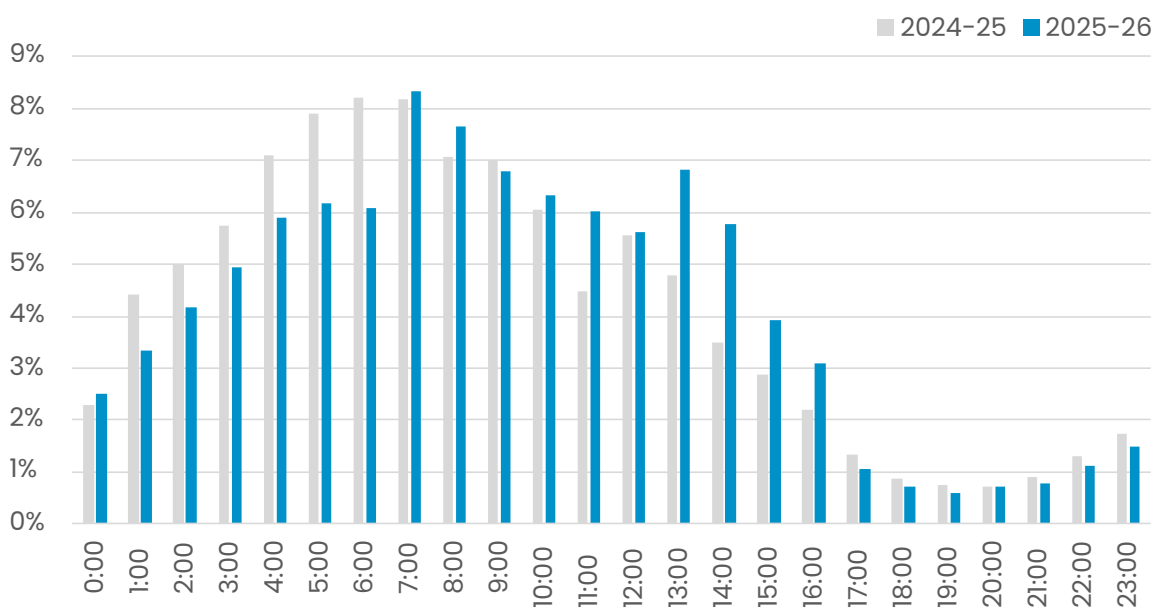
18,297
Intervention phone calls*

*Intervention call data covers the 12 month period to 30 April 2026.

% of verified **fatigue** events by day of week

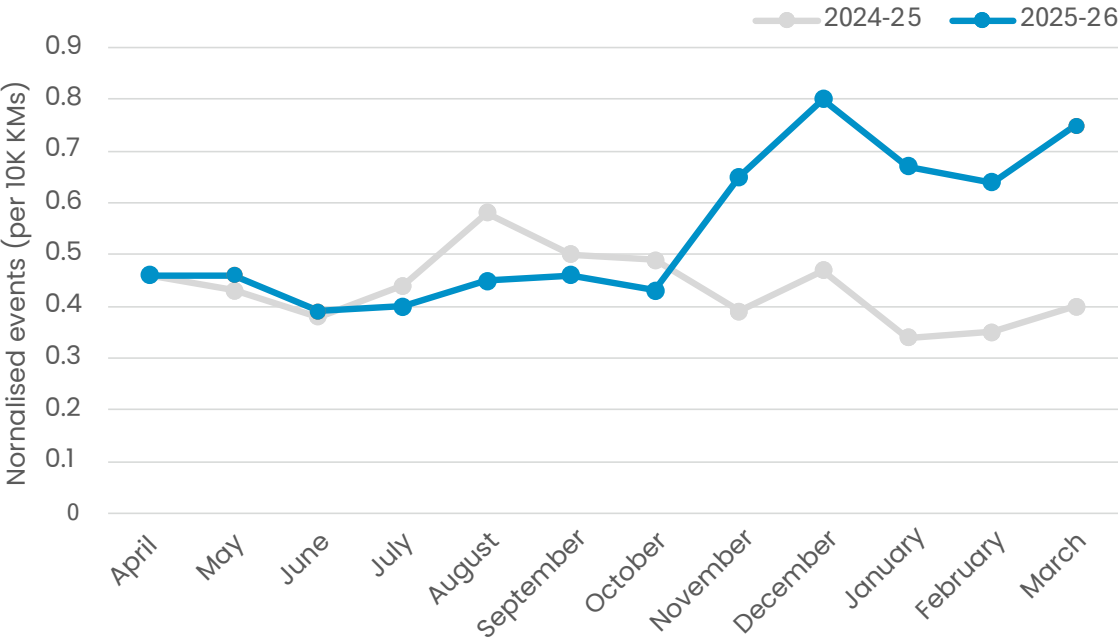


% of verified **fatigue** by time of day





Verified **fatigue** events by month (per 10,000 KM)



Over the past year, the New Zealand insights show

Fatigue events occurred most frequently between **7:00–9:00am**, with a secondary peak between 1:00–2:00pm.

These periods align with higher levels of road activity during morning commuting and post-lunch travel across New Zealand roads.

Fatigue events were **most frequent on Monday and Tuesdays** across reporting periods, highlighting higher fatigue incidence at the start of the working week.

The **fewest fatigue events** were recorded in the evening, from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

Monthly fatigue rates per 10,000km show some

broadly consistent seasonal patterns, despite a large uplift from late 2025. In particular, we see similar baseline levels through **autumn** (March–May).

The 2024–25 period shows a clear late winter peak in August–September, while 2025–26 shifts to a sustained elevated period from November–March, with peaks in **December and March**.

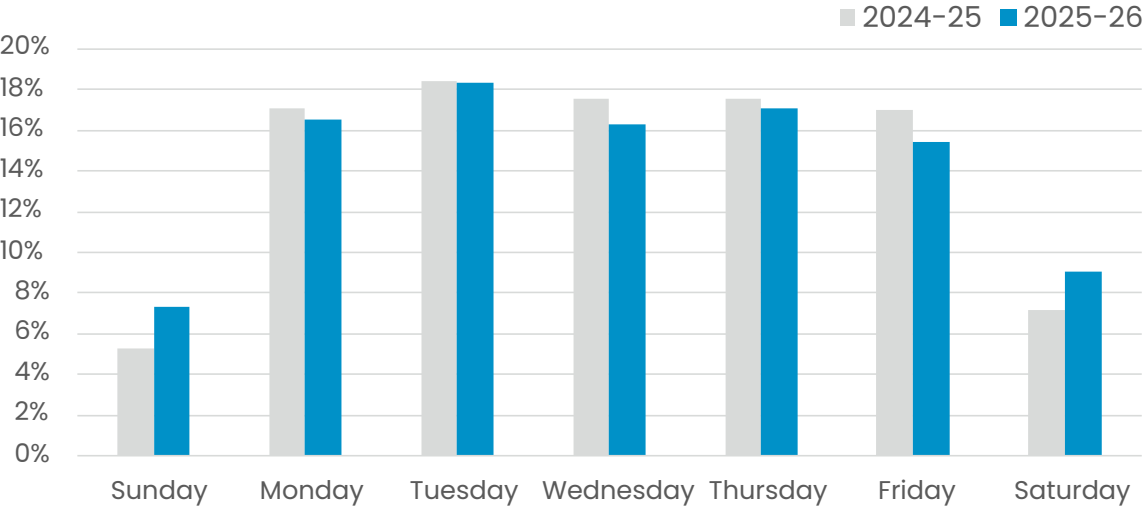
From late 2025, **enhanced early drowsiness detection** capability increased the system’s ability to identify fatigue-related events, contributing to higher observed rates in 2025–26 at a given level of driving exposure.

Distraction overview

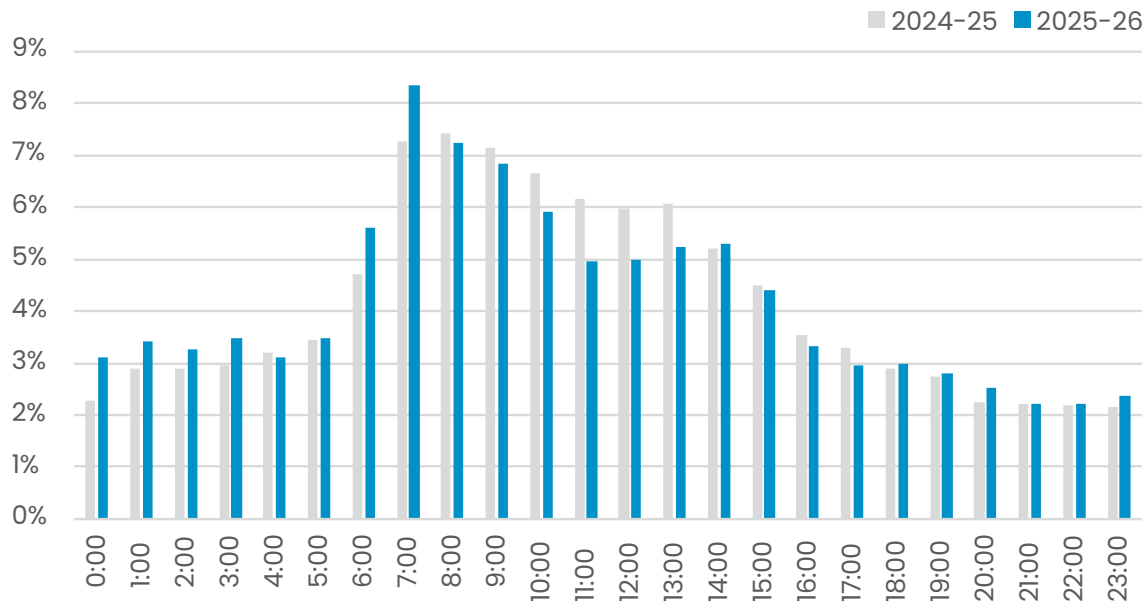


14,980 Instances of mobile phone use **68,264** Other distraction events

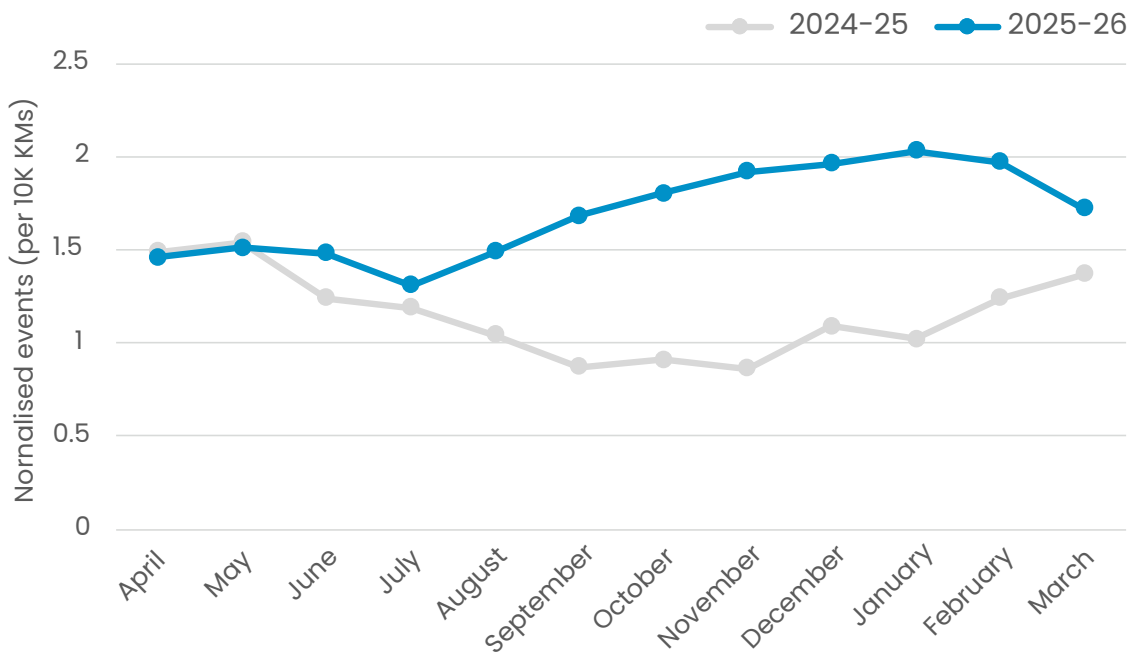
% of verified **distraction** events by day of week



% of verified **distraction** by time of day



Verified **distraction** events by month (per 10,000 KM)



Over the past year, the New Zealand insights show

Distraction events were highest between **7:00am and 3:00pm**, when traffic volumes are typically also at their highest.

In 2025–26, there is a slightly higher concentration of distraction events occurring earlier in the day, particularly between **7:00am and 10:00am**.

This pattern remains broadly consistent year on year, despite a sizable increase in total distraction volumes.

Distraction events were **lower through late winter and early spring**, increasing into summer and autumn. Year-on-year rates were higher in 2025–26, particularly from September onward, reflecting both seasonal trends and the introduction of enhanced detection algorithms in late 2025.

Mobile device use accounted for 18% of all distraction events, with the **volume of mobile phone distractions decreasing 16%** year-on-year.

Attention Sharing

In late 2025, Guardian Gen 3 arrived in New Zealand, introducing a new distraction detection capability known as “attention sharing” — detecting where a driver’s gaze repeatedly shifts between the road and another focal point for a cumulative 10 seconds within a rolling 30-second window.

These detections are not human-verified and are

therefore excluded from the validated detection metrics presented in this report; however, they provide valuable new insight into subtle distraction behaviours that may otherwise go undetected.

In March 2026 alone, more than 21,000 attention sharing detections were recorded.

Making data work for you

This report offers valuable insights into driver fatigue and distraction trends across New Zealand. To complement these findings, all clients are encouraged to utilise the detailed, account-specific data available through their monthly reports and the Guardian Live console. Your AutoSense account manager is ready to assist you in exploring your fleet's insights in greater depth.



Driver engagement

Educating drivers about the dangers of fatigue and distraction is critical to enhancing road safety. One of the most effective coaching methods is sharing real events captured by Guardian with drivers, especially fatigue-related incidents. This also helps reinforce the importance of the technology and encourages driver buy-in.

Sharing data from this report and monthly Guardian Live insights with your drivers can raise awareness of high-risk periods. When combined with fostering an understanding of the signs of

fatigue and distraction, your team will be better equipped to proactively manage these risks, so everyone gets home safely at the end of their shift.

Guardian can only protect your drivers if it can see them. If the in-cab sensor is misaligned or tampered with, for example turning it to face another direction, it can have devastating consequences. AutoSense can assist with overcoming potential inertia drivers may have about this important in-cabin technology.

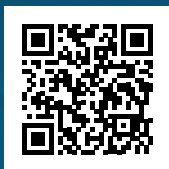
Solutions

AutoSense offers a range of tailored driver safety solutions to help improve fleet and driver safety. Contact our team to learn more about our Safe Driving Advisory services, Fleet Driver Training,

Fatigue and Sleep Management programmes, Geotab telematics, LifeSaver Mobile, and the latest advancements in driver safety technology.



Get in touch



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