

SPEED AND DELIVER

THE truth behind the cameras? Not your safety apparently...

Blunkett vows to review penalties

THE depth of public hatred for speed cameras may at last be getting through to the Government.

Last week the home secretary David Blunkett admitted he is considering decreasing the penalty points awarded for minor speeding offences.

The move is in the wake of

record numbers of drivers being banned under the current totting-up process.

Blunkett's comment came as estimates for the number of speeding penalties likely to be issued in 2004 were put at close to three million.

The Department for Transport has also ordered a review of the placement of

all 4500 UK cameras to check they meet their own placement rules.

A report into their findings is expected later this year.

To add your voice to those who think there are better ways to improve road safety than speed cameras, sign our petition below.

MCN BACK OFF BIKING PETITION FORM

DEAR GOVERNMENT... I'm supporting MCN's *Back Off Biking* campaign. Instead of measures such as spending more and more money on speed cameras, we want the Government to make or support some simple changes to improve our riding safety. These include: 1. More relevant training for learner riders to include more bike handling skills. 2. Standardised advanced rider training 3. Offering rewards for those who undertake advanced rider training 4. Free advanced training for those buying the highest performance machines. 5. Less fines and penalty points, more rider education of "offenders". 6. More action to improve the condition of our roads 7. Changes to the car test to help drivers be more aware of bikes 8. Reinvestment in police traffic divisions.

MCN

This is a problem that the whole motorcycle community must tackle together. We can't afford to sit back and hope someone else solves this problem for us. We all need to make a stand. You can show your support for MCN's *Back Off Biking* campaign by completing this petition form.

NOW MAKE sure your voice is heard by sending the form back to us at the address below. We will be delighted to deliver it personally to

10 Downing Street to show Tony Blair's Government the strength of feeling among motorcyclists. Take photocopies to add more

signatures. **Back Off Biking, MCN, Media House, Lynch Wood, Peterborough Business Park, Peterborough, PE2 6EA**

Name.....(PRINT IN BLOCK CAPS)

Address.....

Postcode.....Signature.....

EXAMPLE 1

IT'S SAFE TO SPEED – SO WHY IS THERE A CAMERA?



IN this common situation, a dual carriage way with 30mph limit has a speed camera. The natural speed limit here is, say, 50mph, so many fines are served on road users who are actually driving quite safely. Lunatics who speed excessively will also be fined but they are the minority of "offenders" in these circumstances. And people who slow for the cameras are actually increasing their risk of an accident.

EXAMPLE 2

IT'S DANGEROUS TO SPEED – YET THERE'S NO CAMERA



IN this typical English village scene the narrow road and short sight-lines ensure the majority of drivers keep well within the speed limit. Their natural speed limit is about 25mph (compared to the actual speed limit of 30mph; or rather the 33mph that would earn you a ticket in most cases). So no speed camera can be installed to catch the crazy few who pose a real threat to others' safety by doing 34mph or more on this road.

met, according to Department for Transport policy.

● There must have been at least four deaths or serious injuries and eight personal injuries in the last three years

● Speeding must have been a contributory factor in some of the accidents, and, crucially...

● The 85th percentile speed must be HIGHER THAN the actual enforced speed limit on the road (the enforced speed limit usually being the speed limit + 10% + 2mph)

This takes a bit of getting your head round. But essentially it means that:

1 You can only put up a camera where road users travelling at the safest speed will get a ticket.

2 Anyone slowing down when they see a camera to avoid a ticket will increase their crash risk

3 In locations where it is clear that the crash risk is high, and road users naturally slow down, you CANNOT put up a camera – even though the results of speeding there are potentially the most serious

The two examples right explain further...

SAFETY campaigner Paul Smith, who runs safespeed.org.uk – a website dedicated to improving road safety through careful research and analysis – concludes: "This sort of carelessness in the rules is clear evidence of the oversimplified and muddled thinking of the officials who are populating our highways with surveillance equipment with no safety benefit."

Footnote: David Solomon's research into speed almost 50 years ago led to the 85th percentile method of setting speed limits. This is still used internationally by transport planners and engineers today. The most current UK document on the method is the DfT's "Circular roads 1/93". This is a recommendation of best practice and not binding by law, hence the ability for politicians to be able to impose limits based on the misinformed belief that higher speeds automatically mean more risk.




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