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## Summary

### 1 Speeding–the problem

#### Definition of speeding

Speeding refers to both excessive and inappropriate speed. Excessive speed is when drivers break the speed limit, while inappropriate speed is speed that is too high for the circumstances, but not above the speed limit.

Thus drivers should stay under the speed limit when there are vulnerable road users around and when it is dark or wet...**basically every urban road, many rural roads and all night-time and bad weather travel.**

#### The Highway Code states:

- The speed limit is the absolute maximum and does not mean it is safe at that speed (respective of conditions. Driving at speeds too fast for the road and traffic conditions can be dangerous. You should always reduce your speed when
- the road layout or condition presents hazards, such as bends
- sharing the road with pedestrians and cyclists, particularly children, and motorcyclists
- weather conditions make it safer to do so
- driving at night as it is harder to see other road users<sup>1</sup>.

### Extent of speeding

While speeding on 30 mph roads has decreased by 20% since 2000, the majority of drivers still exceed the 30 mph speed limit (53%), with a quarter exceeding it by 5 mph or more. Better speed compliance is found on 40 mph roads where 27% exceed the speed limit, while on motorways and dual carriageways, approximately half of all car drivers exceed the speed limit<sup>2</sup>.

#### Crash risk

The relationship between crash risk and speed has a simple core premise: the faster one travels, the greater the chance of hitting someone or something. And when there is a collision, the impact will be harder. The reaction times of drivers and pedestrians do not improve with vehicle speed.

The exact crash risk will vary according to many factors related to the road, vehicle, driver and the environment. For instance, the crash risk on a 30 mph road cannot be applied or compared to a motorway where vulnerable road users are banned, traffic flows are separated, access is restricted and junctions are removed.

#### Key points about the link between speed and crash risk:

- A pedestrian hit at 20 mph has a 95% chance of surviving, but at 30 mph this decreases to 50% and at 40 mph, less than 5% will survive<sup>3</sup>.
- The difference between a pedestrian being hit at 30 mph and 35 mph is crucial with the survivability halving with the increased impact<sup>4</sup>.
- The Health Development Agency has concluded that a 20 mph speed limit on residential roads would reduce child road deaths and injuries by 67%<sup>5</sup>.
- Drivers flashed by a speed camera are twice as likely to be involved in a crash than drivers not flashed<sup>6</sup>.

### Why drivers speed

Key reasons include:

- They believe that they are better drivers than others and they can 'handle' speed.
- They are rarely faced with the consequences of their actions.
- They are encouraged by society's desire for speed (microwaves, internet, instant money transfer, etc.) and incredible tolerance to speeding.

In 1998, an Injury Prevention editorial stressed the need for government to be proactive in preventing road traffic injury. The Government has had to establish special funds to compensate people who have suffered from government inaction. This includes those who contracted HIV or Hepatitis C from contaminated blood products, and BSE victims. As of 2003, the government had paid over £33 million to HIV victims<sup>7</sup>. The government also compensates farmers for whose cows fall ill from unsafe travelling conditions.

*With so much evidence showing the life saving potential of safety cameras and traffic calming measures, will the government one day have to compensate those road traffic victims that could have been avoided with a more proactive approach to speed management?*

### Cows, casualties and compensation

- Contact your local media (newspaper and radio, if not TV) and make sure the transport, crime and health correspondents are aware of your support for speed cameras. Send them a copy of your press release.
- Contact RoadPeace and the Slower Speeds Initiative if you want to campaign against the body count approach to safety cameras.
- For further copies of this briefing pack, contact RoadPeace.

### How you can help

- Document your support for speed cameras and include any personal reasons.
- Document the support for speed cameras of any local or national organisation you are involved with - show it is not only the victims who want to see road danger reduced. Produce a press release and publish it on your organisation's website.
- Contact your local Safety Camera Partnership as well as the local police service and local authority. Find out when their next evaluation or consultation is due and be ready to support speed enforcement.
- Contact your local media (newspaper and radio, if not TV) and make sure the transport, crime and health correspondents are aware of your support for speed cameras.

- Fine revenue to be invested in national publicity campaigns explaining rationale for safety cameras and also in road traffic victim support and rehabilitation services. This would remind drivers that speeding is not a victimless crime.
- Involvement of speed to be estimated by speed calculations recorded at the end of the investigation, not at the initial reporting stage, as its currently done when only a 'best guess' is possible.

### What we want

- The casualty requirements for safety cameras (both speed and red light cameras) to be ended. Safety cameras should be used to increase compliance with road traffic laws and to prevent death and injury.

- Inconspicuous, i.e. covert, cameras to be trialled.
- Existing cameras to be used more effectively and additional speed cameras to be installed according to local operational criteria established in consultation with communities.
- Consistent and proper evaluation of all road safety interventions, including those aimed at reducing excessive and inappropriate speed. **A lower standard should not be tolerated for more popular measures that may well be less effective at saving lives and preventing disability.**

- Fine revenue to be invested in national publicity campaigns explaining rationale for safety cameras and also in road traffic victim support and rehabilitation services. This would remind drivers that speeding is not a victimless crime.
- Involvement of speed to be estimated by speed calculations recorded at the end of the investigation, not at the initial reporting stage, as its currently done when only a 'best guess' is possible.

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