



SAFETY CAMERAS AND ROAD SAFETY FUNDING CUTS

Drivers and riders who exceed speed limits cause more crashes, and kill and injure more people, than drivers who do not exceed speed limits. In 2010, 241 people were killed in crashes involving someone exceeding the speed limit and a further 180 people died when someone was travelling too fast for the conditions.¹

This is why speed management is a major part of the UK's road safety strategy, with safety cameras being one tool of this speed management strategy. Over the last 10 to 15 years safety cameras, in particular, have become an important and cost-effective method for reducing road casualties.

Safety cameras are one of the reasons why deaths on the road have fallen from around 5,000 a year at the start of the 1990s to fewer than 2,000 in 2010, and they must continue to play their part in the UK's future road safety strategy.

Although it is unavoidable that public spending cuts will affect road safety because they will affect every area of our lives, it is crucial that spending decisions are informed and based on clear evidence and data, and crude, blanket spending cuts are not imposed.

Both central government and local authorities should carefully examine the evidence of the effectiveness of safety cameras before deciding to cut funding in a way that means they will cease to operate.

Getting these hard decisions wrong will cost lives.

Ten Reasons to Maintain Speed Camera Enforcement

Excessive Speeding Kills Hundreds of People a Year

In 2010, 241 people were killed, and 1,495 seriously injured, because drivers or motorcyclists exceeded speed limits.¹ A further 180 people were killed, and over 1,500 seriously injured in accidents where someone was travelling too fast for the conditions. Inappropriate speed also magnifies other driver errors, such as driving too close or driving when fatigued or distracted, multiplying the chances of these types of driving causing an accident. Even where speed is not the main factor in a crash, it fundamentally affects both the likelihood of the crash occurring, and its severity for those involved.

Speed Cameras Reduce Speeding and Save Lives

Cameras are a very effective way of persuading drivers not to speed, and thereby reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured. An evaluation of their effectiveness in 2005² showed that they were saving around 100 lives a year, and preventing over 1,600 serious injuries. A wide range of UK and International research studies consistently show that cameras are very effective at saving lives.³ A further review⁴ of the evidence of the effectiveness of speed cameras, taking into account other factors that might reduce speeds, and speed-related crashes and casualties, concluded that in the year ending March 2004, cameras at more than 4,000 sites across Great Britain prevented some 3,600 personal injury collisions, saving around 1,000 people from being killed or seriously injured (KSI). The report also concluded that if safety cameras were decommissioned about 800 extra people across Great Britain could be being killed or seriously injured each year.

Without Cameras, Speed Enforcement will Disappear

Cameras enable a much higher level of speed enforcement to be conducted than is possible using police officers on their own. In 2009, cameras provided evidence for 85% of the 1.1 million fixed penalty notices issued for speeding offences.⁵ Without cameras, the level of enforcement would almost certainly dwindle to a very low level, especially as the Police service is also facing financial cuts. The deterrent against speeding would almost completely disappear. It is highly likely that speeding would increase, followed inexorably by an increase in the number of people killed and injured on the road.

Speed Cameras Save Money

Not only do safety cameras save lives and prevent injury, they also save the public purse many millions of pounds. Apart from their human cost, road accidents are extremely expensive in financial terms. Safety cameras more than pay for themselves, and so from a purely financial point of view, cutting them does not make sense. The four year evaluation of the national safety camera programme² estimated that the annual economic benefit of cameras in place at the end of the fourth year was over £258 million, compared with enforcement costs of about £96 million.

Cameras are Educational, not just Punitive

Cameras are an effective way of identifying drivers who would benefit from attending a Speed Awareness Course, and so they provide a good opportunity to re-educate, and not just punish, drivers who are caught speeding, but who are not massively violating speed limits. These courses are now becoming available across the country. Even where drivers are fined and given penalty points, this acts as a warning to the driver to consider his/her driving before they begin to tot-up further points, with the risk of being disqualified if they gain 12 or more points.

Road Safety Partnership Do More than Speed Enforcement

Road Safety Partnerships, who manage safety cameras around the country, do many more road safety activities in addition to operating the cameras. They are heavily involved in delivering road safety education services, as well as other types of road safety enforcement. For example, the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership use safety camera vans for mobile phone and seatbelt offences, and in one six month period detected 108 drivers using a hand-held mobile phone and 859 people failing to wear their seat belts.⁶

The War on Motorists is a Myth

Despite claims about a war on motorists, Home Office data⁷ shows that the number of speeding tickets issued from cameras has been falling in recent years. There were substantial rises during the first half of the decade, but then reductions from 2004/2005. The reasons for the reductions are not clear, but will probably include a fall in the number of drivers speeding (In 1999, 67% of car drivers exceeded the 30 mph speed limit; by 2010 this had dropped to 46%⁸) and an increasing proportion of the drivers who are caught by a speed camera being able to do a Speed Awareness Course instead of receiving the fine and penalty points.

Table 3e Fixed penalties¹ for offences detected by cameras, 2000 to 2009

Numbers (thousands)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Speeding offences	599	878	1,135	1,670	1,787	1,824	1,689	1,296	1,048	935
Traffic light offences	52	46	71	115	113	124	120	109	100	92
All offences	651	924	1,206	1,785	1,900	1,948	1,808	1,406	1,147	1,027

1. Paid i.e. no further action.



Cameras Support the Wider Road Safety Strategy

Cameras are only one part of a comprehensive road safety strategy, which has helped to reduce deaths on Britain's roads from around 5,000 a year at the start of the 1990s to 1,850 in 2010. Persuading drivers to drive at safe speeds requires a mix of enforcement, education and engineering. Cameras are used alongside road engineering measures, such as better speed limit signing, traffic calming and road design, and education measures, such as publicity campaigns and driver training. Many car drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit, often without realising it. Modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give drivers little sensation of their speed. It is too easy to creep above the limit, but there are some simple and practical things drivers who find it difficult to stay with speed limits can do to help themselves. For more advice see RoSPA's [Top Ten Tips To Stay Within the Limit](#).⁹

Cameras are one of the Reasons Britain is a World Leader in Road Safety

The UK has one of the best road safety records in the world, and in common with other countries that have very good road safety records (Sweden, the Netherlands, Australia) has included speed management in its road safety strategies. The importance of addressing speed is also included in UN Resolution 62/244, "Improving global road safety"¹⁰, which underlines "*the importance for Member States to continue using the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention as a framework for road safety efforts and implementing its recommendations by paying particular attention to five of the main risk factors identified, namely, the non-use of safety belts and child restraints, the non-use of helmets, drinking and driving, inappropriate and excessive speed and the lack of appropriate infrastructure*". An EC project, SUPREME,¹¹ to identify the best ways of preventing road deaths gave the speed camera programme in the UK the highest rating, citing it as best practice, and highlighting the structured programme, with national guidelines on the deployment of cameras, the use of local partnerships to manage them, and the arrangements to use fine revenue for other road safety measures.

There is Strong Public Support for Cameras

The original Safety Camera Partnerships commissioned surveys in their areas to assess the public's views about cameras. The level of support was consistently high with 79% of people agreeing that "the use of safety cameras should be supported as a method of reducing casualties". Two thirds (68%) of those questioned agreed that the primary use of cameras was to save lives.² Public opinion surveys continue to be conducted regularly. A very recent example¹² is one by the South Yorkshire Safety Camera Partnership of over 3,000 residents across the county that showed that 80% of South Yorkshire residents think that safety cameras are meant to encourage drivers to drive within the speed limits and 55% thought that safety cameras (fixed cameras, mobile cameras and average speed cameras) are the most effective type of speed enforcement.



References

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