

Public support for speed cameras becomes increasingly fragile

Support for the use of speed cameras to enforce speed limits on UK roads has fallen below 70 per cent, the AA Motoring Trust will reveal in a speech to international road safety experts today*.

In July 2002, 76 per cent of motorists found it acceptable for the police to use speed cameras at the side of the road to identify vehicles involved in speeding offences. This acceptability dropped last month to 69 per cent**.

Andrew Howard, head of road safety for The AA Motoring Trust, will tell delegates that, in Britain, laws are only successful when they have strong public acceptance. However, at least a quarter of UK households now has at least one person with a speeding conviction in it.

At the moment, the speed camera approach risks losing public acceptance if people believe camera enforcement is not justified, says Andrew Howard.

On the face of it, the fact that two-thirds of UK drivers believe that speed cameras are the right way to reduce speeding on our roads should be a good sign. But, when driver confidence continues to ebb away more than 10 years after speed cameras were introduced, it shows that the authorities and road safety professionals are failing to carry popular opinion with them and convince motorists that speed camera enforcement actually benefits them.

Too many motorists see themselves as victims of speed cameras rather than the cameras improving their safety.

NOTE TO EDITORS: *Andrew Howard is addressing a conference entitled International Best Practice in Road Speed Management in Birmingham. The conference draws expert speakers from the Government, local authorities, police, transport research organisations, and foreign countries, including Australia, Holland, USA and France.

** Source: NOP Automotive, commissioned by The AA Motoring Trust. Research carried out on the weekends of 24-26 June and 1-3 July 2005. Sample size 500 motorists across mainland Britain.