

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

ARE ROADS BEING CLOSED MORE FREQUENTLY? This story courtesy of PistonHeads website

Everyday it seems like a motorway is closed for the police to deal with an incident but anger is growing among motorists that the major roads are being shut for longer than is necessary. The closures last longer because police now label serious smashes as crime scenes and investigate them as such.

They are following a manual which was introduced by the Association of Chief Police Officers to create the same set of standards nationwide.

The manual was written by Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom.

The RAC Foundation says it can understand drivers' frustration but the police need to get on with their job. A spokeswoman said: *“We do recognise the frustration it causes when a motorway is closed but they are extremely difficult to get out of. Police only close a motorway for the most serious incidents. You can see it from both sides – the police need to get as much evidence as possible and drivers need to be on their way. “We would like to see much more information about what is going on and why. The police should also place diversions to prevent people joining heavy traffic.”*

The Highways Agency told pistonheads.com that they don't close motorways that often – and usually rely on a 'rolling road block' to create opportunity for debris to be cleared from the roadway to the hard shoulder. A spokesman added: *“Other incidents are police-led, especially if it involves an injury and we are instructed by the police to close the motorway. This is for the police to carry out an investigation and they then hand the road back to us and we can't start a recovery until that happens. We always try to get the road opened as soon as possible after that.”*

The PPP comments ... Our experience has been that road closures for both incidents and planned road works are more extensive in terms of length of road closed and length of time closed. There has also been a proliferation of signs including large LCD screen types showing misleading messages such as ‘Work force in the road’ often when the works site is deserted!

This policy has several negative effects on road safety in reality AND on driver perception Viz....

The impact and credibility of safety signage is diminished, distraction and frustration are increased, dynamic risks are increased where traffic joins the single open lane and where convoy driving, particularly of HGVs continues for miles after the area of closure. All these effects are exaggerated on the A55 due to bunching of ferry traffic particularly HGVs (many multinationals). There are inadequate acceleration lanes and no hard shoulders on much of the A55. With long journeys cross country to and from heavily congested ferry ports driver fatigue and tight time tables can make for a dangerous combination. The number and scale of service areas on the A55 is inadequate as is the number of sleep stops now occurring in the unsafe narrow and noisy laybys.

This international route is now our responsibility whether we like it or not.