



People for Proper Policing in North Wales

Figures in the news on 23/09/07 for S172 convictions and attributed to Department for Transport (DfT) are not only wrong, they are absolutely wildly wrong says Safe Speed.

Figures reported by The Times (Saturday), Sky TV News (Saturday) and BBC News 24 (Sunday) and attributed to Department for Transport suggest that **around 3,400 prosecutions resulted in 2,400 convictions for 'section 172' 'failing to identify the driver' offences**. The assumption is that it is an annual figure, but no period has been stated or confirmed.

But these figures are absurd. Safe Speed estimates indicate that S172 convictions are running at about 270,000 per annum in England and Wales. Attempts to get official figures from the Home Office have failed because (they claim) that S172 figures are bundled into a 'miscellaneous' category before they are received (at the Home Office). **Of course each individual Police force will have S172 statistics.**

However the Home Office have twice claimed in recent years that S172 offences are the reason for the rapid growth of the miscellaneous offence category. Earlier trends indicate that the miscellaneous category was shrinking significantly before the rapid rise of S172 offences brought on by the rapid rise of speed camera offences.

The latest (2004) figures indicate 346,700 miscellaneous offences. Safe Speed estimates that about 200,000 of those were S172 convictions. Since 2004, S172 convictions have been on the rise and have very likely reached 270,000 by now. **But many S172 cases are lost. 270,000 convictions implies some 380,000 prosecutions, of which 110,000 were found innocent.**

The rise of the Home Office 'miscellaneous' category is not the only estimate of S172 offences. We should also consider what percentage of camera detected speeding offences end up as S172 cases. **With some 3.1 million prosecution starts in the last year on record (from camera partnership accounts) we can estimate that 'a percentage' end up as S172 offences. 10% is a fair starting guess which implies immediately 310,000 cases. Safe Speed believes that the reality is rather higher at about 12%. This confirms the 380,000 cases estimate.**

Paul Smith, founder of SafeSpeed.org.uk, said: "Sorry, DfT. Wrong Number. The numbers you are quoting for these offences are ridiculous. The incompetence is breathtaking.

Our road safety is in your hands and your numbers are out by a factor of 100. It is almost unbelievable that DfT officials have such a poor grip on the numbers that rubbish like this can be handed to the press

The PPP comments ... we are lucky that Paul Smith is around to protect us from the incompetence of the DfT (the NHS may still get you!!). Even those with the holier than thou attitude to speed cameras are seriously at risk from Camera operator 'errors', number plate cloners, car thieves and ANYONE they allow to drive their car. The change in the law now allows them to give you six points for failing to admit who was driving your car Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SafeSpeedPR/message/396>