

“ PPP ”

People for Proper Policing in North Wales

The Government, the Police AND the fire service are obsessed with the gratuitous and simplistic message that ‘**speed kills**’ and that means exceeding a posted speed limit. This **video clip** courtesy of North Wales weekly news repeats the message AND claims that the fire service are doing everything to prevent road deaths.

<http://www.northwalesweeklynews.co.uk/videos-pictures/>

The problem is that this message is **dangerously misleading** despite being absolutely true. Road safety is all about **psychology** and little about **physics**. When the physics becomes critical it is usually **TOO LATE**.

The physics of moving objects tells us that the destructive energy in any moving object from a **bullet** to a **bus** or a **speck of dust** to a **large asteroid** is $Ke = \frac{1}{2} \times M \times V^2$. In words.... **half the mass times the velocity (speed) squared. If two objects collide it is the combined mass times the closing speed squared.** So the truth of ‘**speed kills**’ is that if you double the closing speed you increase the destructive energy **FOUR times**.

If we take the real world of **most fatal and serious crashes** there are two main types ... a single vehicle hits a stationary object like a tree, lamp standard or wall **OR** two vehicles going in opposite directions collide head on. The **physics** of the second means that the energy is very high (up to EIGHT times) and so is the damage to the vehicle and drivers involved. It also means that **at any of the posted speed limits** a head on crash is always SERIOUS and often fatal. The emergency services often travel well in excess of these limits BUT minimise the fatal consequences by attention to the psychology of the situation. The vehicles are in excellent mechanical order and the drivers are very experienced and highly skilled and most importantly totally concentrate on the task in hand AND they use a range of lights and alarms to warn other road users of their approach **in their case speed rarely kills**.

The ‘**speed kills**’ policy is also giving out very dangerous messages to drivers on the **ACPO speed awareness courses**. Drivers are criticised for not checking their speedos frequently they are even told that “**it only takes 3 seconds**” for a speedo check. **At the posted speed limit of 40 mph a vehicle will travel 176 feet in 3 seconds and without the driver looking ahead.**

So if we take a real look at the problem as described above we see that what **we must avoid or prevent is head on crashes**. The best way is to **provide dual carriageways/motorways** for all major routes and generally the crash rate is much lower on these roads DESPITE the much higher average speeds. Secondly we need **drivers to be highly skilled** (the current driving training and test is inadequate) **and attentive**. Modern technology provides safe and reliable vehicles with excellent steering, suspension and brakes and excellent safety systems such as ABS, air bags and crumple zones BUT it also provides loads of internal distractions in sound systems, Sat. Navs and mobile phones. Externally **we are distracted by masses of road furniture** including painted lines, a myriad signs, ever changing speed limits and **SPEED CAMERAS**. The final & key factor is **driver psychology/state of mind** and here we include the effects of simple tiredness & frustration/anger to drink and drugs. **All these factors are known to cause far more serious incidents than SPEED alone.** The Government and emergency services all know this but avoid the complications and costly solutions and stick to their dishonest and failing policy which costs lives. For more information on the REAL CAUSES of RTAs including Inattention got to the late Paul Smith’s archive at ... <http://www.safespeed.org.uk/inattention.html>