

## AVZ Briefing: Road crime reporting in the news

9th Oct 2024

### Key points

- Police have stated that the public submitted 150,000 videos of unsafe driving in the past year.
- In the West Midlands, submissions have increased over 50-fold, from 208 in 2017 to over 11,000 in the last 12 months. Some 90% of submissions result in a driver being sanctioned (this includes warning letters).
- There is widespread support for use of cameras with rising concerns over the standard of driving.
- People should see it as their civic duty to report unsafe driving, similar to reporting a burglary or robbery, or volunteering on a neighbourhood watch scheme.

AVZ is delighted to see how much publicity road crime reporting received last week. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) informed the BBC that the public had submitted 150,000 videos of bad driving in the past year, through Operation Snap.

Special thanks to Tim Wall for doing so many interviews to raise awareness of the cyclist perspective, as well as detecting so many unsafe drivers. Three of the recent interviews are summarised below.

### Today programme

The BBC featured this topic throughout Friday (4<sup>th</sup> Oct) on radio and television, including [Radio 4's Today programme](#). Speaking there (1 hr 15 min 31 sec), Tim highlighted the benefits of being able to submit to the police and allow them to follow-up, rather than confronting the driver as often happened previously. He thought driving in Birmingham was improving and this was much needed, especially for the many children who want to cycle and deserve to be able to do so in safety.

Superintendent Gareth Mason, head of roads policing at West Midlands Police, also spoke and confirmed how the police welcomed the efforts of the public with reporting road crime. This was not only due to the extent of travel (10 billion miles are driven on the roads in the West Midlands each year) but also the fact that drivers often changed their behaviour when a police car was near. He noted how many more people were killed by dangerous driving than in burglaries, and just as the public would expect people to report burglaries, so should they expect and support the reporting of bad driving.

### [5 Live Breakfast](#)

[Here](#) (23 min) Tim stressed how the police were using education courses to help drivers learn how to drive more safely. Court prosecutions were possible but these result in a higher fine and the possibility of penalty points or even disqualification. He countered the notion that this was dividing cyclists from drivers and his view was that the actual divide is between those who are making the roads safer (whether cyclists or drivers) and those making them less safe.

### BBC West Midlands

[Kath Stanczyszyn](#), the presenter, began (12 min 33 sec) by describing the regular bad driving encountered on the roads, especially at night. Tim stressed the need to follow the Highway Code with a minimum passing distance when overtaking a cyclist being 1.5 m. Drivers need to think about other people.

Again, Tim expressed his belief that driving standards had improved as he was having fewer offences to report. Much credit was given to the West Midlands Police who have invested in their Operation Snap system. The public were just being good citizens. And they were rightly identifying bad driving, with the police taking action and sanctioning 90% of drivers reported (this included warning letters).

Nick Lomas, from IAM RoadSmart, was also interviewed and described having a Dash Cam as a public service and having a key role to play in improving driving standards.

Others also joined in on the day. [LBC](#) showed the video of a serious collision released by Devon and Cornwall Police. And [Nextbase](#) had previously reported research finding that 70% public thought that all cars should be fitted with a dash cam.

### **AVZ comment**

Deterrence depends on the perceived risk of detection. So, this publicity is very welcomed as it will help spread the word that bad driving can be detected anywhere and is increasingly being caught. All are encouraged to be good citizens and to report unsafe driving.