

ROADSIDE INTERVIEW SURVEYS NOTES FOR POLICE OFFICERS

Introduction

These notes are to give general guidance to Police Officers when undertaking duties at roadside interview stations in accordance with the statutory powers set out in the Road Traffic Act 1988, Section 35 and 36.

Survey Operation

Roadside interview surveys typically operate from 07:00 to 19:00. A Police Officer must be on site at least 15-minutes prior to the start to allow for any site specific briefing.

Officers should wear Class 3 hi-vis reflective jackets at all times whilst on site. The survey station is required to operate in virtually all weather conditions except when the safe operation of a site is at risk because of poor visibility or related factors. Suitable clothing should therefore be worn.

If the Police Officer on duty has reason for concern about any aspect of the operation of the Interview station, he should consult with the supervisor about remedial action. Any instructions the Police Officer may wish to give on the survey site during the time it is operating should be given to the Supervisor and not to individual members of the survey team (except in emergencies).

Shift working can be undertaken, if convenient, providing a Police Officer is on duty at all times when interviewing is taking place. If Officers are not present the interviewing will have to cease and this will consequently disrupt the survey and increase its cost, as the section of the survey will have to be repeated. Casual breaks are not permitted, as continuous interviewing for the whole of the scheduled period is essential for statistical purposes.

Other than at sites where two Police Officers are on duty, a relief for meal breaks should be prearranged.

If a relief is late in arriving the Officer on duty should ask the supervisor to contact the appropriate station. They should not leave the site until relief arrives as this will result in the suspension of interviews as detailed in the previous paragraph.

The survey requires that a random sample of vehicles, both private and commercial, be selected for interview. On sites where the interview bay is not separated from the main traffic stream (on single two lane carriageways) the Police Officer should position himself by the interviewer who is furthest from the approaching traffic stream and stop the first vehicle driver for interview directly in front of him. Following vehicles will then stop in front of the remaining interviewers. On completion of the interviews the traffic should be signalled to proceed.

On layby sites with two Officers working at the same time, one Officer should be in a position to direct selected traffic into the layby, whilst the other Officer should be positioned at the head of the site alongside the position where the "lead" vehicle will stop.

The second officer will stop the lead vehicle in position for the Interviewer to carry out the survey; in addition they are responsible for releasing traffic back into the main flow of traffic on completion of the interview.

Random sampling must be achieved as far as is compatible with the safe operation of the site but the following points are stressed:-

a. Do not wait until there is a break in the approaching traffic stream before stopping the next batch of vehicles, as this may bias the sample (i.e. you may tend to stop more slow moving vehicles). This could also reduce the sample rate, as interviewers may be standing idle.

b. Keep the interviewers busy but not overloaded, and always direct the vehicles in numbers which correspond to the number of interviewers on the station.

c. Do not be reluctant to stop specific types of vehicles if they are required by the sample

e.g. heavy goods vehicles, which may be slower to accelerate on completion of the interview. (The location of the site will always be such that severe gradients are avoided and, although some difficulty by heavy vehicles may be encountered in starting away from the site, all vehicle types must be sampled to avoid bias).

d. Do not be reluctant to stop the faster moving vehicles, but obviously safety is the paramount concern.

e. The Police Officer should position themselves so that they have full control over all traffic entering the survey area. This usually requires that he/she stands in the carriageway. The layout of the station should therefore be arranged so the traffic approaches the sampling line and Police Officer at a reasonably slow speed i.e. well below 30mph.

The following types of vehicles should not be selected for interview:

SERVICE BUSES, EMERGENCY SERVICES, ARMED FORCES,
VEHICLES IN CONVOY, ROYAL MAIL VANS, SECURITY VEHICLES,
PEDAL CYCLES, DRIVING SCHOOL VEHICLES.

Some delays are inevitable at roadside interview stations in the same way as those at roadworks, temporary traffic signals, and other exceptional events. The close co-operation of the Police Officer and site supervisor is required to ensure that these delays are reduced to a minimum compatible with safety and the maintenance of an adequate sample.

Should it be necessary to suspend or terminate the interviewing because of conditions (i.e. weather, traffic congestion etc.) the officer should write a brief report on the incident for the supervisor.

It is advised that a copy of these notes or similar advice be in the possession of the Police Officer when they are at an interview station.