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## NEW CONCRETE SAFETY BARRIER OFFERS UNRIVALLED VEHICLE CONTAINMENT

A new concrete safety motorway barrier that offers considerably better containment ability than steel barriers has been initially approved by the Highways Agency. In addition to contain all cars, 4x4s and small lorries, the new shape concrete barrier provides an inherent containment level of H2 which can contain an errant 13 tonne vehicle, such as a coach or heavy goods vehicle, compared to the normal containment level of N2 which is designed to contain vehicles up to 1.5 tonnes.

The new barrier will be included in the next revision of the 'Manual of Contract Documents for Highways Works'. Until then, the use of the new barrier will require a Departure from Standard to be issued by the Highways Agency.

Developed in Holland, the concrete step barrier, as it is known, is widely used throughout Continental Europe where it has proved successful in preventing that most dangerous of motorway accidents: the crossover. This is where central barriers have not been able to restrain an errant vehicle from crossing over in to the face of on-coming traffic. In the UK crossover accidents account for over 200 motorway accidents a year, many of which cause multiple fatalities.

"The concrete step barrier provides greatly superior inherent containment levels. Standard steel and wire rope barriers are limited in the level of containment that they can provide. They can only offer containment up to N2 compared to the much higher H2 level provided by concrete step barriers", explained David Jones, Director of Britpave, the transport infrastructure group.

Britpave has been calling for the increased use of concrete barriers for some time. Concrete barriers have been used on limited sections of the M1 and the M25 where since their

installation there have been no reported cross-over accidents and, unlike steel barriers, no ongoing maintenance and replacement programmes. "Concrete barriers have been proved to eliminate cross-over accidents," said Jones. "Despite evidence of vehicular impact on the sections of concrete barriers located on the M1 and M25, the barriers have successfully restrained the errant vehicle and have not been adversely damaged. This saves a fortune on the cost of barrier repair and replacement programmes and eliminates the disruption of motorway crash barrier repair roadworks".

A further benefit is the long-life performance of concrete barriers. "Compared to the short life of only 20 years for steel barriers, concrete barriers are designed to last for at least 50 years. This and their minimum maintenance requirement make them the best long-term cost solution", said Jones.

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**Notes to editors.**

1. Britpave (British In-situ Concrete Paving Association) promotes the better and greater use of concrete for transportation solutions. Its members include major contractors, specialist contracting companies, specialist equipment and material suppliers, consulting engineers and interested trade associations. Together they provide a single voice for the in-situ concrete paving industry. For further information see [www.britpave.org.uk](http://www.britpave.org.uk)
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