

## **ACCIDENT AND DELAYS ON A14 COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED**

A recent crossover accident and consequent traffic jams on the A14 'Road to Hell' could have been prevented if slipformed concrete barriers had been installed believes Britpave, the transport infrastructure group.

The accident involved a lorry crashing through the steel central barriers and dangerously coming close to hitting oncoming traffic. No one was killed but one person needed treatment for minor injuries, however the motorway was closed for ten hours and caused mayhem for morning commuters.

In Britain there are some 400 crossover accidents such as this every year; accidents that Britpave believes could be avoided if outdated steel barriers are replaced by the stronger and safer concrete barrier. "The superior strength of concrete step barriers prevent crossover accidents. On the sections of UK motorways where concrete barriers have been installed no vehicles have ever crashed through them", said David Jones, Director of Britpave.

The concrete barrier prevents crossover accidents by successfully restraining vehicles and stopping them from crossing over into the path of oncoming traffic. The barrier is designed to be repair and maintenance free for the entirety of its 50-year life. By contrast, steel barriers, with a design life of only 20 years, would not only have to be replaced three times during this period but would also need regular tensioning and maintenance. Furthermore, unlike steel barriers, which usually need to be replaced following vehicular impact, concrete barriers are robust enough to withstand vehicular impact. Lane closures for the ongoing replacement and maintenance of steel barriers are a major factor in the delays and congestion that is experienced on Britain's roads.

Recognising their benefits, in January 2005 the Highways Agency announced that the concrete step barrier is the preferred option for motorways where the traffic flow is over 25,000 vehicles per day. Given the number of accidents on roads under the jurisdiction of local councils, such as the A14, perhaps we should think about the importance of the concrete step barrier on our A-roads, too?

**ENDS**