

By **Ray Massey**
Transport Editor

SPEED cameras have helped to send the number of drivers with penalty points on their licence soaring, a major survey reveals today.

Forty-two per cent now have points, compared to 39 per cent in 2003. And the figure rises to 48 per cent among those aged 41 to 50.

Critics last night described the increase in penalties caused by cameras as 'the legalized mugging of motorists'.

Mark McArthur-Christie, of the Association of British Drivers, said: 'It is absolutely appalling. The fact that so many now have points shows that these cameras are being used as revenue-raisers, not as lifesavers.'

There are more than 6,000 cameras watching the UK's 30million motorists, but police predict this figure will double.

Mr McArthur-Christie added: 'At this rate we'll have a speed camera on every corner. Half the population will lose their licence and the roads will be free for the unlicensed and uninsured drivers

4 in 10 drivers have points on their licence

who the cameras can't catch.' The annual motoring survey, by Bank of Scotland Vehicle Finance, says 27 per cent of drivers have up to three points, 12 per cent have four to six, two per cent have seven to nine and one per cent have ten or more.

Under the totting-up system, those with 12 lose their licence - and often their livelihood. The

report, covering 1,000 company car drivers, says part of the blame for the rise in speeding fines lies with the explosion in the number of cameras.

But it also cites the pressure of modern life, with 'stressed out' workers rushing to meet deadlines as they average 17,400 miles a year on business - up 30 per cent from last year. The survey found

huge demand for the motorway speed limit to rise to 80mph.

Nearly nine in ten want the change, which is backed by motoring groups and the Tories.

Bank of Scotland Vehicle Finance director Sean Bingham said: 'The speed limit for motorways was set in the 1980s. Time has moved on.'

More than six out of ten break the 70mph limit to make business meet-



On guard: The motorists' bugbear

ings, says the survey. Women are slightly more likely than men - 62 to 61 per cent - to speed on motorways.

But motorists are not speed freaks, with the report adding: 'Virtually 90 per cent believe the speed limit near schools should be 30mph or under, with a significant number (82 per cent) voicing the opinion it should be 25mph or under.'

rmasssey@dailymail.co.uk