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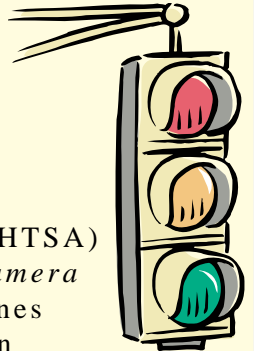
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U.S. Department of Transportation releases *Guidance for Using Red Light Cameras*



On March 21, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released *Guidance for Using Red Light Camera Programs*. This publication issues guidelines that are designed to promote consistency in implementation of red light camera programs by providing critical information for state and local agencies on red light camera systems. The report does not contain regulatory requirements but offers procedures that traffic engineers, law enforcement officials and state and local agency managers can follow to implement a successful red light camera program.

The report highlights the importance of conducting a thorough engineering study of intersections to identify traffic safety problems and appropriate countermeasures. In-depth information on engineering countermeasures and their applications is provided. The report also details the steps of effective red light camera program implementation from early planning and start-up to operation and maintenance and establishes public awareness and education as a top priority. *(cont. on pg.2)*

National Campaign Update

This issue represents the one year anniversary of the *Safety Focus* newsletter. Thank you to all of our readers and Campaign members for making the Campaign a success. The National Campaign has just completed a busy month. We have added a new article on our website at www.stopredlightrunning.com. It was written by the Campaign's Executive Director Leslie Blakey and published in the March 2003 issue of the *ITE Journal*.

Additionally, the National Campaign exhibited at the 2003 Lifesavers Conference on traffic safety in Chicago, Illinois March 9-11. More than 2,000 traffic safety advocates attended this year's conference. As part of the agenda, Campaign Director of Grassroots and Outreach Brandy Anderson presented at a workshop session entitled Automated Enforcement: What to Do Before You Invest. The Campaign extends its thanks to everyone who attended the conference and stopped by our booth to sign up to join the Campaign.

(cont. from pg. 1)

Guidance for Using Red Light Cameras

Additionally, *Guidance for Using Red Light Cameras* offers a complete research bibliography and synopsis on photo red light-related court cases along with a discussion on legal considerations. The document can be found on NHTSA's website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/enforce/guidance03/introduction.htm> or the FHWA website at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/rlcguide/index.htm>.

Additional resources on red light camera program implementation can be found on the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running website at <http://www.stopedredlightrunning.com>. The Campaign's *Stop on Red = Safe on Green: A Guide to Red Light Camera Programs* publication was published last year.

General Accounting Office Releases Report on Federal Funding of Photo Enforcement Programs

Last month, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released *Traffic Enforcement: Funding of Automatic Red-light and Speed Enforcement Technologies*, a report on the role federal funds have played in local use of photo enforcement technology and the amount of revenue generated by these programs.

The GAO is the audit, evaluation and investigative arm of the United States Congress. The report, which was requested by former Congressman Dick Armev (R-TX) and Congressman Todd Tiahrt (R-KS), found that 40 jurisdictions operated photo enforcement technology on federal-aid highways.

Five jurisdictions received \$508,000 in federal funds for photo enforcement over the last six years. These funds came from NHTSA grants, FHWA grants or Surface Transportation Program funds.

These five jurisdictions collected approximately \$50.4 million in fines from photo enforcement programs. Three jurisdictions found that photo enforcement program revenues were less than program costs, while the revenues in the two other jurisdictions exceeded program costs. The GAO report did not include an examination of the safety benefits of local photo enforcement programs. The report can be found at www.gao.gov, GAO report number GAO-03-408R.

News stories from across the nation

The following editorial appeared in the March 17, 2003 edition of The Charlotte Observer and is reprinted with permission of The Charlotte Observer. Copyright owned by The Charlotte Observer.

Nabbing speeders Legislature should let police make more use of cameras

Here's good news. A bill to give Charlotte-Mecklenburg police better tools against speeders is getting under way in the legislature.

Officers in parked police cars would photograph the license plates of speeders. Drivers would then receive tickets in the mail. They'd be fined \$50, but no penalty points would be levied against licenses.

The legislature has twice rejected similar proposals. Some critics have charged that cameras invade driver privacy.

(cont. on pg. 5)

Legislative Update

California: S.B. 780 (Sen. Torlakson) is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee and is scheduled for a hearing on 4/22/03. The bill is sponsored by the California Peace Officers' Association. It requires automated enforcement system violations to be cited as civil violations, provides for owner liability, sets the fine limit at no more than \$200, and exempts those violations from a traffic violation point count process.

Connecticut: H.B. 6282 (Rep. Farr) has been referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. It would authorize local law enforcement agencies to use automated traffic enforcement devices to photograph motor vehicles that violate speeding and stoplight laws, and to provide that the fines received from such violations be remitted to the municipalities in which the violations occurred.

H.B. 5911 (Rep. Fleischmann) has been referred to the Joint Committee on Planning and Development and was publicly heard on 02/26/03. It would authorize local law enforcement agencies to use automated traffic enforcement devices and to provide that fines received from such violations be remitted to the municipalities in which the violations occurred.

Illinois: S.B. 173 (Sen. Cullerton) provides for statewide authorization of red light camera enforcement. It has passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and will likely go to the Senate Floor for consideration on April 2 or 3.

Indiana: S.B. 3 (Sen. Adams) passed the Senate on 2/4/03 by a vote of 31-19 and is awaiting a hearing in the House Roads and Transportation Committee. Attorney General Steve Carter has strongly endorsed the bill.

Maryland: S.B. 455 (Sen. Forehand) provides for statewide authorization of photo radar in school zones and residential areas. It has passed out of the Senate. The bill is expected to be heard in the House Environmental Matters Committee on April 2 or 3.

S.B. 456, sponsored by Sen. Mooney, would have repealed red light camera enforcement. It was defeated in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Missouri: S.B. 90 (Sen. Kennedy) was introduced and referred to the Transportation Committee. It would allow ten cities throughout the state to establish red light camera programs, established owner liability, sets a \$50 fine limit, provides for a flat fee arrangement with the vendor, and it contains a sunset clause (Aug, 28, 2008).

New York: There are five bills that have been introduced and referred to the Assembly Transportation Committee. They are:

A.B. 48 (Lafayette)/S.B. 1367 (Trunzo) would authorize the counties of New York City, Nassau and Suffolk, the Long Island Rail Road and the Metro-North Commuter Railroad to implement demonstration programs imposing monetary fines on the registrant of the vehicle for the failure of the operator of such vehicle to obey railroad grade crossing signals indicating the approach of a train; authorizes the use of remote-control photo radar equipment for use in such program.

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Legislative Update

A.B. 599 (Hoyt)/S.B. 3221 (Kuhl) would authorize municipalities with populations under one million to enact a local law or ordinance imposing liability for fines on registrants where operators of vehicles have failed to obey traffic-control device; only applies if municipality has photo-monitoring of traffic-control device

A.B. 766 (Hoyt) would authorize municipalities in Erie County to implement a program imposing monetary liability on vehicle owners for failure to obey a traffic signal in the municipality and allows a municipality to install and operate traffic-control signal photo-monitoring devices at intersections and highway-railroad crossings.

A.B. 772 (M. Cohen)/S.B. 2126 (Stavisky) would authorize a photo radar demonstration program in cities of one million or more imposing civil liability upon vehicle owners for maximum speed limit violations.

North Carolina: H.B. 562 (Rep. Alexander, Rep. Rhodes) has been introduced and is pending in the House Judiciary I Committee. It would authorize a 3 year photo radar pilot program in Charlotte.

Additionally, H.B. 68 (Rep. Lucas) has been introduced and passed the House on 3/24/03. It would allow the use of red light camera enforcement in Spring Lake and Newton.

Texas: Statewide red light photo enforcement bills have been introduced. H.B. 901 (Rep. King) was passed out of the House Transportation Committee 6-2. It is now pending in Calendars.

Virginia: H.B. 1696 (Del. McQuigg) was passed by the Militia Police & Public Safety Committee 12-10 on 1/18/03 but the bill was re-referred to the Committee and on 1/31/03, the bill was defeated on a tie vote. Similar legislation in the Senate, S.B. 840, was defeated by the House Militia, Police & Public Safety Committee.

Washington: S.B. 5369 is pending in the Senate Rules Committee. The companion bill, H.B. 1324, is pending in the House Transportation Committee. The legislation provides for statewide authorization for photo enforcement (red light, radar and railroad crossing) and owner liability.

For more information please see Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety's webpage at www.saferoads.org

Attention Campaign Members!

Do you have friends, family or colleagues who would be interested in receiving our newsletter? Do you regularly forward the newsletter on to others who are interested? Help us increase awareness of the dangers of red light running by asking anyone who is interested to e-mail us at bplevelich@blakey-agnew.com to be added to our mailing list.

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(cont. from pg. 2)

Nabbing Speeders

Others have resorted to odd notions of fair play, arguing that ticketing speeders is the face-to-face job of sworn officers, not of mechanical devices and the U.S. Postal Service.

Proponents hope they've improved their chances this time by repackaging the effort as a trial run. The system would be tested on 14 stretches of crash-prone roads in Charlotte. Signs would be posted to notify drivers that cameras were in use. The legislature would have to reapprove the program after two years.

The use of cameras to catch speeders is not experimental. Dozens of cities in North America and Europe do it. In Charlotte, experience already shows that using cameras in stepped-up traffic enforcement produces results. Cameras mounted to catch red-light violations have succeeded in moderating driver behavior and lowering accident rates.

Opposition to this new proposal is marked by inverted logic. It holds that drivers have a kind of private entitlement to break the law and endanger others. Lawbreaking matters only if drivers are caught — and only if they are caught in a prescribed way. In other words, the onus is on the larger community to defer to individuals' decisions about obeying the law.

Thus are the obligations of citizenship turned upside down. Driving upon the public streets is not a right but a licensed privilege. The proper onus is on all drivers to observe established rules and respect the safety of others.

Speeding is a material problem in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Last year it played a role in more than half of fatal crashes here. This new tool would improve the efficiency of police and lower accident and injury rates.

Lives are at stake, along with the right of law-abiding people to be safe and feel safe on the streets. There is simply no good reason to reject this straightforward measure to curb behavior that is impermissible in the first place.

Reprinted with permission from *The Wilmington Star*

Police: Camera program working Keeping an eye on unsafe intersections reduces collisions

By Todd Volkstorf
March 14, 2003

The number of collisions in 10 dangerous Wilmington intersections has dropped steadily since the city installed traffic-light cameras two years ago, according to a new report.

"It's been a very good program for the city," said Jim Flechtner, Wilmington transportation manager. "We've been able to reduce the number of collisions and the number of violations."

Typically rated the most dangerous place in the state for motorists, Wilmington got the go-ahead from state lawmakers to start nabbing red-light runners with cameras in 1999.

It's been downhill ever since.

Those drivers who confuse their gas and brake pedals when they come up to red lights picked up 3.4 citations per day per camera-equipped intersection (cont. on pg.6)

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Camera program working

from March 1, 2001, through Feb. 28, 2002 - the first full year all 10 cameras were operating.

The second full year of traffic-light camera operation ended last month with a 17 percent drop in those citations to 2.8 per day per intersection.

“That’s how we measure success,” Mr. Flechtner said. “We’re seeing a reduction in collisions and a reduction in citations.”

In 1999, before any cameras were installed, 188 collisions occurred at the 10 intersections. Last year the number dropped 36 percent to 120 collisions.

Brightly colored signs warn motorists that the intersection they’re approaching is camera-equipped. And when a light turns red, sensors embedded in the road surface activate, tripping the camera if a driver fails to stop.

In the blink of an eye, the camera snaps three digital photos. One shows the car approaching the red light, the second shows it under the red light and the third takes a close-up of the license plate.

A \$50 civil citation, which doesn’t affect driving points or increase insurance premiums, is then mailed to the vehicle’s owner.

By the end of last year, 30,226 citations were mailed. Typically 2 percent of the citations are appealed, Mr. Flechtner said. And of that 2 percent, about one in five get dismissed.

“It’s not surprising how high (the number of citations) is,” Mr. Flechtner said. What’s encouraging, he added, is that the number is reducing as fast as it is.

Funded entirely by the violators, the SafeLight program has cost the city nothing. And its success so far could lead to more cameras at more intersections.

“We’re happy with the outcome,” said Wilmington Police Community Relations Officer Linda Rawley. “We’re looking forward to seeing a further decline in the accidents.”

Speaking for the police department, Officer Rawley said she supports getting more cameras.

“They could only make things better,” she said.

Mr. Flechtner said the city won’t be looking into purchasing more cameras until the current contract with the company, Peek Traffic, comes up for renewal in March 2005.

“We may move some of the ones we have to new locations,” he said.

Attempting to quell the notion some people have that the cameras are an invasion of privacy, Officer Rawley said the photos only show a vehicle, not a person, on public property.

“The bottom line is it has helped save lives,” she said. “You’re never going to satisfy everybody. But at least they’ll think twice again before they go through that intersection.”
