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Published by The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running



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Volume Nine, No.1

February / March 2010

This issue features an article about a new study documenting the effectiveness of speed cameras in Illinois work zones, a recent ruling on one Florida photo enforcement program, an email from one of our Campaign members, and a driving lesson from one of our survivors.

IL highway work zone study finds speed cameras as effective as police presence

In January the Illinois Center for Transportation released findings on the effects of automated speed photo-radar enforcement (SPE) on the speed of vehicles in highway work zones. The study, titled *Speed Photo-Radar Enforcement Evaluation in Illinois Work Zones*, opened by stating that the large number of crashes and fatalities due to speeding, especially in work zones, calls for reliable techniques to reduce speed. Due to constraints that come with work zone conditions, such as reduced roadway and shoulder width, traditional enforcement such as police officers pulling offenders over is often unsafe, or not feasible. SPE is able to safely operate under these conditions, and provides an alternative to conventional law enforcement.

This study compared SPE's effectiveness in speed reduction to other methods such as speed display trailers, police presence (with and without flashing lights) and combinations of these methods. Researchers collected three data sets in two work zones, as well as data from outside the work zones to check for "halo effects" of SPE and police presence. **SPE lowered the average speed of traffic below the speed limit in all cases.**

"The automated speed enforcement technology worked in Illinois work zones and was effective in reducing the average speed and percentage of speeding drivers." said Rahim F. Benekohal, an author of the study and professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "In general, the SPE was as effective in reducing speed as having a police car present in the work zone. "

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Some of the study's findings include:

- When the SPE was present, cars traveled 5.1 to 8.0 mph slower in the median lane and 4.3 to 7.7 mph slower in the shoulder lane. Likewise, trucks traveled 3.7 to 5.7 mph slower in the median lane and 3.9 to 6.4 mph in the shoulder lane;
- The SPE lowered the average speed of the general traffic stream below the speed limit. Even though the SPE reduced the percentage of speeding cars by 32% - 58%, there were still 2% - 30% of cars speeding in the median lane. In the shoulder lane, the SPE reduced speeding cars by 6% - 54% so that only 0% - 30% were still speeding; and
- The SPE reduced speeding trucks by 0% - 58% so that only 0% - 8% were still speeding on the median lane. In the shoulder lane, the SPE reduced speeding trucks by 0% - 56% so that only 0% - 4% were still speeding.

For the complete study, please visit: <http://ict.illinois.edu/Publications/report%20files/FHWA-ICT-10-064.pdf>

“ “Notable quotes” ”

“Camera critics point to surveys that claim to show the devices have no effect on red-light running and dangerous intersection crashes, but the weight of the evidence seems to confirm the common sense conclusion. When drivers know they can be caught by red-light cameras, they're likelier to slow down and stop instead of racing through yellow or red lights.”

From a February 10th editorial titled “Our view on road safety: Red-light cameras prompt backlash, but save lives” by USA Today

“Have some respect for your own safety. You should be more worried about the car ready to T-bone you at the next intersection than the camera that will take your picture only if you blow the light.”

From a February 10th editorial titled “Red means stop; cameras would drive that home” by the Rockford Register Star (Rockford, IL)

“‘They only people who need to worry about red light cameras are the people who run red lights,’ says Russ Rader is with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (the people who do those crash tests you see on TV all the time). ‘And, unfortunately, there are a lot of people who believe that their time is worth more than your life and red light running kills more than 700 people every year.’”

From a February 12th article titled “Do red light cameras really reduce crashes?” by Herb Weisbaum of KPIC-CBS 4 (Roseburg, OR)

Florida judge voids red light camera tickets in Aventura

In a decision that could affect photo enforcement across the state, Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Jerald Bagley voided the use of red light cameras to catch violators in Aventura on Monday, February 22.

The lawsuit was filed by a motorist who argued that Florida state law mandates state legislature pass traffic laws — not cities. Aventura had been treating the tickets as a code violation (like a parking ticket), as opposed to traffic violations; the plaintiff argued this was a tactic used to evade state law which requires an officer be present when issuing a red light running ticket.

The City of Aventura contracted with automated traffic enforcement provider American Traffic Solutions (ATS) and began issuing tickets in October 2008. Judge Bagley did not file an injunction against the program, therefore Aventura can continue issuing tickets from the cameras while officials decide whether or not to file an appeal.

According to a 2004 review by the National Association of Counties, Florida is one of 37 states that has some form of home rule authority. In home rule states, it must be determined that cities have the necessary authority under state law to enforce traffic laws using civil penalties. This can be established by securing an opinion from state attorney general. In 2005, Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist submitted a legal opinion on the issuance of tickets using photo enforcement cameras which stated “photographic record of a vehicle violating traffic control laws may not be used as the basis for issuing a citation for such violations.” Crist went on to say that legislative changes would be necessary for photo enforcement cameras to issue tickets.

“By having enabling legislation, a state is able to define the terms and conditions for programs, eliminating a great deal of uncertainty at the local level,” said Campaign Executive Director Leslie Blakey. “Too much latitude has been experienced under home rule authority, giving way to questionable practices. Clear-cut parameters provided by enabling legislation limit the possibility of undue influence from private sector companies giving advice on program establishment.”

There are currently several other cities issuing red light camera tickets in Florida; Judge Bagley’s ruling may have implications for these photo enforcement programs. Judge Bagley’s written opinion was not available at the time of publication.

Just for Laughs

This joke was recently submitted by a Campaign member... enjoy!

A man was driving when he saw the flash of a traffic camera. He figured that his picture had been taken for exceeding the limit, though he knew he was not speeding. To be certain he went around the block and passed the same spot, driving slower, but again the camera flashed.

Now he began to think that this was quite funny, so he drove even slower as he passed the area again. Once more, the traffic camera flashed. He tried a fourth time with the same result.

He did this a fifth time, laughing when the camera flashed as he rolled past, now at a snail’s pace.

Two weeks later, he got five tickets in the mail for driving without a seat belt... **You can’t fix stupid!**

We've Got Mail!

The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running routinely receives thoughtful emails from law enforcement officials and concerned citizens alike with comments and questions relating to traffic safety. Below is an email that we recently received from a southern California geologist, and the response from Campaign Executive Director Leslie Blakey.

From: Southern California geologist
To: Leslie Blakey
Subject : Red light running

Dear Leslie,

I have seen this problem; people intentionally running red lights and am appalled by this behavior. I suspect that drugs and alcohol often play a part. It would be easy to become paranoid, thinking that someone will run a red light and hit me anytime I am out driving (I commute about 130 miles a day to/from work). I want to thank you for your efforts across the nation.

One comment I would like to make is that I believe that this behavior is encouraged in some communities where lights are timed to turn red as they are approached, even if no one is waiting to cross. I suspect this is done to control the speed of traffic and I see this in Apple Valley, a community that I must travel through during my commute. I know I get very frustrated by this, as I am sure others do as well. While I don't run red lights, I could see, and have seen, where others would and do. Not only does this frustrate drivers but it costs drivers money. Acceleration uses more gas than keeping a constant speed. Break wear means more frequent trips to the garage.

I have wanted to start a campaign to force communities to time lights to keep traffic moving, as much as possible, especially on major thoroughfares. I have heard communities say that it would cost too much money to time the lights. This makes no sense to me because the lights are timed to turn red, so it seems like they could be timed to "not turn red." As far as speeding, why can't systems be set up like at intersections where speeders are photographed and cited? Why can't the systems set up at intersections be used for this purpose as well as red light running?

This is just my 2 cents on what I believe is a contributing factor to red light running and a suggestion to mitigate it. Thank you again for your efforts.

From: Leslie Blakey
To: Southern California geologist
Subject: RE: Red light running

We wholeheartedly concur that lights should be timed to assist, rather than impede, the flow of traffic on busy routes. This would reduce congestion and fuel waste, along with driver frustration. Of course, the lights must be timed to the posted speed limit. Often, drivers do not respect the speed limit and are then frustrated that the lights do not correspond to their driving speed. One problem we hear from traffic engineers is that cities meet great resistance from neighboring residents in trying to raise the speed limits on roads where the posted limit is inappropriately low. This may partly account for why they say it "costs" too much to go through the timing exercise – they may mean the whole process becomes too expensive in terms of city resources.

In any case, we believe that speed limits and light timing should be determined by scientific standards and then enforced scrupulously. Thank you for your comments; we appreciate hearing from you!
Best regards,

Leslie Blakey
Executive Director
National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running

Massachusetts teen has a deep understanding of the responsibilities that come with driving

Brandon's grandmother, Dora, died on March 30, 2009 as the result of a red light running crash in Englewood, Florida. Her sedan was T-boned by a pick up truck running a red light. Brandon shared Dora's story in the National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running's 2009 Stop on Red Week Survivors Memorial Newsletter. Less than one year after his grandmother's crash, Brandon is learning the rules of the road. Here is an update from Brandon:

Just three months ago I was a 15-year-old sitting in driver education class, realizing how much of a personal connection I had to the traffic fatalities shown to us in countless films that the instructor used during class.

Now I am 16 years old, with my learner's permit, and I don't think I've missed a day without driving at least somewhere! Being able to drive is very exciting, but comes with a lot of responsibility; a lot of this responsibility comes from grieving from the loss of my grandmother, Dora Bushway, to a red light running crash in March 2009. It has been traumatic to lose a family member in such a preventable way.

I am proud to say that I will never be a red light runner, no matter how much of a hurry I am in. When I approach an intersection, I am very cautious about being able to stop in time, in case the light turns red. I hope this makes other drivers think about the consequences of running red lights. Being a few minutes late is a better alternative to ending someone's life. My final message to everyone is that I plan on keeping my grandmother's memory alive. She certainly believed that everyone had his or her time to die, but I'm sure she would not have agreed that this was her time.



Brandon enjoying time in Florida this Thanksgiving

**2010
NATIONAL
STOP ON RED
WEEK
AUG. 1ST – 7TH**

