SAFETY FOCUS

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Special Research Edition

Editor's note: Several important research reports were recently released by The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Monash University on red light running and speeding. This month's newsletter will highlignt these reports. The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running welcomes information on new research and can be reached at 202-828-9100.

Cameras Reduce Speeding on D.C. Streets

New research released by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and backed by new statistics from the Washington, D.C. police department finds that when cameras are present, drivers slow down. Institute researchers measured travel speeds on seven D.C. streets before the cameras were installed and six months after deployment. The number of drivers traveling more than 10 mph over the speed limit dropped dramatically at every site, with reductions ranging from 38 to 89 percent.

As a comparison, researchers also measured speeds at eight sites in Baltimore, Maryland, where cameras are not used. Speeds there stayed about the same or increased slightly.

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Upcoming Events- 2002 Stop on Red Week

Mark your calendars and start planning now for 2002's Stop on Red Week (September 7-13, 2002). National Stop on Red Week, sponsored by the FHWA, is a week dedicated to educating Americans about the dangers of running red lights. National Stop on Red Week takes place during the first full week of September every year, going from Saturday to Friday. For more information on Stop on Red Week or for ideas on activities to hold in your community please visit www.fhwa.dot.gov/safety/fourthlevel/pro_res_srlr_week.htm or call The National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running at 202-828-9100.

Cameras Reduce Speeding on D.C. Streets *(continued from page 1)*

Statistics from the D.C. police department bolster those findings. Police statistics show that the percentage of vehicles aggressively speeding on D.C. streets and highways has declined by more than 58 percent since the photo radar program started in July 2001. During the July warning period, 31 percent of the vehicles monitored by photo radar exceeded the program's speeding threshold. In March 2002—when a record number of 538,470 vehicles were monitored by photo radar—the figure had fallen to 13 percent.

Speeding is a major factor in motor vehicle crashes, which are the leading cause of death for people under 34 years of age.

D.C.'s automated traffic enforcement includes a successful red light camera program. From August 1999 through March 2002, red light violations at intersections with cameras dropped 64.2 percent, resulting in 24,300 fewer violations a month.

Institute Findings Confirmed: Red Light Cameras Reduce Crashes, Including Serious Ones

The results of the IIHS Oxnard Study were called into question after a state senator mentioned that researchers should re-analyze the Oxnard data taking into account that most violations at signalized intersections are likely to involve red light running even if the crash causation data from the state includes violations at intersections other than red light running. When the data was re-analyzed an even greater success rate from cameras was evident. The new data showed a 20% reduction in all crashes as opposed to a 7% reduction previously and a 46% reduction in injury crashes as opposed to the first analysis's 29% reduction in injury crashes.

Monash University Accident Research Centre

Monash University Accident Research Centre recently conducted a study on vehicle speedometer accuracy. The report is based on data collected from new-car road tests for 555 vehicle models tested over the past 20 years.

The research shows that, on average, speedometers tend to read faster than the actual speed of the vehicle, with the variation increasing slightly as indicated speed rises.

The survey also found that only between 1 percent and 2 percent of vehicles in the sample had an actual travel speed exceeding the indicated speed by more than 3km/h. Earlier vehicle models are more likely to have actual speeds in excess of that indicated by the speedometer than are later models.

In used cars other factors contribute to speedometer error. Wear on tires causes speedometers to progressively read higher indicated speeds than actual road speed.

The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) released a report today on The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes on America's roadways. This economic impact has reached $230.6 billion a year, or an average of $820 for every person living in the United States. The report based on year 2000 data calculates the U.S. economic costs of an average roadway fatality at $977,000 and estimates the economic costs associated with a critically injured crash survivor at $1.1 million.

The study determined that excessive driving speed is associated annually with 12,350 fatalities and 690,000 non-fatal injuries. This represents 30 percent of all fatalities and 13 percent of all nonfatal injuries. Crashes in which at least one driver was exceeding the legal speed limit or driving too fast for conditions cost $40.4 billion in 2000, or $144 for every person living in the U.S.

The report showed considerable variation among states with the most populous state, California, experiencing the highest cost, almost $3.7 billion – 93 times higher than Vermont. "This is primarily due to the higher incidence of death and injury in California, but also to the higher cost levels in that state," according to the report.

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News summaries from across the nation

Red light running toll continues

Car Jumps Curb, Kills 3-Year-Old

May 10, 2002 *Los Angeles Times*

The driver of a Mercedes ran a red light at North Main Street and Santa Ana Boulevard in Santa Ana, hitting another car before swerving onto a sidewalk where a family was waiting to cross the street. The Mercedes jumped the curb killing stroller-bound Jennifer Martinez, 3, and seriously injuring her 11- month-old brother, Brando. The drivers of the two cars were also injured.

Santa Ana has one of the highest pedestrian accident rates in California. Despite police and city programs to reduce accidents by ticketing jaywalkers and installing more crosswalks, the number of fatal pedestrian accidents this year has jumped to three, compared to two for the same period in 2001. -In 2000, Santa Ana reported six fatalities and about 100 pedestrian injuries.

Council to Weigh Traffic Cameras: Some People Want Devices at Red Lights While Others Say More Officers is the Key

May 5, 2002 *The Press-Enterprise*

The Yuicaipa City Council is considering whether or not to install motion-detecting video cameras at some intersections. The Council has directed staff to research the pros and cons of installing these cameras as part of a three-pronged proposal to improve traffic enforcement which includes money set aside for a traffic motorcycle and radar equipment for patrol cars.

In February, San Bernardino Associated Governments, the county's regional transportation agency, spent $60,000 to develop software that would sense when a car will run a red light and hold the opposing red light in the intersection to prevent collisions. Additional software would allow the county's court system to process data collected from the software. Cities can purchase the software for $5,000. They also pay for the installation and maintenance of cameras. Police Chief Bob Fonzi placed the cities cost for purchasing the system at $80,000.

Mayor Dick Riddell is waiting for more information to make up his mind, and Councilman Tom Masner opposes the devices on grounds of privacy concerns.

Bethesda Collision Kills Driver

May 29,2002, *Montgomery Journal*

The driver of a 2000 Pontiac Grand Am was struck and killed when he failed to stop for a red light in Bethesda, Maryland. As David Lee Pedersen, 49, ran the red light, he collided with a 1998 Ford van, traveling east on Rockledge Drive. The impact of the collision caused the Pontiac to spin around and strike a Toyota Corolla in the westbound lane of Rockledge Drive. David Lee Pedersen was pronounced dead at the scene, and the driver of the Ford, Julio Argueta, 30, was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries and released.

Legislative Update

Illinois Senate Bill 2159 which would allow any municipality or county (rather than only a municipality with a population of 2,000,000 or more) to enact an ordinance providing for an automated red light enforcement system was referred to the Rules Committee. Illinois session ends May 31.

Massachusetts House Bill 4912 authorizes Cambridge and Boston to enact ordinances to use red light cameras. The bill was passed in the House Ways and Means Committee and Public Safety Committee and is awaiting further action in the House.

Pennsylvania's House Bill 1572 would authorize the installation of red-light photo enforcement cameras at high-risk intersections in Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania. The bill currently awaits hearing in the House Transportation Committee.

The legislative update portion of the newsletter is a synopsis of recent bills pertaining to automated enforcement. For a more comprehensive list, please see Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety's webpage at www.saferoads.org.

The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes

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Statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data indicate that in 2000, a total of 12,350 fatalities, representing 29.5 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities, occurred in speed-related crashes nationwide. These crashes, in turn, comprised 29 percent of all motor vehicle crashes. Speeding is the leading cause of death for people under 34 years of age.

NHTSA's new study also estimates the yearly economic cost of roadway crashes to include:

- $61 billion in lost workplace productivity
- $20.2 billion in lost household productivity
- $59 billion in property damage
- $32.6 billion in medical cost
- $25.6 billion in travel delay costs.

Public revenues cover about 9 percent of costs from motor vehicle crashes. Federal revenues pay 6 percent, while states and localities pay about 3 percent. Private insurers pay about 50 percent and individual crash victims pay about 26 percent. Third parties, such as charities, health care providers and uninvolved motorists delayed in traffic, pay about 14 percent.

Overall, nearly 75 percent of the costs of roadway crashes are paid by those not directly involved - primarily through insurance premiums, taxes and travel delay. In 2000 the costs to society rather than individual crash victims, totaled $170 billion.

In the year 2000, the year of NHTSA's most recent research figures, 41,821 persons were killed; 5.3 million were injured, and 27.6 million vehicles were damaged in motor vehicle crashes in the United States.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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We'd love to hear your comments or story ideas, and we'd be happy to provide more information on the Campaign. We can be reached at 202-828-9100 or bplevelich@blakeyassociates.com. Or visit us on the web at www.stopredlightrunning.com.