

**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY
SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES**

**RED LIGHT
CAMERA
PROGRAM
ANALYSIS**



December 28, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Section 316.0083, Florida Statutes, directs the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to provide a summary report on the use of traffic infraction enforcement detectors (red light cameras) used to enforce red light violations. The statute specifies three areas to be addressed in the report; statistical data, enhancement to traffic safety, and procedural information. This summary is a compilation of information the DHSMV received from local counties and municipalities (agencies) through an on-line questionnaire.

METHODOLOGY

Agencies were requested to participate by completing an online questionnaire which captured selected activities and agency data. The online *Florida Red Light Camera Annual Report Survey* was the primary instrument used to gather data for this report and consisted of 9 multiple choice and 15 free form data elements. Each agency entered data specific to red light camera utilization between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. In total, 73 agencies responded to the online survey in accordance with reporting requirements set forth in Florida Statute.¹ The information requested specific to red light camera implementation and program operations included:

- Rating factors used to select red light camera locations
- Number of intersections utilizing red light cameras
- Comparison of intersection data before and after red light camera installation for:
 - Total crashes
 - Side-impact crashes
 - Rear-end crashes

- Number of Notices of Violation issued
- Personnel responsible for Notices of Violation
- Number of Notices of Violation challenged
- Personnel responsible for reviewing notice of violation challenges
- Number of Notices of Violation dismissed after challenged
- Number of Uniform Traffic Citations issued for red light camera violations
- Personnel responsible for issuing Uniform Traffic Citations
- Policies regarding enforcement of red light violations while making right-hand-turns

ANALYSIS

Seventy-three agencies reported collectively throughout the State of Florida there are 404 intersections with red light cameras installed. During the reporting period of July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, these agencies reported issuing 999,929 Notices of Violation.

Agencies also captured data regarding Notices of Violation challenged and reported 20,064 challenges. Of those violations challenged, 14,065 were dismissed. Thus, nearly 70% of violations challenged are dismissed. (950 challenges pend-

ing at the time of this report)

Florida Statutes provides for the issuance of a Uniform Traffic Citation (UTC) when a notice of violation is not paid within 30 days of receipt. In all, 66 agencies issued 265,783 UTCs based on red light camera violations.

Each agency surveyed was asked to rate the factors below, from most to least important, used in selecting an intersection for red light camera installation.

Table 1
Factors Used to Select Intersections for Camera Installation (rated 1-5 by importance)

	Most (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Least (5)	Response Count
Traffic Crash Data	39	11	9	3	8	70
Traffic Citation Data	4	18	18	20	11	71
Citizen Complaints	7	17	14	18	15	71
Law Enforcement Officer Observations	7	18	22	22	2	71
Video Survey of Violation	14	8	8	6	34	70

While a majority of agencies listed traffic crash data as the primary consideration for placement of the cameras, the data demonstrates that 44% did not consider this first when placing cameras.

However as depicted in Tables 2, 3 and 4, the most common outcome since the installation of red light cameras is a

decrease in traffic crashes. Forty-three percent noticed a reduction in side-impact crashes, 41% of the agencies surveyed experienced a reduction in rear-end crashes, while 56% of the agencies experienced a total reduction in crashes at red light camera intersections.

Table 2
Red Light Camera Side-Impact Crash Outcome

	Response Percent	Response Count
Increased	11.0%	8
Decreased	43.8%	32
Remained the same	15.1%	11
No data available	30.1%	22
Respondents		73

Table 3
Red Light Camera Rear-End Crash Outcome

	Response Percent	Response Count
Increased	22%	16
Decreased	41%	30
Remained the same	6.8%	5
No data available	30%	22
Respondents		73

Table 4
Red Light Camera Total Number of Crashes Outcome

	Response Percent	Response Count
Increased	15%	11
Decrease	56.2%	41
Remained the same	9.6%	7
No data available	19.2%	14
Respondents		73

Continued

Agencies were asked to provide information regarding additional improvements in traffic safety stemming from the implementation of red light cameras. The most common improvements cited were: reductions in drivers running red lights at intersections using cameras; reductions in red light violations observed by law enforcement at all intersections; and an increase in cautious driving, jurisdiction-wide.

Agencies were asked to provide a breakdown of personnel issuing Notices of Violation, reviewing challenges to Notices of Violation, and issuing UTCs. Nearly 70% of the agencies reported some participation by sworn law enforcement officers for each of these functions. These results are depicted in Tables 5-7 below.²

Table 5
Personnel Issuing Notices of Violation

	Response Percent	Response Count
Vendor	23.2%	17
Non-Sworn Government Employee	23.2%	17
Sworn Employee	71.2%	52
Other	5.5%	4

Table 6
Personnel Reviewing Notice of Violation Challenges

	Response Percent	Response Count
Vendor	16.4%	12
Non-Sworn Government Employee	27.3%	20
Sworn Employee	68.5%	50
Other	12.3%	9

Table 7
Personnel Issuing Uniform Traffic Citations

	Response Percent	Response Count
Vendor	26%	19
Non-Sworn Government Employee	19%	14
Sworn Employee	68.5%	50
Other	11%	8

Pursuant to s. 316.0083, F.S. "A notice of violation and a traffic citation may not be issued for failure to stop at a red light if the driver is making a right-hand turn in a careful and prudent manner at an intersection where right-hand turns are

permissible." Agencies were asked whether they issued such notices for right-hand turn violations and had a policy defining "careful and prudent manner". The results are depicted in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8
Notices of Violation & Citations for Right-Hand Turns on Red Lights

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	62.5%	45
No	37.5%	27
Respondents		72

Table 9
Agency Policy Defining "Careful and Prudent Manner"

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	22.5%	16
No	77.5%	55
Respondents		71

Several agencies utilized the Careful Driving statute, s. 316.1925, F.S. to define "careful and prudent manner." Others agencies utilized a more objective process and determined

that drivers proceeding in a careful manner, not violating the right of way of other vehicles or pedestrian traffic, were acting in a careful and prudent manner.

CONCLUSIONS

Agencies reported that historical traffic crash data and law enforcement observation were the top two factors used to select red light camera locations. In most cases, Notices of Violation were issued and reviewed by sworn agency employees. And while violations were rarely challenged, more than 70% of those challenged were ultimately dismissed. In cases where Notices of Violation were not paid or dismissed, sworn employees were responsible for issuing the majority of Uniform Traffic Citations.

Section 316.0083, F.S. states that “a notice of violation and a traffic citation may not be issued for failure to stop at a red light if the driver is making a right-hand turn in a careful and prudent manner at an intersection where right-hand turns are permissible.” Of the 73 agencies which submitted data, 44 actively issue Notices of Violation and citations for right-hand

turns on red signals. However, only 16 agencies reported having a policy defining “a careful and prudent manner”.

With regards to crash data, the most common outcome was a decrease in rear-end and side-impact crashes. In fact, a majority of agencies reported decreases in the total number of crashes at red light camera intersections. Lastly, agencies reported that in addition to the decrease in total crashes, traffic safety improved throughout the jurisdiction as drivers were more cautious when approaching all intersections.

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¹Agencies using red light cameras are required to report summary data annually to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. To ensure that all required data was reported in a timely manner, the Department attempted to identify jurisdictions with active red light camera programs by compiling lists of the following:

- agencies which requested UTC's specifically related to red light camera violations
- agencies which submitted UTC's for red light camera violations;
- agencies identified by the Department of Revenue as having received revenue from red light camera citations.

Identified agencies were provided with instructions and a link to the on-line questionnaire. The Florida Sheriff's Association and Florida Police Chiefs Association were provided data reporting procedures for distribution the member agencies. In addition, a red light camera vendor informed participating client agencies of the Department's reporting guidelines.

²Note: Agencies were asked to select all applicable personnel categories and as such, there are more responses than respondents. Percentages, however, remain indicative of total respondents.