

**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY
SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES**

**RED LIGHT
CAMERA
SUMMARY REPORT**



December 17, 2013

(Revised January 8, 2014)

INTRODUCTION

Section 316.0083(4)(b), Florida Statutes, directs the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to provide a summary report on the use of traffic infraction enforcement detectors (red light cameras).

METHODOLOGY

The Department created an on-line survey to gather data for this report from local agencies responsible for the administration of red light camera programs. The survey consisted of 11 multiple choice and 17 free form questions related to activities from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

The Department contacted 79 counties and municipalities (jurisdictions) with active red light camera programs. These jurisdictions were identified from uniform traffic citation data and red light camera monies remitted to the Department of Revenue. In addition, the Florida Sheriff's Association, the Florida Police Chiefs Association and red light camera vendors distributed the survey information to their members.

The information requested specific to red light camera implementation and program operations included:

- Number of approaches to intersections utilizing red light cameras
- Number of Notices of Violation issued
- Number of Notices of Violation contested
- Number of Notices of Violation dismissed after contested
- Percentage of Notices of Violation issued to a single license plate
- Rating factors used to select red light camera locations
- Comparison of intersection data before and after red light camera installation for:
 - Total crashes
 - Side-impact crashes
 - Rear-end crashes
- Personnel responsible for Notices of Violation
- Personnel responsible for reviewing Notices of Violation contested
- Personnel responsible for issuing Uniform Traffic Citations
- Policies regarding enforcement of red light violations while making right-hand-turns
- Definition of "careful and prudent manner"
- Camera footage usage to investigate other crimes
- Consideration of repealing the red light camera ordinance

DISCUSSION

In total, 75 agencies (respondents) responded to the online survey in accordance with reporting requirements set forth in Florida Statutes. Representatives of Campbellton, Florida City, Hialeah Gardens, and Opa-Locka were contacted but did not complete the survey. Last year, 73 agencies responded to the survey.

As of June 30, 2013, red light cameras were installed at 922 approaches to intersections.

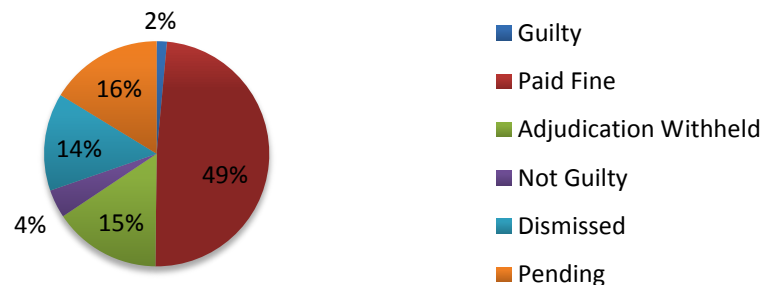
Notices of Violation and Uniform Traffic Citations

One-third of offenders fail to pay the traffic fine timely

During the reporting period, 1,094,106 Notices of Violation were issued, with 36,063 (three percent) contested by the vehicle owner. Upon review, 24,285 (67 percent) of the violations contested were dismissed by the issuing agency. Five percent of the Notices of Violation were issued to repeat offenders.

In calendar year 2012, 342,308 uniform traffic citations were issued to owners who failed to pay the red light camera fine or contest the Notice of Violation within 60 days. Interestingly, although one-third of the total drivers cited fail to pay the fine timely, almost half of these drivers pay the fine once a uniform traffic citation is issued. It is important to note that court costs and fees are assessed on top of the base \$158 fine when the citation is paid.

**Red Light Camera Uniform Traffic Citations
Calendar Year 2012**



By comparison, Florida law enforcement officers issued 72,465 citations to drivers who ran red lights in calendar year 2012.

Intersection Selection

The respondents were asked to rate the factors used in selecting an intersection for red light camera installation from most to least important. The most important factor is traffic crash data (61 percent), with law enforcement officer observations as the second most important factor (32 percent). Video survey of violations was the least important factor of the five choices provided in the survey. In addition to the choices provided, the counties and municipalities responded that they consider overall traffic volume.

*25% reported
that crash data
is not available*

Effect on Safety

Survey respondents were asked to indicate if crashes at intersections with red light cameras had increased, decreased or remained the same. Although section 316.0083, Florida Statutes, requires jurisdictions to report the details of the results of using red light cameras to the Department annually, one-fourth of respondents indicated that crash data at these intersections is unavailable. Further, 31 of the 75 agencies reported no data specific to side-impact and rear-end crashes.

**Number of Respondents Reporting Crash Trends at Red Light Camera Intersections
Fiscal Year 2012-13**

	Total Crashes	Side-Impact	Rear-End
Increased	17	7	14
Decreased	33	27	19
Remained the same	6	10	11
Total Respondents	56	44	44

Florida law requires law enforcement agencies to submit traffic crash reports to the Department, from which the data is extracted and stored in a database. The Department used the crash database to analyze crashes at all traffic control signal intersections for the surveyed jurisdictions. At this time, the Department cannot isolate crash data from the Department's crash database for specific red light camera intersections. The chart below reflects the change in traffic control signal intersection crashes jurisdiction-wide (i.e., at all traffic control signal intersections within the applicable county or municipality) from 2011 to 2012, based on data from the Department's crash report repository. The chart above reflects self-reported trends.

Some areas experienced significant increases in crashes. For example, law enforcement agencies serving the city of Jacksonville reported 1,653 total crashes at traffic control signal intersections in 2011 and 2,887 in 2012, for an overall increase of 75 percent. Side impact crashes increased 81 percent and rear-end collisions increased 85 percent. All of the jurisdictions showing a decrease in crashes had fewer than 600 crashes a year. Statewide, crashes at traffic control signal intersections increased 21 percent from 2011 to 2012.

Although most jurisdictions reported a decrease in crashes at intersections with red light cameras, the crash data maintained by the Department indicates that crashes at traffic control signal intersections typically increased, both statewide and in the surveyed jurisdictions.

**Number of Jurisdictions – Change from Calendar Year 2011 to 2012
Traffic Control Signal Intersection Crashes Jurisdiction-wide**

	Total Crashes	Side-Impact	Rear-End
Increased	47	40	47
Decreased	12	20	13
Remained the same	10	9	9
Total Respondents	69	69	69

Source: DHSMV Crash Database. Note: we could not definitely match respondents to crash data agencies in some cases, accounting for the difference between 69 agencies and the total 75 respondents.

Agencies surveyed were also 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;
- driver and public awareness; and
- an increase in cautious driving, jurisdiction-wide.

Some jurisdictions have made improvements to lighting, traffic sign visibility, striping, and engineering as a result of their red light camera programs.

Personnel

Jurisdictions were asked to provide a breakdown of all personnel involved in issuing Notices of Violation, reviewing contested Notices of Violation, and issuing uniform traffic citations. Sworn officers, non-sworn government employees, and contractors may be involved in different steps of the same process.

Personnel	Notice of Violation		Uniform Traffic Citation
	Issuing	Reviewing	Issuing
Sworn Police Officer/Deputy	85%	79%	84%
Non-Sworn Government Employee	41%	44%	40%
Other	3%	12%	12%

Right-Turn on Red

Pursuant to section 316.0083, Florida Statutes,

44 of 75 respondents issue Notices of Violation for right-hand turns

“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 75 survey respondents, 44 (59 percent) indicated that they issue Notices of Violation for right turns. However, only 15 agencies have policies

defining 'careful and prudent'. Definitions range from mirroring the Careless Driving law, section 316.1925, Florida Statutes, to drivers proceeding in a careful manner, not violating the right of way of other vehicles or pedestrian traffic. Section 316.1925, Florida Statutes, uses the term 'careful and prudent manner' to define careless driving, but further includes "regard for width, grade, curves, corners, traffic and all other attendant circumstances, so as not to endanger the life, limb, or property of any person."

In 2013, the Legislature attempted to clarify its intent by further modifying section 316.0083, Florida Statutes, to state:

"A notice of violation and uniform traffic citation may not be issued under this section if the driver of the vehicle came to a complete stop after crossing the stop line and before turning right if permissible at a red light, but failed to stop before crossing over the stop line or other point at which a stop is required."

This change was effective July 1, 2013 and is not reflected in the responses mentioned above.

88% use red light cameras to investigate other crimes

Other Use of Red Light Camera Images

Of the 75 survey respondents, 66 (88 percent) reported that they use their red light cameras to investigate other crimes, such as aid in traffic crash investigations, thefts, robbery, shootings and tracking stolen vehicles. Florida law does not address the use of red light camera images for other purposes, nor does it exclude red light camera images from public record. Additionally, Florida law does not specify how long images may be retained.

Consideration for Ordinance Repeal

Ten of the survey respondents indicated that their jurisdictions have considered repealing their ordinance.

Although Hialeah Gardens did not complete the survey, the agency did state that all red light cameras in its jurisdiction were removed in the spring of 2013.

CONCLUSIONS

- At least one-fourth of the agencies are not tracking crash data at red light camera intersections and an additional 15 percent that do track overall crash data are not collecting data related to specific collision types (side impact, front to rear impact, etc.).
- Although most agencies reported a decrease in crashes at intersections with red light cameras, the crash data maintained by the Department indicates that crashes at traffic control signal intersections typically increased, both statewide and in the surveyed jurisdictions.

- Section 316.0083, Florida Statutes, 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 75 agencies that submitted data, 44 actively issue Notices of Violation and citations for right-hand turns on red signals. However, only 15 agencies reported having a policy defining “a careful and prudent manner.”
- Florida law does not require counties and municipalities to report to the Department or any other state agency when red light cameras are installed or removed, or at which intersections they are installed.
- Some agencies indicated that traffic volume at an intersection is a primary factor in the decision to install a red light camera.
- Florida law does not prohibit the use of red light camera data for other purposes, exclude it from public record, or establish retention periods.