



LIGHT CAMERA PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Photo enforcement is a proven, effective tool to make roads safer. Well-controlled before-and-after studies have found that red light cameras reduce violations and injury crashes, especially the violent front-into-side crashes most associated with red light running.

Successful programs have a strong public information component, are transparent, and emphasize safety over revenue. In fact, communities should expect that revenue will decline over time as fewer drivers run red lights. Some, though not all, studies indicate that rear-end crashes increase initially, but rear-enders are typically low-severity crashes compared with the high-speed right-angle collisions targeted by red light camera programs.

This checklist assumes your community is already legally authorized to set up a program. It is intended to help you operate a program to reduce crashes, prevent injuries, save lives, and maintain strong public support.

FIRST STEPS

- Identify problem intersections:
 - Assess violation and crash data.
 - Conduct field observations.
 - Collect resident input.
- Make changes necessary to ease compliance with the law:
 - Ensure the road geometry conforms with guidelines from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials or state road design manuals.
 - Ensure that signal timing at a minimum conforms with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Institute of Transportation Engineers guidelines.
 - Remove sightline obstructions of signals and signage.
- If photo enforcement is appropriate for the problem intersections, establish an advisory committee comprised of stakeholders, e.g., law enforcement, transportation department, victim advocates, school officials, community residents, first responders, health officials, and the courts. Outline the committee's role to advise on the development and implementation of the program.
- Meet with the media and newspaper editorial boards to build support and educate the public.

SECOND STEPS

- Select appropriate sites based on data from first steps.
- Publicize the extent of the safety problem and need for innovative solutions.
- Secure a vendor and establish payment based on the vendor's actual costs, not the number of citations.
- Establish a grace period before a vehicle is photographed of up to 1/2 second and no less than 1/8 of a second after the light turns red.
- Establish that law enforcement officers or other appropriately trained personnel employed by the locality will review evidence, identify violations, and issue citations.
- Create a website and social media plan with program details, such as how to pay and dispute tickets.
- Establish a method for answering questions accurately and in a timely manner.
- Develop an emergency action plan for handling problems, such as system malfunctions.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Hold a kickoff event with advisory committee members. Introduce a sustained public education campaign focused on improving safety by changing driver attitudes and behavior.
- Connect the program to safety initiatives such as Vision Zero, Toward Zero Deaths, and Road to Zero.
- Install prominent warning signs at camera locations and major roadways entering the jurisdiction.
- Establish a probationary period during which only warnings are issued.
- Target violations with the greatest safety consequences. Discard right-turn-on-red violations when pedestrians, bicyclists, and oncoming vehicles are not present.
- Allow for due process. Minimize the number of days between the violation and citation issuance. Establish and publicize the available procedures for contesting an alleged violation.
- To the extent feasible, allocate fines in excess of program costs to traffic safety programs.

LONG TERM

- Publicize changes, including new camera locations. Reinstate the probationary period before ticketing begins at new locations.
- Monitor program operation and publicize results.
- Require regular field reviews. Verify monthly camera calibration and synchronization with signals.
- Require regular program evaluation by collecting crash and infraction data. Avoid simple before-and-after comparisons by using proper control intersections. Include control intersections that are not subject to spillover effects.
- Regularly meet with the advisory committee and media to review program status and sustain public support.

For more information on red light cameras, go to IHS.ORG/RED-LIGHT-RUNNING

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