



Red Light Photo Enforcement

The Village of Fox Lake has one intersection that is monitored by an Automatic Red Light Photo Enforcement System for red light violations. That intersection is located at Illinois Route 12 and Illinois Route 134. The decision to implement the program was based on the number of right angle injury accidents that occur at the intersection, the difficulty and danger to officers conducting traditional enforcement activity at the intersection, and the ability to accurately monitor the intersection 24/7/365. To accomplish this type of impact on driver behaviors it would be impossible through traditional enforcement efforts.

Red light running incidents happen frequently. Each year many people are killed in red light running events. In 2017, 890 people were killed in crashes that involved red light running. In addition to those tragic deaths, an additional 165,000 serious injuries occur during higher speed right-angle collisions at intersections.

<https://www.ihs.org/topics/red-light-running>

Make no mistake intersections are dangerous places if motorists do not follow the rules of the road. Enforcement of the traffic laws are the best way to get people to comply but it is impossible for police to be at every intersection. Photo enforcement effectively and fairly fills the void.

Prior to implementing a photo enforcement program a traffic study was conducted at the intersection to determine if the program was warranted. Some of the factors considered were the number and severity of the accidents at the intersection, approach visibility, the signal timing to include duration of the Yellow Light sequence based on approach speed, traffic volume, and the ability to effectively enforce violations by traditional measures. Once all of this data was collected, an application was made to the Illinois Department of transportation to request authorization to install the system. In our case, the enforcement tool was approved.

When the red light enforcement program was initiated, we conducted a public information campaign to inform motorists of the enforcement program. Warning signs indicating the presence of the cameras, along with orange flags placed on those signs to bring extra attention to the placement of the cameras at the

intersection. We initiated the program by issuing warnings citations to violators. Once the warning period was concluded, citations were issued.

Once a violation is detected, a series of still photographs and a short video is captured of the vehicle, from the rear, as it approaches and enters the intersection. The photographs and video are reviewed by a Fox Lake police officer. If in the officer's opinion a red light violation has occurred, the citation is issued and sent to the registered owner of the vehicle. The decision to issue the violation notice is at the discretion of a police officer, just as it is if the officer observed the violation in person. The difference is; the officer does not have to drive through a red light to stop the violator against cross traffic, stop and delay the motorist on the side of the roadway, while potentially blocking and delaying other motorist's to issue a much more expensive traffic citation.

Once a motorist receives a violation notice, they have a right to contest the violation in writing by mail. This is not an available option if an officer issues a traditional ticket. They can pay the \$100.00 fine, which is less than a fine issued in person by an officer, without a court appearance. Finally, they can appear at a local adjudication hearing and contest the violation in person with an adjudication judge. There are no additional court costs added and no additional costs for "Court Supervision." These violations are not reported to the Illinois Secretary of State.

If a violation notice is received, the motorist has the ability to review the still photographs and video of the violation. Once they review the photographs and video, if they would like to contest the violation, they actually have evidence to dispute the violation. If a motorist is issued a citation by an officer in the traditional method, the proof is the officer's testimony that she/he observed the violation but there is no video evidence available for the judge to review. It is simply the motorist's word against the officer's.

Some critics state that red light enforcement is only a "money grab." Although there is a fine associated with a finding of liable, there is also a cost to administering the program. The fines charged by this enforcement program are substantially less than fines for citations issued by a police officer in person. It also reduces the risk to the officer standing in traffic to issue the citation and still have the effect of changing poor driving behavior, which is our ultimate goal. For revenues related to red light enforcement please see the Village of Fox Lake Annual Budget document on the website at www.foxlake.org.

Some motorists have complained about receiving a right turn on red violation. They don't believe these are dangerous or serious violations. The truth is, those motorists are rolling through a red light while turning towards the right but looking left back over their shoulder. The Police Department documented slower speed collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists injured by motorists driving at slow speeds around corners. Although these collisions are typically at slower speeds, the impact on a pedestrian or bicyclist can be devastating.

As indicated above, a sworn police officer reviews the photographs and video recordings of each potential violation captured by the red light camera system. Even though a vehicle may be recorded as a violation, a citation is not generated until approved by an officer. The following statistical information is related to calendar year 2018:

Illinois State Route 12 at Illinois State Route 134 Fox Lake, Illinois

Reported Traffic Crashes	Property Damage	Injury	Fatal	Total
	51	16	0	67

Red Light Camera Location	Violations Reported to Police	Violations Approved by Officer	Approval Rate by Officer
S/B Rt. 12 @ Rt. 134	4750	2278	47%
W/B Rt. 134 @ Rt. 12	3652	799	21%
Total	8402	3077	37%