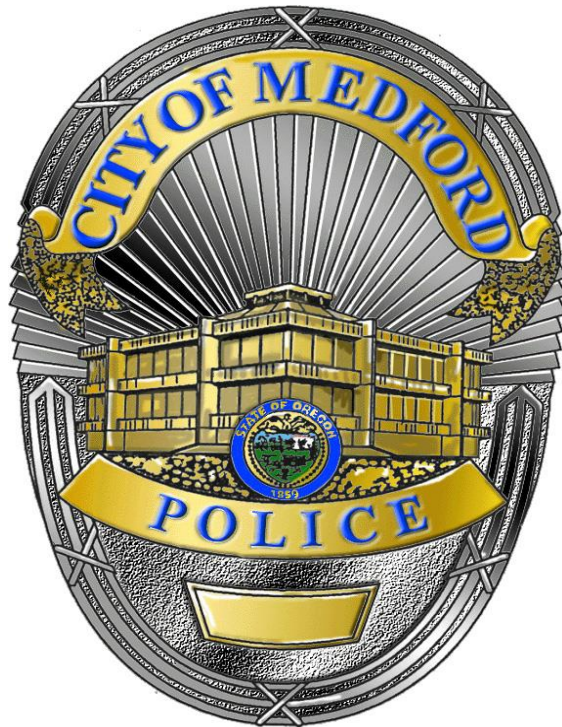


CITY OF MEDFORD POLICE



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Photo Radar Speed Enforcement Report to the Legislature Process and Outcome Evaluation

February 2021

Background – Legislative Report Requirements

Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 810.438 requires cities using photo radar equipment to conduct a process and outcome evaluation for the legislature once each biennium. The law reads as follows:

(3) A city that operates a photo radar system under this section shall, once each biennium, conduct a process and outcome evaluation for the purposes of subsection (4) of this section that includes:

- (a) The effect of the use of photo radar system on traffic safety;
- (b) The degree of public acceptance of the use of the photo radar system; and
- (c) The process of administration of the use of the photo radar system.

(4) By March 1 of each odd-numbered year, each city that operates a photo radar system under this section shall present to the Legislative Assembly the process and outcome evaluation conducted by the city under subsection (3) of this section. [1995 c.579 §1; 1997 c.280 §1; 1999 c.1071 §1; 2005 c.686 §3; 2007 c.634 §1; 2010 c.30 §9; 2011 c.545 §66; 2015 c.138 §25]

Effects of the Use of Photo Radar on Traffic Safety

ORS 810.438 (3)(a)

Photo radar is a speed enforcement tool operated by trained police officers in a marked police vehicle. A reader board mounted on the photo speed van displays the vehicle's speed to the driver. When radar detects an approaching vehicle is speeding 11 MPH or more over the posted speed limit, a camera takes a photograph of the driver and the vehicle license plate. A citation is then mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle.

The City of Medford's photo radar program has been in operation since June 15, 2004. The program currently consists of two radar equipped vans. Previously a lidar equipped van was utilized, but due to the age of the equipment and lack of available replacement parts this van was replaced with radar equipment in September of 2016. The vans are deployed five to six days a week and are operated by four part-time sworn officers.

The goal of the Medford Police Department's photo radar program is to reduce traffic crashes and increase driver, passenger, and pedestrian safety within the city. To accomplish this, the photo radar vans are utilized in school zones, in areas with a history of excessive speeding, in areas with mixed use of the roadway, and in areas identified by citizen speed complaints. From these areas, radar van deployment locations are selected based on

threshold requirements in regards to traffic counts and recorded speed surveys. Speed surveys and traffic counts are conducted using a mobile radar trailer. All of this information is compiled and analyzed to justify radar van sites.

Traffic Crash Summary Comparison (City of Medford)

	2019	2020
# of Reported Crashes	3,299	2,619
% Change		-21%

The effects of the radar vans can be observed in the changed behavior of the drivers in the areas the vans are deployed. While certain areas need continual focus due to high volumes of traffic, other areas where the vans are deployed require fewer return trips, due to the deterrence already established in the area. This established speed deterrence is a significant benefit towards increasing traffic safety.

Photo Radar Speed Enforcement Program Statics 2017 - 2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Violations Captured	2,589	5,686	3,666	2,903
Citations Issued	1,637	3,373	2,614	1,690

In examining 2020 data compared to 2019 data, the radar vans were deployed 104 additional shifts yet captured 21% fewer speed violations and generated 46% fewer speeding citations. This is a very positive trend showing that the increased use of radar vans deployed to random locations throughout the city is having a positive impact at reducing speeding vehicle violations.

Degree of Public Acceptance of the Use of Photo Radar

ORS 810.438 (3)(b)

The public acceptance of the photo radar program has grown since its inception in 2004, due to it being administered in a fair and open manner. Traffic complaints are received frequently from citizens requesting the radar vans be deployed in their neighborhoods or to areas they feel excessive speed is a safety concern.

In 2014 the City of Medford Police Department began measuring the public opinion of the photo radar program through a public safety survey conducted annually. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 the door to door public safety survey was not conducted in 2020. During the survey conducted in 2019 the following information was documented.

- 91% advised they were aware of the City’s photo radar program
- 64% rated the photo radar program as very good to good

- 80% rated the photo radar program as improving traffic safety

The City of Medford also measures the public opinion of the program based on citizen complaints. This agency has an open and exhaustive complaint process. With the exception of receiving occasional inquires about the program, no official complaints were filed this reporting period. In part this can be attributed to the way the program is administered, in that only undeniable violations are prosecuted. The number of violations that are rejected demonstrates this fact.

2019 – 2020 Rejected Incident Summary

Violations Captured	Rejected Incidents	Approved Violations
6503	2348	4155

Process of Administration of the Use of Photo Radar

(ORS) 810.438 (3) (c)

The administrative process for the use of photo radar speed enforcement encompasses many components. The steps for issuing a citation consist of: violation detection, violation processing, quality control checks, citation review and approval, and citation mailing. Included in these steps are the City’s compliance with legislative requirements under ORS 810.438 and 810.439. Citations issued under the department’s program are handled through the City of Medford Municipal Court.

A uniformed police officer operates the marked photo radar van when in service. When a violation is detected, the system documents the incident. Four photographs are captured for each incident: the vehicle approaching the photo radar van, the vehicle passing the van, a close up of the driver’s face, and a close up of the vehicle’s license plate. The violator’s vehicle speed is also displayed on a reader board mounted on the van to immediately inform the driver of their speed.

Violations captured with the photo radar van are uploaded to the City’s vendor – Redflex. Redflex reviews the images, identifies the violator’s vehicle license plate number, and sends a request to the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for the registered owner’s information. Redflex then provides this information to the photo radar officer who reviews the details from the violation (such as location, date, time, speed, etc.) and the registered owner’s information. The officer verifies the information provided.

After reviewing the information the officer decides if a citation is to be issued or not. If the officer approves the violation, a citation along with photographs are mailed to the registered owner by Redflex. This is done within six business days in accordance with Oregon law. The citation is also routed to the City of Medford Municipal Court. The registered vehicle owner has 30 days to respond to the citation and has all of the same rights and options as with any

other traffic citation, with the addition of the Certificate of Innocence/Certificate of Non-Liability form.

An important component of Oregon's photo radar statute is the citation is issued to the registered owner of the vehicle. Oregon law requires drivers to maintain their updated address information with the DMV. The presumption in Oregon on photo radar citations, as with parking citations, is the registered owner of the vehicle is the driver at the time of the violation. The responsibility is on the registered owner to provide evidence if they were not the driver at the time of the violation. This is done through the process of completing a Certificate of Innocence or Certificate of Non-Liability form and returning it to the Medford Police Department. Once the form is received a request to have the citation dismissed is sent to the Municipal Court.