

**City of Portland  
Portland Police Bureau  
PHOTO ENFORCEMENT BIENNIAL REPORT  
2023-2024**



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**Saving Lives with Safe Streets**



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## Executive Summary of Photo Enforcement

The Portland Police Bureau has been operating photo enforcement systems since the mid 1990's through statutory authorization. Since the introduction of photo enforcement systems, such photo red-light cameras, fixed speed cameras and now more modern intersection cameras that enforce red lights as well as speeding, the public has come to appreciate and value Portland's photo enforcement measures. Through several studies over the years, the public has consistently agreed photo enforcement is a valuable tool and works. Overall, photo enforcement has been widely accepted and continues to be a major factor in combating high speeds and failures to obey red lights.

Another form of photo enforcement is the deployment of photo radar vans. This has been very advantageous to traffic enforcement as the van can be deployed almost anywhere in the city and done so at the request of partner agencies, focused enforcement by the Portland Police Bureau in school zones or public requests where citizens find dangerous driving needing to be addressed. The advantage to the photo radar van over traditional enforcement is the capacity to capture more violations in a single location versus traditional enforcement which requires stopping individual vehicles.

The public still appreciates traditional traffic enforcement through police officers being active in stopping vehicles. This saw a decline through the years of 2020 to 2022, however, the Portland Police Bureau returned to a dedicated Traffic Division in 2023. Deploying traffic officers to do traffic enforcement through traditional measures allows for traffic enforcement, photo enforcement cannot provide. It allows for investigations into traffic crimes, dangerous driving cameras cannot enforce and non-moving violations such as child safety restraints.

Traffic safety does not just rely on citations. It also relies on education and through the photo enforcement program, a traffic safety class is utilized specifically for photo enforcement. The goal is to provide education for a first-time offender in hopes of a long-term impact to improve overall driving behaviors.

Traffic enforcement is a priority in the City of Portland and having a multifaceted approach is the best way to combat dangerous driving. Photo enforcement has been an ideal way to do this as traditional traffic enforcement has its limitations, even if it is an invaluable tool for public safety as well. The continued partnership with other city bureaus, multiple ways of providing traffic enforcement, improved roadway design and education, the City of Portland can continue its intent on reducing traffic crash related injuries and death throughout the city.



## Purpose of Program

The purpose of this program is to reduce speeds and failing to obey traffic control devices to save lives and reduce injury to the Citizens of Portland from traffic crashes. The United States saw a decline in fatal crashes 2018-2019, but the national trend changed with an increase in fatality crashes in 2020 (38,824) and 2021 (*Preliminary Numbers: 42,915 – NHTSA/FARS*). The number decreased in 2022 to 42,514 which is the first decline since 2019 (*NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts Sheet – September 2024*). The City of Portland continued to experience an increase in the number of traffic related fatalities in 2023 but saw the first decrease in fatal crashes in 2024. The Portland Police Traffic Investigations unit investigated 69 NHTSA categorized fatal crashes in 2023, but the total number of fatal investigations dropped to 58 in 2024. The Portland Police Traffic Investigations Unit had a total of 75 fatal investigations in 2023 and 68 fatal investigations in 2024 when suicides or medical events are included. Speed is and has always been a factor in many fatal crashes, past and present. One of the continued factors in the higher number of fatal crashes continues to revolve around pedestrians. The total number of pedestrian fatal crashes from 2023 was 27 and the number only dropped by one in 2024, but lower than the previous biannual report years (2022 – 32 and 2021 – 31). The recent reinstatement of a full-time Portland Police Traffic Division in May of 2023, appears to be a factor in the decrease in vehicle-related fatal crashes. It continues to be a necessary and useful tool to bring awareness, change behavior and save lives. Between January 1, 2022, and May 31, 2023, there were only 17 DUII arrests by Traffic Officers working in a patrol function. From June 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024, the reinstated Traffic Division Officers made 369 DUII arrests. The City of Portland has also seen a reduction in hit and run cases since the reinstatement. Overall, the need for a multifaceted approach through officer-related traffic enforcement, photo enforcement and education are the key factors in reducing traffic related injuries and fatalities



## REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The Oregon Revised Statute 810.438 authorizing photo radar in cities was amended in the Legislative session of 2005. This amendment required cities using photo radar to conduct a process and outcome evaluation once each biennium.

A copy of the requirements per statute is below:

*(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 the 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]*

## PHOTO-RADAR

### A- THE EFFECT OF USE OF THE PHOTO RADAR SYSTEM ON TRAFFIC SAFETY:

#### Background

Photo radar is a method of traffic speed enforcement that is used to detect speeding violations and record identifying information about the vehicle and driver automatically. Violation evidence is processed and reviewed in an office environment and violation notices are delivered to the registered owners of identified vehicles after the alleged violation occurs, rather than at the time of the offense.

The City of Portland received authority from the 1995 Legislature to conduct a two-year test of photo radar. After a successful test phase, the Legislature extended the use of photo radar.

The City of Portland will be entering its 30<sup>th</sup> year of photo radar operation and the program continues to be a cornerstone of the Portland Police Bureau’s efforts to reduce speeding.

**Deployments**

The Portland City Council, through City Ordinance #172517, has directed the Police Bureau to deploy photo radar in school zones, highway work zones, residential streets, high crash corridors and other streets determined to have an unusually high number of crashes or speeding complaints. The Portland Police Bureau also utilizes the photo radar system based on citizen complaint, interagency requests (PBOT/ODOT) and police officer requests.

During 2023, the Portland Police Bureau received two new photo enforcement vans from the vendor of the photo enforcement program. There was a decrease in proactive enforcement while bringing the new vans online. The vans are technologically advanced, and it took time for training and technical difficulties to be worked out. However, after the few months needed, the photo radar vans have been used extensively and continue to be a valuable asset in reducing speeds around the City of Portland.

<b>Photo Radar Van</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Photo Radar</b>	<b>2024</b>
Court Filed Citations	4,653	Court Filed Citations	8,283

In May of 2023, the Traffic Division regained its Police Motorcycle Unit. The Traffic Officers were reassigned to full-time traffic enforcement duties which have also been a mitigating factor in reducing speeding and vehicle specific fatalities. With continued efforts of the photo radar van and the reinstatement of the Traffic Division, the City of Portland has increased its capabilities of slowing speeds and reducing crashes in the City of Portland.

**School Zones**

The Portland Police Bureau remains dedicated to the safety of the numerous school zones throughout our city. Photo-radar has been used extensively for speed enforcement in school zones city-wide. Requests for photo-radar deployments in school zones have come from school administrators, school resource officers, neighbors living near schools, and parents of children attending the schools. We strive to fulfill every request for a school zone deployment that we receive. Currently, the Portland Police Bureau has reinstated our Traffic Motor unit but only in the evening hours. Once the ability to reinstate our dayshift portion of the Traffic Motor unit, the Portland Police Traffic Division will begin more active enforcement in school zones to supplement the photo radar van deployments.

Our deployment signage complies with state law in school zones without flashing beacons. The school zone deployment signs, meeting the dimensions required under ORS, indicate 'SCHOOL IN SESSION' in addition to the standard admonishment that photo-radar is being deployed. These signs are placed 100-400 yards prior to any photo-radar deployment.

## **Reduction of crashes**

Studies have shown that photo-enforcement has been effective in reducing speeding within the boundaries of the City of Portland. The trend is clearly visible that with increasing exposure to photo radar, the percentage of vehicles that were exceeding the posted speed limit decreases. The Police Bureau attempts to identify trends in causation and behavior to determine which enforcement is needed for the traffic safety issue. Where a trend of crashes appears, the operators are notified to deploy more often in those areas to bring the speed down of average drivers, issue citations to those outside the photo radar threshold and in turn, cause awareness to drivers for future travels. As people have become more familiar with photo radar vans and their deployments, they have learned to slow down.

## **Reduction in High Crash Corridor/Network Incidents**

Since the Police Bureau has been utilizing data to strategically deploy enforcement vans, crashes have been reduced over the last decade within most high crash networks. PBOT found that 57 percent of 2016's traffic fatalities occurred on High Crash Corridors. This is still a continuing trend based on PBOT's crash location studies. Per PBOT, only 8% of the City of Portland streets are found in the high crash corridors. Information received from PBOT shows that most fatal crashes occur on this 8% of roadways. Below you will find the annual percentages for the last four years.

- 2021: 64 Fatal Crashes – 39 were on the High Crash Network (61%)
- 2022: 62 Fatal Crashes – 43 were on the High Crash Network (69%)
- 2023: 69 Fatal Crashes – 51 were on the High Crash Network (74%)
- 2024: 58 Fatal Crashes – 41 were on the High Crash Network (71%)

Prior to the conception of photo radar in Portland, fatality rates were substantially higher than they were in most recent years. The decade before the program began (1986 – 1995) the annual fatality rate averaged 56.8 traffic related deaths per year. The decade after the photo enforcement program was introduced (1996 – 2005), fatality rates decreased to an annual average of 41.2 fatalities. The following decade of 2006 - 2015 continued this trend, showing a drop in traffic related fatalities to an annual average of 31.1 traffic related deaths. However, there was an alarming increase in traffic fatalities. In the years 2017-2020 the average had risen to 45.5 deaths per year with high increases showing up in 2019 and 2020 (*2018 had 33 fatal crashes and 2019 had 50, 2020 had 53*). In the years 2021-2024, that average reached 63.25

per year. There are many factors that could have contributed to this with Covid, decreases in traffic volume with associated higher speeds and the decrease in law enforcement. However, there has also been a turn with law enforcement numbers increasing, enforcement increasing, a higher number of photo enforcement cameras being installed and several roadway changes. With these changes, the City of Portland saw its first decrease in fatal crashes in 2024 with a decrease of roughly 15 percent since 2020. There has also been an increase in photo radar van deployments by full-time Traffic Officers, outside of the full-time photo radar van operator schedule, which covers weekends and evenings. The overall increase in enforcement from all angles seems to have a positive effect on the fatality rate.

## **B- THE DEGREE OF PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE PHOTO RADAR SYSTEM**

The Traffic Division and Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) routinely receives a large number of requests from schools, neighborhood organizations and citizens specifically requesting the deployment of photo enforcement vans, in order to enforce speed and curb aggressive driving.

### **2016 Public Survey**

Since the program had not undergone a public survey since 2005, in March 2016, the Police Bureau collaborated with Portland State University to conduct an online survey that polled the relationship between the use of photo enforcement and public perception. More than 10,000 survey flyers were mailed randomly to residents in each Portland Metropolitan zip code. The survey consisted of 25 questions allowing participants to anonymously complete the survey by computer or smart phone. The results were submitted to Qualtrics, an online database. The data collection period lasted from April to June of 2016 and yielded a 1.05 response rate. Of the respondents, 63% believe drivers will drive more carefully where cameras are located.

### **2018 PBOT Public Survey**

In 2018, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), with the assistance of DHM Research, conducted another public opinion poll concerning speed photo enforcement. That survey showed a continued support of the photo enforcement programs. Participants were asked if they were aware that the City of Portland uses photo radar vans to enforce speed laws, 84% of participants responded that they were aware of the program. When participants were asked if they considered photo enforcement of traffic laws fair or unfair, 49% rated photo enforcement as fair or very fair while another 23% were neutral on the subject. Only 23% rated the use of photo enforcement as unfair or very unfair. Participants were also asked if they felt "traditional" enforcement of traffic laws, face to face contact with a police officer, was fair or unfair. The results were very similar to those of photo radar enforcement. 43% of participants said they

believed traditional enforcement was fair or very fair while another 29% was neutral. 23% said traditional enforcement was unfair or very unfair.

City of Portland residents expressed awareness towards the use of photo enforcement and the City of Portland's programs. When participants were asked if they ever noticed signs in Portland that indicate traffic control devices are photo enforced, 72% of respondents indicated yes. Corresponding results were demonstrated when participants were asked if they were aware of the City of Portland's photo radar speed program, 65% of participants responded with yes. In addition to City of Portland resident awareness, another significant variable includes resident's support of the use of speed cameras to monitor drivers speed within three locations: School Zones, Construction Zones, and Local Roads in Residential Neighborhoods. When respondents were asked if they generally support the use of speed cameras to monitor driver's speeds in school zones, 73% of respondents indicated yes. Respondents demonstrated similar support for monitoring driver's speed in construction zones (67%) and local roads in residential neighborhoods (61%).

## **2024 Public Survey**

In the fall of 2024, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) had a new survey done to get current feedback from the citizens of Portland on the Photo Enforcement system in place inside the City of Portland. This was a multiple question survey with 1963 residents taking the survey. The survey was pushed out through social media in partnership through PBOT and PPB. In the following, you will see some of the questions posed and the public's response.

Survey Question 8: *Were you aware that the city uses photo enforcement cameras in vans parked throughout the city to ticket drivers who speed?*

- Approximately 61.9 percent of those surveyed knew about the City of Portland use of photo enforcement throughout the city.

Survey Question 10: *What is your reaction to this statement? "Speeding is unsafe and increases the risk of crashes, serious injury, or even death."*

- Approximately 90.93 percent of those surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree to this statement.

Survey Question 13: *What is your reaction to this statement? "Enforcing traffic light compliance is an effective way to improve safety at intersections."*

- Approximately 87.46 percent of those surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree to this statement.

Survey Question 19: *What is your opinion about the City of Portland's efforts to enforce traffic laws?*

- Approximately 78.91 percent felt the City of Portland did not put enough effort into enforcement of traffic safety laws.

Survey Question 21: *Do you support or oppose using fixed-location speed safety cameras to ticket drivers who speed on streets with high crash rates?*

- Approximately 76.11 of those surveyed support the use of speed cameras

Survey Question 22: *Do you support or oppose using mobile van-based speed safety cameras to ticket drivers who speed on streets with high crash rates?*

- Approximately 72.03 percent of those surveyed support van-based speed enforcement throughout the city.

Survey Question 23: *Do you support or oppose using red light photo enforcement cameras at intersections to enforce traffic light compliance?*

- Approximately 81.92 percent of those surveyed support photo red light enforcement

From the survey, it is clear that the citizens of Portland want more traffic enforcement, feel not enough is being to enforce traffic laws and support the photo enforcement program in all its facets. PBOT and PPB are working in partnership to expand the photo enforcement program by adding more systems in the future. With these efforts and public support, these systems will continue to support the overarching goal of reducing speed and red light running throughout the City of Portland.

In conjunction with more cameras systems strategically placed throughout the city, continued increases in photo radar van deployments and the return of the full-time Traffic Division, the effort to reduce fatal crashes to levels not seen since 2018 (*37 fatal crashes*) are more possible than ever.

### **Preferred Speed Enforcement Options**

When they were asked whether they think the police department is doing a good job addressing traffic issues in your neighborhood, 46% of respondents answered agree or strongly agree. Therefore, preferred speed enforcement methods were addressed in the survey. Participants were asked to select which of the following speed enforcement methods they prefer. The response options were direct contact from a police officer, photo enforcement, the most cost-effective option and other. If participants selected “other”, a follow-up question allowed the participant to fill-in their response. Participants were more likely to select “direct contact from a police officer” (50%) from the given options. The second most favored option included “the most cost-effective option” (39%). When participants selected the “other” option (7%), respondents

expressed the interest of receiving a combination including direct one on one officer contact as well as additional traffic control features. Examples include widening streets, round-about circles, and speed bumps.

Four surveys over the last two decades revealed consistently similar results. The 2005 survey revealed that 85% of drivers would drive slower consistently if they saw photo radar being used at least three times per week. The 2003 David and Hibbits survey disclosed that 71% of Portland residents support photo enforcement. In a like manner, even at the conception of the program, the 1996 public opinion poll showed 74% of city residents approved the use of photo radar in neighborhoods, while 89% of city residents approved of photo radar use in school zones. Again in 2018 public opinion of photo enforcement of speed laws remained high.

The 2024 survey again reinforces the fact that photo enforcement is a valuable tool and that the Portland residents support the system. They continue to show they want more traffic enforcement, not less and expectations the City of Portland do more is obvious. Through continued efforts of the Cities Bureaus, the goal is to do what is expected by the citizens and save lives in the City of Portland through proactive traffic enforcement from all available options.

## **C- PHOTO RADAR PROCESS OF ADMINISTRATION**

The basic steps involved in issuing a photo radar citation are:

- 1- Violation Detection
- 2- Violation Processing
- 3- Quality Control Checks
- 4- Citation Review and Approval by a Portland Police Officer
- 5- Citation Mailing
- 6- Court Appearance / Educational Class

### *1- Violation Detection*

This occurs when a police officer operating a marked police vehicle visually observes a violation. The police officer also hears an audible signal indicating the violator speed. The officer maintains an observation log at each deployment and takes notes of each violation.

At least three photographs are generated for each violation. These include the vehicle in the radar beam approaching the police vehicle, a close-up photo of the driver in the violation vehicle, and a close-up picture of the violation vehicle's license plate. The violation vehicle's speed is displayed on a reader board at the back of the photo radar vehicle. The police officer maintains a checklist for each deployment to document that they are following all the technical procedures for operating the photo radar equipment.

## *2- Violation Processing*

Violation images are downloaded from the laptop computer aboard the photo-radar van each day by our vendor, Elovate. Those images are sent electronically to the vendor's processing facility.

If they can identify the license plate, the vendor sends a request to the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) or the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for registered owner information. NLETS or DMV sends this information back to the vendor. The pertinent details of the violation (such as location, date, time, speed, etc.) are reviewed by the vendor along with the registered owner's information.

## *3- Quality Control Checks*

The vendor discards violations where there is no gender match to the registered owner, or owners. They also discard any violations where the driver is not identifiable due to factors such as glare, face blocked by a visor, etc.

## *4- Citation Review and Approval by the Police Officer*

Any violations that pass this first screening by the vendor are then sent to the issuing police officer as citations. The issuing police officer reviews the citations for accuracy and electronically signs them. The approved citations are sent back to the vendor for issuing.

## *5- Citation Mailing*

The vendor then mails this citation, along with a photo from the violation to the registered owner. This citation must be mailed to the registered owner within six (6) business days to remain in compliance with Oregon law. The registered owner has thirty (30) days to respond to this citation. They are afforded all the same rights as a defendant would have with any traffic violation. The citation is processed through the State of Oregon Court system. The presumption in Oregon is that the registered owner is the driver at the time of the violation.

## *6- Court Appearance / Educational Class*

Once the recipient receives the citation, they can appear in court at the scheduled arraignment date, pay the citation in person or online or if they are eligible, they can pay for a traffic safety class which would allow for the dismissal of the citation. If none of the actions are taken by the recipient, the citations are defaulted which requires payment of the presumptive fine.

If the registered owner was not driving the vehicle when the violation occurred, they may file a Certificate of Innocence (COI) with the Circuit Court, at which time the citation will be dismissed. A Certificate of Innocence is included with each citation. If the citation goes to a business, they may file an Affidavit for Non-Liability (AFNL), which is mailed with the citation.

The Police Bureau's photo radar program manager, or designee, subsequently reviews these Certificates of Innocence and Affidavits for Non-Liability for accuracy.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **Diversion Class**

To change behavior, the Portland Police Bureau recognizes the importance and value of educating the public on driver safety in areas photo enforcement is operated. To create a platform for dialogue with violators, a traffic safety class was birthed in the spring of 2016 for Photo Enforcement violations. The Portland Police Bureau has collaborated with Oregon Driver Education Center (ODEC) to message Vision Zero objectives. The class is administered by a Driving Instructor provided by ODEC and a Portland Police Traffic Officer. This gives students relevant information about driving matters, current traffic laws and access to resources regarding driver safety.

- Increase understanding of Photo Enforcement Program
- Expose the public to the heart behind traffic safety enforcement
- Demonstrate how our actions impact others' lives
- Deflect frustration and common misperceptions pertaining to photo enforcement
- Reintroduce face to face contact between community and traffic safety personnel that has been lacking with photo enforcement
- Create awareness, change mental attitude and driving behavior
- Reduce crashes, and save lives

In lieu of the citation appearing on a violator's driving record a violator may take the diversion class. To be eligible for the course violators cannot have had more than one speeding or red-light ticket in the past three years and only qualifies for the course one time.

During the years 2023 and 2024, the online format for traffic court and ODEC remained in place. This has been found to be invaluable regarding citizens' time and ability to attend court and classes. In the years 2023 and 2024, approximately 12,121 attended the ODEC traffic safety class.

Class participants are asked to give feedback about the class, its content and instruction. The results remain consistently positive. Due to classes being moved to an online setting in 2021

and 2022, the class surveys were not done in this format. However, the surveys returned in 2024 and below are the results of the last two quarters of 2024.

#### Q3 - 2024

<b>1. The instructors were knowledgeable about Traffic Safety</b>		
Agree	383	84.2%
Neutral	2	0.4%
Disagree	70	15.4%
<b>2. The Instruction I received in this class has changed my mental attitude toward my driving behavior</b>		
Agree	375	83.7%
Neutral	21	4.7%
Disagree	52	11.6%
<b>3. The Class was interesting, insightful, and kept my attention</b>		
Agree	368	83.4%
Neutral	21	4.8%
Disagree	52	11.8%

#### Q4 – 2024

<b>1. The instructors were knowledgeable about Traffic Safety</b>		
Agree	266	89.9%
Neutral	1	0.3%
Disagree	29	9.8%
<b>2. The Instruction I received in this class has changed my mental attitude toward my driving behavior</b>		
Agree	263	88.6%
Neutral	13	4.4%
Disagree	21	7.1%
<b>3. The Class was interesting, insightful, and kept my attention</b>		
Agree	270	90.9%
Neutral	8	2.7%
Disagree	19	6.4%

In order to change behavior, the Portland Police Bureau recognizes the importance and value of educating the public on driver safety in areas where photo enforcement is operated. We believe these efforts will be a catalyst for bringing about greater awareness of the Vision Zero goals and ultimately leverage the benefits of the program.

The Portland Police Bureau initiated and has maintained information about photo enforcement cameras at [Photo Enforcement | Portland.gov](#), which can be referenced by the public. There is

also a link to the Portland Bureau of Transportations website regarding photo enforcement data, [Speed and intersection safety cameras | Portland.gov](#) for the public to access as well. This too educates the public about photo enforcement and where to see where these photo enforcement systems are being placed.

Based on information from Multnomah County Courts, there were 87,401 citations issued (*Certificate of Innocence (COI)* / *Affidavit of Non-Liability (AFNL)* not included) in 2023 and 2024 via photo enforcement. From that total, 11,637 drivers took the opportunity to attend a class which resulted in a dismissal of the citation. This represents a large portion of the population that are willing and wanting education to be a factor in the citation process. These classes are designed to be less of a financial burden, giving the driver more understanding of photo enforcement and traffic laws as well as giving them the opportunity to ask questions regarding traffic laws. They have the opportunity to ask questions of a Portland Police Officer and a Driving Instructor from the Oregon Driver Education Center (ODEC). This helps the educational process by giving the driver answers from the instructors who are teaching the law and enforcing the law.

## **CONCLUSION**

Developing a proactive traffic safety program, which combines enforcement and education, is one of the best ways to control, reduce and ultimately, eliminate the burdensome costs on government and society, incurred from traffic crashes. Photo enforcement alone cannot solve all of society's traffic safety problems.

The multifaceted approach needs to have random enforcement through the Traffic Division along with Patrol Officers initiating traffic stops between calls for service, continued enhancement and updates to roadway characteristics, education continued with safety classes and access to online data or information regarding traffic safety and the continued and expanded use of photo enforcement in all its forms.

Photo Enforcement is a valuable tool in making streets safe and efficient. The continued use of photo radar vans and fixed speed camera enforcement will help the City of Portland come closer to the goal of zero traffic deaths.

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RED LIGHT / ISD CAMERAS  
BIENNIAL REPORT 2023-2024**



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**Saving Lives with Safe Streets**



**Vendor Information:**

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## BACKGROUND REPORT REQUIREMENTS

### **810.434 Photo red light; operation; evaluation.**

*(1) Any city may, at its own cost, operate cameras designed to photograph drivers who violate ORS 811.265 by failing to obey a traffic control device.*

*(2) Cameras operated under this section may be mounted on streetlights or put in other suitable places.*

*(3) A city that chooses to operate a camera shall:*

*(a) Provide a public information campaign to inform local drivers about the use of cameras before citations are actually issued; and*

*(b) 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 cameras on traffic safety;*

*(B) The degree of public acceptance of the use of cameras: and*

*(C) The process of administration of the use of cameras.*

*(4) By March 1 of each odd-numbered year, each city that operates a camera under this section shall present to the Legislative Assembly the process and outcome evaluation conducted by the city under subsection (3) of this section. [1999 c.851 §1; 1999 c.1051 §327; 2001 c.474 §1; subsection (5) of 2001 Edition enacted as 2001 c.474 §3; 2003 c.14 §491; 2003 c.339 §1; 2005 c.686 §1; 2007 c.640 §1; 2011 c.545 §65]*

## BACKGROUND

The City of Portland received authority from the 2000 Legislature to implement the use of red-light cameras to enforce O.R.S. 811.265, which covers disobeying traffic control devices. Using traffic volume and crash data provided by the PBOT, four (4) intersections, with a total of five (5) cameras were initially chosen as test project for this technology. The initial five cameras were activated in October 2001 and January 2002.

With the success of the testing phase, the red-light camera program was expanded over the following 7 years. Camera locations were chosen, not where intersections with the most crashes occurred, but rather intersections where injury crashes were determined to be caused from red-light running.

Portland's 18 red light cameras are currently functioning at 16 intersections. These are no longer just red-light enforcement cameras. All these systems are new, and the old red-light cameras systems were replaced with cameras that enforce the red lights but also speed enforcement on green lights. These new dual function cameras continue to enforce failing to obey a traffic control device but now assist in decreasing speeds by capturing speed violations when the traffic signal is green. These intersections cameras will also capture both

red-light running and speeding if the vehicle goes through the intersection at 21 mph or faster while the signal is red. All of these systems went into place over the previous two years and continue to be effective at maintaining low numbers of injury crashes or reducing the number of injury crashes.

Location	Direction of travel
NE Martin Luther King Jr. at Lloyd boulevards	southbound
SE Foster Road at 96th Avenue	westbound
SE Stark Street at 99th Avenue	westbound
SE Stark Street at 102nd Avenue	westbound
SE Stark Street at 122nd Avenue	eastbound
SE Stark Street at 148th Avenue	westbound
SE Washington Street at 103rd Drive	eastbound
NE Grand Avenue at Couch Street	northbound
SE 82nd Avenue at Woodstock Boulevard	northbound
NE 122nd Avenue at Halsey	northbound
NE César E Chávez boulevards at Sandy Boulevard	northbound
NE Sandy at César E Chávez boulevards	westbound
SE Grand at Burnside	northbound
SE Grand Avenue at Madison Street	northbound
NE 82nd Ave at E Burnside Street	southbound
NE 82nd Avenue at Glisan St	northbound
NE Glisan Street at 82nd Avenue	westbound
NE Broadway and Grand Avenue	westbound

The City of Portland is committed to ensuring that all traffic signage is up to date and in conformance with Oregon law and MUTCD standards for automated enforcement. Yearly, the Portland Police Bureau assigns an officer to check and verify the signage is in place and visible. The Portland Police works with its partners when any of the signage needs replacement or repair.

#### **A- THE EFFECT OF USE OF CAMERAS ON TRAFFIC SAFETY**

To select locations for red light photo enforcement, an analysis of intersections was conducted within the city. Intersections were selected for the program based on a significant crash history attributed to disregard of the traffic signal. Crash data provides a strong

understanding of where crashes occur, crash type, and crash severity. The Portland Police Bureau's Strategic Services Division in cooperation with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) conducted an analysis on prospective intersections for possible program expansion. To alleviate duplication in statistics, information was gathered and analyzed from multiple systems including RMS, RegJIN, CAD systems as well as DMV, ODOT and PBOT databases. Individual incidents were identified and isolated through calls for service, police reports, and other database information. By inspecting a wide variety of information sources, a more complete understanding of where crashes caused by running red lights occurred, was gained. Portland's experience with red light cameras has been positive. While there remain challenges with drawing specific conclusions about the direct impact of red-light cameras, very positive trends are occurring at intersections with red light camera enforcement.

### Violations Captured / Citations Issued

Red light / ISD Cameras	2023	ISD Cameras	2024
Violations Captured	56,109	Violations Captured	122,697
Citations Issued	21,489	Citations Issued	30,168

- *Violations captured account for all controllable, uncontrollable errors and non-violations captured.*

Portland Police Bureau's Strategic Services Division conducted an analysis of red-light intersection crashes. Incidents were counted within an approximate distance of 50 feet of the identified intersection during 2021 and 2022 and 100 feet during 2023 and 2024. Data was compiled from individual reports and calls for service obtained within the Police Bureau's RegJIN System and RMS and mapped for distance relationships, which yielded a more accurate crash rate than was represented in Oregon Crash Reports and on previous biennium reports.

During the 2019-2020 biennium, injury crashes at red light camera intersections was approximately 14.7% of the total reported crashes. For the 2021-2022 biennium the percentage of injury crashes dropped to 8.5% of the total number of injury crashes. However, the total number of crashes rose from 169 total red light related crashes to 199 total red light related crashes between the two biennia. The most recent biennial period for comparison to 2021-2022, was 2015-2016, where 198 total crashes were red light related. But during the 2015-2016 biennium, there were 27 injury crashes versus 17 during the 2020-2021 biennium. Even though the numbers of crashes have risen, the number of injury crashes has been decreasing at red light intersections over the last few years.

During 2023 and 2024, compared to 2021 and 2022 reporting period, there was an overall decrease of 6.4% in traffic crashes related to intersections with intersection cameras. For this two-year period where cameras existed (*before and after the new camera installation*) there was an approximate decrease of 18.3% in traffic crashes. The intersections where

new cameras were installed found an approximate decrease of 2.3% in traffic crashes. It should be noted that the new locations have varying times of actual enforcement periods. The data will be more comprehensive in the next biennial report as that report will have a full two years of data on the intersections where cameras were installed during the previous biennial period.

Regarding injury crashes, the years 2023 and 2024 saw an overall drop of 11.5% in injury crashes. Although the numbers of traffic crashes are down, and the overall number of injury crashes is down, there was an increase in injury crashes at existing locations by 58.3% (*2021-2022 had 12, 2023-2024 had 19*). Where there was new red-light intersection cameras installed, there was a decrease in injury crashes at those locations by approximately four percent. In regard to overall crashes reported, existing red-light intersections account for approximately 10.3% of the injury crashes and the newly installed intersection cameras account for approximately 16.2% of the injury crashes.

The decrease in general continues to show the positive effect intersection photo enforcement has on traffic crashes. Although the increase in injury crashes with a decrease in overall crashes at existing locations is troublesome.

## **B- PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE**

Upon first implementation of the Photo Red Light Program, the City of Portland initiated public outreach for photo enforcement as a part of efforts to educate the public as outlined in previous biennial reports. In addition, Portland Police Bureau maintains a web site regarding information about red light cameras.

In March 2016, the Police Bureau conducted a survey to determine the public's perception of the program. More than 10,000 survey flyers were mailed randomly to Portland residents. The data collection period lasted seven weeks from 12 April to 6 June of 2016, and gleaned a 1.05 response rate. Of the respondents, more than 74% were supportive of using red light cameras at high crash intersections. Only 66% were aware of the red-light Program. 63% believe drivers will drive more carefully where cameras are located.

These results parallel the 2003 David and Hibbits survey, where 71% of Portland residents reported that they support additional red light camera locations being installed in the city.

In 2010 the Portland Police Bureau's photo-enforcement program was selected for review as part of a study done for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program [NHRCP]. Our program was one of only five programs nationwide to be selected for review. Our program was selected because of its longevity, continued success, and continued public support. In that review, we stressed the importance of maintaining the public's trust and running a transparent program.

## 2024 Public Survey

In the fall of 2024, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) had a new survey done to get current feedback from the citizens of Portland on the Photo Enforcement system in place inside the City of Portland. This was a multiple question survey with 1963 residents taking the survey. The survey was pushed out through social media in partnership through PBOT and PPB. In the following, you will see some of the questions posed and the public's response, specifically to red lights.

Survey Question 7: Were you aware that the City uses photo enforcement cameras at some intersections to ticket drivers who run red lights?

- Approximately 93.89 percent of those surveyed stated they were aware of camera use in ticketing drivers who run red lights.

Survey Question 13: *What is your reaction to this statement? "Enforcing traffic light compliance is an effective way to improve safety at intersections."*

- Approximately 87.46 percent of those surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree with this statement.

Survey Question 18: How do you rate vehicles running red lights at intersections as a safety issue or concern?

- Approximately 95.36 percent of those surveyed strongly agree or somewhat agree with this statement.

Survey Question 23: Do you support or oppose using red light photo enforcement cameras at intersections to enforce traffic light compliance?

- Approximately 81.92 percent of those surveyed stated they support the use of red-light photo enforcement to enforce traffic light compliance.

The results continue to show the support of photo enforcement cameras and specifically support the use of intersection cameras to assist in traffic enforcement for this specific violation.

## C- THE PROCESS OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE USE OF CAMERAS

The administrative process for photo red light enforcement includes citation processing and issuance, delivery, payment, and adjudication. Citations are processed by the vendor, Conduent, in accordance with a multi-step process that ensures that the violation image, violation data, and owner information are as accurate as possible. If any of this evidence does not meet stringent quality control standards, citations are not issued.

## **Violation/Citation Processing**

The vendor operates the cameras and retrieves digital data from each camera for processing each business day. The images and data are screened by the vendor. If a license plate can be identified, a request is sent to the Oregon NLETS or Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for the registered owner information. Once NLETS or DMV information is obtained, it will be reviewed along with pertinent details of the violation.

The vendor discards violations where there is no gender match to the registered owner, or owners. They also discard any violations where the driver is not identifiable due to factors such as window glare and facial obstructions, for example.

Any violation that passes the first screening by the vendor is put into citation form and placed into a secure database for a Police Officer to review. A Portland Police Officer certified in red light camera enforcement, reviews each citation/violation for accuracy. This includes viewing a video clip of the violation. If the citation passes the Police Officer's review, and it is determined that a violation has occurred, the citation is electronically signed and returned to the vendor for issuance.

The vendor mails each citation, along with a photo from the violation to the registered owner. This citation must be mailed within ten (10) business days of the violation to remain in compliance with ORS 810.436. The recipient is also given a PIN number and directions to access the vendors website. On this website, they can view high resolution images of the violation as well as the 12 second video clip taken by the red-light camera.

The registered owner has thirty (30) days to respond to this citation. They are afforded all of the same rights as a defendant would have with any traffic violation. The citation is processed with the state of Oregon court system. The presumption in Oregon is that the registered owner is the driver at the time of the violation.

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If the registered owner was not driving the vehicle when the violation occurred, he or she may file a Certificate of Innocence with the Circuit Court, at which time the citation will be dismissed. A Certificate of Innocence is included with each citation. The Portland Police Bureau's photo-enforcement project manager, or designee, subsequently reviews the Certificates of Innocence for accuracy

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **Diversion Class**

To change behavior, the Portland Police Bureau recognizes the importance and value of educating the public on driver safety in areas photo enforcement is operated. To create a platform for dialogue with violators, a traffic safety class was birthed in the spring of 2016 for Photo Enforcement violations. The Portland Police Bureau has collaborated with Oregon Driver Education Center (ODEC) to message Vision Zero objectives. The class is administered by a Driving Instructor provided by ODEC and a Portland Police Traffic Officer. This gives students relevant information about driving matters, current traffic laws and access to resources regarding driver safety.

- Increase understanding of Photo Enforcement Program
- Expose the public to the heart behind traffic safety enforcement
- Demonstrate how our actions impact others' lives
- Deflect frustration and common misperceptions pertaining to photo enforcement
- Reintroduce face to face contact between community and traffic safety personnel that has been lacking with photo enforcement
- Create awareness, change mental attitude and driving behavior
- Reduce crashes, and save lives

In lieu of the citation appearing on a violator's driving record a violator may take the diversion class. To be eligible for the course violators cannot have had more than one speeding or red-light ticket in the past three years and only qualifies for the course one time.

During the years 2023 and 2024, the online format for traffic court and ODEC remained in place. This has been found to be invaluable regarding citizens' time and ability to attend court and classes. In the years 2023 and 2024, approximately 12,121 attended the ODEC traffic safety class.

Class participants are asked to give feedback about the class, its content and instruction. The results remain consistently positive. Due to classes being moved to an online setting in 2021 and 2022, the class surveys were not done in this format. However, the surveys returned in 2024 and below are the results of the last two quarters of 2024.

### Q3 - 2024

<b>1. The instructors were knowledgeable about Traffic Safety</b>		
Agree	383	84.2%
Neutral	2	0.4%
Disagree	70	15.4%
<b>2. The Instruction I received in this class has changed my mental attitude toward my driving behavior</b>		
Agree	375	83.7%
Neutral	21	4.7%
Disagree	52	11.6%
<b>3. The Class was interesting, insightful, and kept my attention</b>		
Agree	368	83.4%
Neutral	21	4.8%
Disagree	52	11.8%

### Q4 – 2024

<b>1. The instructors were knowledgeable about Traffic Safety</b>		
Agree	266	89.9%
Neutral	1	0.3%
Disagree	29	9.8%
<b>2. The Instruction I received in this class has changed my mental attitude toward my driving behavior</b>		
Agree	263	88.6%
Neutral	13	4.4%
Disagree	21	7.1%
<b>3. The Class was interesting, insightful, and kept my attention</b>		
Agree	270	90.9%
Neutral	8	2.7%
Disagree	19	6.4%

In order to change behavior, the Portland Police Bureau recognizes the importance and value of educating the public on driver safety in areas where photo enforcement is operated. We believe these efforts will be a catalyst for bringing about greater awareness of the Vision Zero goals and ultimately leverage the benefits of the program.

The Portland Police Bureau initiated and has maintained information about photo enforcement cameras at [Photo Enforcement | Portland.gov](https://www.portland.gov/police/photo-enforcement), which can be referenced by the public. There is also a link to the Portland Bureau of Transportation's website regarding photo enforcement data, [Speed and intersection safety cameras | Portland.gov](https://www.portland.gov/bureau-of-transportation/speed-and-intersection-safety-cameras) for the public to access as well. This too educates the public about photo enforcement and where to see where these photo enforcement systems are being placed.

## CONCLUSION

Through continuous meetings with the vendor, the Portland Police Bureau's Traffic Division has continued to monitor and track vendor and program operations to ensure best practices are followed and goals are met. Continued efforts are needed regarding public awareness to reduce serious injury and fatal crashes. Through enforcement, roadway design and photo enforcement we can create safer roadways for the public. The Portland Police Bureau is committed to working with our partners in government and the community to push for and create safer streets. The work towards reducing, and eventually eliminating, traffic fatalities as part of Vision Zero is at the forefront of our mission considering the increase of traffic fatalities in 2021 and 2022.

