

Oregon Department of Transportation Report on Photo Radar in Highway Work Zones (ORS 810.441)

March 2015

BACKGROUND

The 2013 Oregon Legislature passed HB 2465 (ORS 810.441). This legislation replaced the photo radar legislation enacted by the 2007 Oregon Legislature, HB 2466, which was scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2014.

ORS 810.441 allows the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to request the Oregon State Police or other law enforcement jurisdictions authorized under ORS 810.438 to operate photo radar in highway work zones on state highways including interstates.

Criteria surrounding the use of photo radar are identified in ORS 810.441 including the requirement to deploy photo radar within 100 yards of workers **or** within 100 yards of a configuration change as defined within this law. Signs announcing the use of photo radar must be posted as well as the actual speed of the vehicle which must be displayed within 150 feet of the photo radar unit. A uniformed police officer in a marked vehicle must be present in order for a citation to be issued.

ORS 810.441 continues to require ODOT to deliver a Process and Outcome Evaluation to the Legislative Assembly by March 1 of each odd-numbered year as did HB 2466. The report continues to require the following:

- The effect of the use of photo radar on traffic safety,
- The degree of public acceptance of the use of photo radar, and
- The process of administration of the use of photo radar.

PHOTO RADAR PROCESS AND OUTCOME EVALUATION

The effect of the use of photo radar on traffic safety:

Since the HB 2466, 2013 Legislative Process and Outcome Report, ODOT have continued to work with OSP and cities that are authorized to provide photo radar enforcement. Oregon State Police (OSP) does not provide photo radar enforcement. City of Portland, Police Bureau (PPB) has provided photo radar in ODOT work zones and ODOT has identified a potential interstate project that will be under construction the summer of 2015.

Two ODOT projects using photo radar in a work zone have been studied and the research has been completed to date which resulted in varying outcomes:

1. Yeon Avenue Project: “During photo radar enforcement periods, speeding was reduced by an average of 23.7 % at the traffic sensor site within the work zone.”

2. SE Powell Boulevard Project: This study saw no positive effect while photo radar was being used.

Additional information about both projects that were studied can be found in the following research report and its addendum located at:

http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP_RES/docs/Reports/2010/PhotoRadar_Speed.pdf

ODOT has investigated additional state highway, non-interstate locations within the cities authorized to provide photo radar that have operating photo radar programs. There are approximately four cities authorized with operating programs at this time in the state. For various reasons the locations identified and the type of construction occurring at those locations has not been conducive to photo radar implementation. Constraints such as limited pavement width, frequent intersections and a limited number of state highway work zones within those city limits have presented difficulties.

The degree of public acceptance of the use of photo radar:

ODOT routinely contracts with a private research firm to obtain and document Oregonians' public perceptions on various transportation safety-related issues in order to gain a greater understanding of these safety issues. From an August 2014 ODOT Transportation Safety Division Statewide Public Opinion Survey, ODOT learned that 68 percent of Oregonians polled favor the use of photo radar traffic enforcement in work zones. Since 2000, motorists continued to identify speeding as the greatest problem observed while traveling through work zones. A highway work zone in comparison to a work zone on any type of roadway was not differentiated in these surveys. ODOT will conduct another public opinion survey later this year.

The process of administration of the use of photo radar:

During ODOT's photo radar research projects, ODOT worked closely with PPB to assure the unique elements of the law allowing photo radar in a highway work zone were implemented successfully. The Multnomah County Circuit Court was also contacted in advance of the project(s) in order to assure application of the law and that pilot project(s) would be conducted to their standards.

ODOT continues to work with law enforcement agencies identified in the law to implement and ensure the law is followed regarding the use of photo radar in highway work zones as other photo radar in ODOT highway work zone projects are identified.