



VILLAGER

THE TRUTH ABOUT ELK GROVE'S RED LIGHT CAMERA PROGRAM: WHAT THE MEDIA IS NOT SHARING

Over the past month, much has been written by the media and said by the community regarding the Village's installation of red light cameras over one year ago. While some of the information that has been printed by the Daily Herald and Chicago Tribune has been correct, much has been skewed, incomplete, and flat out wrong. As such, we would like to take the opportunity to provide the other side of the story regarding this program.

There are times when serving the public that we have to do what is right for the community. While it may not always be the most popular decision at the time, it is our duty to do what is in the best interest to preserve lives and safety within Elk Grove Village.

Over the years, the Mayor and Board of Trustees have had to make many difficult decisions. Even though the community as a whole hasn't always favored these decisions, they were the right decisions to be made. As history will show, the same will be true of the installation of red light cameras.

While some media outlets may suggest that this program is solely for revenue, what they don't tell you is that a lot of thought and research went into this program and the location of the cameras. Analysis was done to determine the most accident-prone intersections, and counts were conducted to establish the number of vehicles that were running red lights at those intersections.

At our July Village Board meeting, we provided the community with an annual report for the two (2) intersections that have had four (4) red light cameras operational for one year. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide the community with the information that was presented at that Village Board meeting. If you'd like to view the actual Village Board meeting, you can find it by visiting <http://egtv.pegcentral.com> and clicking on the July 14, 2009 Village Board Meeting.

While you may not like the concept of red light cameras, or perhaps you don't like the concept of "big brother," rest assured that the sole purpose of this program is to enhance the life-safety of all who live in our community and travel our streets. Hopefully this special newsletter helps to clarify some of the concerns that you have, fills in the blanks that the papers are choosing to ignore, and sheds some light on why we support this program.

~ SPECIAL EDITION ~
Red Light Camera
Program



SAFETY IS A CONCERN

Since the Daily Herald and Chicago Tribune ran their stories on red light cameras, the Village has received a number of inquiries about our program – most based upon inaccurate data. While the Daily Herald chooses to editorialize the program and ignore the hard facts in their reporting, our statistics show resounding proof that these cameras are having a positive impact on driver behavior.

One of the first inaccuracies that has been reported is that the cameras were placed at intersections that did not warrant their installation. For Elk Grove Village, this could not be further from the truth. As you can see below, our focus is on our top accident-prone intersections with six (6) of the top 10 receiving cameras, two (2) being considered by the County, and one (1) already denied by the County.

TOP ELK GROVE CRASH LOCATIONS IN 2008 DETERMINED LOCATION OF RED LIGHT CAMERAS

<u>Intersection</u>	<u>Crashes (Camera)</u>
Oakton & Busse *	79 (Red Light Camera)
Oakton & Higgins *	66 (Covered with Above)
Landmeier & Busse	38 (Cook County Considering)
Higgins & Arlington *	37 (Red Light Camera)
Devon & Busse *	35 (Red Light Camera)
Biesterfield & Arlington	34 (Cook County Denied)
Biesterfield & I 290 *	29 (Red Light Camera)
NW Point & Arlington	29 (Under Consideration)
Biesterfield & Meacham	29 (Cook County Considering)
Biesterfield & Rohlwing*	28 (Red Light Camera)

VIOLATION REVIEWS

There also exists a perception with the media and the public that we are giving out tickets to people who may or may not have stopped. This could not be further from the truth. Anyone who receives a violation notice in the mail, actually receives a video link so that they can watch themselves run the red light. Unlike some other programs, this is not based off of a photo. It is solely based off of video of the infraction. While there may be a private company who oversees the program and mails out the violations, they cannot do so without our Police Officers first verifying that an infraction has occurred. It should be noted that our Officers treat each violation with the same discretion as if they were physically at the scene. On average, our Police Department dismisses 24% of potential violations. Again, this is not an automatic fine. Our Police Department estimates that roughly 1 of 5 violators who contest their citation, have it dismissed by an adjudicator. We believe this evidence shows that this is not a money-making scheme.

POLICE ARE FAIR TO MOTORISTS

Photo Enforcement Summary				
LOCATION	VIDEO VIOLATIONS FORWARDED TO EGV POLICE	CITATIONS APPROVED BY EGV POLICE	% ISSUED	
S/B BUSSE OAKTON	4,173	3,280	78 %	
W/B OAKTON BUSSE	3,401	2,679	78 %	
N/B BUSSE DEVON	3,478	2,790	80 %	
S/B BUSSE DEVON	2,835	1,922	68 %	
TOTAL	13,887	10,671	76 %	

WHAT IS THE FUSS OVER RIGHT-ON-RED VIOLATIONS?

One item that the media continues to address are the right-turn on red violations. While the media views these infractions as irrelevant and solely revenue-based, we believe there is a high level of significance to these infractions.

First, the law states that all drivers must come to a complete stop when making a right-hand turn when the traffic signal is red. The law is the law, and you cannot ignore a red light even though you are turning right and assume that your actions will have no impact on others. If you assume that it is ok to make a right-hand turn without stopping because you feel no one is around, then would it also be safe to assume that you could proceed straight through a red light if you also feel that your actions will not impact anyone else? We would hope not!

Secondly, would you face backwards if you were trying to drive forward? We'd hope not, but this concept applies for people who are running red lights to make right-hand turns. One particular intersection that we would like to point out when addressing this issue is at Biesterfield and I-290. Several years ago we had five (5) pedestrians (some children) hit at this intersection within a 24-month period by people making right-hand turns without ever looking to their right before turning. Since then, we were able to use this data to have the bicycle bridge constructed over I-290. This goes to show that many people turning right-on-red to beat the on coming traffic never even look to their right. While right-on-red may not be considered a concern for other motorists, in this instance it is the pedestrians that we are trying to keep safe.

THE NUMBERS CANNOT HIDE THE TRUTH

On July 15 the Daily Herald ran an article “Studies show cameras reduce crashes, but local data scant.” Throughout the article they note that “the evidence is pretty convincing” from the national studies and indicate that the cameras decrease red light infractions, reduce accidents, and potentially save lives. In their next breath, they go on to note that the Daily Herald “has found little substantive evidence of crash reductions at suburban intersections, because cameras have been up for such a relatively short period of time.” While Elk Grove has provided the Daily Herald with our data, they have chosen not to use it for their “Seeing Red” series. As such, we are sharing our data with you.

Since activating those cameras one year ago:

- Those intersections that have been in operation for at least a year have experienced a 26% reduction in crashes for the first 6 months of 2009, compared to the first 6 months of 2008 when the cameras were not in operation. Throughout the entire Village, we have experienced a 19% reduction in crashes in that same period;
- Overall, we’ve experienced a 36% reduction in red light violations when comparing the first 6 months of the program to the past 6 months. There has been a significant reduction in the number of violations for the four cameras that have been in operation for a year, with one intersection showing an 80% decline in violations.

**RED LIGHT CAMERAS
REDUCE ACCIDENTS**

COMPARING 2008 & 2009 CRASHES

**Traffic Accidents For The
First 6 Months (January – June)**

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Red Light Controlled	92	68	-26%
Entire Village	1,006	814	-19%

AFTER 1 YEAR...

Violations Reduced... Safety Enhanced!!!

	S/B Busse at Oakton Street	W/B Oakton at Busse Road	S/B Busse at Devon Ave.	N/B Busse at Devon Ave.
Citations Issued First Month of Program	470	737	409	216
LATEST DATA Citations Issued May 2009	217 53% DECREASE	142 80% DECREASE	268 34% DECREASE	156 27% DECREASE

**VIOLATIONS REDUCED....
SAFETY ENHANCED!!!!**

**NUMBER OF RED LIGHT CITATIONS AT THE 2
INTERSECTIONS PREVIOUSLY NOTED**

	<u>Last 6 months of 2008</u>	<u>First 6 months of 2009</u>
Total Tickets	6,922	4,436

36% DECREASE IN RED LIGHT VIOLATIONS

WHY NOT PUT A POLICE OFFICER AT THESE INTERSECTIONS?

An important bit of information that the media chooses not to report is the difficulty that our Police Officers have with controlling some of these intersections. In some instances, such as the camera at Biesterfield and I-290, there are no shoulders, parking lots, or side streets to station a squad car to catch red light violators. In other instances, the high-volume of traffic prohibits a Police Officer from sitting and monitoring red light compliance.

It should also be noted that if we were able to place a Police Officer at these locations, we believe there would be a change in driver behavior. Unfortunately, once the officer leaves we believe motorists would revert back to their previous behaviors and run the red lights. We believe this, because the data that was captured before the camera was installed indicated that drivers were showing no regard to the rules of the road, as red light violations were an issue.

Although it would be great to have enough Police Officers on hand to catch every speeder, reckless-driver, and red light violator, the economics of having that many officers on the street makes it unrealistic. As such, Elk Grove must use all technologies available to assist with the delivery of law enforcement services in the most effective, economic, and efficient manner.



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The Village Hall is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for payment of water bills, local fines, pet licenses, vehicle stickers, and general Village information. In addition, the Finance counter is open on the first Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. through noon, and the Engineering & Community Development counter is open on the first Saturday of the months of May through September from 9:00 a.m. through noon.

Village Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The floor is opened to the public at 8:00 p.m. for comments and questions.

GENERAL QUESTIONS REGARDING ELK GROVE VILLAGE'S RED LIGHT CAMERA PROGRAM

Should a vehicle fail to stop and remain stopped before an intersection that is controlled by a red traffic signal, the citation will be issued to the vehicle owner. Additionally, the failure to stop at an intersection with a permitted right turn on red will be a violation if the vehicle does not come to a complete stop. Vehicle owners will be issued a citation notice with a link to a website that permits viewing of the violation via the Internet. **Please review the video of the potential violation on the website.** If you do not have a computer or are having trouble viewing the video, please go to your local library or contact the Police Department at (847) 357-4100 to schedule a time for an officer to review your notice with you. If you are not satisfied, you are able to contest the violation.

Contesting a Violation in Elk Grove Village:

- **Contest by Mail** - by checking the "Contest by Mail" box on the ticket and mailing the form back using the self-addressed envelope.
- **In-Person Hearing** - by checking the "In-Person Hearing" box on the ticket and mailing the form back using the self-addressed envelope.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** In-Person Hearings are held at the Elk Grove Village Fire Administration Building, located at **901 Brantwood Ave., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007.**

In all cases, the motor vehicle operator will be notified by mail of the finding or hearing date and location.

Payment Options:

Payment must be received on or before the **PAY DATE** or the **CONTEST BY DATE** as noted on the front of the citation notice or a late fee will be applied.

To make a payment:

- Pay online - visit RedLightViolations.com;
- Pay by phone - Call (866) 562-4138 or call the number on the back of the citation; or
- Pay by mail - send check or money order as outlined on the back of the citation

Consequences for Registered a Vehicle Owner:

- Failure to pay five (5) violations will result in the owner's driver's license being suspended.
- Paid photo-enforced red light tickets are non-moving violations and as such are not counted against your driving record.

The Elk Grove Village Police Department continues to focus on safety for drivers and pedestrians using Village streets and intersections. Red Light Camera Enforcement Programs are designed to improve intersection safety and positively change driver behavior.