

## The Right Turn on Red Scam

by Greg Mauz, NMA Texas State Activist



Camera promoters have deceived the public into believing that “red light running” is the leading cause of urban crashes and fatalities.

For the record, red light violations cause a very minor 1.5 percent of all US crashes and only 2 percent of fatalities.

The percentage of urban crashes is less than 5 percent and not 22 percent as dishonest camera promoters claim. For perspective, an American is twenty times more likely to be murdered than killed by a red light violator.

True speeding numbers and percentages are similarly low.

☛ Targeting invisible, non-dangerous violations for a very minor cause of crashes is bad enough, but now camera promoters are exploiting legal right turns on red.

This is another very questionable, not even remotely dangerous, letter of the law versus spirit of the law violation.

\* According to a 1998 U.S. Department of Transportation report, improper right turns on red caused only 2,378 crashes of 6.33 million U.S. collisions.

That’s a microscopic 0.037 percent of all crashes. Again, safety isn’t even in the picture.

Over 80 percent of Los Angeles County red light camera tickets are

for questionable stops for right turns on red. Cameras in Duncanville, Texas, a city with a population of 38,000, handed out over 40,000 right turn on red tickets.

RedFlex, an Australia-based ticket camera company, started this heinous scam. It’s not just questionable stops either. Many people swear they knew about the cameras and made sure they had stopped!

Clever placement of the stop bar trigger devices before the actual point of turning can entrap hundreds every day.

An 82-year-old man, dying of cancer, was entrapped in Herlingen, Texas. Despite swearing innocence, writing letters, and attending a hearing, he was forced to pay the fine.

Despite documenting only two improper right turn on red crashes, Burleson, Texas issues thousands of right on red tickets.

Randall James, an award-winning businessman, challenged a right turn on red ticket charged to one of his business vehicles.

He knew for a fact that he was not driving that truck, but despite having a GPS device installed, he was unable to determine which employee was driving during the alleged violation.

James challenged the ticket, but despite proving his innocence, the hearing official demanded payment. James appealed to a real court while a local newspaper reporter observed the scenario.

Two days later, a letter from the city arrived at James’ house. They dismissed the ticket “on a technicality.” Was the dismissal due to fear of media exposure to their extortion racket?

Houston attorney Randall

Kallinen challenged (for a client) three red light on red tickets in court. The judge dismissed the tickets as “hearsay evidence” – there was no proof who was driving the car.

Camera companies promised in the 1990s that they would not target right turns on red and that their trigger lines only reacted to vehicle speeds over 16 mph.

Now they set their lines to flash photograph at 1 to 2 mph. This means that if a front tire rolls over the stop line and stops, a ticket can still be issued.

Legal right turns on red need to be changed from having to come to a complete stop to a yield. Most intersections, with separate right turn lanes, already post yield signs.

It’s petty and vindictive to ticket someone for arguably not coming to a 100 percent complete stop before turning right on red.

Remember, this “violation” causes only a microscopic 0.037 percent of all crashes.

In the real world of driving, right turns on red are already a yield. Millions of drivers obey the spirit of the law by safely yielding as they legally turn right on red.

The letter of the law is wrong and needs to be changed to reflect the safe expedition of traffic. ■

\* **"Analysis of Crossing Path Crashes" (2001- using '98 data). 58,000 Intersection right turn into path (RTIP) x 4.1% signal violations = 2378 Right on red crashes.**  
 ☛ **70%+ RLY tickets < 1 sec. red**  
**Tables 3-1 (p.10), 4-1 (p.16)**