

Does a ticket get issued every time the lights flash?

- The visible flash occurs when the traffic enforcement camera system detects a possible red light running violation. Before a citation is issued, video of the incident is reviewed.

Is a human reviewing the tickets to make sure there is an actual violation?

- Before a citation is issued, a commissioned Des Moines Police Officer reviews the video of the incident to determine if there is probable cause to believe a violation has in fact occurred and to ensure that multiple citations do not issue for a single violation. If the officer reviews the video and does not believe that a violation has occurred, the citation will not issue. The officer reviews two still photographs and a close up of the vehicle license plate. The officer verifies the license plate is correct and matches the vehicle in the photographs and video.

The notice I received shows my vehicle at a complete stop. Why did I get a ticket?

- The photo included on the notice of infraction captures one moment in the course of the incident and may not tell the entire story. A link is provided in the notice that will allow you to watch the full video recording of the incident online which can confirm whether the vehicle came to a complete stop before the stop line or not. If you believe the video shows that your vehicle did come to a complete stop before the stop line (or even if you don't), you are entitled to a contested hearing in front of a neutral judge, upon timely request, to determine whether the City has proven the violation.

Are drivers being cited for making legal free right hand turns?

- No. A driver facing a red signal may make a right hand turn if there is no sign prohibiting such a turn, but only after coming to a complete stop before the stop line and remaining stopped to allow other vehicles and traffic to complete their lawful movements within the intersection. If the reviewing officer observes that the vehicle comes to a complete stop before the stop line and does not interfere with other traffic or pedestrians as the vehicle proceeds into the intersection to make a lawful right turn, no citation will be issued.

Are drivers being cited for rolling right hand turns?

- Yes. A driver facing a red signal may make a right hand turn if there is no sign prohibiting such a turn, but only after coming to a complete stop before the stop line and remaining stopped to allow other vehicles and traffic to complete their lawful movements within the intersection. If the driver facing a red signal fails to completely stop before entering the intersection to make a right turn, the driver has committed a traffic infraction and may be cited.

Are these cameras addressing an actual public safety issue, or is this all about revenue?

- According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, red light running causes hundreds of deaths and tens of thousands of injuries each year. An Institute study of urban crashes found that these were the most common type of crash and 39 percent of such crashes resulted in injuries. The six approaches where cameras have been installed were chosen from 21 potential locations based on both a high rate of actual observed violations and a high number of accidents in recent years. In reality, the rate of violations in the first months show a much higher rate of

violation than studies projected, particularly the westbound approach of Kent-Des Moines Road at International Blvd. Red light running at these intersections is a public safety issue, and photo enforcement cameras are a cost effective method for addressing the issue without taking patrol officers away from other calls.

Where does the money raised by the fines go?

- The City ordinance creating the red light running camera enforcement program mandates that 100 percent of the revenue raised by the red light cameras is to be spent for public safety purposes. "Public safety purposes" specifically includes general fund expenditures for police services and funding for intersection safety projects. DMMC 10.40.070

Do photo enforcement cameras violate people's privacy?

- Courts have consistently found there is no expectation of privacy in matters that are in open view from a public area. Despite this, traffic enforcement cameras are required to be placed in a manner that minimizes the intrusion on a driver's affairs. The camera "may only take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate and only while an infraction is occurring. The picture must not reveal the face of the driver or of passengers in the vehicle. The primary purpose of camera placement is to take pictures of the vehicle and vehicle license plate when an infraction is occurring." RCW 46.63.170(1)(d)

Have the yellow light cycles been shortened to increase the number of tickets?

- No. Cameras can only be placed at intersections where yellow light times have been set by traffic engineers in accordance with federal standards. State law forbids reducing yellow light times after installing traffic enforcement cameras. RCW 46.63.170(1)(b)

Do red light camera tickets affect my insurance?

- No. The state law that authorizes red light enforcement cameras specifies that these citations do not become part of the violator's driving record and are processed by the court in the same manner as parking tickets. RCW 46.63.170(2)