

Why I want MORE red-light cameras



This is the norm, not the exception. The lead car might have made it into the intersection while yellow. Might. The following car? Not a chance. Simply ran the red light, never slowed down. This is at Jefferson & Farm Hill, and it happens throughout the day (this was at about 10:10am on a Monday morning).

What is going on out there? 10 years ago I didn't see nearly the extent of red-light running and "California stops" that I see today. The red-light running occurs mostly on 4-lane streets, rarely 2-lane. And cities are removing red-light cameras daily, because they're too much hassle????!!

Two common varieties-

- Drivers making left-hand turns from a signaled left-hand-turn lane, and as long as they're close enough to the car ahead of them, they just keep moving through, even after the light's turned red. Not much speed is involved, since the car in front of them isn't flying through (they've got a green or maybe just-turned-yellow light, after all).
- Flying through a just-turned-red intersection. They've had plenty of time to see the light turn yellow, but instead of slowing down, they barrel through. They're so focused on trying to "make the light" that they don't even pay attention to cross-traffic.

That's why I'm a fan of red-light cameras. There needs to be a lot less subjectivity when it comes to dangerously-heavy & fast objects moving through intersections. I do recognize a double standard here; that a red-light camera can do much for catching cyclists flagrantly violating the laws, but I suggest two things. First, that there's a greater public purpose served in reducing accidents, injuries and fatalities than in extracting punishment for cyclists breaking the law. Both are needs, but one is far more important. And second, the motorists are getting worse over the years, picking up on the worst behaviors of cyclists, while I believe, really do, that cyclists are getting better.

Let's be careful out there at intersections. The good news is that potential accidents are almost-entirely avoidable by being cautious and assuming the worst (that they're going to run the light right after it turns green), and the cost of doing so comes down to, at most, a couple seconds of time. A reasonable exchange to safeguard the rest of your life. --Mike--