

## Police: Red light cameras do mean fewer crashes

By Kelsey Keny

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Don't run that red light.

On Monday Knoxville added red light cameras at two intersections: Millertown Pike and North Mall Road and Henley Street and Clinch Avenue.

Knoxville has 19 other red light cameras at intersections. Knoxville Police Department spokesman Darrell DeBusk said the decision to install the new systems was based on crash data.

"Those two intersections repeatedly have shown up in our crash analysis," DeBusk said, "That shows there's a lot of crashes, there's a lot of people running red lights. We felt like those two intersections needed to be addressed because of those issues."

DeBusk said car crashes at intersections are usually a T-bone style of crash, where one vehicle hits the side of the other. This results in less protection where the driver and passenger are sitting.

"When you're talking about an intersection crash, you're talking about one of the most dangerous types of crashes that can occur," DeBusk said.

Every year since Knoxville began using red light cameras, the city has had a reduction in total crashes, he said.

"They're very effective. Since we initiated the red light camera program, we have seen a steady reduction in the number of crashes occurring in those intersections. Last year we had a reduction of total crashes of 6.9 percent from the year prior," DeBusk said while looking at a report with data from Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 2013.

DeBusk said there's an officer who reviews every violation sent to KPD by the camera company before approving or rejecting the citations.

"People become aware of them. They do watch their speed, they watch the red lights cautiously and they do stop."

They're also aware of the \$50 fine that comes from running a red light. DeBusk said total collections of fines from red light cameras was \$1,116,920.95 in 2013. Much of

that money goes to the camera vendor LaserCraft, who pays for all the upkeep and installation of the program.

“Keep in mind there’s not one penny of taxpayer money that goes to the red light camera program,” DeBusk said. “If you never run a red light, you don’t contribute to the operation of the red light camera system at all.”

DeBusk said they’ve turned off cameras at a couple intersections where they were no longer needed. “We would like to see the program actually be forced out of business because people have decided they’re not going to violate the law and run red lights.”

For the first 30 days the two new intersection cameras will issue warning notices. After the warning period, offenders will receive notices for fines.



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