



## NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION

*Advocating, Representing, and Protecting the Interests of North American Motorists*

608/849/6000

Fax: 608/849/8697

E-mail: [nma@motorists.org](mailto:nma@motorists.org)

Web site: [www.motorists.org](http://www.motorists.org)

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### Washington Post: Red Light Cameras Increase Accidents

*Analysis of accident data shows accidents doubled at intersections with red light cameras in the District of Columbia.  
(from [www.thenewspaper.com](http://www.thenewspaper.com))*

Since the District of Columbia installed its first red light camera in 1999, The Washington Post has championed use of photo enforcement technology on both its editorial and news pages. Now, five years into the program, the District's largest newspaper has discovered that accidents are up significantly as a result of their use.

A comparison of accidents at camera intersections before / after they were installed produced the following results:

Accident Type	1998	2004	Change
Broadside	81	106	+30%
Fatal/Injury	144	262	+81%
Overall	365	755	+107%

The accident doubling effect is not a statistical anomaly, happening in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004. In 2003, accidents did increase, but by less than 200 percent.

AAA and other critics have accused the city of installing cameras in high-volume locations where they could generate thousands of tickets, regardless of how many accidents happened there. The analysis raised questions about where police installed the cameras. Nine intersections with cameras had two or fewer crashes annually in 1998 and 1999; seven reported no crashes that led to injuries or fatalities during that period. Officials installed cameras at six of the 20 most crash-prone intersections in 1998, data show.

In total, the city's photo enforcement program has issued two million red light and speed camera tickets worth \$151 million. DC police have never studied the accident data and do not dispute the Post's findings.

#### Key Statistic:

*The analysis shows that the number of crashes at locations with cameras more than doubled, from 365 collisions in 1998 to 755 last year. Injury and fatal crashes climbed 81 percent, from 144 such wrecks to 262. Broadside crashes, also known as right-angle or T-bone collisions, rose 30 percent, from 81 to 106 during that time frame.*

#### Article Excerpt:

*Douglas Noble, the chief traffic engineer for the D.C. Department of Transportation, said his office was examining crash data and plans to review the red-light camera locations. The department collects the data from police reports and advises police about where to install the devices. Noble said that no studies have been conducted on the District's red-light cameras in several years but that he "would not disagree" with The Post's analysis. "I don't necessarily have an explanation" for the trends, he said.*

Source: [D.C. Red-Light Cameras Fail to Reduce Accidents](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/03/AR2005100301844.html) (Washington Post, 10/4/2005)  
(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/03/AR2005100301844.html>)