



**PhotoSafe** is Albemarle County's photo red light enforcement program. This is an important and necessary traffic safety initiative - during the three year period from January 2006 to January 2009 there have been 177 crashes at the Route 29/Rio Road intersection alone, 22 of which were directly attributable to red light running.

Red light cameras:

- Increase safety and improve compliance with laws.
- Supplement the uniformed police force by monitoring red light violations
- Reduce the risks involved in red light violation enforcement at large intersections.

The locations of monitored intersections will be highly publicized as they become active. The first intersection to be included in the PhotoSafe program is Route 29 North and Rio Road. Other intersections may be added in the future, with the Route 20/Route 250 intersection as the most likely next location.

Although intersections are constantly being videotaped, only violators will be photographed and receive a civil penalty for violations.

Information on the Virginia law governing the photo-monitoring systems to enforce traffic light signals can be found under the Code of Virginia section 15.2-968.1.

The PhotoSafe program is scheduled to begin with a 30-day warning period starting in early November 2010, and active enforcement will begin in early December 2010.

### **How Does It Work?**

Signs are located within 500 feet of each photo enforcement intersection in an effort to remind motorists to comply with the traffic signal laws. The camera system is constantly in operation but will only trigger when a violation occurs during the red light cycle. The system is wired to the traffic lights and to sensors that are buried in the roadway. Vehicles that cross the sensors after the signal has turned red for one half a second are in violation and activate the camera system.

Each vehicle that is in violation is photographed 3 times and a 12-second video is also produced documenting the violation.

- The first photo is taken at the stop bar as evidence to show that the light was red prior to the vehicle entering the intersection
- The second photo is the vehicle's license plate for identification purposes
- The third photo is taken to show evidence of the vehicle proceeding through the intersection while the light is still red.

The photographed documentation of the red light violation is evidence for the police department to issue a civil penalty to the owner of the vehicle. Documentation can not be used for any other purpose except enforcement of red light running.



### What is the Penalty?

There is a \$50.00 civil fine for each photo enforced red light running violation. No court costs are associated with the fine and there are no driver license points assessed and no insurance implications for a violation. By law, the Department of Motor Vehicles and insurance companies cannot be notified of the offense. This violation does not affect drivers that are on probation with the court or with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

### How Many Intersections Will Be Monitored?

Albemarle County is authorized to monitor a total of 9 intersections by Virginia State Code guidelines of one intersection per 10,000 residents. There is no limit to the number of cameras that can be used to monitor an intersection.

Currently, cameras are installed at the US 29 North and Rio Road intersection.

The following factors were used for the selection of this intersection:

- High incidence of accidents
- Rate of red light violations occurring at the intersection
- Difficulty police have experienced when apprehending violators – either in patrol cars or on foot
- Ability of police to apprehend violators safely within a reasonable distance from the violation
- Pedestrian safety

### Who Is Responsible?

The operator of the vehicle is liable for the fine. The video and photographed evidence of the red light violation will be available for review and inspection by the registered owner or driver of the vehicle. There is a legal presumption that the registered owner, lessee, or renter of the vehicle was the person who committed the violation. This presumption can be challenged by affidavit or testimony under oath in open court that the owner, lessee, or renter was not the driver at the time of the violation.

### How can I learn more?

The primary focus of the **PhotoSafe** program is public awareness and education. The success of the program is measured in the reduction of red light running and not by the number of vehicles caught violating the law. For further questions, contact the **PhotoSafe** Program Coordinator by phone at **434-296-5807 ext: 5152** or email at **chintz@albemarle.org**. You can also visit the PhotoSafe website at **<http://www.albemarle.org/photosafe>**.

### More sites containing information on this topic:

- VDOT – Virginia Department of Transportation at **<http://www.virginiadot.org/info/photored.asp>**
- U.S Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration at **<http://www.fhwa.dotgov/>**
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at **<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>**
- National Campaign to Stop Red Light Running at **<http://www.stopedlightrunning.com/>**
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety at **<http://www.iihs.org/>**
- Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety at **<http://www.saferoads.org/>**