

Laser Technology, Inc.

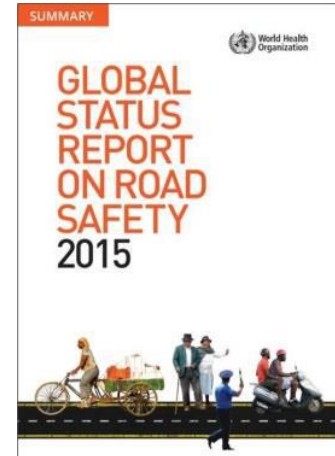
Video-Backed Traffic Enforcement Mandates on the Horizon for U.S. Police Departments

Proven Technology and Tactics that Reduces Road Fatalities

Video-Backed Traffic Enforcement Mandates on the Horizon for U.S. Police Departments

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— World Health Organization (WHO)

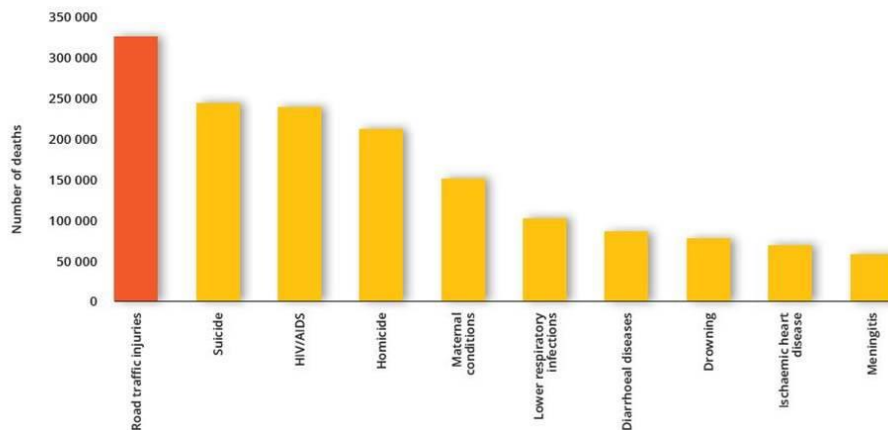
CENTENNIAL, Colorado – Video imaging will soon be a basic requirement for hand-held traffic enforcement devices in the United States, technology and law enforcement experts say, as some U.S. police departments mimic a global trend toward mandatory video and image evidence for speeding and other related citations.



Speeding continues to be the most violated traffic law around the world, one that accounts for 27 percent of motor vehicle crash deaths annually – nearly 10,000 people – in the U.S. alone. With growing mandates for dashboard cameras inside police cruisers and the increased call for departments to equip officers with body cams, video-equipped traffic enforcement devices are the next step toward enhanced roadway policing, experts say.

In fact, the World Health Organization’s most recent [Global Status Report on Road Safety](#) sets a lofty Sustainable Development Goal for reducing traffic fatalities around the world, and the United States has a long way to go in doing its part to help reduce global traffic-related deaths and injuries by 50% by 2020, something U.S. experts must look to improve with more stringent enforcement of the laws already in place.

FIGURE 1
Top ten causes of death among people aged 15–29 years, 2012



According to the WHO report, “the most positive changes to road user behavior occur when road safety legislation is supported by strong and sustained enforcement, and public awareness.” The United States traditionally lags behind other countries in these areas, partially because of its general disagreement over mandating video-backed traffic enforcement cameras.

While some municipalities across the U.S. are beginning to adopt video traffic enforcement, many more are reluctant to make the change as courts continue to stand by the testimony of sworn police officers as proof enough and consider it overkill to mandate video evidence.

Ohio, for instance, has been an action-packed battleground in the U.S. debate over camera enforcement. A [2015 law](#) required traffic enforcement cameras be manned by sworn police officers, but that [requirement recently was struck down in a state Supreme Court ruling](#). Without officers required to be present for ticketing, critics say these cameras are merely a “cash grab” mechanism to boost public coffers and that they may even violate drivers’ rights.

“Video enforcement hasn’t been widely established here yet, but it’s just a matter of time before it dramatically improves officers’ jobs, because we know it works.”
— **Robert Barret, Ohio Police Officer**

However, experts say evidence-based traffic enforcement delivers much-needed transparency for traffic citations, which will be the real force driving adoption across U.S. departments rather than a need to generate revenue.

“This is not about generating income; it’s about deterring habitual speeders and tailgaters from causing unnecessarily unsafe conditions,” said Robert Barrett, a Police Officer and Subject Matter Expert in Traffic Enforcement in Ohio. “Highly prosecutable enforcement reduces unsafe driving in problem areas.”

Given the sometimes unfavorable public perception of police all over the world in recent years, video evidence supporting what the ticketing officer is enforcing will actually help restore confidence in law enforcement while also protecting drivers and their rights.

“Video enforcement hasn’t been widely established here yet, but it’s just a matter of time before it dramatically improves officers’ jobs, because we know it works,” Barrett said. “As long as the video portrays what the officer is reporting, it’ll be a useful tool. Video is now part of the law enforcement system, and it’s not going away.”

While video enforcement may not be going away, it hasn’t caught on in the U.S. as it has internationally.



Success Abroad

The end goal, experts say, is to increase safety on U.S. roadways as successfully as it's been done internationally. That's because video-backed traffic enforcement has caught on much more quickly outside the U.S. and has demonstrated real promise in curbing chronic speeding, reducing traffic-related injuries and deaths, and generally improving safety along roadways.

"Several countries around the world have made highly public campaigns to increase road safety using video-backed enforcement tools," said Franck Margerin, Europe & Africa Sales Director, Laser Technology Inc. (LTI). "The goal is to reduce the forces dedicated to speed enforcement and have them transferred to higher-priority security tasks."

Some recent examples:

- Morocco made it a national priority to substantially reduce traffic fatalities. [After seat belt and speed limit laws showed little progress in reducing the number of casualties](#), the country changed a law that required picture evidence on roadways in 2012. Morocco heavily invested in LTI video technology, and traffic fatalities across the country have decreased by 14% since 2011 – from 4,200 reported deaths that year to [less than 3,600 in 2016](#).
- In a [public campaign in Trinidad and Tobago](#) from 2016, government officials deployed LTI's TruCam technology and reported average speeds on busy highways – and fatal traffic accidents – had dropped significantly since implementing video-enabled traffic enforcement devices. Police officials there cited [enhanced speed enforcement as its top highlight for that year](#).
- In Malaysia, [police deployed LTI video technology to monitor roadways during the high-traffic Chinese New Year](#) and beyond. Federal traffic police chief Senior Assistant Commissioner Datuk Abdul Aziz Yusof said the LTI 20-20 TruCam has a considerable advantage over fixed automated speed systems: "It's mobile so my men can use it while in a moving vehicle instead of a static speed trap," he said.
- The United Arab Emirates implemented a tougher unified traffic law with harsher penalties in 2016, and officials there [made the public very aware of the sophisticated technology they were using to curb speeding and reckless driving](#).



Trinidad and Tobago Police Service - Head of Highway and Patrol Branch Supt. Mathura Singh during an interview on the new process. Their strategy was to host several press conferences and remind public about increased speeding fines.

Even in Western Europe, where the reputations of its police officers often hold up in court and in public opinion, support for photo evidence is growing.

“There aren’t too many countries left in Europe using speed guns without picture evidence,” said Neal Westwood, Customer Service Adviser/Trainer for Tele-Traffic UK Ltd. “In this age of highly mobile and widely affordable video technology, there’s no longer a need for any ‘your word against mine’ scenario in traffic enforcement, especially when public safety is at risk.”

What’s Ahead

Speeding continues to be the most violated traffic law around the world, one that accounts for 27 percent of motor vehicle crash deaths annually – nearly 10,000 people – in the U.S. alone. Technology and law enforcement experts agree that video imaging will soon be a basic requirement for hand-held traffic enforcement devices in the United States, but adoption of proven road safety measures must be expedited, according to the WHO.

The Global Status Report on Road Safety indicates that while progress has been made in reducing road traffic deaths worldwide, much more must be done: “1.25 million people are killed each year on the world’s roads, and that this figure has plateaued since 2007. ... However, these efforts to reduce road traffic deaths are clearly insufficient if the international road safety targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals are to be met.”

And that means U.S. law enforcement agencies must adopt video enforcement technology sooner than later. With growing mandates for dashboard cameras inside police cruisers and the increased call for departments to equip officers with body cams, state and perhaps federal requirements for video-equipped devices for enhanced roadway policing are imminent.

“We saw a similar trend with law enforcement agencies progressing from RADAR to LIDAR speed detection tools because of the vastly enhanced accuracy in pinpoint targeting,” said Eric Miller, president of Laser Technology Inc. “Similarly, the kind of incontrovertible evidence video and images can deliver – vehicle make, model and license plate number – will increase enforcement, deter problem driving and begin shaping more careful roadway habits in the U.S., including speeding, tailgating and even distracted driving.”



Additionally, when a minor traffic stop becomes something bigger – perhaps the driver has an outstanding warrant or contraband is found in the vehicle – the probable cause for the initial stop becomes all too critical. Officers’ presenting video evidence means that prosecutors can more confidently seek conviction, which is principally important given that non-convictions can result in additional charges being dropped and even laws being reversed.

This data neutralizes defense lawyer attempts to disprove that the traffic officer didn’t have sufficient, non-biased evidence against the client, reducing the burden on an already heavily-taxed court system.

Summary

The WHO report emphasizes the growing need for commitment to road safety via proven speed deterrents like photo traffic enforcement: “Despite a strong evidence base around what works, it shows insufficient attention has been paid to road safety and that a heavy price is being paid in terms of lives lost, long-term injury and pressure on health-care services. The international attention promised to the issue of road safety by the new Sustainable Development Goal target to halve deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020 presents a golden opportunity for much-needed action, and one that must be seized by all countries. Through this, the pace of progress can be accelerated and an actual decline in global road traffic deaths realized.”

Globally, video traffic enforcement is the evidence base that has proven to decrease average speeds, reduce traffic-related fatalities, and improve overall roadway safety, and widespread adoption in the U.S. will be pivotal in attaining the WHO’s goals.

So, if we know that video traffic enforcement works, why isn’t it more common in the U.S.? Drivers generally understand the rules of the road, but as long as they believe there’s a way around those rules, they will continue to be a danger on the roadways. That’s why investing in heightened enforcement and raising public awareness around that enforcement is critical.

LTI specializes in developing premier video-supported traffic enforcement devices and educating police departments and the public about their benefits. [Learn more about how LTI can help reduce poor driving behaviors and ultimately save lives.](#)