



Reimagining public safety: Improving equity and accuracy, along with safety

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This is part two of our NEW public safety blog series. [Part 1](#) focused on how traffic violations negatively impact public health and safety. In part 2, we highlight ways state and local agencies can incorporate automation to cost-effectively improve accuracy, equity and safety.

We are all human, and no matter how much professional expertise we may possess, we are inherently more error-prone than automated systems. [Research](#) on enforcement confirms this theory, finding that bias is evident whenever human-issued tickets are compared to those captured by cameras.

Camera-based traffic enforcement is automatic and systematic, and that means that violations are captured more consistently, accurately and equitably. Red light cameras, for example, automatically capture every vehicle that runs a red light, using the traffic signal itself and sensors that monitor vehicle location. It's also standard practice to have a person trained to validate violations and confirm that there is clear evidence before a citation is issued to a vehicle [owner](#). Bloomberg reports that more widespread use of automated traffic enforcement would “result in more consistent, fair and comprehensive enforcement of traffic [laws](#).”

Here are a few key factors to keep in mind as you work to modernize public safety operations to include automated traffic enforcement.

1. Gain and sustain public support

By focusing on improving public safety and modifying driver behavior, agency leaders can push back against charged rhetoric about ulterior motives, including revenue generation. Public safety organizations such as AAA, IIHS and the Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety, among others, have drafted a checklist for municipalities planning to implement red light cameras, for example. This checklist provides helpful guidelines to increase transparency and improve public support, [including](#):

- Establish an advisory committee with stakeholders, including victim advocates, residents, and school officials;
- Meet with media to build support and educate the public;
- Publicize safety issues and the need for better solutions;
- Create a website and social media plan describing the program;
- Hold a kickoff event;
- Connect the program to larger public safety initiatives such as Vision Zero;
- After program launch, continue to meet with the advisory committee and the media to maintain transparency and sustain public support.

2. Reduce police interactions

Automated enforcement systems that are installed at fixed locations or in mobile units reduce the need for police to interact directly with anyone who violates traffic laws. Decreasing direct interactions reduces the danger to officers, and also reduces COVID-19 infection risks. Camera-based systems use sophisticated data and imaging technologies to capture violations based on vehicle speed alone. This is critically important to reducing escalation risks inherent in interactions between police and the public. While the number of those interactions have decreased in recent years, traffic stops remain the largest reason people interact with police officers. And the largest reason for traffic stops is speeding.

Rather than casting a wide net, which is often perceived as targeting specific groups, we advise our clients in public safety agencies to deploy automated traffic enforcement to avoid manual profiling and help police increase their focus on known egregious criminal activity.

3. Leverage data-driven analytics

Adopting automated, camera-based enforcement provides an opportunity for agencies to leverage advanced analytics to identify the most dangerous intersections or streets. By making informed decisions about where to place cameras, agencies can focus their limited resources where they're most needed, ensuring responsible use of scarce taxpayer dollars and better enforcing traffic laws in areas with the highest risk for crashes and fatalities.

We counsel public safety agency clients to use impartial and well-documented methods to determine where to locate traffic cameras. At a minimum, agencies should use detailed traffic information and proximity to at-risk populations in determining camera placement.

Agencies can also use information from intersections with the highest percentage of serious crashes, or fatalities relative to traffic volume in specific areas. Northwestern University, for example, produced an independent study that outlined a location determination procedure for red light cameras. Such independent studies offer valuable guidelines that can help municipal leaders implement reasonable and problem-focused enforcement programs.

Another sensible approach that municipalities deploy focuses on enforcing the speed limit near locations where people are most at risk, such as road work zones, school zones, and parks. Adding speed enforcement in these areas reduces risks to vulnerable children and workers who must function in dangerous locations.

Why Conduent Transportation

Conduent Transportation can provide specific research that demonstrates how and why automated enforcement is effective to deter unsafe driver behavior, especially in scenarios that put people at risk of injury or death due to traffic crashes. State and local agency clients also gain from our decades of success and lessons learned through speed and red light enforcement programs implemented across the U.S., and around the world.

Automated traffic enforcement benefits everyone's safety on roadways, using tools and techniques that are cost-effective and inherently valuable to inform risk assessment and traffic planning, while protecting privacy and improving transparency. We stand ready to help agencies responsible for public safety to focus their limited resources, while still enforcing traffic laws.

To learn more about how we can help you ramp up automated traffic enforcement, visit us at www.ConduentTransportation.com, or email us at transportation@conduent.com.

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