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## STUDY FINDS RED LIGHT CAMERAS CAUSE ACCIDENTS



[They generate revenue nothing more](#) February 16, 2013 by [Dr. Richard Swier](#)

Barbara Langland-Orban, PhD, John T. Large, PhD, Etienne E. Pracht, PhD from the University of South Florida (USF) conducted a study on red light cameras in 2008. They updated their study in 2011. Langland-Orban, et. al. found that red light cameras (RLC) increase the number of accidents at intersections by 28%.

The [2008 study](#) found:

“Rather than improving motorist safety, red-light cameras significantly increase crashes and are a ticket to higher auto insurance premiums researchers at the University of South Florida College of Public Health conclude. The effective remedy to red-light running uses engineering solutions to improve intersection safety, which is particularly important to Florida’s elderly drivers, the researchers recommend.

Instead, they increase crashes and injuries as drivers attempt to abruptly stop at camera intersections. If used in Florida, cameras could potentially create even worse outcomes due to the state’s high percent of elderly who are more likely to be injured or killed when a crash occurs.”

“The rigorous studies clearly show red-light cameras don’t work,” said lead author Barbara Langland-Orban, professor and chair of health policy and management at the USF College of Public Health.

The [2011 study update](#) states:

“It is important for the public at large and federal, state, and local officials to understand that motor vehicle safety is advanced through evidence-based methods. Attempts to generate revenue through traffic citations are directly contrary to public safety since infractions are increased by improper roadway engineering, creating hazards and expense for the public.”

The 2011 study update indicates that the media is complicit in promoting the positives of red light cameras and ignoring negatives. The 2011 study update noted:

“One journal reporter, who requested anonymity, revealed that the media can be a source of misinformation on RLCs. She disclosed that special interests that profit from cameras have threatened to reduce or withdraw their advertising revenues if the news is not reported that RLCs provide a safety benefit. The reporter explained that with such threats, journalistic ethics permit an editor to report the advertiser’s perspective if also disclosing the contrary assessment that RLCs pose a safety threat, leaving readers to form their own conclusion. However, she explained that not all editors abide by this principle, which is compounded by the many controversies surrounding RLCs. For example, a Florida newspaper reported that their local poll found support for RLCs. The second half of the article mentioned some of the concerns about RLCs, which included using them to generate revenue, failing to save lives, failing to significantly reduce crashes, and

increasing rear-end crashes (Thalji, 2010).”

Cities and counties install red light cameras as a “hidden tax” on motorists. RLCs are a new revenue stream for government and those companies that produce RLCs according to the study:

Comprehensive studies from North Carolina, Virginia, and Ontario have all reported cameras are significantly associated with increases in crashes, as well as crashes involving injuries. The study by the Virginia Transportation Research Council also found that cameras were linked to increased crash costs.

Some studies that conclude cameras reduced crashes or injuries contained major “research design flaws,” such as incomplete data or inadequate analyses, and were conducted by researchers with links to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The IIHS, funded by automobile insurance companies, is the leading advocate for red-light cameras.

The Florida legislature is considering HB 4011 which would [repeal the use of red light cameras](#) in the state.

## Dr. Richard Swier

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