

## Automated Red-Light Camera Enforcement Violation Processing Methods & Criteria

This document provides general information for the public about the methods and criteria used by the City of Chicago and its vendors to process and determine red-light violations through the automated red-light camera enforcement system.

This document is for general information only regarding the red-light camera enforcement system and is intended to provide the public with more information about the operation of the program.

Currently there are 300 automated red-light cameras deployed at 149 intersections across the City of Chicago. The red-light cameras operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Intersection approaches enforced by a red-light camera are marked with a sign visible to approaching traffic indicating it is monitored by an automated red-light camera enforcement system.



### Roles and Functions

Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT):

- ☒ Manages the on-street signage at red-light camera intersections;
- ☒ Manages the red-light camera contract and vendor;
- ☒ CDOT vendor manages the equipment installation, operation and maintenance, including roadway striping related to red-light camera intersections;
- ☒ CDOT vendor collects data, video and photographic evidence of possible violations; and
- ☒ CDOT vendor performs initial review of data, video and photographic evidence and makes first determination of a possible violation applying city requirements.

Chicago Department of Finance (DOF):

Manages DOF vendor for review and violation processing, including enforcement of service levels to ensure accurate reviews;  
DOF vendor performs a second and final review of data, video and photographic evidence to confirm a violation;  
DOF performs further audit or review functions as needed; and  
DOF mails violation notices, processes payments and manages all customer service functions.

Chicago Department of Administrative Hearings (DOAH):

Administrative Law Judges review evidence and make final determinations of contested red-light camera violations.

General Criteria for Collecting Data on Possible Violations

Recorded images are collected for each possible violation. Specifically, the red-light camera system provides three (3) still photo images and one (1) twelve-second video of the vehicle that document the following:

- Photo 1 - shows the front tires of the vehicle before the stop bar with the red signal indication visible in the photo;
- Photo 2 - shows the rear tires of the vehicle past the stop bar with a red signal indication visible in the photo;
- License Plate Photo - shows a close up of the license plate of the vehicle. This image is cropped from Photo 1 or Photo 2; and
- Video Clip - shows a twelve-second video clip of the event (generally 4 seconds prior to the event and 8 seconds after the event).

The camera's strobe light flashes in order to capture these recorded images based on the possibility that a violation occurred. The red-light camera system uses a radar system to monitor the vehicle's speed and location to determine the likelihood a violation may occur. The system is programmed to compile photographic and video images if upon entering the intersection, the traffic control signal has been red for at least 0.3 seconds before the vehicle enters the intersection.

Cameras monitor multiple lanes at each intersection approach and the relevant lane is referenced in the record. Lanes are numbered sequentially from the curb lane out toward the median as 1, 2, 3, 4 (with Lane 1 being the lane closest to the curb) depending on the number of lanes in that direction of travel. Bike lanes are considered a portion of Lane 1.

The red-light camera system measures the duration of the amber (i.e., yellow) and red-light times during each traffic signal cycle, including separate phases for arrows. In the record of the violation, these measured times are truncated to the tenth of a second and included in the

“databar” in both Photo 1 and Photo 2. Therefore, for example, a measured time of 3.09 seconds will be reflected as 3.0 seconds in the databar of both photos. Possible violations will only be processed further under the following criteria for the measured amber time:

- Where the traffic signals are set for 3.0 seconds amber, the measured amber time must be at least 3.0 seconds; and
- Where the traffic signals are set for 4.0 seconds amber, the measured amber time must be at least 4.0 seconds.

The license plate must be visible and legible in the captured photo for the possible violation to be processed further.

Only after two separate people have reviewed the photographic and video images is an event determined to have been a red-light camera violation.

Notices of violation are not issued under the following circumstances:

If the video shows that the vehicle did not proceed through the intersection;

For right turns, if the video shows that a vehicle came to a complete stop and then proceeded with the turn, unless the intersection is one enforced by the red-light camera system as a No Turn On Red restricted intersection;

If the reviewing technician cannot determine the required stopping location, as mandated by law;

If the vehicle is part of a funeral procession; and

If the video shows a police officer or traffic control aide is present and directed a vehicle through a red-light.

Additional Issuance Criteria

Reviewers apply additional criteria in their determination of a violation:

In determining a violation on a right or left turn, if there is both a turn arrow and a general signal indication illuminated, the status of the turn arrow signal indication takes precedence.

The same photographs and/or video can be used to issue violations to multiple vehicles committing simultaneous or near simultaneous violations.

### Administrative Hearings

Owners may contest a red-light camera violation. If requested, the contested red-light camera violation will be adjudicated by an Administrative Law Judge at the Department of Administrative Hearings. The following items / information are accessible to Administrative Hearings Administrative Law Judges:

- The violation notice;
- Photo 1 of Violation;
- Photo 2 of Violation;
- License Plate of Violating Vehicle;
- Video Clip of Violation; and
- Reviewing technician's certification of the violation.

People contesting notices of violation may present any relevant materials at the hearing.

The above information is not intended as legal advice to any existing or future red-light camera enforcement violations, and does not provide or create additional legal defenses to red-light camera enforcement violations that do not otherwise exist under the law.

For additional information about contesting a ticket, visit [www.cityofchicago.org/finance](http://www.cityofchicago.org/finance).