

Speed Cameras in US Catch Violators, Save Lives

By Paul Sisco
Washington, DC
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Each year about 13,000 people die on U.S. roads and highways in speed-related traffic accidents. A group of state governors says 35 jurisdictions are now using automatic speed cameras. Government and insurance industry officials argue such cameras not only catch speeders, they slow down drivers and save lives. Paul Sisco has this searching for solutions report.



Speed cam catches this image at an traffic intersection

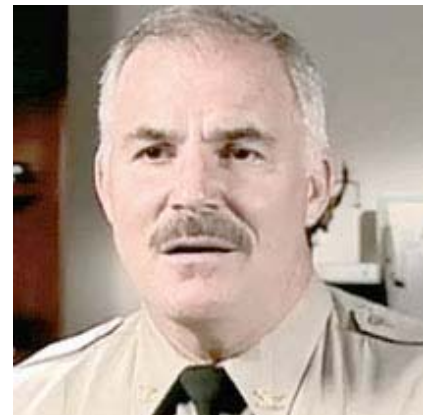
The goal of government leaders is to slow drivers down and make roadways safer. Studies by the [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#), which provided some of the video, show the speed cameras are meeting that goal.

Narration: Automatic enforcement is a way to use technology to help law enforcement agencies identify and deter return traffic violations.

The mounted cameras detect speeding cars, photograph the license plates, and violators are fined.

J. Tom Manger, a local police chief, says that the cameras are effective. He says, "Automotive enforcement has a tremendous deterrent effect. You can look at the number of violations each month when the program started. Look at what we have now six years later, and see a significant reduction in the number of violations that are occurring."

An Arizona highway was the first in the United States to use mounted speed cameras. Here, the cameras reduce the number of speeders by more than 10 percent.



J. Tom Manger

"This is just another way to create a safer environment," says Mayor Mary Manross of Scottsdale, Arizona.

The Insurance Institute study found that in residential areas, signs alone slow drivers down and cameras reduced speeding by as much as 70 percent.

Even so, Charles Terlizzi of the [National Motorists](#)



Speed cam

Association opposes the speed traps, as he refers to the cameras. He says, "The only effect they have is locally where the cameras are placed and over a short period of time."

Many also argue the automatic cameras are not always accurate. But Chief Manger disagrees. "You can't get any more fair and objective and consistent than a photo enforcement program," he said.

The chief's community is the first in the Mid-Atlantic area to use the cameras. Arizona's governor urges cameras be placed statewide, while insurance officials suggest more communities slow down drivers this way.

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