Q. What is red light running?

It is a violation that occurs when a driver enters the intersection when the traffic signal is red. A driver that enters the intersection on a green or amber traffic signal will not be ticketed by a red light camera system.

Q. How do the red light cameras work?

The red light camera takes 2 photographs. The first photo is taken when a vehicle is behind the stop bar and about to enter the intersection when the traffic signal is red. The second photo is taken when the vehicle is actually within the intersection. In order to capture the license plate, both photos show the rear of the vehicle only. The violation notice sent to the registered owner includes both of these photos in addition to an enlarged photograph of the rear license plate of the vehicle.

Q. When will red light cameras be operating in Kingston?

There were tentative plans for red light cameras to be operational at the 10 intersections noted below in Kingston in early 2017. In April of 2016, City Council deferred the discussion about red light cameras until next year so there are currently no plans to install red light cameras in Kingston at this time.

1. Queen Street & Montreal Street
2. Division Street & John Counter Boulevard
3. Perth Road & Unity Road
4. Taylor Kidd Boulevard & Bayridge Drive
5. Bath Road & Portsmouth Avenue
6. Gardiners Road & Princess Street
7. Princess Street & Sir John A Macdonald Boulevard
8. Princess Street & Taylor Kidd/John Counter Boulevard
9. Gardiners Road & Taylor Kidd Boulevard
10. John Counter Boulevard & Sir John A Macdonald Boulevard

Q. How serious is the red light running problem in Kingston?

As part of a red light camera study, violation surveys were completed in the City at 22 intersections for a period of 6 hours at each location. There was an average of 5 violations per day at each intersection with a high of 30 violations per day at one location.
Red light running is one of the causes of angle or “t-bone” collisions, the most severe type of collision that often results in serious injuries. A review of the City’s collision history showed that an average of 60 right-angle collisions occur per year at signalized intersections. In Kingston, 64% of right-angle collisions result in serious injuries. By contrast, 78% of rear-end collisions in Kingston result in property damage only.

Q. How do red light cameras increase safety if they can’t actually prevent a collision from happening?

Public awareness of red light cameras reduces aggressive driving behaviour and decreases red light running. The cameras are a deterrent such that the threat of a ticket can change motorist behaviour. Studies have shown that red light violation rates can decrease by as much as 42% within a few months of camera installation and that right-angle collisions can be reduced by 25%. The benefits of improved driving behaviour can even spread to intersections without red light cameras.

Q. Why install red light cameras? Aren’t there other ways to reduce red light running?

As part of the background research for the City’s red light camera study, the City’s high collision locations were reviewed in the field. Minor improvements were suggested for some of the locations but none of these were thought to be effective enough alone to solve the red light running issues. Some of the factors considered were the length of amber and all-red clearances, visibility of traffic signal heads, proper signage, lane configuration and roadway alignment.

Q. What if a vehicle is making a left turn and the signal turns red when the vehicle is still in the intersection?

As long as the vehicle ENTERS the intersection on a green or amber traffic signal, the left-turning motorist will not be ticketed for turning when the traffic signal is red.

Q. What if a vehicle is making a permitted right turn on red? Will the motorist receive a ticket?

In accordance with the Highway Traffic Act of Ontario, as long as the vehicle comes to a complete stop before the stop bar prior to turning, the motorist will not be ticketed for turning right on red.

Q. Why not just make the amber light longer so that vehicles have more time to clear the intersection?

The City uses Ministry of Transportation Ontario guidelines to determine both the length of the amber and the all-red phase at signalized intersections. The guidelines consider the posted speed limit and the width of the intersection. A longer amber or a longer all-
red may only encourage motorists to continue driving through the intersection and it increases overall delays for all users of the intersection.

Q. Will the City shorten the length of amber lights at traffic signals in order to catch more vehicles running red lights?

No. The City will continue to adhere to Ministry of Transportation Ontario guidelines to determine both the length of the amber and the all-red phase at signalized intersections. The length of amber lights at signalized intersections will not be adjusted in order to catch more red light runners.

Q. Are the cameras installed on all approaches at the intersection?

No. Red light cameras are typically installed on only one approach of an intersection. The camera is usually installed on the approach that has the highest risk of red light running.

Q. Are signs installed at intersections with red light cameras in order to warn motorists?

Yes. All intersections with red light cameras must be signed on all 4 approaches. Since red light cameras are typically installed on only one approach of an intersection, motorists may not be aware which approach has a camera.

Q. Do red light cameras replace police officers at intersections? Isn’t regular police enforcement enough?

Red light cameras are another tool being used to help police efforts and to discourage motorists from running red lights. It is difficult for police to enforce red light running since they must follow offenders through the intersection in order to catch them. The cameras allow police to focus on other enforcement needs.

Q. Do police have to show up in court when a red light camera ticket is appealed?

No. The photographic evidence provided to the judge by the red light cameras is very compelling so a police officer is not required to be in court when a ticket is appealed. This saves valuable time and allows police resources to be utilized where they are most needed. By contrast, when a motorist receives a red light running ticket directly from a police officer (not from a red light camera) the officer has to be in court if the ticket is appealed.

Q. What do Kingston Police think of red light cameras?

The following statement was issued by Kingston Police:
“The Kingston Police support a red light camera program in Kingston. Chief LaRochelle is familiar with the Ottawa program, which has been shown to increase public safety by inhibiting aggressive driving and decreasing the incidence of red light violations. Red light cameras have proven useful in discouraging motorists from running red lights, which allows police to focus on other enforcement needs.”

Q. What is the penalty for running a red light if caught by a red light camera system?

The set fine for running a red light is currently $325. This charge includes $260 returned to the municipality, a $60 victim surcharge and a $5 court cost. Since the registered owner of the vehicle may not actually be the driver that ran the red light, demerit points are NOT issued with red light camera tickets.

Q. What is the penalty for running a red light if caught by a police officer?

The set fine for running a red light when caught by a police officer is $325 and 3 demerit points.

Q. Do the cameras photograph every vehicle passing through the intersection?

No. The cameras only photograph vehicles that enter an intersection after the traffic signal has turned red. Vehicles that enter the intersection on a green or amber traffic signal will not be photographed.

Q. Can cyclists who run red lights be ticketed?

No. The red light camera will not detect and photograph cyclists who run red lights. Although cyclists are subject to the same laws as motor vehicles, there is currently no system in place that could identify cyclists in a photograph.

Q. Will emergency vehicles receive tickets for running red lights?

In accordance with the Highway Traffic Act of Ontario, all emergency vehicles responding to calls, including police, fire and ambulance MUST STOP at red lights to ensure that traffic has stopped before proceeding through the intersection. If an emergency vehicle does not come to a complete stop at a red light before entering the intersection, they will receive a ticket for a red light violation.

Q. Do the red light cameras still work when it is snowing? If the roads are icy will a motorist still receive a ticket for running a red light?

It is important that motorists adjust their driving to the current road conditions. Although the red light cameras can usually continue to operate during poor weather, if the stop bar (white line) is covered by snow and not clearly visible in the photograph taken by the
camera, the motorist will NOT receive a ticket. Even when the weather is clear, the stop bar must be visible for the motorist to be charged.

**Q. If a motorist stops slightly beyond the stop bar on a red light but doesn’t proceed through the intersection will they receive a ticket?**

Detection loops under the pavement behind the stop bar tell the red light camera system how fast a vehicle is travelling as they approach the intersection. The vehicle must be travelling at a specified threshold speed or higher for the camera to be activated. A vehicle travelling relatively slowly across the stop bar will not trigger the camera. If the camera is triggered but the vehicle stops and does not enter the intersection on a red light, the processing officer reviewing the photos will NOT process the violation notice and the motorist will NOT receive a ticket.

**Q. Will motorists in a funeral procession be ticketed for driving through a red light?**

If traffic at the intersection is being directly controlled by a police officer, motorists in a funeral procession will not be ticketed for driving through the red light. If there is a police vehicle parked within the intersection and the officer remains in the vehicle and does not directly control traffic, then the motorists in the funeral process will be ticketed for driving through the red light.

**Q. How are violations processed? Are the photographs carefully reviewed before motorists are ticketed?**

The contractor typically downloads the digital film at the intersections on a weekly basis. All images are sent to a centralized processing centre operated by the City of Toronto. Trained Provincial Offences Officers carefully review every photograph to verify information and to ensure that the vehicle is in violation. Tickets are mailed to registered vehicle owners only if the photographs clearly show that the vehicle ran the red light. The local court system is responsible for any appeals or trials.

**Q. Who receives the ticket for running a red light detected by a camera system?**

The registered license plate holder receives the ticket, regardless of who was driving the vehicle.

**Q. Do red light cameras violate privacy?**

Every attempt is made to minimize capturing members of the public in the photos. If members of the public are inadvertently captured on film, it will not be possible to identify them from the photos.

**Q. How long does it take to receive the ticket in the mail?**
The regulations state that the ticket must be sent within 23 days of the offence. The letter is expected to arrive within 7 days so the ticket should be received within 30 days or less after the offence.

Q. What is the cost of a red light camera?

The red light camera contractor installs, operates and maintains the camera system and then charges the municipality a monthly fee based on a minimum 5-year contract. The estimated cost to operate a red light camera system, exclusive of staff time, is $52,000 per camera per year. Based on a program with 10 cameras, the estimated total cost is $520,000 per year.

Q. Do red light cameras generate a lot of revenue?

The focus of the red light camera program is SAFETY and not a means to generate revenue. A successful red light camera program is revenue neutral. Since the incidence of red light running decreases after the installation of cameras, it is difficult to predict the number of red light violations. Once operating expenses and staff time are accounted for, municipalities cannot ensure that the program will generate revenue.

Q. How many violations are required per intersection in order for the program to pay for itself or “break even”?

An average of 0.5 violations per camera per day is required to “break even”. It is important to note that not all offenders receive tickets for reasons such as out of province vehicles cannot be ticketed, dirty license plates, plate blocked by trailer hitch and poor visibility due to weather.

Q. Who supplies the cameras? How big are the cameras? Where are they located?

The red light camera supply contract for all municipalities in the program is with the vendor Traffipax. The camera is an industrial digital camera, manufactured for unattended operation in an outdoor environment. The cameras are housed in a 1/2 metre by 1/2 metre by 1/2 metre enclosure. The cameras are mounted on a pole, approximately 20 metres in advance of the intersection and are mounted approximately 3.6 metres above the ground. These cameras operate even in darkness, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Q. Where are red light cameras currently operating in Ontario?

Red light cameras have been operating in Ontario since 2000 and have been installed in the following 7 municipalities thus far: City of Toronto, City of Ottawa, City of Hamilton, Region of Waterloo, Region of Peel, Halton Region and York Region. The City of London has plans to join the program along with the City of Kingston in early 2017.
Q. Where else are red light cameras operating?

In Canada, red light cameras are currently operating in the following 6 provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Within the United States, red light cameras are operating in 24 states. Red light cameras are used extensively in many other countries including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan and United Kingdom.