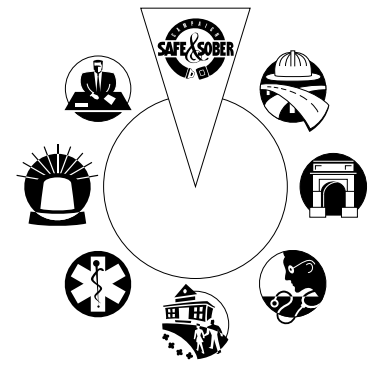


Every driver -- at one time or another -- has run a red light. But not every driver is aware of the serious consequences of doing so. Twenty percent of respondents in a recent Gallup survey (commissioned by the Potomac Chapter of the American Automobile Association) classified running red lights and stop signs as the second most dangerous driving behavior -- second only to driving while intoxicated. Subsequent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) focus group research found that not only is the public losing sight of the purpose of the traffic signal, but more importantly, compliance with traffic controls in general is deteriorating.



According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, disregarding red lights and other traffic control devices is the leading cause of urban crashes, representing 22 percent of the total number of crashes. The economic impact is estimated at \$7 billion each year in medical costs, time off work, insurance rate increases, and property damage.

To address this emerging traffic safety problem, community safety leaders can develop a comprehensive public information and education campaign against red light running that is coupled with aggressive law enforcement. The campaign goal is to create a safer community by re-establishing respect for traffic control devices; specifically, the traffic signal.

The objective of this campaign is to decrease the incidence of red light running by increasing the awareness of the hazards associated with non-compliance of traffic signals.

Community organizers can use the following strategies to reach their goal:

- Define the community's red light running problem;
- Identify the target audience(s);
- Develop alliances with local engineers, law enforcement, the media, and key "movers and shakers" within the community;
- Develop or obtain promotional materials on red light running;
- Educate the community on red light running hazards by obtaining media coverage of the campaign;
- Support red light running news coverage with targeted enforcement by all police agencies that have jurisdiction over the community; and
- Foster grassroots red light running education efforts in businesses and school and community organizations.

FHWA has produced a set of red light running campaign materials that include professionally-produced public service announcements (PSAs) for television, radio, and print, as well as a comprehensive *Strategic Planning Guide* that includes a 10-minute presentation video and step-by-step tips on working with law enforcement, leveraging resources, fundraising, and media relations, among others.

Armed with these tools, community coordinators can customize FHWA campaign materials to meet their local needs and successfully combat red light running. Thus far, over 30 communities across the country have successfully implemented red light running campaigns and local coordinators are enthusiastic about sharing their campaign experiences, successful partnering tips, and fundraising know-how. In addition, FHWA division and headquarters safety staff are available to provide technical assistance.

Communities interested in receiving the *Strategic Planning Guide* should submit a letter -- via mail or fax -- that responds to the following items:

- Brief description of the community or organization;
- Statement describing the community's red light running problem;
- How the community heard about FHWA's red light running campaign; and
- Contact person's name, address, phone, and fax.

Send or fax these letters to:

Safety Outreach Team
 Federal Highway Administration
 HHS-20
 400 7th Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20590
 Fax: (202) 366-2249



U.S. Department of Transportation

The Light is Red for a Reason: So Stop!

Additional copies of this piece can be found on FHWA's web site: <http://www.ohs.fhwa.dot.gov>