Chapter 13 Cameras

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13-1 Overview

Cameras are used in various ways on state highways to achieve speed reduction and/or compliance with posted speeds:

- Intelligent Transportation System and corridor operations for automated speed enforcement and red-light running enforcement,
- Work zone speed cameras, and
- Automated License Plate Recognition Systems.

13-2 Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) and Corridor Operations

ITS and corridor operations focus on the coordination and utilization of technology to manage a corridor, maximizing safety and efficiency. Activities include optimizing traffic signals, operating ramp meters and active traffic management systems, integrated corridor management, and using traffic cameras, traffic data collection systems, road/weather information systems, and variable message signs to provide up to date information to travelers. Included in this effort is the operation of six year-round traffic management centers across the state and one winter operations center at Snoqualmie Pass, supported by software, web application IT development, and maintenance staff.

13-2.1 Enforcement Programs – automated speed and red-light running cameras

Automated speed enforcement (ASE) and red light running (RLR) enforcement use cameras to detect traffic law infractions and provide photo or video documentation of the vehicle or driver violating the law. These automated programs enforce speed limits and traffic signal compliance to improve safety and reduce congestion. To learn more about these enforcement programs using cameras, refer to Enforcement programs - automated speed & red light running | TSMO | WSDOT. In addition, see the WSDOT TSMO website (TSMOWA.org) for more information about using cameras like radar cameras, “Your Speed Is”, and automated systems Speed management | TSMO | WSDOT.

13-3 Work Zone Speed Cameras (WZSCs)

During the 2023 legislative session, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) requested legislation authorizing the use of work zone speed cameras in active state highway construction, maintenance, and emergency work zones. The bill was proposed to improve worker and traveler safety in response to the increase in erratic and unsafe driving behaviors on Washington roadways in recent years.

In April 2023, RCW 46.63.200 became law when the governor signed Senate Bill 5272 during WSDOT's annual Worker Memorial ceremony. The law took effect on July 1, 2023. The program involves collaboration among WSDOT, the Washington State Patrol, the Office of Administrative Hearings, the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Enterprise Services, and the Department of Licensing.

In spring 2025, work zone speed cameras began operating throughout the state, rotating among active construction, maintenance, and emergency work zones.

Why are work zone speed cameras needed?

SAFETY. Far too many workers and other first responders have had close calls, serious injuries and deaths in marked work zones.

- Most road workers can recount incidents where they had to take action to avoid tragedy due to drivers entering work zones.
- Crews work while traffic speeds by just feet or inches away.
- It's not just construction and work crews at risk in work zones; nearly 95% of people injured in work zone crashes are drivers, their passengers or nearby pedestrians.

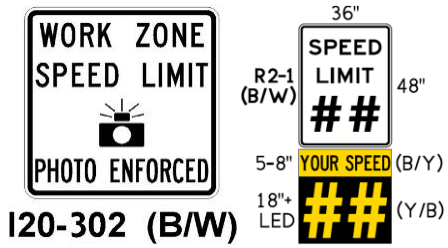
The implementation of the work zone speed camera program, Work Zone Speed Camera Program | WSDOT, reached a one-year milestone on April 16, 2026. See more information here Work Zone Speed Camera Program reaches one-year milestone — but the work is far from over | insideDOT.

13-3.1 Work Zone Speed Camera Signing

Per RCW 46.63.200, when speed safety camera systems, also known as work zone speed cameras, are in state highway work zones enforcement can only occur when workers are present and WZSC photo enforcement signs are posted. SSCS is managed by HQ Transportation Operations through a Vendor. To request speed safety cameras in work zones on projects, email: WZSCProgram@wsdot.wa.gov.

While the speed safety camera systems are in use, I20-302 sign(s) or portable temporary signs must be posted by the Vendor or as Class A construction sign(s) by the Contractor per the Contract Plans. Include this Contractor-Vendor Coordination general special provision GSP in all Contracts with work zone traffic control, except projects only having alternating one-lane, two-way traffic control.

A radar speed display sign, with an attached R2-1 regulatory speed limit sign, may be placed in advance of the SSCS vehicle when feasible.

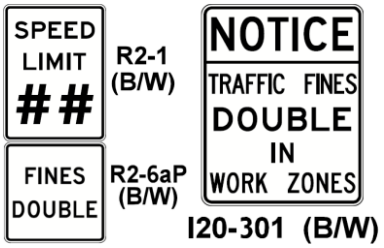


Coordination with either Contractor's traffic control manager or Maintenance includes:

- Closure details including its time and location.
- Hours when workers will be present.
- Will existing/conflicting speed limit signs be covered?
- Who is installing/removing I20-302 signs?
- Will a radar speed display sign (with R2-1) be on site and what is its location?

Traffic Fines Double in Work Zones:

Per RCW 46.61.527, traffic fines are doubled in work zones and do not require I20-301 or R2-6aP signs; however, WSP encourages their use to increase driver awareness.



13-4 Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Systems

This policy establishes WSDOT requirements for the installation, operation, identification, and removal of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems within state highway right of way. It outlines the applicable statutory authority, procedures for addressing unauthorized installations, and requirements for managing existing installations authorized under prior agreements. The complete *Policy on Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Systems on State Highways* is included in Appendix 13-1 at the end of this chapter.

Appendix 13-1 Policy on Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) Systems on State Highways

13-1.1 Purpose and scope

This policy establishes Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) requirements for the installation, operation, identification, disablement and removal of Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR) systems located on portions of state highways.

The installation of these cameras by any public or private third-party is strictly prohibited. Section 13-1.4, below, describes the process WSDOT will follow to disconnect, disable, or remove an ALPR system that is discovered in WSDOT-controlled right of way.

13-1.2 Statutory authority and responsibilities

Cities and counties are authorized to install and operate automated traffic safety cameras (ATSCs) within their respective jurisdictions under RCW 46.63.200 through RCW 46.63.260. These provisions govern only traffic infraction enforcement cameras and do not authorize general-purpose automated license plate recognition (ALPR) surveillance systems.

Under RCW 47.24.020, the city retains responsibility and control over the portions of right of way on city streets that are designated as part of a state highways beyond the curbs or beyond that portion of the highway used for highway purposes, except on limited access facilities where WSDOT has full jurisdiction and control pursuant to RCW 47.24.020. Pursuant to RCW 46.63.220 (5), a city may use automated cameras to enforce traffic ordinances on state highways that are also classified as city streets, pursuant to Chapter 47.24 RCW; however, the city must inform WSDOT when it installs the ATSC and the authorized ordinance it is enforcing. Cities may not use WSDOT resources for their ATSC installation, operations and maintenance without a written agreement with WSDOT.

13-1.3 State Right of Way Outside of City Limits

Within state right of way located outside incorporated city limits, WSDOT retains full jurisdiction and control. Any ALPR system identified within state-controlled right of way outside city limits is unauthorized.

After identification, ALPR systems located in state-controlled right of way outside city limits shall be disconnected or disabled as soon as practicable by physically covering the camera lens to prevent data collection.

Permanent removal shall follow the notification and compliance timelines outlined in Section 13-1.4 of this policy.

13-1.4 Notification and Removal Process for Unauthorized ALPR Systems

13-1.4.1 Request for Local Authorization (city street designated as state highways)

WSDOT will issue a written notice to the owner or local agency informing them that an ALPR system has been identified within state-controlled highway right of way and that its compliance status must be verified.

The notice will direct the local agency to provide the following information:

- The purpose of the ALPR installation
- The specific legal authority authorizing the installation
- A copy or citation of the local ordinance that authorizes the installation and operation of the system

The local agency or system provider must provide a written response to WSDOT within **15 days** of the date of notice.

13-1.4.2 Determination of Unauthorized Installation

WSDOT will issue a written notice of Determination of Unauthorized Installation to the local agency or system owner if known. If the agency or system owner does not provide a written response within the requested timeframe, or if the information provided does not demonstrate compliance with state statutory requirements,

This notice will state that:

- WSDOT has not received a response or
- The system is not authorized and therefore cannot remain on state right of way

The notice will direct the local agency to **remove the non-compliant installation** within **10 days** and provide written confirmation to WSDOT upon completion of the removal.

13-1.4.3 WSDOT Action to Disconnect or Remove the Device

If the installation is not removed within 10 days of the Determination of Unauthorized Installation notice described in Section 13-1.4.2, or if the agency fails to provide written confirmation of removal, WSDOT will issue a final notice informing the agency that WSDOT will proceed with compliance action which will include disabling and/or removing the device.

Disabling actions may include physically covering the camera lens to prevent further data collection immediately.

13-1.4.4 Existing ALPR Installations Covered by Agreements

Any existing ALPR systems installed within the state right of way pursuant to a prior agreement with WSDOT that do not have clear statutory authorization shall be considered non-compliant.

WSDOT will provide written notice to the local agency that the agreement authorizing the ALPR installation is terminated.

The local agency shall comply with the same notification, response, disconnection, and removal timeframes outlined in Sections 13-1.4-1 through 13-1.4.3 of this policy.

The ALPR system shall be disconnected by covering the camera lens no later than the response deadline provided in the notice and permanently removed within the timelines required for unauthorized installations.

13-1.4.5 Cost Responsibility

The local agency is responsible for all costs associated with removal, relocation or corrective work needed to achieve compliance.