



CHATHAM COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP # OPS-028:

EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/17/21

SCHOOL ZONE CAMERAS

REVISION: 06/22/2023

PURPOSE

To guide the installation, maintenance, monitoring, and use of speed cameras in school zones.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Chatham County Police Department (CCPD) to employ speed detection cameras in school zones as allowed by state law (O.C.G.A. 40-14-18). These cameras are a force multiplier for our officers and a deterrent to dangerous driving in school zones. The purpose of these systems is to improve the department's ability to address speed violations more aggressively and consistently.

PROCEDURES

I. Camera Selection Criteria

- A. The determination of camera locations is based on several factors, approved by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), which establish a clear need for increased enforcement. These factors include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. The use of a camera system at a specific site must serve a safety purpose.
 - 2. Existing or potential safety problems caused by excessive speed.
 - 3. Need established based on speed studies conducted during school days at each location.
 - 4. Location approval by GDOT.
- B. A single factor may be enough to establish a site. Maximizing driver compliance and reduction of speeding and accident risk are the goals of the program.

II. Training

- A. Personnel assigned the responsibilities in the School Zone Speed Camera Program must complete the required training associated with the operation of the system.

III. Program Administrator

- A. The Program Administrator of this program will be designated by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. The Administrator will be the main point of contact between the Department and Blue Line Solutions. He/she will ensure that all personnel with access to the system are properly trained and will complete monthly reports.

IV. System User

- A. System users will be certified police officers who have been trained and authorized to review, issue, reject citations, or participate in administrative court hearings. Additional training will be provided as needed.

V. Citation Approval Procedure

- A. By law, all citations must be approved and mailed within 30 days after obtaining the name and address of the motor vehicle owner but no later than 60 days after the date of the alleged violation. Citation approval should commence as soon as possible after the violation enters the queue to allow for any quality control issues that may arise. A sworn law enforcement officer **MUST** approve all speed camera citations during the final review.
- B. Citations will only be issued where a violation is clearly and legibly evidenced. Acceptance or rejection of a violation rests with Chatham County Police Department.

VI. Emergency Vehicles

- A. The citation will be voided for any police, fire, or EMS vehicle on a call for service that goes through a speed camera location. If no flashing emergency lights are visible or no call for service can be located, a notification of the violation will be sent to the registered owner (Federal, State, County, or local government entity) of the vehicle. CCPD will retain a copy of the notification.

VII. Rejecting Citations

- A. Once a vehicle has been flagged for a violation, the vendor will obtain vehicle and owner information. The vendor will review the information and photos prior to sending them for review by the police department.
- B. Officers performing approvals may reject citations at any time prior to the issuance of the citation if:
 - 1. The violation is questionable.
 - 2. It is not a violation in accordance with the law.
 - 3. Any of the images are of poor quality.
 - 4. The citation contains erroneous or inaccurate information.
 - 5. Emergency personnel are responding to a call for service.
- C. Officers will reject citations based on the most appropriate cause, as indicated in the rejection codes.
- D. Citations in the approval process may be rejected only for the reasons outlined above. Dismissing citations for friends, relatives, government officials, or emergency vehicles not on a call for service is not permitted.

VIII. Criteria for the Issuance of a Valid Citation

- A. Blue Line Solutions will provide photos of each alleged violation. One photograph should show the vehicle and its location on the roadway. The second should show the license plate of the vehicle.
- B. In order to approve the citation, the following criteria must be met:

1. Registration plates on the vehicle must match the information on the citation.
2. The speed shown is at least 11 mph over the posted speed limit.
3. Vehicle make matches that which is depicted in the photograph.
4. The date and time of the violation are within statutory times.
5. The violation is unobstructed.
6. If the photograph contains multiple vehicles traveling away from the camera, the lane identification number must be consulted to confirm the correct vehicle is being cited.

IX. Voiding Issued Citations

- A. The Speed Camera Program Administrator may request to have a citation voided once a citation has been mailed. However, the citation cannot be voided if the citizen has already requested an administrative court hearing.
- B. The Program Administrator will determine if citations were issued in error or the individual did not receive proper notice of the violation. The Program Administrator will maintain a log detailing the citation number, the date of the violation, the owner's information, the license tag, the date the citation was voided, and the reason. The Program Administrator will then send a notice to the vendor to void the citation.

X. Hearing Process

- A. A citizen who has received a citation can request an Administrative Court Hearing.
 1. A Records Court Judge will preside over the administrative hearing. The judge shall decide to dismiss or uphold the citation.
 2. An officer trained and authorized in the School Zone Safety Camera system will be present during this hearing.
 3. The citizen contesting the citation will have the opportunity to review the documentation and ask questions regarding the program and process. The citizen may present information or their documentation at this hearing.

XI. Site Inspections

- A. Camera calibration tests must be performed at least once every 12 months by an independent 3rd party. Copies of the independent calibration tests shall be stored in the Vendor's Electronic Records system and available to the Police Department. The Program Administrator shall also keep copies of all annual camera calibration tests.

BY ORDER OF:

Electronically Signed in PowerDMS on 06/22/2023

Jeffrey M. Hadley
Chief of Police