

Date: 10/02/2005 **Publication:** Florida Times-Union

TRAFFIC: Red light runners beware

Editorial

Florida Times Union Jacksonville

For all those weary of watching motorists zoom through red lights, some retribution is coming. Red light runners across the state now face a stiffer fine if they get caught.

A new law effective yesterday boosts the fine for running a red light from \$60 to \$125. Actually, it's about \$180 in most Northeast Florida counties when court costs are included. Ticketed drivers also will now lose four points off their license for a ticket, as opposed to three, The Associated Press reports.

And to cap it off, anyone nabbed running two red lights twice within 12 months has to take a driver improvement course.

It doesn't take much time spent on Jacksonville's highways to conclude that running red lights seems to be sport for some people. To put it another way, smart drivers wait to proceed on a green light till all the drivers finish running the red light.

It's a deadly habit.

Red light runners accounted for 115 deaths and 13,000 injuries in the Sunshine State in 2003, the last year for which statistics are available, AP said.

The increased fine is designed to help increase the money going to trauma centers in the state. It's a shame those centers must deal with the carnage that results from such a preventable problem.

Fines aren't the only solution, of course. More police enforcement, especially at busy intersections, can help. Sometimes the yellow light is too brief.

In heavy traffic, behind a large truck, drivers may not be able to see the light. Pavement markings can help alert drivers that they are approaching a light.

Let's hope the new law will inspire more motorists to play it safer and leave their lead foot at home.

The Florida Times-Union. All rights reserved.