



Victoria Police

Traffic Camera Office



Mobile Cameras Policy Manual

APRIL 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Manual has been prepared by the Traffic Camera Office of Victoria Police in consultation with RMIT Innovation Ltd and the Department of Justice to:
- (a) provide Victoria Police staff with guidelines and procedures to effectively administer the selection of Mobile Camera Sites and direct deployment of mobile cameras to support the reduction of road trauma in Victoria (Part A of the Manual); and
 - (b) provide Contractor staff with the guidelines and procedures necessary to effectively operate mobile cameras (currently Gatsometer MRC System cameras) to Victoria Police policy expectations in a manner that meets legal and technical requirements (Part B of the Manual).
- 1.2. All staff using the Manual are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the whole Manual. In this regard it is noted that Part A and Part B include some of the same clauses.
- 1.3. The Manual relates to the mobile cameras only (currently Gatsometer MRC System camera) and does NOT apply to fixed mobile camera technology.
- 1.4. The Manual is issued under the authority of the Assistant Commissioner, Traffic and Transport Services Department. The instructions and guidelines represent the Victoria Police policy governing the operational use of mobile cameras by Victoria Police and the Contractor.

- 1.5. In circumstances where this policy is believed to conflict with the effect or meaning of any relevant Act or Regulation, the legislation or regulation shall prevail.
- 1.6. An amended Manual will be issued by the Traffic Camera Office from time to time when required. A copy of the Manual and any amendments will be directed to all Regional Traffic Inspectors, Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeants and Traffic Management Unit Sergeants.

2. MOBILE CAMERA PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

- 2.1. The philosophy behind the Mobile Camera Program is based on well documented evidence of the relationship between speeding and road trauma. The program aims to reduce road trauma through changing driver behaviour by creating a broad community perception through general and specific deterrents that the chance of detection is so high that speeding is not worth the risk. The Mobile Camera Program has been based on a range of carefully designed principles of operation.

2.2 Operating Principles of the Mobile Camera Program

- 2.2.1 Mobile Cameras are deployed strategically across the State on a daily basis. Mobile camera sites consist of unmarked vehicles and the sites are not sign-posted or their locations otherwise publicly disseminated. The aim is to provide the basis for the perception that if you speed you will get caught. To maintain community confidence in the speed camera initiative, it is important for the operational use of the devices to be seen as fair and reasonable. Under no circumstances are speed camera vehicles, tripods or flash units to be disguised by signs, logos, breakdown of vehicle (eg. boot open or spare wheel / jack visible etc), tree branches, lamp posts, dust bins or any other means that would generate public perceptions of sly operations.
- 2.2.2 General deterrents against speeding will be provided by high volume advertising about the risks of speeding and the dynamic relationship between speed and impact forces, and the visibility of mobile cameras operating across the State on a daily basis.
- 2.2.3 Specific deterrents against speeding will be provided by the issuing of speeding infringements to drivers who have been detected speeding.

- 2.2.4 Speeding is a problem which exists across the State, rather than only at specific sites. The publicly undisclosed deployment of mobile cameras will enhance the specific deterrent of mobile cameras enforcement to prevent drivers from being unable to predict where cameras are located, forcing drivers to reduce speeds across the State, rather than simply where a camera is known to be located.
- 2.2.5 General and specific deterrents will be aimed at influencing driver behavioural change, higher compliance with the posted speed limit, lower mean travel speeds and reduced incidence and severity of collisions across the community.
- 2.2.6 When combined with the influence of educational programs in media advertising, in schools and other key forums, changed behaviour is aimed at being sustained over time to result in higher levels of voluntary compliance.
- 2.2.7 Voluntary compliance will not be universally achievable, and a program profile will always be necessary for both general and specific deterrents.
- 2.2.8 To achieve these objectives in the most effective manner, the enforcement activity must be consistent, meaningful and applied at the high-risk times of the day.
- 2.2.9 To achieve the essential ingredient of community support and program ownership, there must be a popular belief that the enforcement is fair, impartial and objectively administered in the community interest based on the achievement of road safety objectives.

3. VICTORIA POLICE

- 3.1. Victoria Police has overall responsibility for the operation of the Mobile Camera Program and retains all core prosecution and policy functions. The determination of the location and operating times of all mobile cameras will be at the sole strategic direction of Victoria Police.

4. STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT OF MOBILE CAMERAS

- 4.1 Mobile Cameras as a general rule should not be used during peak traffic periods, particularly in the inner Metropolitan area. It is an inefficient use of an expensive resource to operate a mobile camera during peak periods when traffic volumes reduce the traffic flow to speeds lower than the posted limit.

5. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT DATA

- 5.1 The Information Management Unit mobile camera enforcement hours and collision data will be produced on a monthly basis for circulation to Regional Traffic Inspectors, Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeants, Traffic Management Unit Sergeants and Community Road Safety Councils.

6. MOBILE CAMERA SITE SELECTION

- 6.1 Mobile Camera Site selection is a critical element of the program, and the guidelines in this Manual have been carefully developed to meet technical and legal requirements. Mobile Camera use at properly selected sites will also be able to withstand public scrutiny, clearly demonstrating fair and reasonable speed enforcement in the interests of improving road safety through the enforcement of the posted speed limits.
- 6.2 Every street, road or highway considered for evaluation as a Mobile Camera Site **MUST** have a significant documented history of serious and major injury collisions within the previous 12 months; or be the subject of a validated written complaint of excessive speeds, resulting in a written assessment by a Traffic Management Unit Sergeant or above indicating that driver behaviour demonstrates a significant risk of speed related collisions; or be otherwise assessed by a Traffic Management Unit Sergeant or above as posing a significant risk of speed related collisions.
- 6.3 Correspondence received at the Traffic Camera Office or Traffic and Transport Services Department from persons claiming that specific sites are inconsistent with Victoria Police policy, or otherwise inappropriate for mobile camera enforcement, will be referred to the Regional Traffic Inspector for enquires and appropriate response.

7. MOBILE CAMERA SITE - DEFINITION

- 7.1 A Mobile Camera Site may be a single point on a road, or a stretch of road several kilometres long. The site however, must meet each of the criteria provided in this part. If a section of road several kilometres long meets all of the collision evaluation criteria, but only meets the technical considerations (roadside objects, gradients etc.) in one or 2 locations, then the approved "site" must be confined to those specific points which must be clearly described (eg. Main Road, Wangaratta, 17 metres east of the 100 km post).
- 7.2 Sites in the metropolitan area and regional towns should be defined by the closest intersecting streets on either side of the site, but **MUST** not have more than 4 intersecting streets within the site including the site perimeter streets. Rural site length should be kept to a minimal length, i.e. not more than 5 km. This will make it easier for motorists to determine (when referring to the Infringement Notice) where the alleged offence occurred.

8. PRIMARY TARGET ROADS

- 8.1 Mobile Camera enforcement as a general principle will concentrate on primary and secondary arterial road systems that are subject to a regular and heavy traffic flow where a risk of trauma occurs.
- 8.2 Clause 8.1 does not necessarily exclude the use of mobile cameras at other sites that by definition do not meet this general policy, but where documented evidence is available indicating a significant risk that speed related collisions may occur as a result of a high incidence of speeding. On the basis that geographical Regional Traffic Inspectors will be responsible for justifying the use of mobile cameras at these locations, they may personally authorise site evaluations to be conducted on: -
- (a) **Rural Highways** subject to occasional heavy traffic flow, eg. snow or holiday traffic or other special events; or
 - (b) **Urban or Rural Freeways** - These **MUST** have a documented recent history of serious or major injury speed related collisions recorded with Victoria Police or VicRoads; or

- (c) **Other urban collector roads** meeting the following requirements:-
- A written complaint of excessive speed; or
 - High volume traffic flow beyond the effective capacity of alternative traffic enforcement; ie. radar, laser, patrol; or
 - A history or forecast risk of serious collisions following a causal analysis of the available data from Victoria Police or VicRoads sources.

9. ROAD CONSTRUCTION SITES

9.1 There is agreement between Victoria Police and VicRoads that temporary speed limits at road construction sites are enforced to reduce the risk of injury to road workers, drivers and passengers. As a general principle, conventional speed enforcement efforts are to be used at these locations. Speed cameras are only to be considered while road construction activity is actually occurring and where the site is experiencing traffic volumes beyond the capacity of alternative traffic enforcement; ie. radar, laser, patrol.

9.2 The following approval process must be complied with in circumstances where it is considered necessary to utilise mobile cameras to enforce road construction temporary speed limits:

- (a) Memorandum of Consent authorised and signed by a VicRoads Manager or Project Manager for major traffic control items to be erected at roadwork sites to be obtained; and
- (b) Further written advice obtained from the relevant VicRoads Regional Manager or Project Manager containing the following information:
 - (i) The precise location and dimensions of the temporary speed zone; and
 - (ii) The times of day and days of week that road construction activity is being undertaken; and
 - (iii) The speed limits in force during actual road construction work and at other times when it is not occurring; and

- (i) Details of traffic volumes mean travel speeds of vehicles and a general assessment of the collision risk; and
- (ii) Advice that adequate speed limit and public awareness signage is displayed, including a 300 metre speed reduction buffer zone at the site and precise details of same. Such signage to include:
 - Restriction signs on each side of the road on both approaches, 300 metres before the construction works.
 - A minimum sign size of 60 cm x 60 cm on the approaches with 45 cm x 60 cm repeater signs throughout the zone.
 - A sign displaying “Mobile Camera Operating in Construction Site” is to be displayed at each approach to the enforcement area.
 - Any other information or incidents to support the request for mobile camera enforcement at the site; and
- (c) The proposed site meets the general site selection criteria published in Criteria 1-10 of this Manual.

9.3 The Regional Traffic Inspector may then provide written authorisation for the use of mobile cameras, ensuring that this policy has been complied with, and particular consideration paid to:

- (i) Adequate pre-enforcement media coverage and community awareness activity occurs to encourage optimum voluntary compliance with the speed limits, and minimise community complaints; and
- (ii) A copy of all the written material above to be forwarded via fax to the Officer in Charge Traffic Camera Office on 9637-5722 prior to the commencement of enforcement activity for the information of the Assistant Commissioner, Traffic and Transport Services Department and the Media Director’s Office.

10. SPECIAL OCCASION SITES

- 10.1 Regional Traffic Inspectors may personally approve mobile cameras to be used for special occasions (eg. snow traffic, holiday traffic, etc) provided they are in accordance with the Site Selection Criteria. Enforcement should only be at the times identified in the complaint or the times of the specific occasion.

11. WHO MAY APPROVE MOBILE CAMERA SITES?

- 11.1 Prior to a location being used as a Mobile Camera Site, it must be first evaluated and approved by either the Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeant or Traffic Management Unit Sergeant. If this member has no experience in camera operations, then site assessment shall be conducted in conjunction with the Traffic Camera Office.

12. COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT

- 12.1 Victoria Police embraces the general principle that the community has an inherent responsibility to be actively involved in appropriate aspects of policing. Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeants or Traffic Management Unit Sergeants MUST formally consult with their local Community Road Safety Council executive when approving Mobile Camera Sites and developing associated enforcement strategies. Community Road Safety Councils are to be provided with all relevant information, including collision data and a list of existing sites, and will be given the opportunity to:-

- (a) Sponsor new sites for evaluation;
- (b) Recommend discontinuance of enforcement at specific sites based on validated and significant evidence of community concern;
- (c) Recommend enforcement strategies – ranking of sites for attention; enforcement times, days of week and times of day etc.

- 12.2 While law enforcement responsibility will ultimately remain with Victoria Police, it is expected that these arrangements will be conducted in a professional and mutually supportive way, in writing and minuted at the Community Road Safety Council meetings. Police should then expect their Community Road Safety Council to provide timely and enthusiastic public support for a process in which they were an active participant on behalf of the broader community in the interests of road safety.

13. REQUEST FOR ENFORCEMENT BY NON-TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT UNIT PERSONNEL

- 13.1 When non Traffic Management Unit personnel are of the opinion that a specific location could be enforced by mobile cameras they may refer a request for evaluation of that site together with any supporting material for the consideration of the relevant Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeant or Traffic Management Unit Sergeant.

14. MOBILE CAMERA SITES: POLICY EVALUATION

- 14.1 Each Mobile Camera Site being evaluated for selection and rostering **MUST** satisfy the following policy criteria: -

- 14.2 **Criterion 1:** The existence of recent speed related collision history on the road in question, or a written complaint validated by a Traffic Management Unit Sergeant or above, complaining of excessive rates of speeding from: -

(d) A member of Victoria Police

(e) A Government or Municipal Authority, or a member of the public, including a local Community Road Safety Council.

- 14.3 **Criterion 2:** An assessment of data contained in local complaint files, the Victoria Police Traffic Accident Information System or VicRoads data bases, with particular emphasis placed on the incidence or forecast risk of serious injury collisions, with regard to clear identification of the days of the week and times of the day, eg. A.M. 0700 to 1100 or P.M. 1400 to 1600, 2100 to 2400 etc. Enforcement activity will occur at times during which collisions have occurred in the past or at the particular times that complaints have addressed.

- 14.4 The additional policies in relation to primary and other target roads and road construction sites are also relevant policy considerations to the selection of a Mobile Camera Site that may override the provisions of Criteria 1 and 2 of clause 14 to the extent specified.

15. MOBILE CAMERA SITES: PHYSICAL FIELD EVALUATION

- 15.1 In addition to the policy evaluation undertaken in accordance with Criteria 1 and 2 of clause 14, each Mobile Camera Site being evaluated for selection and rostering **MUST** satisfy the following physical field criteria: -

- 15.2 **Criterion 3:** Sites must be safe for the camera operator, members of the public (motorists and pedestrians) and the mobile camera equipment (car/tripod). Particular regard should be given to the degree of visibility and road surface approaching the direction of the camera operations. Safe access for pedestrians and driveways should also be considered when setting up the vehicle, tripod and associated cables.

- 15.3 **Criterion 4:** A site shall not be:

- (f) On a bend in the road;
- (g) Descending down gradients or within 300 metres of the bottom of a gradient or hill,

UNLESS the site has a significant speeding related collision record;

Unsuitable gradient is defined as a slope that causes a vehicle in top gear (or drive) to **increase** indicated speed against maximum deceleration (NO BRAKE OR ACCELERATION) from a commencement speed at the top of the slope at the posted limit. **This restriction does not apply to mobile camera enforcement of the ascending traffic flow or where a Regional Traffic Inspector provides written approval for a particular location.**

- (h) Within 200 metres of a change to a speed zone, applicable to the same length of road, subject to clause 15.4.

- 15.4 Notwithstanding clause 15.3 (c) a Regional Traffic Inspector may provide written authorisation for mobile camera enforcement of speed limits at a **children's crossing** (as defined in Rule 80 of the Road Rules – Victoria) or in a **school zone** (as defined in Rule

23 of the Road Rules – Victoria).

Before giving authority, the Regional Traffic Inspector must consider the following:-

- (i) Media coverage and community awareness is undertaken to encourage voluntary compliance and lessen complaints;
- (j) The **children's crossing** and/or the **school zone** meet the applicable definitions in the Road Rules – Victoria;
- (k) The speed limit on the length of road prior to the **speed limited area** or **school zone** being enforced;
- (l) The proposed site meets the site selection criteria according to the criteria in Clauses 18 and 19 of this Manual; and
- (m) There has been pro-active police presence and re-active police enforcement for a reasonable time preceding a camera operation.

15.5 **Criterion 5:** Sites must not require a camera vehicle (or tripod) to be positioned:-

- (i) In a way that is likely to cause any interruption to the traffic flow; or
- (ii) In contravention of the Road Rules – Victoria

Consideration may be given to exercising the exemption contained in Rule 197

(1) (c) of the Road Rules in relation to stopping on pathways, dividing strips and nature strips.

15.6 **Criterion 6:** A site shall not be on or near an overpass, or facing any elevated adjacent road that may carry traffic past the extended mobile camera radar beam.

15.7 **Criterion 7:** Careful **background** evaluation of each site shall be conducted for any sources of reflection in an arc between the far extremity of the beam and directly opposite the camera equipment including: -

- (n) The possibility of vehicles entering or leaving intersections, or travelling along service roads
- (o) Pole mounted electricity supply transformers;
- (p) Mobile Camera set-ups should not include sites where there are train lines, which are obscured by dense foliage - the operator is unable to determine whether a train is present at the time a target vehicle is photographed;
- (q) Tram and train lines: Other than (c) above, the camera operator must indicate on the Camera Operator Statement incident log the time and frame number of any photographs taken whenever a tram or train is within the area of the beam;
- (r) Metal signs - house sale / auction signs and similar;
- (s) Centre strip traffic signs such as No U Turn, No Right / Left Turn, Keep Left and large advisory cross street signs;
- (t) Armco road barriers or chevron signing;
- (u) Metal bus stop shelters, public telephone booths, Australia Post letterboxes;
- (v) Sheet metal garage doors, fences, factory walls and closely spaced iron picket fences;
- (w) Individual sites that are approved may become temporarily unusable due to parked cars or trucks. Camera operators must monitor the site continuously during operations and shut down the camera if vehicles or other reflective surfaces become stationary in or near the extended radar beam.

15.8 **Criterion 8:** Careful **foreground** evaluation shall also be conducted of each site, to ensure that there are no sources of reflection within 20 metres of the camera vehicle when positioned against the kerb or where the camera vehicle / tripod is set up on a nature strip, no reflective surfaces to be within 40 metres of the camera.

15.9 A distance of 50 metres from the camera vehicle / tripod has been calculated by the Testing Officer where very tall / large vehicles or double parked vehicles are positioned in the foreground.

15.10 **Criterion 9:** Note that as part of their site evaluation process, camera operators must check the speed limit applicable to the length of road allocated for camera enforcement and further check that the camera set-up is within the designated between street boundaries before commencing a camera session. This criterion should be taken into account when selecting Mobile Camera Sites.

15.11 **Criteria 10:**

Once a site has been considered for mobile camera enforcement and where the approving member has concerns about the appropriateness of the posted speed limit, the site should be subjected to a speed classification assessment. Such assessment should be made by VicRoads.

GENERAL COMMENT:

It is the responsibility of each Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeant or where practicable, the Traffic Management Unit Sergeant to “confirm” the appropriateness of the speed limit in each case prior to further use of the sites as mobile camera sites.

16. ITEMS NOT AFFECTING THE SLANT RADAR BEAM

16.1 It should be noted that the Victoria Police Testing Officer has advised that the following items will not affect operational use of the mobile camera:

- (x) Small signs such as street name signs, bus stop signs, and parking restriction signs (too small and usually wrong angle and height).
- (y) Metal roofing on houses and buildings (too high and at the wrong angle).

(z) Open wire or cyclone fencing (reflection is too diffuse).

(aa) Brick and wooden fences (not reflective surfaces).

17. SITE LOCATION NUMBERING

17.1 Site numbers must be prepared strictly in accordance with the instructions provided by the Traffic Camera Office. Site numbers are selected by Region, Division and site allocation. Eg 45621 = Region 4, Division 5, Site 621.

17.2 Once a site is approved for use it is to be entered with a location number on the Camera Site Data Base Entry Change Request form by a Victoria Police member then forwarded electronically to the Information Management Unit following approval by the Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeant. This change request must reach the Contractor 6 weeks prior to the first “operational month” via the Information Management Unit.

NOTE: Site location numbers can apply to 2 way operations.

17.3 To ensure accuracy in the database, site numbers that have been deactivated (cancelled) by Divisions must not be reissued for a new site location. A **new** number must be issued with the creation of a **new site** location.

17.4 Where it has been identified that a current site shows an error in the **spelling of any of the location details** or where **the road type** (eg. “street” entered instead of “Drive”) **is incorrect**, a Camera Site Data Base Entry Change Request form **is not** required. These amendments can be rectified in the database without deactivating a site and allocating a new number.

17.5 Where the **between streets** (site boundaries) **are extended within a camera site** or in the case where the actual **street or suburb name in the location description is either incorrect or is changed (eg. street does not intersect / Gazetted street name change)** these sites **must** be deactivated and new site applications forwarded with new site numbers.

17.6 Deactivation of camera sites should only occur where the site is permanently unsuitable due to either permanent modifications to the location which fails to meet the general site

selection criteria of this Manual or the site has become a work safe issue which affects safety and reliable camera operations.

- 17.7 Sites that are rendered **permanently unsuitable** are not to be included in the monthly mobile camera deployment schedule (roster).

18. SITE RECORDS

- 18.1 Each site evaluated by either the Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeant or Traffic Management Unit Sergeant shall have a written record of the evaluation process in a file kept at the Traffic Management Unit Office. This file (which may be computerised) shall provide details of the evaluation process and relevant data utilised in approving the site for mobile camera use. Divisions must be prepared to justify mobile camera enforcement by reference to these files.

19. FILM ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSIGNMENT

- 19.1 As part of Film Management, a constant supply of film is allocated to all mobile camera operators on a regular basis. This procedure ensures that operator film stocks are always maintained.
- 19.2 The Manager of the Film Management Unit is to be contacted where difficulties arise relating to the film collection / delivery service or other film management issues.
- 19.3 It is the responsibility of the camera operator to leave the used film at the nominated collection point after each shift, or in the case of where the film is used for more than one shift on the same day; the afternoon shift operator is to ensure that the magazine is available for collection by the courier the following day.
- 19.4 Traffic Management Unit Senior Sergeants / Traffic Management Unit Sergeants to make the appropriate arrangements to guarantee the security of the film awaiting use or consignment to the Contractor.
- 19.5 Documentation must address security / continuity issues in respect of each film. The Traffic Camera Office has an objective of issuing infringements within 10 days of the date of offence, and the requirement is incorporated in to the Contract as a service standard for the Contractor.

20. WELFARE ISSUES

- 20.1 All mobile camera operators deployed by the Contractor are provided with communications which allow prompt access to camera operations management and “000”. Police units are encouraged to liaise with operators at camera sites on a regular basis, particularly at night, to further enhance security.

