

Dane County Traffic Safety Commission: Officers warn against red light/stop sign running

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Dane County law enforcement agencies are teaming up to warn area residents about the dangers of red-light and stop-sign running, which last year caused five Dane County fatalities. Between March 12-21, twenty agencies across the county will be increasing enforcement efforts for violators and providing education to their communities. This effort is coordinated by the Law Enforcement Group of the Dane County Traffic Safety Commission (TSC).

“Despite a slight decrease in the overall number of Dane County traffic crashes involving red light or stop sign running in 2025, not only were there five fatalities but also 115 injuries,” said Lt. Matt Plendl, Waunakee Police Department and co-chair of the TSC Law Enforcement Group. Lt. Plendl said preliminary information for last year shows 260 crashes in the county caused by drivers running a red light or stop sign. Over the last six years (2020 - 2025), 753 persons were injured and 15 died as a result.

“These are preventable collisions,” said Lt. Plendl. “People run red lights or roll through stop signs when they’re driving too fast, distracted by phones, ignoring weather conditions, or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Many drivers seem to think ‘yellow’ means ‘speed up.’ Those who could have stopped safely are making a reckless choice that puts them and other road users in danger.”

“When intersection collisions of two vehicles occur, injuries are often more severe because it usually results in a T-bone type of crash,” he said. He noted that in many red-light running crashes, it’s not just the driver who is injured, but often pedestrians, bicyclists or other motorists.

Lt. Plendl noted a 2023 AAA study showed 27% of drivers admitted running a red light in the past 30 days, while at the same time, 81% of drivers said it is very or extremely dangerous to drive through a red light.

Any driver entering an intersection after the light turns red is violating the law. Likewise, where right turn on red is allowed, failing to come to a complete stop before turning is breaking the law. Violations also include drivers turning right on red at intersections where doing so is prohibited.

The City of Madison Department of Transportation Traffic Engineering Division identified the following as among Madison top high crash intersections, where drivers should be especially cautious.

- John Nolen Dr. at Hwy. 151
- John Nolen Dr. at E. Olin Ave./Olin-Turville Ct.
- Mineral Point Rd. at Pleasant View Roundabout
- S. Gammon Rd. at Watts Rd.
- S. Stoughton Rd. at Buckeye Rd.
- S Midvale Blvd./Verona Rd. at Beltline entrance and exit
- N. Stoughton Rd. and Hwy. 30 Ramps
- Commercial Ave. at Packers Ave.
- Northport Dr. at Troy Dr.

Especially risky intersections in Dane County outside Madison include:

- Monona: Monona Dr. at E and W. Broadway
- Fitchburg: McKee Rd. at Fitchrona Rd. and Fish Hatchery Rd. at Greenway Cross
- Middleton: University Ave. at Hwy 14 Entrance/Exit
- Sun Prairie: Windsor Rd. at N. Bird St. and W. Main St. at N. Grand Ave. Walker Way and S. Bird St.
- Waunakee: S. Century Ave. between Peaceful Valley Pkwy. and Kopp Rd.

Lt. Plendl said officers throughout the county will remind drivers of the following recommendations to reduce red light/stop sign crashes, fatalities, and injuries:

- **If the light is green**, look in all directions for red light runners before proceeding, whether driving, cycling or walking.
- **If the light is yellow as you approach the intersection**, safely stop. It

doesn't mean "speed up."

- **If turning on red**, look for bicyclists coming up from behind you or pedestrians starting to cross.
- **After stopping on red**, when your light turns green, pause to ensure the intersection is clear.
- **At a stop sign**, come to a complete stop. Look both ways. Incoming traffic with no stop sign has right-of-way. If a four-way stop, the vehicle that stopped first has right-of-way. If several stop simultaneously, right-of-way goes to motorist on your right.
- **Consider weather and road conditions** and how they might affect stopping time.

"During these two weeks, we will be especially watchful for drivers not following these laws, Lt. Plendl said. "Violators will be given warnings or citations, which can be costly. But most importantly, remember a simple error in judgement can result in a life-changing injury or even a tragic fatality."

The Traffic Safety Commission will later share the results, including number of citations issued.