



Liberty Township is one of the twenty-four townships of Trumbull County, Ohio, United States. The 2010 census found 21,982 people within the geographical area of the township, 12,034 of whom lived in the unincorporated portions of the township.

In 2018, Liberty Township Police Department assessed community needs. A recurring complaint was high rates of speed and a need for more traffic patrol. Staffing restricted a robust, consistent presence, so a decision was made to utilize handheld traffic camera program that would allow officers to enforce traffic speeds in problematic corridors. In this way, traffic patrol officers are present at the time of the infraction and can monitor traffic flow, weather conditions, and other variables while also protecting the safety of the officer from an unsafe stop along busy roadways with minimal road shoulder and heavy traffic. A Liberty Township officer only activates the camera when a car is driving 11 mph over the posted limit.

Public Advocacy: While these cameras are used in identified corridors, there are a number of other components to modifying driver behavior in these specified roadways. A robust Public Information & Education (PI&E) campaign is used to make the public fully aware of the program that includes district-wide mailings, social media campaigns, local media stories, and multiple signs/flashers, as well as implementing a 30-day warning period. Specifically, Liberty Township:

- Installed 20 signs in designated areas of the township to alert drivers of a camera-enforced area
- Advertises on 570 am radio advertises when and where an officer is working the speed camera
- Uses local media to regularly reports on Liberty Township's photo speed camera program
- Employs a second officer to run a "chase car". This officer is stationary in the area of the speed camera on S.R. 11. One officer monitors traffic with the speed camera. If this officer observes high rates of speed (80-100mph), reckless operation, or observes a "Be on the Lookout" (BOLO) vehicle, he radios to the chase car who makes a physical stop. In 2022, the Liberty Township PD chase car stopped 165 motor vehicles for speeds ranging from 80-100 mph. As a result of these stops,

Citations & Revenue: Citations that are issued include details of the time and location of the infraction, along with photos of where on the vehicle the LIDAR technology hit. These citations are civil infractions, which mean that there are no points that accumulate on a driver's license and insurance rates remain unaffected. The revenue that is collected through these fines has allowed Liberty Township to reinvest in the safety of the public. Liberty Township PD has employed 6 additional officers and an additional canine, as well as creating community policing programs such as "Coffee with a Cop" and "Community Night Out" to reinstate a healthy relationship between members of the community and law enforcement officers.

Request: Language in Sub-House Bill 23 would prohibit townships and counties from using photo speed programs. The elimination of our program would have a drastic, negative impact on the driving public, as well as force lay-offs in our department. Our photo speed program is run responsibly, with results and metrics to support the use in identified, problematic corridors. Please consider an amendment to make exceptions for hand-held speed camera programs or reconsider this language entirely.

Captain Ray Buhala