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RED LIGHT CAM SNAFU BURDENS S. SAN FRANCISCO COURT



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By [Vic Lee](#)

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA -- A superior court official says processing red light camera citation refunds will take a long time and cost the court more than \$200,000.

John Fitton, Chief Executive Officer of the San Mateo County Superior Court, tells ABC7 News he believes around 3,000 of the approximately 7,000 drivers cited will get refunds because of the city's snafu of failing to ratify its contract with camera manufacturer American Traffic Systems.

Because of that error, drivers who received red light camera citations at two major intersections in South San Francisco between August 15 and January 27 will be eligible for refunds.

Fitton says the city's estimate of 2,000 to 3,000 violators is way too conservative and adds that correcting the mistake will place a huge burden on his already overworked staff. He says his court is already reeling from the both the budget crisis and state-ordered furloughs.

"We're down about 20 percent staff-wise and this snafu has added about 25 percent more workload for our traffic department," he said. "So, you figure out the math."

The court CEO says identifying the violators and processing the refunds will take a long time and cost his court in excess of

\$200,000. Fitton also explains that the courts receive no revenue from red light cameras even though a percentage goes to the state's general fund, so there is no way of defraying the added costs.

"I would advise cities who are contemplating installing red light cameras to move cautiously," he said. "I know these systems generate revenue for cities, but safety-wise there are questions about whether the red light cameras reduce accidents."

Fitton points to an independent study in Los Angeles which concluded that the cameras actually increased accidents, where anxious drivers caught in the middle of intersections sped up to avoid getting nabbed.

For information about obtaining a refund, call the red light ticket hotline at (650) 829-3777.
