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Boston Police fine 183 in crackdown on drivers who block intersections

Posted by Matt Rocheleau August 30, 2012 02:11 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

During the first week of a new crackdown, Boston police said Wednesday they have cited 183 drivers for blocking city intersections.

Officers began issuing \$150 fines Friday as part of a campaign called “Don’t Block the Box.” The campaign, similar to an initiative in New York City, is based on a state law enacted in 1986 prohibiting drivers from entering an intersection when they are unable to make it completely through before the light turns red, according to city officials.

Such a scenario often slows traffic or causes gridlock as the next group of drivers to get a green light has to maneuver around the vehicle blocking the intersection, if they are able to pass at all.

Eighteen Boston intersections, 11 in the Longwood Medical Area, have been chosen for the campaign. Signs reading “Do Not Block Intersection, State Law \$150 Fine” have been posted at the locations.

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More locations will be added to the program “as necessary,” city officials said.

“ ‘Don’t Block the Box’ is yet another component to ensure safety and accessibility on Boston’s streets,” Mayor Thomas M. Menino said in a statement.

“Drivers who venture into an intersection when it is impossible to drive through it cause traffic gridlock and pose a threat to pedestrians and people in wheelchairs by blocking crosswalks and interrupting the ‘walk’ cycles at traffic signals,” Menino said. “This is in violation of existing state law and, in a busy city like Boston, it is imperative that this rule of the road is followed.”

The campaign was launched from a partnership between the city and MASCO, a non-profit affiliate of hospitals, schools, research and cultural organizations in the Longwood Medical Area.

“The thought of an ambulance being delayed in the medical area due to gridlock is appalling,” Boston Transportation Commissioner Thomas J. Tinlin said. “We are optimistic that the campaign will change driver behavior and result in safer and more efficient local streets for all of us.”

To read more and see a full list of the targeted intersections, [click here](#).

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