

CITY OF NEW YORK
Date of Issue: June 20, 2005

**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
RE:**

IMPROVEMENT OF THE TAXICAB PARTITION

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AUTHORIZED AGENCY CONTACT PERSON

Contractors are advised that the Authorized Agency Contact Person for all matters concerning this Request for Information is:

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This Request for Information (RFI) seeks to gauge the various options available for implementation of an improved taxicab partition in all New York City medallion taxicabs.

During the late 1970's, the mandatory partition requirement was eliminated and became voluntary. In 1994, concerns for passenger safety resulted in the adoption of Owners Rule 1-17 requiring all medallion cabs (except ones operated exclusively by the owner) to be equipped with a partition. In April 2000, the TLC's Board of Commissioners enacted emergency rules unanimously to require the installation of a bullet-resistant partition or an in-vehicle digital security camera in all previously exempt independently-owned/operated livery vehicles and medallion taxicabs.

On March 30, 2004 the TLC's Board of Commissioners promulgated rules authorizing the TLC staff to explore options in setting new specifications for partitions to increase safety for both the passenger and driver through the use of different materials and new designs while considering the following factors:

- Clarity
- Scratch resistance
- Ballistic resistance
- Communication between the driver and passenger
- Means of receiving payment by the driver
- UV resistance
- Safety and comfort for both the passenger and driver

Information about all or any of the above issues pertaining to the partition is welcome from the taxicab industry, material manufacturers, designers, engineers and the riding public.

This RFI contains a brief segment describing its purpose, a description of the TLC's goals and objectives for the partition improvements and specific details as to what the TLC is seeking in terms of a response to this request.

In the event that the TLC decides to form an advisory committee, please include in your response if you wish to be considered for appointment to the committee.

Please feel free to contact Ira J. Goldstein with any questions you may have about this request as issued.

SECTION II - Timetable

A. Release Date of this Request for Information: June 20, 2005

All questions and requests for additional information concerning this RFI should be directed to Ira J. Goldstein, the Authorized Agency Contact Person, at:

Telephone #: (212) 676-1017
Fax #: (212) 676-2002
E-mail Address: ira.goldstein@tlc.nyc.gov

Response Date and Time and Location:

Date: July 15, 2005
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Location: Responses to this RFI shall be submitted to the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission *by mail*: 40 Rector Street, 5th Floor
New York, New York 10006

by facsimile: (212) 676-2002
or by email: partition@tlc.nyc.gov

SECTION III – Purpose and Goals of This Request for Information

Purpose of RFI

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is charged with “furthering the development and improvement of taxi and livery service in New York City, establishing an overall public transportation policy governing taxi, coach and car services and wheelchair-accessible vans, and to establish certain rates and standards.” The TLC acts through its Board of Commissioners, which consists of nine (9) members, eight (8) of whom are unsalaried part-time Commissioners, and one of whom is the TLC’s Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson.

During the late 1970’s, the mandatory partition requirement was eliminated and became voluntary. In 1994, concerns for passenger safety resulted in the adoption of Owners Rule 1-17 requiring all medallion cabs) except operated exclusively by the owner) to be equipped with a partition.

In 1997, the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law made partitions a statewide requirement for localities with a population in excess of 75,000 people. New York City was exempted from this legislation because it had an existing partition regulation.

At an emergency meeting of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) held April 18, 2000, the Commission voted unanimously to require the installation of a bullet-resistant partition or an in-vehicle digital security camera in all independently-owned/operated livery vehicles and medallion taxicabs. Vehicle owners had 30 days from the date of the emergency rule’s passage to come into compliance.

On April 15, 2000, the City of New York announced it would reimburse individuals up to a maximum of three hundred and twenty five dollars (\$325) toward the cost of either a new partition or a new in-vehicle digital camera system, which met TLC specifications and was installed by an authorized vendor. Owners of medallion taxicabs and for-hire vehicles previously exempt from the TLC partition requirement as individual owner operators had the opportunity to apply for reimbursement.

At a public meeting on Tuesday, March 30, 2004, TLC’s Board of Commissioners, after accepting public comment with respect to a series of new rule proposals, enacted new rules by a unanimous vote. These new rules cover three areas: technology, safety and service. The technology area of the service improvements or “Technological Enhancements” consisted of requiring taxicabs to capture trip sheet data electronically vehicle, ability to receive text messaging, capability to accept credit/debit cards for payment of fares and the installation of a passenger information monitor (PIM). The safety portion of the rule amendments requested the Chairperson to make recommendations of how to improve the partition regarding clarity, scratch resistance, safety and communication between the passenger and driver. The service aspect of the rule amendments requested that the Chairperson investigate potential new group ride stands within the City.

On June 21, 2004 the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) issued a Request for Information (RFI) regarding the Technological Enhancements. On March 2, 2005 the TLC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on behalf of the taxicab industry for implementation of the technological enhancements. Responses from vendors were due on June 6, 2005. The TLC is now evaluating the proposals that were submitted. Therefore, parties interested in responding to this RFI must take into consideration that there will need to be a space for the PIM to be mounted in the back of the partition. The PIM will be a passenger activated interactive terminal used to display public service announcements, display useful media content and possibly used for completing credit/debit card transactions. The size of monitor at this time still must be determined.

A typical taxicab partition at this time displays the following items: a visible view of the driver's Taxi and Limousine Commission operator's license, a view of the meter located in the front compartment, and stickers displaying passenger fare information and the Passenger Bill of Rights. These stickers may be eliminated and included for presentation on the PIM.

The Taxi and Limousine Commission is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to ascertain the state of materials, design and technology available in regard to the taxicab partition. Please note that responses to this RFI are welcome from parties both within and beyond the extant New York City medallion taxicab industry and will ensure that the TLC will keep you informed of all activity as it relates to this RFI. This RFI is essentially soliciting feedback about different taxicab partition design and material options for installment in medallion taxicabs.

The City's Goals and Objectives for this RFI

The City's goals and objectives for the Medallion Taxicab Partition RFI are to solicit information with respect to:

- improving the design of the taxicab partition with regard to safety and comfort for both the passenger and driver;
- developing a taxicab partition that will be clear and scratch resistant;
- maintaining or improving communication between the driver and passenger;
- determining the costs associated with the proposed improvements; and
- ensuring that solutions are practicable for all segments of the taxicab industry including fleets, individually owned medallions, drivers and medallion lease operators.

SECTION IV - Content of the Response

Instructions: Responses to this RFI may include, but are not limited to, specific details and solutions regarding any or all of the following:

1. safety for the passenger and driver within their respective compartments;
2. comfort of the passenger and driver;
3. design of the partition;
4. material of the upper (clear portion) partition;
5. clarity;
6. scratch resistance;
7. material of the lower partition (material and thickness);
8. bullet-resistance;
9. padding around the partition;
10. communication between the driver and passenger;
11. method of payment to driver in the use of a window or money slot in the partition; and
12. overall production, assembly and cost of any proposed enhancement to the complete partition.

No specific format must be used by any entity submitting a response to this RFI.

Information contained in the responses received to the RFI will be used by TLC staff, the TLC Board of Commissioners and any other NYC agency, to develop implementation strategies that may include proposed rulemaking, specifications for approved equipment, criteria for evaluating vendors, and parameters for pilot programs to test equipment.

Vendors should note that no contract will be awarded pursuant to this RFI. Likewise, submission of a response to this RFI will not enhance any vendor's chances to be either included in any preferred vendor's list, or be awarded a contract pursuant to any RFP, should one be issued in the future.

No representation is made herein that responses to this RFI will be confidential, proprietary or nondisclosable pursuant to the New York State Freedom of Information Law, Public Officers Law Article 6 Sections 84-90.

In the event that the TLC decides to form an advisory committee, please include in your response if you wish to be considered for appointment to the committee.

ATTACHMENT 1

Statement of Basis and Purpose

The regulations promulgated herein by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (“TLC”) are authorized under Section 2303(a) of the Charter of the City of New York, which empowers the TLC to regulate and supervise the business and industry of transportation of persons by licensed vehicles for-hire in the City, under Section 2303(b)(6) of such Charter, authorizing the TLC to establish standards for vehicle safety, design and comfort; and under Section 19-503(a) of the Administrative Code, authorizing the TLC to promulgate regulations necessary to exercise the authority conferred upon it under the Charter.

Section §1-17 of the Taxicab Owners’ Rule requires each taxicab to be equipped with a partition that meets TLC Specifications, except for taxicabs operated exclusively by an owner-driver. These vehicles may be equipped with either a partition or an approved in-vehicle security camera. Section §3-03(e) (3) (i) sets forth the specifications for such a partition.

The rules presently require that a partition be made of Lexan, Margard or another polycarbonate material. Lexan and Margard are the trade names for bullet-resistant polycarbonate materials manufactured by General Electric. While these materials are durable and provide safety to the driver, Lexan has the tendency to scratch and become opaque after a period of use. As the partition is no longer clear, the passenger’s view of the driver’s hack license and rate card, the meter and the road through the front windshield could become compromised. Furthermore, the driver’s view of the rear passenger compartment as well as his view through the rear view mirror, may likewise be affected. While Margard, a Lexan product treated with a scratch-resistant finish, represents an improvement over Lexan, newer technologies may develop in the future which would be superior with respect to both safety and clarity over the products presently on the market. In addition, there are other manufacturers who have developed suitable products that may be tested by the TLC.

The TLC hereby repeals a portion of existing Rule 3-03 (e) (3) (i) and replace it with a rule to require an interior partition that is more durable and resistant to scratching, fading and clouding. The Chairperson is empowered to review partition design and make recommendations to the Commission for approval of partitions that meet functional specifications. This provides a better approach than listing specific approved products that may be used in partition manufacture and allows the Commission to more quickly adapt to evolving technology.

Each taxicab is required to replace its existing partition with a new one that meets these specifications. In order to provide time for the industry to comply with this new requirement, it will not take effect until November 1, 2005. After that date, each owner hacking-up a new vehicle would be required to install a new partition that meets these specifications and is approved by the Commission.

The rule promulgated by the Commission was amended in light of comments received and testimony heard at the public hearing held on March 30th to clarify and expand the role of the TLC Board of Commissioners with respect to approving new equipment design and specifications for the manufacture and installation of equipment.

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Previous Rule 3-03 (e) (3) (i)

(3) Security

- (i) An owner shall install a transparent partition and a protective

plate which will isolate the driver from the rear seat passengers, in accordance with §1-17 of these of these rules. Such partition shall be made of Lexan, Margard or other polycarbonate material not less than 0.375 inches thick extending upward from the back of the front seat to the ceiling of the vehicle. There shall be a provision for communication with passengers while the partition is closed. The partition shall be designed so that the air conditioning system within the taxicab is able to provide cool air to the passenger compartment. There shall be a money slot. Such partition may be able to be partially opened by the driver, as long as the driver can fully close the partition at any time. The protective plate shall be 0.085-inch thick plate of ballistic steel or its equivalent, installed inside the backrest of the front seat. The plate shall cover the complete back rest area, which is exposed to the rear seat compartment.

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 1043(b) of the New York City Charter, that the Taxi and Limousine Commission (“TLC”) amends the Rules Governing Taxicab Specifications. These regulations are promulgated pursuant to the authority vested in the TLC under Charter Sections 2303(a) and 2303(b)(6); and under Section 19-503(a) of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

A public hearing in connection with these regulations was held by the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission on March 30, 2004 at 40 Rector Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10006.

Section 1. Title 35 of the Rules of the City of New York, Chapter 3, Taxicab Specifications on or after March 1, 1996, paragraph 3-03, subdivision (e) (i), is amended to read:

Italics indicate new material.

(i) An owner shall install a partition that isolates the driver from the rear seat passengers, in accordance with § 1-17 of these rules. The purpose of said partition shall be to provide protection to the driver while ensuring passenger safety and enabling rear seat passengers to enjoy a clear unobstructed view of the taxicab driver’s license, rate card and front windshield.

(A) The partition shall consist of a transparent partition that shall extend downward from the ceiling to a point, determined by the Chairperson, based upon the make and model of vehicle in service, that will provide passenger and driver with maximum visibility. The transparent portion of the partition shall be constructed of a bullet-resistant material, approved by the Chairperson, which is also clear and scratch-resistant.

(B) A protective plate shall join the transparent partition of the partition and extend from the lowest point of the transparent portion of the partition downward to the floor of the vehicle. The plate shall be constructed of a bullet-resistant material approved by the Chairperson, and shall provide for padding to protect rear compartment passengers.

(ii) No partition shall be installed unless it shall have the following features, which shall be provided for in a manner approved by the Commission and which does not compromise passenger or driver safety:

(A) A means for passengers and drivers to communicate with each other;

(B) *The capacity for the passenger to pay for fares, either by cash or by credit card if the taxicab is capable of accepting credit card payments, and for the passenger to receive receipts for payments and transactions, while the passenger is in the rear passenger compartment.*

(iii) No partition shall be installed unless the design of the partition, the materials used in its manufacture, and the method of installation have been approved by the Chairperson and approved by the Commission in accordance with the requirements of this paragraph.

(iv) No vehicle, other than a vehicle which is exempt from the partition requirements set forth in section §1-17 of these rules, may be hacked-up after the effective date of this rule unless a new partition has been installed which complies with these specifications.

(v) Each taxicab shall be equipped with a new partition, which complies with these specifications no later than its first regular vehicle inspection conducted on or after November 1, 2005.