



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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DOI INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN SIX GUILTY PLEAS BY TAXI AND LIMOUSINE-LICENSED TAXICAB DRIVERS WHO DEFRAUDED PASSENGERS THROUGH OVERCHARGING

Daniel G. Cort, Acting Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced the guilty pleas of four current and two former taxicab drivers licensed by the City Taxi & Limousine Commission (“TLC”) for overcharging passengers with non-existing tolls and/or inflated toll charges. A seventh taxicab driver’s matter is pending in court. Each defendant was charged separately with Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, a class E felony, and the criminal complaints were unsealed Friday, November 19, 2021. The six defendants pleaded guilty to a violation, waived their right to seal their cases, and were ordered to attend sessions with the Manhattan Justice Opportunities, which provides community-based diversion and sentencing options to reduce the use of incarceration and criminal convictions for individuals charged with low-level offenses and felonies. DOI began its investigation into toll fraud in the City’s taxicab industry after receiving an allegation of misconduct regarding a taxicab driver and then investigated in partnership with the office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.

Acting Commissioner Daniel G. Cort said, “The City’s taxicab industry suffered a devastating economic blow over the last several years and, as a result, so many drivers have directly experienced a grave impact. While we have compassion for all those who have been affected, DOI acted to stop fraud by this group of drivers and protect taxicab passengers from being victimized. Fraud can never be allowed to fester anywhere in this City and must be brought to light. In addition, DOI issued recommendations to TLC so it can strengthen its procedures and prevent this conduct in the future. I thank the Manhattan District Attorney for their partnership on this matter and TLC for its cooperation and assistance.”

DOI’s investigation included analyzing driver information, GPS data, and trip data from TLC, and also included identifying suspicious toll charges, reviewing maps developed from the GPS records of the cabs driven by the defendant drivers, creating maps for each suspicious trip and examining each to see if the appropriate toll amount was charged. In these matters, the taxicab drivers overcharged passengers by charging toll rates that did not account for the E-ZPass discount required by TLC regulations and/or charged passengers for tolls when none should have been charged. When a driver overcharges a passenger, the overcharge amount is not collected by the TLC but kept by the driver who does not have permission or authority from TLC to obtain any funds that result from overcharges. DOI issued recommendations that led the TLC to strengthen its rules as they relate to passenger alerts regarding toll charges and driver ability to select tolls within the five boroughs.

The case of one taxicab driver remains pending in court: AYMAN ABDALLA, 51, of Elmhurst, N.Y., was charged with overcharging approximately 103 passengers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$1,402 in overcharges between September 11, 2015, and March 17, 2017. The defendant is next due in court December 16, 2021.

The following six individuals pleaded guilty on Friday, November 19, 2021, to a violation. The details of their charges are below, according to each of their criminal complaints:

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- MD ARIFUZZAMAN, 34, of Flushing, N.Y. was charged with overcharging approximately 620 customers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$4,539 in overcharges between July 4, 2015, and March 18, 2017.
- YEVGENY OSTROV, 60, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was charged with overcharging approximately 600 passengers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$2,151 in overcharges between July 1, 2015, and January 15, 2016. TLC revoked this defendant's TLC license as a result of a matter unrelated to this fraud case.
- MANDEEP SINGH, 31, of Jamaica, N.Y. was charged with overcharging approximately 153 passengers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$1,350 in overcharges between October 24, 2015, and March 15, 2017.
- ANVER KERIMOV, 62, of Staten Island, N.Y., was charged with overcharging approximately 116 passengers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$1,270 in overcharges between approximately July 26, 2015, and February 7, 2017.
- MOATAZ ATTIA, 44, of Queens, N.Y., was charged with overcharging approximately 330 passengers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$1,256 in overcharges between July 4, 2015, and January 25, 2017.
- ALY EL-DOKSH, 48, of Bethpage, N.Y., was charged with overcharging approximately 242 passengers for non-existent tolls and/or inflating toll charges for trips with a toll, totaling approximately \$1,076 in overcharges between approximately July 1, 2015, and March 17, 2017. This defendant failed to renew his TLC license, according to TLC.

Acting Commissioner Daniel Cort thanked Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and his staff, for their partnership and prosecutions of this matter; and thanked TLC Commissioner Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk, and her staff, for their assistance and cooperation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for TLC, specifically Assistant Inspector General Aleksandro Tilka, under the supervision of Deputy Inspector General Arturo Sanchez, Inspector General Whitney Ferguson, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella, and Acting First Deputy Commissioner Philip Hung.

Manhattan Justice is made possible through a unique partnership between the Center for Court Innovation, CASES, the Osborne Association, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Department of Social Services, the New York State Unified Court System, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, the local defense bar, and dozens of community-based service providers. More information on the program [can be found here](#).

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