

Commissioner's Corner

September 2018

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City Council Legislation

On August 14, Mayor Bill de Blasio signed into law five City Council bills focused on the taxi and for-hire vehicle industries. We are grateful to Mayor de Blasio and Council Speaker Corey Johnson, as well as these bills' many other Council sponsors, for their leadership and vision on this legislation. The TLC is now working hard to implement the new local laws.

Local Law 147 requires the TLC to pause the issuance of for-hire vehicle licenses for one year, with an exception for new wheelchair accessible vehicles. Current for-hire vehicle licensees will continue to be able to operate and change the vehicle on their license. This law went into effect on August 14 at 5pm.

Local Law 148 removes licensing fees for all new and renewing licenses for wheelchair accessible for-hire vehicles and all renewing medallion licenses with a wheelchair accessible taxi in service.

Other legislation directs TLC to set minimum payments to for-hire vehicle drivers for trips dispatched by high-volume for-hire services, which dispatch 10,000 or more trips a day. We anticipate rulemaking this fall on how drivers are paid.

Another recently-passed local law codifies a new licensing class for this group of high-volume for-hire services.

Several of the new laws require the TLC to study important subjects, including driver income and well-being, the impact of setting minimum for-hire vehicle trip fares, and evaluating potential policy solutions to congestion related to for-hire vehicles on our streets.

This set of new laws will be helping thousands of drivers make a living and provide for their families, as well as increase mobility and address the important issue of congestion in our city. Thank you again to the Mayor and City Council for their courageous action in creating and supporting this legislation.

The City also announced the creation of the TLC Office of Inclusion, which will build on the TLC's efforts to prevent service refusals. Despite our agency's significant prosecution, enforcement, outreach, and education efforts, it is still far too common to hear from passengers that they were refused a pick-up by a taxi driver because of their race, ethnicity, or destination. There has also been a rise in the number of passengers reporting refusals in the for-hire vehicle sector, such as when a driver cancels a trip after a passenger requests a pick-up in a predominantly African-American community.

If an on-duty driver refuses to pick up a passenger, they face penalties that include steep fines, suspension, and revocation. Picking up everyone is the not only the right and lawful thing to do, but the more trips you perform, the more money you take home. Non-discriminatory service is good for both the riding public and for drivers.

Street Safety

In August, a young Australian tourist, Madison Jane Lyden, visiting New York City was killed while cycling on Central Park West. The NYPD's preliminary investigation shows that she was struck by the driver of a commercial garbage truck as she tried to avoid a TLC-licensed black car that was obstructing the bike lane and the bus lane. TLC-licensed drivers are important stewards of New York City streets, and it is important that you share the road safely and take great caution with cyclists and pedestrians. Always keep bike lanes and bus lanes clear – it's the law – and look behind you for cyclists before pulling over or away from the curb. Share this message with your colleagues -- doing so can save the life of a person sharing the road with you.

Until next time, drive like your family lives here!

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