

LICENSEE LEADERS

FEB 2024

PEDRO FERNANDO

Community

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission’s (TLC) Licensee Leaders is a media program that highlights the stories and voices of TLC’s community of drivers and other licensees, amplifying leadership in accessibility, customer service, and safe driving.



Licensee Leaders’ monthly program engages the TLC community through long and short-form features. The series also recognizes citywide and national awareness months while celebrating the viewpoints of our licensees as they relate to culture and heritage, industry, and safety.

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TLC's Licensee Leaders recognizes and salutes New York City's taxi and for-hire vehicle (FHV) drivers and their commitment to a safer and more accessible NYC.

Drivers and other licensees represent the heart of a pivotal transportation industry in a city that stays in motion 24/7 constantly focused on progress.



Speaking with February 2024's Licensee Leader, TLC met with Dominican-born Pedro Fernando in Manhattan to learn about his experiences in the FHV industry.

From automated braking to an in-car air filtering system, Fernando describes electric vehicle features that add the most value to his work as a driver, defensive driving, and how he hopes to give back in the industry.

INTRODUCTION



Driver Spotlight

Pedro Fernando

What first brought you to New York City?

I'm from the Dominican Republic. My friend suggested I come to New York City.

When and why did you choose to join the for-hire vehicle industry?

I think it was in 2018. I wanted to be my own boss and to be able to

drive when it's convenient for me.

What did you think of the licensing process?

The exam was a little complicated for me because I had to use a translator to take it. But when translated, certain words don't translate well from Spanish to English.

For me the most important thing was to study for the exam.

What are some things you do to make sure you, your passengers, and pedestrians are safe?

First, I make sure the passenger is using their seatbelt. Second, I make sure I pay attention to my surroundings before I start driving. Lastly, I drive with safety and precaution.

Defensive driving is something that I make sure I am always doing. I leave enough space between my car and the car in front of me because I am unsure what they may do. Defensive driving is the thing I put the most emphasis on when I'm driving.

What's the make and model of your vehicle?

I have a 2023 Volkswagen ID.4.

Why did you initially choose an electric vehicle (EV)?

I chose an electric vehicle to save money for gas. And Volkswagen gave me three years of free charging [through Electrify America] which adds up to saving \$3,600 for each year. That's \$0.26 per kilowatt.



Fernando cites defensive driving and seatbelt use as pivotal to safe driving

Have you always drove an EV?

This vehicle is my first time driving an electric vehicle. I remember looking at multiple videos about electric vehicles online to see.

Then, when I visited the Volkswagen car dealer, I learned more about the vehicle like how long the battery lasts, fastest charging times, and how the ID.4 doesn't lose much battery in the winter-time.

What are some of the challenges in making the switch from gas-powered to EV?

I did not have any challenges preparing for my electric vehicle. I knew I wanted it because I did not have to worry anymore about things like changing the oil, pumping gas, and changing filters.

How long does it take for you to charge your vehicle and how long does that charge last?

To charge my car from zero to 80 percent, it takes twenty-five to thirty minutes. That charge will last for 290 miles. If I were to charge it to 100 percent, it would last for about 345 miles. The 80 percent charge will last me for about a week if I am only running errands. When I use the car for work to conduct trips, that it lasts for about two days.

Which of your vehicle's features have you found most helpful?

There is a list of features that I love about my car. The moon-roof allows passengers to look up while I am driving and view the city. The feature I love the most is



A thirty-minute charge lasts Fernando around two days of work

the navigation. Once I put in the address it shows me the best way to go.

Does your vehicle have smart capabilities like sensor-engaged automated braking or blind spot monitoring?

I love these smart features however there are sometimes some issues. For example, the front windshield was dirty, and the front camera thought that dirt on the windshield was a car, and stopped suddenly, causing me to hit my head on the visor.

The sensors around the car detect everything. It automatically stops. [Fernando demonstrates how the vehicle automatically stops when backing up too close to another object, avoiding impact altogether.]

Do you think driver assistance features like automated braking help make the road safer?

It's an extra safety precaution when driving. The car will use the automated brake when backing up. However, when there is a vehicle in front of me, it will only use

it if the vehicle in front is moving. The feature can be turned off, but I keep it on, because it helps a lot.

Does your vehicle have other features like stop-and-go adaptive cruise control or automated highway driving?

I only use them on the open highway. But not when I have passengers in the vehicle. And I don't use it in the City because you have to be aware at all times. In this situation, you have to be in control at all times.



Fernando demonstrates smart features like automated braking



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Fernando talks the importance of contributing to a greener NYC



Features like an in-car air filtering system provide passengers with a better trip experience says Fernando

Especially when driving in downtown Manhattan—the car has sensors all around, but it does not see everything in the same way that a driver will see everything around the car.

And park assist?

This can only be used in oblong space. You cannot really use this in a place like New York City because of how tight the parking spots are. If there is an object to the side of the car when it is parking, it will not use the parking assist feature.

Have you explored any tax credits or rebates offered through federal or state programs you may be eligible for as an EV owner?

I was given a \$1000 tax credit from the dealer that will be deducted from my taxes for 2023. I assumed that it would be money that goes into my pocket.

Is it important for you to contribute to a greener, more sustainable environment as an EV driver?

Oh yes, the contribution to the City is important. The TLC wants the for-hire vehicle fleet to go all

electric [or WAV] by 2030 because they believe this will reduce emissions and the pollution in the air. I am not just saying this because I am an electric vehicle owner. I think everyone should contribute to saving the world.

What is something that everyone can do to help contribute to cleaner environments?

Everyone should do this if they can. If a thousand people made an effort to clean the streets it would definitely make an impact on the world.

As far as the vehicle space and interior cabin, have your passengers had any interesting feedback?

The car has a filter that is able to clean the air inside of the car. I love this feature for my car because it gives the passengers a better experience during trips. For example, if someone around the car is smoking, the car will filter any unclean air. So, you do not smell smoke or anything like that in the car.

How do you view TLC's role in shaping rules?

It's perfect.

There is no other state in the country that has a TLC. New York City needs it because of how large of a city it is. There would be so many complaints, such as drivers overcharging and disrespecting passengers. If everyone followed the rules, then no one would complain about the TLC.

Have you had any experience with TLC's Enforcement unit?

I have had great experiences with TLC officers. I think they're great because they help regulate illegal activity. There are illegal drivers who are fishing for passengers and without the officers, the pas-



FHV driver Fernando discusses

sengers will not know that they can get hurt riding in these vehicles. TLC created that department to protect the people.

What are other ways to maintain safety in the industry?

Patience is something all drivers should have and especially driving in New York City. I want to send a message to all drivers: I know you want to get home but think about it. If you lost your life, in one minute, everything you were rushing for is gone. If you take that extra minute, to be safe, you can live on.

Are there any other goals you might hope to achieve in this industry?

I would like to make it better for TLC drivers in New York City. I want to create solutions in a way that help where drivers do not see TLC as the bad guys. I want TLC drivers to see the TLC the same way we look at police and ambulances. We call them when we need help. Look at TLC as the solution and not the problem.

This interview has been edited and condensed for length and clarity.



I WANT TO SEND A MESSAGE TO ALL DRIVERS:

I KNOW YOU WANT TO GET HOME BUT THINK ABOUT IT. IF YOU LOST YOUR LIFE, IN ONE MINUTE, EVERYTHING YOU WERE RUSHING FOR IS GONE.

IF YOU TAKE THAT EXTRA MINUTE, TO BE SAFE, YOU CAN LIVE ON.



¡EN ESPAÑOL!



Pedro Fernando

Introducción: Al hablar con el Líder Titular de marzo del 2024, la TLC se reunió con Pedro Fernando, de origen dominicano, en Manhattan para conocer sus experiencias en la industria de los FHV. Desde el frenado automático a un sistema de filtración de aire integrado en el carro, Fernando describe las características de los vehículos eléctricos que añaden más valor a su trabajo como conductor, la conducción defensiva, y cómo quiere dar algo a cambio a la industria.

Conductor

Destacado

FHV - EV

¿Cuáles son algunas de las cosas que hace para garantizar su seguridad, la de sus pasajeros y la de los peatones?

En primer lugar, me aseguro de que el pasajero lleva puesto el cinturón de seguridad. En segundo lugar, me aseguro de prestar atención a lo que me rodea antes de empezar a conducir. Por último, conduzco con seguridad y precaución.

Me aseguro de siempre conducir a la defensiva. Dejo suficiente espacio entre mi carro y el carro de adelante porque no estoy seguro de lo que pueden hacer. La conducción defensiva es lo que más enfatizo mientras conduzco.

¿Cuánto tarda en cargar su vehículo y cuánto dura esa carga?

Para cargar mi coche de cero al 80%, tardo entre vein-

ticinco y treinta minutos. Esa carga dura 290 millas. Si lo cargara al 100%, me duraría aproximadamente 345 millas. La carga del 80% me dura aproximadamente una semana si sólo estoy haciendo mandados. Cuando uso el coche para hacer viajes en el trabajo, esa misma carga me dura unos dos días.

¿Hay algún otro objetivo que le gustaría alcanzar en esta industria?

Me gustaría mejorar la situación de los conductores de la TLC en la Ciudad de Nueva York. Quiero crear soluciones que ayuden y que los conductores no vean a la TLC como si fueran los enemigos. Quiero que los conductores de la TLC vean a la TLC de la misma manera que vemos a la policía y a las ambulancias. Los llamamos cuando necesitamos ayuda. Vean a la TLC como la solución y no como el problema.

THANK YOU

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