



July 2023 – Keys to the City is a newsletter featuring information about city services that are available to TLC drivers and their families.

Letter from the Chair



Dear TLC licensees,

As we approach the summer, I would like to share the exciting milestones that the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) has realized over the past several months.

In March, the application for 1,000 new electric vehicle (EV) licenses went live. Out of this total, 600 were exclusively available to individual TLC-licensed drivers, while the remaining 400 were available to anyone. While there was an overwhelming demand and the application quickly closed, I'm proud to announce that the majority of EV licenses went to individual drivers! As the agency continues forward with our ambitious vehicle electrification goals, we will continue to evaluate the high demand for new EV FHV licenses.

In May, TLC launched a new street hail livery (SHL) Pilot Program for drivers of EVs, hybrids, and wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs). The purpose of this pilot is to test the feasibility of a license that cuts costs traditionally associated with SHLs while also eliminating the ability to receive street hails. Unlike traditional SHLs, drivers operating with these pilot licenses will not be able to accept street hails but can accept prearranged trips in Northern Manhattan outside of the Hail Exclusionary Zone (south of West 110th St. and East 96th St.) and in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. However, participants are allowed to provide Access-A-Ride and Medicaid-reimbursed brokerage trips anywhere in New York City.

As the TLC Commissioner, I wanted to experience firsthand what it's like to be a TLC licensee. So I decided to go through the TLC licensing process. If a licensee went through it, I went through it as well, from taking the 24-hour training course to passing the licensing exam. I will continue to drive a taxi and take trips throughout this year in order to personally understand the issues that TLC-licensed drivers encounter daily.

I hope that you take the time to read this edition of Keys to the City and learn about the various resources available to you from our local partners. I wish you all a wonderful summer, and please drive safely!

Sincerely,

David Do
TLC Commissioner & Chair

This Month's Highlights

- **Van Hailin'**
- **Introducing Express Care!**
- **Meet the TLC Team!**
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- **NYSERDA Drive Clean Rebate for Electric Cars**
- **Con Edison Drive Electric Incentives**
- **NHTSA Summer Driving Tips**
- **Catalytic Converter Etching**
- **Congestion Pricing Update**
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Van Hailin'



TLC's Mobile Outreach Unit

TLC's Van Hailin' pilot program was inspired by Mayor Eric Adams's initiative to improve customer service and was created to enhance the experience for TLC drivers by allowing them to perform a variety of transactions that would otherwise require them to visit TLC's offices in Long Island City. Van Hailin' will be visiting all five boroughs and is a one-stop-shop mobile office where staff members from various TLC units can assist licensees.

To learn about upcoming events, please visit TLC's website: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/about/mobile-outreach-unit.page>

Introducing ExpressCare!



TLC drivers now have access to virtual ExpressCare through the NYC Health + Hospitals Corporation and the Mayor's Office of Community Health.

ExpressCare provides confidential and convenient access to affordable physical and emotional health services 24/7/365. You can connect with ExpressCare from the privacy of your car, home, or anywhere you feel comfortable. Best of all, you do not need an appointment!

We also speak your language! ExpressCare has interpreter services available in over **200** languages.

Help is just a click away through ExpressCare's innovative service!

1. Use your smartphone camera to scan the QR code, or go to <http://www.Expresscare.nyc/NYCDriverWellness>
2. Select the visit type and enter your information in the fields. These services are available regardless of your health insurance status.
3. ExpressCare will connect you to a service provider in the language of your choice.
4. You can also call their hotline: 718-360-5277.



Meet the TLC Team!

A decorative border made of black and white squares, resembling a checkered pattern, surrounds the central content area.

**Meet the
Fleet
Fridays**

NYC
Taxi & Limousine
Commission

@NYCTAXI

Check out our continuing employee spotlight video series, Meet the Fleet, which explores the behind-the-scenes of how various TLC team members play a big part in keeping our agency running. A new video is released each month on social media.

April

May

June

Office of the Parking Summons Advocate



The Office of the Parking Summons Advocate is an independent office located within the New York City Department of Finance (DOF) to assist New Yorkers with parking and camera summonses. The Office works with all the agencies involved in the summons adjudication process as well as informs the public about relevant rules and laws.

You can schedule a video appointment and learn more about its services by visiting the website of the [Office of the Parking Summons Advocate](#).

NYSERDA Drive Clean Rebate for Electric Cars

REBATE UP TO \$2,000 | 60+ CAR MODELS | THOUSANDS OF CHARGING STATIONS ACROSS NYS

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) is offering electric car buyers a Drive Clean Rebate of up to \$2,000 for new car purchases or leases. The Drive Clean Rebate amount will depend on the EPA all-electric range of the car that is purchased, and there are over 60 models to choose from.

The Drive Clean Rebate is available to NYS residents and businesses that buy or lease new eligible cars through participating new car dealerships. Only dealerships that have registered with the Drive Clean Rebate can offer this point-of-sale rebate. You can find a list of dealerships on [NYSERDA's website](#).

If you have additional questions about this program, you can call (866) 595-7917 or email: NYDriveClean@energycenter.org. Additional information is also available on [NYSERDA's website](#).

Con Edison Drive Electric Incentives

SmartCharge New York



SmartCharge is a residential EV charging program offered by ConEdison for its customers. You can earn cash incentives for charging your electric vehicle at off-peak times from 12:00 a.m. (midnight) to 8:00 a.m. Charging during off-peak times reduces stress on the energy grid, which helps ensure more reliable service for everyone.

You can learn more about incentives and enroll by visiting [ConEdison's website](#). If you have additional questions, you can email EVprograms@conEd.com.

NHTSA Summer Driving Tips



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) encourages drivers to maintain their vehicles and avoid risky behaviors year-round. As we enter the summer months, the agency encourages you to perform a number of vehicle checks to prevent breakdowns and crashes. Drivers should check the performance of their air-conditioning system before traveling since interior vehicle temperatures can reach dangerous levels in warm weather. The higher temperatures also accelerate the rate at which rubber belts and hoses degrade. Drivers should inspect all belts and hoses to make sure there are no signs of bulges, blisters, cracks, or cuts in the rubber.

Additional safety information, such as how to check for vehicle recalls, is available on the NHTSA's Summer Driving Tips webpage: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/summer-driving-tips>.

Catalytic Converter Etching

Catalytic Converter Theft Prevention

A catalytic converter is a part of your engine's exhaust system. Catalytic converters contain platinum, palladium and rhodium — precious metals more valuable than gold.

Three ways to protect against catalytic-converter theft:

1. Etch your license plate number or VIN onto your catalytic converter
2. Park in well-lit areas
3. Install an anti-theft device



CALL 911
if you observe
catalytic-converter theft
in your neighborhood



Since 1975, internal combustion engine automobiles in the United States have been equipped with an emissions-control device called a catalytic converter. However, the rising price of precious metals has made catalytic converters a target for theft.

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) can etch a unique serial number and scannable QR code onto your catalytic converter for free at special events. This identifier will deter thieves from stealing your catalytic converter and allow the NYPD to track stolen parts.

Contact Crimeprevention@nypd.org or follow NYPD Community Affairs on Twitter, [@NYPDCommAffairs](https://twitter.com/NYPDCommAffairs), to learn about upcoming etching events.

Congestion Pricing Update



The Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA, an MTA affiliate), the New York State Department of Transportation, and the New York City Department of Transportation have updates for you on the Central Business District (CBD) Tolling Program, popularly known as congestion pricing, and have asked TLC to share these updates with you. This program would toll vehicles that enter or remain in the Manhattan CBD, reducing traffic and helping fund capital projects to improve mass transit.

The Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and a draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) are now available and include information on the program's benefits and potential effects, including those on the taxi and FHV industries. The documents also include new commitments that state that NYC taxis and FHV's will not be tolled more than once per day. By state law, a six-member Traffic Mobility Review Board will review and recommend a plan for NYC taxis and FHV's to the TBTA Board, which will adopt a final toll structure.

You can learn more and read the final EA and draft FONSI on the MTA's website at mta.info/CBDTP.

The Taxi Network Health Programs

The Taxi Network

Serving the needs of NYC for-hire drivers



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center



South Asian Council
for Social Services

The Taxi Network provides health and well-being programming for taxi and for-hire vehicle (FHV) drivers, including health fairs, clinical referrals, insurance enrollment, coordinating medical appointments, cancer screenings, and prescription needs. The Taxi Network was created by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and its partner, the South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS).

For more information about upcoming health fairs, cancer screenings, or information about where to locate a public restroom, please visit the [website of the Taxi Network](#).

Licensee Leader - Driver Profile

Licensee Leader Profiles

Join us for TLC Licensee Leaders as we meet with TLC licensees across the city to discuss the issues that matter most. To read more about TLC's Licensee Leaders, please visit the TLC's Medium blog here: [New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission](#).

Licensee Introduction:

Robert “Bob” Bedford of the Queens-based fleet, Big Apple Taxi Management, is an attorney by trade who previously served as General Counsel of Nassau County’s own Taxi and Limousine Commission (NCTLC), and reflects on Big Apple’s operations, industry evolution, and the fleet’s enthusiasm for the iconic yellow taxi.



TLC: When was the business founded, and how would you describe its journey so far?

Bob Bedford: Big Apple Taxi Management was founded in 2021 as a new taxi management company, looking to move the industry forward. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly presented challenges no one could ever foresee; however, Big Apple has come through the other side, and we are excited about the future of this iconic NYC industry.

TLC: What are the core services of the business?

BB: Big Apple is a full-service taxi management company, leasing and managing NYC taxis. We have a number of different leasing options for those seeking to begin, or further their driving career, including drive-to-own options for taxi vehicles. Big Apple continues to evaluate its operations to see how we can better serve the people of the greatest city in the world.

TLC: How do you see the fleet changing in the future?

BB: Big Apple is continually evaluating options to bring the industry forward, including in our own operations. We believe technology will be an important part of the NYC taxi industry of the future — in the back office, in the vehicle, and in the vehicles themselves. Electric vehicles are a prime example of the industry’s continuing evolution, and it’s an issue Big Apple is watching closely. While there appear to be a number of infrastructure questions that will need to be addressed, including but not limited to charging availability, it’s clearly an important initiative for the city, the TLC, and the industry.

TLC: What is your professional background, and how did you first join this industry?

BB: I’m an attorney by trade and have worked in the past as a government attorney, commercial counsel to various entities, and as a litigator. I first entered the industry as GC [General Counsel] for the Nassau County Taxi and Limousine Commission and have continued in the NYC transportation industry since. I recently joined the Big Apple team and am excited to have the opportunity to work for such a great company in the NYC taxi industry, which I feel is truly part of the foundation of NYC.

TLC: Can you remember your first experience with a driver and what you learned from that exchange?

BB: I worked with a driver/medallion owner on completing a loan re-structure for his medallion. I learned about the driver’s care for the taxi industry and the rider, just as much as any medallion owner, manager, or regulator. That has stuck with me, and I’ve tried to remember that through everything I’ve done since.

TLC: What type of feedback have you received from drivers? How, if at all, does that feedback inform what you do?

BB: They truly love what they do and simply want a fair shake at being able to do it. They want to be able to operate a yellow taxi and move NYC in the most efficient manner, for themselves and the rider.

TLC: What does Big Apple Taxi Management’s typical business day look like?

BB: Addressing various driver issues at our walk-up window, processing new drivers through our various application routes, evaluating fleet performance and vehicle availability, addressing vehicle issues or other problems. Marketing campaigns, industry analysis, responses to rule changes and other regulatory actions, and the continued evaluation of forms and contracts can also be part of the daily operation.



TLC: What is something not many people might expect to learn about managing a fleet?

BB: I think the level of communication with the drivers, and driver outreach, would surprise.

TLC: Have you taken trips as a passenger in yellow or green cabs, black car services, or other FHV services? Is there anything that stands out to you?

BB: I have tried every form of transportation available in NYC. From green cab, Uber, and subway to CitiBike and scooters, and yellow taxi continues to stand out for me. Even when I left the industry, when I needed a ride, yellow was my first go-to. Driver professionalism, condition of the vehicle, cost, availability of the ride, and efficiency of the ride route all stand out to me as advantages to riding with a taxi.

TLC: What would you say are some of the most crucial skills to have as a safe and successful driver?

BB: Professionalism, awareness, and an understanding of the area beyond just what a map app can tell you.

TLC: What would you like drivers to know before they start working professionally?

BB: That yellow is an opportunity for a career! You can drive-to-own your own vehicle and build your income and skills. You can own your own medallion at some point, and then you're running a business with other drivers! Yellow is truly an opportunity to build a career and a business, not just a "side-hustle."

TLC: In your own words, why is providing reliable, accessible, and inclusive service important to the fleet?

BB: Because we are all a part of NYC, and moving NYC means moving all of NYC. We value all of our employees, drivers, and riders equally, and our values need to be evident in the service we provide. A NYC taxi is a part of the history and foundation of NYC, and an icon like the yellow taxi needs to represent, uphold, and foster the values of the city it services — the greatest city in the world.

TLC: What makes the driver-passenger experience so significant and what customer service do you encourage?

BB: The riding public is the reason we get to come to work in the morning, and our passion is to provide that riding public with the best possible experience — one befitting a historic institution like the NYC yellow taxi. We foster this mentality with our drivers and our staff, and we encourage our drivers to remember, that they do better when the rider is a happy customer.

TLC: What notable changes have you observed within the NYC taxi and FHV industries and which have you met with the most enthusiasm?

BB: Technology advances, and inclusivity of all kinds — such as accessible vehicles — continue to be the most impactful changes the industry has seen. We at Big Apple welcome these advances and continue to evaluate our own operations to see how we always can do better. We have to meet the needs of the riding public, and sometimes that means more than just getting from point A to point B.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.



Taxi & Limousine Commission

As always, let us know what you think! Email comments, questions, and suggestions to tlcexternalaffairs@tlc.nyc.gov.