
Matthew W. Daus, Commissioner/Chair

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GPS ELEMENT ADDED TO ACCESSIBLE DISPATCH PROGRAM PILOT

CHANGE TO ACCESSIBLE PRIORITY PROGRAM AT JFK AIRPORT

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) today announced a modification to the JFK Airport Accessible Taxicab Priority Project that grew out of a partnership between the TLC, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ). As of March 1, 2009, the drivers of wheelchair accessible taxicabs that previously had full-time automatic priority at JFK Airport terminals will now receive priority dispatch only following the pick-up and transportation of a wheelchair-using passenger through the 311 dispatch system. Once the driver of a wheelchair accessible medallion taxicab has made a pick-up following a dispatch via the 311 Accessible Dispatch System, that driver will have a four-hour-long window of opportunity during which they may receive priority status at JFK Airport's Central Taxi Hold lot. Priority will be based on the taxicab's medallion number.

In another innovation, the TLC will authorize the testing of newly-developed GPS-based messaging and dispatch technology as part of the 311 Accessible Dispatch System pilot program, which allows persons who use wheelchairs to call 311 to request the citywide dispatch of one of 238 wheelchair accessible taxicabs. The new technology will be implemented in roughly half of the participating vehicles, while the remaining taxicabs will continue to receive and respond to dispatch communications via Blackberry technology. During this phase of the pilot project, the TLC will monitor the performance of both types of dispatch technology to explore the benefits and/or disadvantages of each.

"These two 'tweaks' to our accessibility initiatives will help us to continue to improve transportation options for people with disabilities," said TLC Commissioner/Chairman Matthew W. Daus. "Not only are we testing new, cutting edge applications for dispatch, but we are also improving the ways in which drivers are incentivized to provide accessible transportation at JFK Airport. We would like to thank the Greater New York Taxi Association, the New York State Federation of Taxi Drivers, the League of Mutual Taxi Owners, the Committee for Taxi Safety, the NYTWA and Creative Mobile Technologies, LLC, for their assistance and cooperation on these initiatives."

"This modification to the Accessible Dispatch program will provide drivers with an incentive to serve disabled riders rather than penalizing them," said Commissioner Matthew Sapolin of MOPD. "It will allow drivers who operate wheelchair-accessible taxis to continue participating in the priority status program at JFK Airport while ensuring that they are able to provide reliable service to wheelchair and scooter users who call 311 to reserve a wheelchair-accessible taxi in advance."

