



TLC TIMES

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Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Matthew W. Daus, Commissioner/Chair

Commissioner's Corner

First and foremost, I want to thank the leaders of the TLC's regulated industries for helping to make our unveiling of the agency's new Staten Island Licensing/Adjudication Facility such a success on June 3. As outlined in our recent industry notice, the facility is located at 1893 Richmond Terrace (between Clove Road and Jewett Avenue), and offers selected driver and for-hire vehicle (FHV) licensing services on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, by appointment only, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. For information and appointments, you may call (718) 815-3734 or (212) NYC-TAXI. We will also be utilizing the TLC's web site at www.nyc.gov/taxi to maximize customer convenience, allowing our customers to make appointments and obtain information regarding the Staten Island facility via the Internet. The Staten Island facility will also hold summons hearings on Wednesdays and Fridays for those summonses that indicate a hearing has been scheduled there. I am pleased to report that business has been brisk at the facility, and have high hopes that this "experiment" will continue to be successful, and ultimately become a permanent part of the TLC's infrastructure.



I am also pleased to report that Operation Street Hail is in full swing, fulfilling its mandate of getting illegal liveries off the street and out of business, protecting the public and supporting our legitimate industries. Of particular note are the joint operations being conducted by the TLC and the NYPD, the most recent of which occurred on June 14. On that day alone, 17

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TLC's New Stretch Limousine Rules Put Safety First

Recently, the Taxi & Limousine Commission gained regulatory authority over stretch limousines



with a seating capacity of nine to twenty passengers. As a result, a number of new rules and regulations had to be created for this segment of the industry, most notably with regard to insurance and after-market retrofitting.

At a recent public hearing, the TLC unveiled its new proposed rules for stretch limousines which include the following:

- Each vehicle must be licensed by the TLC and affiliated with a licensed base before it is permitted to pick up passengers.
- All vehicles with a seating capacity of more than nine (9) passengers must be inspected every four months.
- Each vehicle with a seating capacity of 9-15 passengers must

maintain \$1.5 million in liability insurance.

- Each vehicle with a seating capacity of 16-20 passengers must maintain \$5 million in liability insurance.

- No vehicle that has been altered with respect to length, width, weight or seating capacity ("stretched") by an after-market coachbuilder may be licensed by TLC or operated for hire in New York City unless the alteration has been performed in accordance with the manufacturer's certification program.

The new rules were published in *The City Record* on July 1, 2002 and will officially take effect on August 1, 2002. These new rules can be viewed and downloaded from the TLC's website, www.nyc.gov/taxi.

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street hail summonses were issued to drivers, and one vehicle was seized, bringing the total number of summonses issued to 4012, and the number of vehicles seized (and potentially forfeited) to 229.

While Operation Street Hail has certainly garnered the most attention recently, it is not alone in the universe of specially tailored TLC enforcement initiatives. Another successful example is “Operation City Lights,” which targets quality of life and safety related violations by both medallion taxicabs and for-hire vehicles between the hours of 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. — a practical approach in the “city that never sleeps.” While it has a somewhat different methodology than some other initiatives, it too exists both to protect the public while supporting our legitimate regulated industries. Our latest operation brings the total of summonses issued since inception to 550, with 71 seizures (and potential forfeitures) of illegal for-hire vehicles.

I am writing this column a few hours after the TLC’s June 20 public hearing and meeting, at which we heard testimony and voted on the TLC’s regulation of the stretch limousine industry. Stemming from our concerns on the structural integrity of the vehicles being stretched by the limousine industry, the TLC was at long last granted the authority to regulate the stretch limousine industry in late December 2001. I drafted this law in my role as the TLC’s General Counsel several years ago and actively sought to obtain approval by the City Council immediately after my appointment as Commissioner.

The next key step was to put in place rules and regulations that apply the same high standards to these vehicles and drivers that exist in our other regulated industries, and I am happy to report that these proposed rules were supported by the TLC’s Board of Commissioners with a unanimous affirmative vote. For one thing, these new rules require significantly enhanced levels of insurance coverage – \$1.5 million for vehicles with a seating capacity of 9-15 and \$5 million for vehicles carrying 16-20 – which mirror Federal DOT requirements for

vehicles transporting passengers in interstate commerce. The rules also require, for the first time, that the drivers of these vehicles hold TLC licenses. Perhaps most importantly, the rules, which I estimate to be in effect on August 1, 2002, will prohibit the operation of vehicles that have been altered with respect to their length, width or seating capacity unless that alteration was performed in accordance with the original vehicle manufacturer’s certification program. Speaking for both my fellow Commission members and myself, I found the testimony of several manufacturing industry experts to have been highly compelling, especially in the area of vehicle safety. It will also be nice to know that the Taxi and “Limousine” Commission will finally be true to its title.

As you may imagine, it has been a busy few months for the TLC on a number of other fronts as well. On May 28, I offered testimony to the Workers’ Compensation Insurance Task Force on the importance of uniformity and consistency throughout our regulated industries with respect to the availability of Workers’ Compensation Insurance coverage for drivers. I am pleased to report that I was very satisfied with the quality of the questions asked of us, as well as the Task Force’s clear intention to move forward in this important area in the interest of the TLC’s many licensed drivers.

The TLC also recently unveiled the newly redesigned taxicab map. We made the frugal decision to wait until the supply of the previous version of the map was exhausted before finalizing this newly redesigned and updated version. The new taxi map adds a full 40 blocks to the north in the Manhattan-specific portion, allowing us to appropriately highlight the communities of Harlem, Spanish Harlem and Morningside Heights, and the many sites of cultural interest they contain. This, of course, was a product of the well-known economic revitalization of these communities, as well as their status as popular tourist destinations.

As expected, the new map has caused quite a positive buzz among passengers, who have let us know how much they are enjoying it with letters, phone calls, e-mails, and many

thousands of visits to our web site where it is in downloadable format. It is also true that the TLC has noted a significant decline in complaints against drivers, and an equally significant increase in compliments. That being the case, I felt it was important to reflect this trend on our new taxi maps by putting the word “Compliments” before the word “Complaints” in promoting our (212) NYC-TAXI customer service hotline. In memory of the victims of the September 11, 2001 tragedy, the Twin Tower icons on the former taxi map were replaced with a simple and respectful tribute in the form of a red, white and blue ribbon. Other newly added sites of interest are Brooklyn and Staten Island’s new ballparks, the Chelsea Piers complex, and the Passenger Ship Terminals on Manhattan’s West Side. I hope everyone enjoys them, and makes good use of them in helping both visiting and local passengers to maximize their time in our world capital city.

The TLC recently played a prominent role in the Tribeca Film Festival, designed by its creators (famed Taxi Driver star Robert DeNiro among them) to spotlight the many pleasures of this quintessential New York City neighborhood that was so severely affected by the tragedy. Working closely with the NYC Department of Transportation, the TLC designated a number of temporary taxicab stands in Tribeca to help people make the most of every minute of this historic cultural happening.

I should also point out that the TLC, as all other City agencies, is about to close the book on its latest fiscal year, a year that was perhaps the most difficult and challenging of its 31-year history. But despite the two-month closure of our administrative headquarters, and the fact that most of our Inspectors and other staff were re-deployed to crucial emergency duties in the days and weeks following September 11th, I am proud to say that we have met or exceeded all of the agency’s stated goals. In one particularly remarkable example, we have more than *tripled* our initiation of padlock proceedings, in which we seek the closure of illegal livery bases, enhancing protection of the public while supporting our licensed industries.

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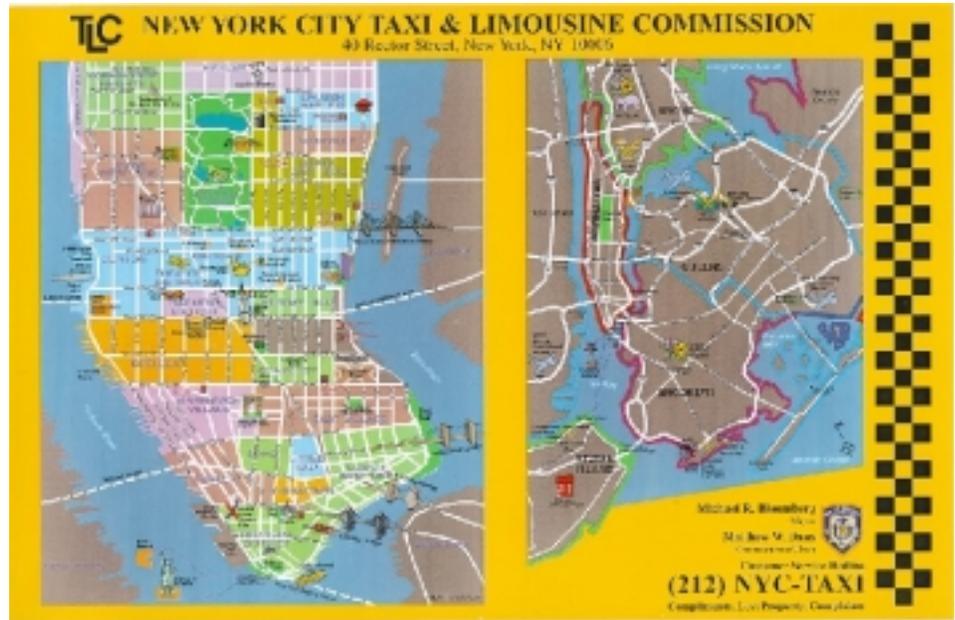


TLC Unveils New Taxi Map

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) unveiled its new taxicab map at a photo opportunity held on May 1st at its 40 Rector Street headquarters. The new map expands its coverage of the borough of Manhattan by 40 blocks to the north, allowing it to spotlight additional communities and sites of interest. The new map also contains such recent innovations as Keyspan Park in Brooklyn, home of the Brooklyn Cyclones, and Richmond County Bank Ball Park in Staten Island, which is the home of the Staten Island Yankees. In Queens, the map will reflect the re-naming of the Interborough Parkway in homage to baseball legend Jackie Robinson. The site of the World Trade Center is marked with a red, white and blue ribbon in memoriam of all those lost in the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001.

The new map is in the process of being distributed to the taxicab industry, and should be in each of the city's 12,187 taxicabs within the next month. The map is also available for viewing on the TLC's web page at www.nyc.gov/taxi.

"I am pleased and proud to unveil the TLC's new taxi map today," said TLC Chair/Commissioner Matthew W. Daus. "This is the TLC's second map redesign, and it incorporates a number of improvements over the previous design. Most notably, it expands



the existing coverage area from 86th Street to 125th Street, and includes new sites of interest such as the Apollo Theater in Harlem, the Passenger Ship Terminal and Chelsea Piers on Manhattan's West Side, and New York City's beloved new minor league baseball stadiums in Brooklyn and Staten Island."

"It is my hope that passengers will take a moment to study the redesigned map and come away with some ideas for new places to visit and/or rediscover. New York City is

a wondrous place for both visitors and New Yorkers alike, and with so many people using taxicabs as a window to view our city, what better way to illustrate the wonderful things we have to offer than with a new taxi map?"

The map will also feature a number of new icons, such as a rose for Spanish Harlem, a "bullish" marker for the Financial District, and a whale to welcome visitors to the New York Aquarium.

Commissioner's Corner

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Further, despite the overtime that was incurred due to the TLC's considerable efforts to assist its regulated industries, we will actually finish the fiscal year *under budget*.

I should also take a moment to point out the role that our M.A.P.P. (Management Accountability and Productivity Program) has played in these successes. It is in this unit that everything the TLC does is carefully tracked, scrutinized and analyzed, allowing us to make modifications wherever necessary to help the TLC make the most of every

resource. The M.A.P.P. unit is also responsible in part for implementing the TLC's redefinition of customer service to include our licensees as much as the riding public, something I hope that everyone reading these words either has experienced, or will experience in the near future. One tangible example of this is the evolution of our (212) NYC-TAXI from a passenger complaint line into a true customer service hotline that links both the public and our licensees to all of the TLC's many services.

Last but not least, I am hopeful that by the time you read this, the strike involving three local bus lines in Queens will have come to an end. That aside, though, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the TLC's staff, Office of Emergency

Management (OEM) and DOT staff members, as well as the commuter van and livery industries for rising to the occasion of helping the more than 116,000 affected Queens commuters get to and from work and school during this difficult period. As of the date of this writing, we have distributed more than 1,600 permits to eligible commuter vans and livery vehicles to provide emergency service during the strike. While the TLC certainly appreciates the quick response of its industries to our city's need, I am sure that it is only a fraction of the public's appreciation.

Until next time, Happy Fourth of July and enjoy the summer.



TLC At Your Fingertips: A Wealth Of Information Is A Mouse Click Away At www.nyc.gov/taxi

The next time you surf the web, make sure you make a pit stop at the official website of the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission, www.nyc.gov/taxi.

“Our website brings an added dimension of service to our customers and the riding public,” said TLC Commissioner/Chair Matthew W. Daus. “Now, customers and riders can view agency policies, download important forms, and e-mail questions to our staff right from their own home or office.”

Visitors to TLC’s website will find a myriad of information at their fingertips. Among the items on the website are industry notices which provide pertinent information to TLC licensees, Public Notices that inform the riding public of upcoming public hearings, press releases describing the announcements and accomplishments of the agency, and a column that gives visitors to the site a personal message from the TLC Commissioner/Chair.

Besides being able to read about the latest on TLC, visitors to TLC’s website can also download forms and rules right from their home or office computer using Acrobat Reader. If the user does not have this program, a link for a free version of the software is available on the site. “By offering our rules and forms on-line, we are saving the public a trip to our offices to pick up the forms that they need,” Commissioner Daus said. “Now, a customer of TLC can do business with us more quickly and efficiently.”

Another feature of the website is the link to the Citywide Accountability Program. This feature allows users to follow the progress of the TLC’s



Management Accountability and Productivity Program (M.A.P.P.) and see firsthand how each department within the agency is operating through the many performance indicators that the public can view or download right from the website.

As rules and regulations change and progress continues at TLC, the website is updated to reflect any change in policy, updates in forms, or when an emergency situation arises, such as we did following the September 11th attacks and the recent Queens private bus strike.

If visitors to the site need additional information or have further questions, there is a link on the site where they can e-mail TLC’s Commissioner/Chair, or even make a complaint on-line.

TLC will be relying on website and on-line communication more than ever to interact with the public and its licensees. All licensees and TLC businesses are now required to use a computer and e-mail to participate in this new program. In the future, TLC will be relying more on this type of communication to transact agency business, which will allow customers to complete and fill out TLC forms over the Internet.

Commissioner/Chair Daus is very pleased with the website. “It’s really a one stop shopping center for the TLC,” he said. “Instead of having to come to the TLC to conduct business, we bring the TLC to you.”

IMPORTANT TLC NUMBERS

Customer Service Hotline (212) NYC-TAXI	
Commissioner/Chair (212) 676-1003 Fax: (212) 676-1100	
Public Affairs (212) 676-1013 Fax: (212) 676-1101	

