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TAXI & LIVERY TIMES

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An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries

SAFE DRIVERS HONORED AMID INDUSTRY TURMOIL

Congestion Pricing and New FHV Category on Nov. 28 TLC Hearing Agenda

DISTINGUEN A CONDUCTORES SEGUROS EN PLENA CONMOCIÓN DE LA INDUSTRIA

Daus Addresses Deadly Limo Crash

2018 NYC Gridlock Alert Days

Hedge Fund Bets on Taxi Medallions

7th Tragic Driver Suicide

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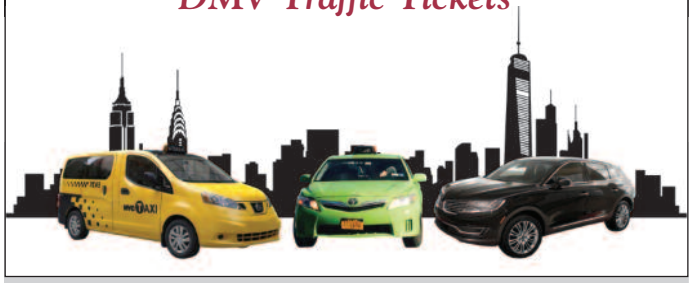

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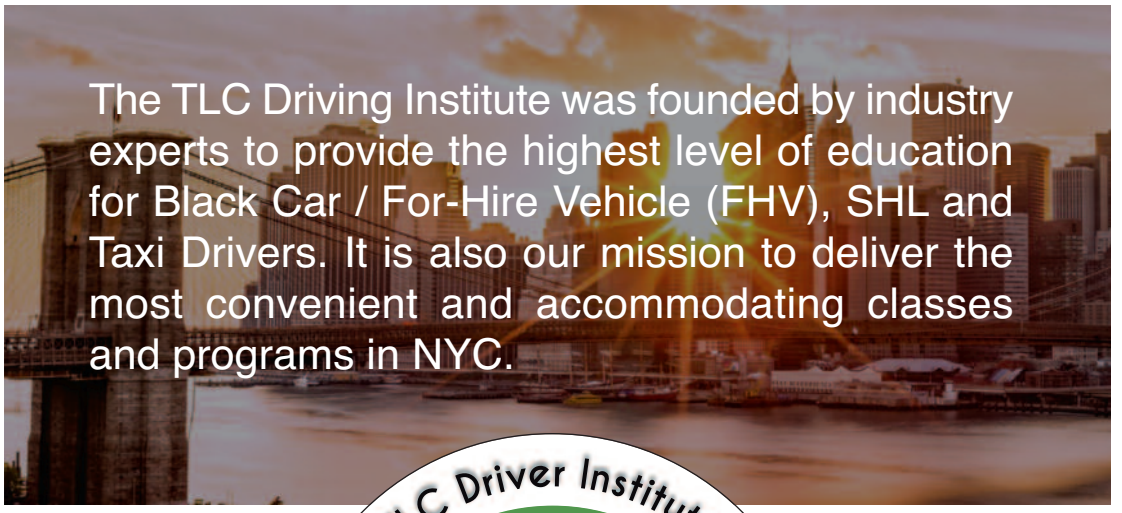

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PUBLISHER'S PAGE

CHECK OUT HONOR ROLL DRIVERS, GET AN EDGE WITH EDUCATION

By David Pollack

Congratulations to ALL the Vision Zero Honor Roll drivers who were given awards by the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission. It is rare that licensed drivers get a pat on the back for anything, which makes these awards even sweeter. Thank you, New York City and Meera Joshi for the well-deserved recognition!

Hey drivers, you may even see yourself in this issue of *Taxi & Livery Times* on page 7.

A lot of you were surprised to see the statistics we published last month in *Taxi & Livery Times*. If you missed them, go to www.taxiliverytimes.com and become more knowledgeable.

Did you know that there is a discussion about raising the income of drivers? The Center for Wage Employment Dynamics (University of California, Berkeley) and the Center for New York City Affairs, The New School reports that a 14% increase in gross driver pay to $25.76 an hour and a 22.5% increase in net driver pay to $17.22 would increase annual income for drivers by $6,345. Their recent report also reveals that industry inefficiencies and inequities by the app-based companies include "incentives to increase the number of drivers without regard for the consequences on driver pay; low driver utilization per driver working hour; and commissions that generate large markups over local operating costs for dominant firms."

Here are some other points in the report: On average, the companies receive a 15 to 20% commission on every trip; 85% of drivers received less than $17.22 an hour after expenses, and that half of all app drivers earned less than $14.25 an hour; 25% of all app drivers have a vehicle that would qualify them for one of Uber's premium fare services above the standard Uber X level; 60-65% of NYC app drivers work full time; 40% of FHV drivers are covered by Medicaid and one in five receive Supplemental Nutritional Assistance; the Toyota Camry is used by 38% of all FHV drivers and another 24% use comparative models like the Honda Accord.

One thing's for sure, those who drive yellows or Uber X must see an increase in income.

This April, the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission will hold a Rate-Of-Fare hearing; be sure to voice your opinion there!

Thanks to all of you who come up to me at red lights, at City Hall and the TLC thanking me for helping the taxi industry and asking when "Taxi Dave" will be back on the radio. I am working on it. Until then, be safe and become educated.

TAXI & LIVERY TIMES
An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries

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PRESS CONFERENCES

Photo Credit
David Pollack

NYC Councilman Chaim M. Deutsch and David Pollack from the Jewish Community Religious Council, are interviewed with a strong message regarding security officers for religious schools and religious places of worship. "There are federal grants available through Homeland Security, and each house of worship can go through a security assessment, as the highest profile location. We have to be realistic in this day and age... we need to do our part."

City council member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. Held a press conference on the steps of City Hall with religious leaders from his district. He introduced new scooters to help constituents travel from subway station is home, and to places of worship.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

By Neil Weiss

TLC HONOR ROLL FOCUSES ON SAFETY, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND ACCESSIBILITY

Recent meetings held by New York's City Council and Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC), along with a seventh tragic, TLC-regulated driver suicide on September 26, reveal more evidence of an industry in chaos, on the cusp of major changes that have come too late for far too many people. Nerves are raw, and understandably so – and evidence of the industry's profound turmoil is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, just weeks after TLC Chairwoman Meera Joshi was shouted down by activists at a vigil for driver Fausto Luna (who tragically committed suicide by jumping in front of an A train on September 26, at the 175th Street and Fort Washington Avenue station), she was handing out awards to drivers and bases at the TLC's 5th Annual Vision Zero Safety Honor Roll ceremony.

It's a difficult and unstable time for the industry, which is obvious by the many news stories included in this issue of the paper, but I think it is important to pause for a moment to celebrate the people recognized by the TLC in October for safety and customer service, along with those who made significant contributions to the TLC's Accessible Dispatch Program, which greatly expanded its service area to encompass citywide pickups this year.

The TLC's 5th Annual Vision Zero Safety Honor Roll ceremony in October celebrated the achievements of nearly 500 of the city's safest TLC-licensed drivers, along with the contributions of industry-leading taxi fleets and for-hire vehicle (FHV) bases.

"Today we honor the men and women who are the model of road safety every day transporting thousands of passengers while navigating New York City's infamous traffic and congestion," Ms. Joshi said at the Honor Roll event. "They are heroes to all of us who use our streets, whether walking, driving, riding a bike or as a passenger. We are here to celebrate their admirable work and ask that everyone join us in thanking these drivers for making our city safer every day."

2018 Honor Roll: By the Numbers

TLC Safety Honor Roll drivers are full-time drivers who have had ZERO crashes involving a fatality or injury, no traffic violations and no violations of TLC safety-related rules for four or more years. This year, there were 269 Yellow Taxi drivers, 37 Green Taxis drivers, 152 For-Hire Vehicle (black car, livery car, or luxury limousine) drivers and 29 Commuter Vans drivers. Six of the drivers made the Honor Roll every year since 2014.

Drivers from all five boroughs were represented, including 46% from Queens, 24% from Brooklyn, 7% from Manhattan, 15% from the Bronx and 3% from Staten Island.

This year, "2018 Accessibility Leaders" were also honored for their "exemplary participation in the TLC's Accessible Dispatch Program, which dispatches wheelchair-accessible Yellow or Green Taxis to passengers throughout New York City by app, web or phone."

- The highest number of Accessible Dispatch trips provided by an honoree was 356 trips, between September 2017 and August 2018.
- Accessibility Leaders have averaged more than 200 accessible trips each since the program's citywide expansion in 2017.
- Four drivers – Luis H. Alvarez, Kwabena Oppong, Bassirou Fall, and Kyaw Thu Ya – were honored for the second consecutive year for their high number of accessible trips.

The "Safest Fleets, Bases and Van Companies" received recognition as well this year. This included 5 Yellow Taxi fleets, 5 Commuter Van companies and 17 FHV bases (including 6 Luxury Limousine, 3 Black Car and 8 Livery bases). All of the Base and Commuter Van honorees had ZERO crashes involving their affiliated vehicles in the past year.

The TLC also focused on Exemplary "Customer and Civic Service." Four drivers were honored – including two for outstanding customer service and two who received mayoral citations for assistance in criminal investigations. Thierno Diakhate helped the NYPD nab a passenger in his taxi who had just robbed a Chase Bank branch on Sixth Avenue in Manhattan in July 2018; and Michael Morgan assisted the NYPD in catching a "mailbox fisher," who had been stealing mail from a mailbox on the Upper East Side in March 2018.

For more information about the Vision Zero Driver Safety Honor Roll, visit: www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/html/industry/tlc_safety_honor_roll.shtml.

LA LISTA DE HONOR DE LA TLC SE ENFOCA EN SEGURIDAD, ATENCIÓN AL CLIENTE Y ACCESIBILIDAD

Reuniones recientes del Concejo Municipal de la ciudad de Nueva York y su Comisión de Taxis y Limusinas York (Taxi & Limousine Commission, TLC) de la Ciudad de Nueva York, sumadas al séptimo trágico suicidio de un conductor regulado por la TLC que tuvo lugar el 26 de septiembre, revelan más evidencias de una industria caótica, en la antesala de importantes cambios que para muchos llegan demasiado tarde. Como es comprensible, los ánimos están caldeados, y lo que mejor ilustra la profunda crisis de la industria quizá sea el hecho de que, pocas semanas después de que la presidenta de la TLC Meera Joshi fuera abucheada por activistas en una vigilia por el conductor Fausto Luna (quien se suicidó el 26 de septiembre, arrojándose a las vías del subterráneo A, en la estación de 175th Street y Fort Washington Avenue), ella entregaba premios a conductores y a bases en la quinta ceremonia anual de la Lista de Honor de Seguridad de Visión Cero de la TLC.

Son tiempos difíciles e inestables para la industria, lo queda claro por la cantidad de noticias incluidas en esta edición de la publicación, pero creo que es importante detenerse un momento para homenajear a las personas que en octubre recibieron premios de la TLC por seguridad y atención al cliente, juntamente con aquellos que hicieron importantes contribuciones al Programa de despacho de vehículos accesibles de la TLC, que amplió considerablemente su área de servicio para que este año se puedan recoger pasajeros en toda la ciudad.

La quinta ceremonia anual de la Lista de Honor de Seguridad de Visión Cero de la TLC celebró en octubre los logros de casi 500 de los conductores con licencias de la TLC más seguros de la ciudad, juntamente con las contribuciones de las flotas de taxis y bases de vehículos de alquiler (for-hire vehicle, FHV) líderes de la industria.

"Hoy distinguimos a los hombres y mujeres que todos los días son el ejemplo de seguridad en las calles al transportar a miles de pasajeros a través del infame tránsito y la congestión de la ciudad de Nueva York", dijo la Sra. Joshi en el evento de la Lista de Honor. "Son héroes para todos los que transitamos estas calles, ya sea a pie, manejando, en bicicleta o como pasajeros. Estamos aquí para homenajear su admirable labor, y pedimos a todos que se nos unan para agradecer a estos conductores por hacer todos los días que la ciudad sea más segura".

Lista de Honor de 2018: Detalle

Los conductores de la Lista de Honor de Seguridad de la TLC son conductores de tiempo completo que no registraron choques con saldo de muertos o heridos, no cometieron infracciones de tránsito y no infringieron ninguna de las reglas de seguridad de la TLC durante un mínimo de cuatro años. Este año, hubo 269 conductores de taxis amarillos, 37 conductores de taxis verdes, 152 conductores de vehículos de alquiler (vehículos Black Car, autos de alquiler o limusinas de lujo) y 29 conductores de vans para viajes diarios. Seis de los conductores integraron la Lista de Honor todos los años desde 2014.

Estuvieron representados conductores de los cinco distritos, incluido un 46 % de Queens, un 24 % de Brooklyn, un 7 % de Manhattan, un 15 % del Bronx y un 3 % de Staten Island.

Este año, también se distinguió a los "Líderes en Accesibilidad 2018" por su "participación ejemplar en el Programa de despacho de vehículos accesibles de la TLC, que envía taxis amarillos o verdes con acceso para sillas de ruedas a pasajeros de toda la ciudad de Nueva York mediante una aplicación, Internet o el teléfono".

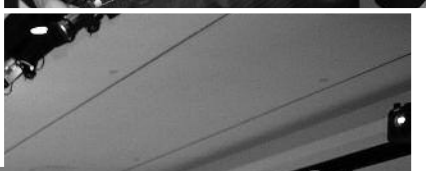
- La mayor cantidad de viajes de despacho accesible realizada por un conductor distinguido fue de 356 viajes, entre septiembre de 2017 y agosto de 2018.
- Los Líderes en Accesibilidad hicieron en promedio más de 200 viajes accesibles cada uno desde la ampliación del programa a toda la ciudad en 2017.
- Cuatro conductores –Luis H. Alvarez, Kwabena Oppong, Bassirou Fall y Kyaw Thu Ya– fueron distinguidos por segundo años consecutivo por la gran cantidad de viajes realizados en vehículos accesibles.

Este año también recibieron un reconocimiento las "Flotas, bases y empresas de vans más seguras". Esto incluyó a 5 flotas de taxis amarillos, 5 empresas de vans para viajes diarios y 17 bases de vehículos de alquiler (incluidas 6 bases de limusinas de lujo, 3 de vehículos Black Car y 8 de autos de alquiler). Ninguna de las bases ni empresas de vans para viajes diarios distinguidas registró choques que involucraran a vehículos afiliados durante el año pasado.

La TLC también se enfocó en "Atención al cliente y servicio cívico". Se destacó a cuatro conductores, dos de ellos fueron distinguidos por su excelente atención al cliente y los dos restantes recibieron menciones de la alcaldía por su contribución en investigaciones penales. Thierno Diakhate ayudó al Departamento de Policía de Nueva York (NYPD) a apresar a un pasajero de su taxi que acaba de robar una sucursal del Chase Bank en Sixth Avenue (Manhattan) en julio de 2018; y Michael Morgan ayudó al NYPD a capturar a un "ladrón de buzones" que había estado robando correspondencia de un buzón en Upper East Side en marzo de 2018.

Para obtener más información acerca de la Lista de Honor de Mejores Conductores en Seguridad de Visión Cero, visite: www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/html/industry/tlc_safety_honor_roll.shtml.

TLC HOSTS 5TH ANNUAL VISION ZERO SAFETY HONOR ROLL



TAXI NEWS

TLC WAIVES NEARLY $20 MILLION IN TAXI FEES IN RESPONSE TO CABBY SUICIDES

The city will apply the brakes on millions of dollars in fees due this week from taxi-medallion owners in an attempt to stem a rash of cabby suicides.

Taxi and Limousine Commission head Meera Joshi agreed to waive what would amount to nearly $20 million in fees to give struggling medallion owners some breathing room.

She made the move after nearly a year of driver deaths led to mounting criticism from other cabbies, pols and city officials.

Councilman Mark Levine (D-Washington Heights) has been pushing legislation to provide longer-term solutions for medallion owners and asked for the break for taxi drivers who are already on the brink financially.

"This is a short-term step to provide some relief to the drivers while we work out a longer-term policy," said Levine.

"It's critical that we take steps to help out the drivers who have seen their life savings evaporate through no fault of their own."

The city usually requires hacks to pay $1,650 every two years — a biennial $550 taxi-medallion renewal, six $90 inspection fees and a $10 renewal for the medallion tin. Handicapped-accessible medallion owners only have to pay $540 for the inspections.

With 11,286 regular medallions on the streets and 2,301 accessible ones, that's nearly $20 million in fees that the city is now waiving. And all of that was set to come due this week.

"Absolutely anything could help out right now," said Bhairavi Desai, executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance. "People are struggling and they would definitely appreciate it."

TLC Commissioner Meera Joshi, who has been scorned by taxi drivers for not doing enough to help them, agreed that the hacks need a hand.

"The renewal fee is one more payment for medallion owners at a time when every penny counts," said Joshi. "It is certainly prudent to pause collection of that fee while [Levine's] bill moves through the legislative process and, if passed, the study it requires would be in motion."

The city could try to recoup the fees in the future.

Levine's bill would require the TLC to conduct a study of medallion owners' and drivers' debt and propose ways to help them out.

Seven for-hire drivers — three of them cabbies — have committed suicide over ruined finances since November.

The most recent was Uber driver Fausto Luna, 58, who jumped in front of an A train on Sept. 26 because of massive debt.

In June, cash-strapped yellow cabby Abdul Saleh, 59, hanged himself in his Brooklyn apartment.

In May, yellow cab driver Yu Mein "Kenny" Chow, 56, jumped into the East River.

In March, cabbie Nicanor Ochisor, 65, hanged himself in his garage in Maspeth, Queens.

Black car driver Douglas Schifter, 61, killed himself with a shotgun outside City Hall on Feb. 5, leaving a scathing note blaming the city for his woes.

In December 2017, livery hack Danilo Corporan Castillo, 57, wrote a suicide note on the back of a summons and jumped out the window of his Manhattan apartment.

A month earlier, livery driver Alfredo Perez hanged himself.

Source: New York Post

Publisher's Note: The Taxicab Service Association known as the TSA is happy to report that $20 million in medallion driver and owner fees have been waived due to the hard work of Councilman Mark Levine. Thank you Council member Levine!

TLC TO DISCUSS CONGESTION FEE AND NEW FHV CATEGORY AT NOV. HEARING

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is holding a public hearing at 10:00 a.m. on November 28, 2018, in the TLC hearing room at 33 Beaver St, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10004. Topics will include a Congestion Surcharge and a new FHV category for app-based companies like Uber and Lyft, called High-Volume For-Hire Services (HVFHS).

Congestion Surcharge

In April 2018, the New York State Tax Law was amended to impose a Congestion Surcharge on taxi and for-hire vehicle (FHV) trips that begin, end or pass through Manhattan, south of 96th street. Beginning January 1, 2019, the State will assess a Congestion Surcharge of $2.50 per trip in yellow taxis, or $2.75 per trip in For-Hire Vehicles. For Shared Rides the surcharge is reduced to $0.75 per passenger. If the passenger requests a Shared Ride, the trip is entitled to the Shared Ride surcharge even if no other passenger joins. The surcharge does not apply if the trip does not start and end in New York State, or if the trip is provided by or on behalf of the MTA.

Proceeds from the Congestion Surcharge will be used to fund the City's subway system, MTA facilities, equipment and services located in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island, and the general operating and capital costs of the MTA.

State Law requires that that the Congestion Surcharge be passed on to the passenger and may not be deducted from the driver's pay. Additionally, State Law further requires that Medallion Owners and FHV Bases remit the surcharge to the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. TLC is proposing these rules to reflect this new State Law obligation on Medallion Owners and FHV Bases to collect the Congestion Surcharge.

For more information about Congestion Pricing fees, visit: www.nyc.gov /html/tlc/downloads/pdf/proposed_congestion_surcharge_for_taxicab_and_fhv_trips.pdf.

New High-Volume For-Hire Services Category

On August 14, 2018 Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 149 of 2018, which creates a separate licensing category for for-hire transportation services that dispatch more than 10,000 trips per day, referred to in the legislation as High-Volume For-Hire Services (HVFHS). This new licensing class would be in addition to existing TLC license classes. These proposed rules establish the criteria for obtaining a HVFHS License, which any High-Volume For-Hire Service must obtain in order to dispatch trips in New York City.

Specifically, to obtain and HVFHS license, applicants must:

- Submit a list of bases through which the HVFHS will dispatch trips
- Pay a biennial licensing fee
- Submit a business plan, addressing the HVFHS's past and anticipated vehicle count, trip volume, service areas, and compliance with the TLC's accessibility requirements
- Assess the impact of the HVFHS on traffic congestion, local transportation, and noise
- Provide a description of all deductions it proposes to charge for-hire vehicle owners or drivers as well as estimates of gross hourly earnings of drivers
- Provide detailed trip and revenue data on an ongoing basis.

Learn more about the new HVFHS category at: www.nyc.gov/html/tlc/ downloads/pdf/proposed_high_volume_for_hire_service_providers.pdf.

Source: NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission

TAXI NEWS

HEDGE FUND BETS ON BATTERED NEW YORK TAXI BUSINESS

Some investors are beginning to see potential in the besieged New York City taxicab industry. Hedge funds that specialize in distressed investing began kicking the tires of the NYC taxi market recently, after prices for medallions plummeted in the face of competition from app-based upstarts. Marblegate Asset Management LLC, a Greenwich, Conn., a hedge-fund firm, has scooped up around 300 medallions for about $50 million over the past year or so.

Owners of taxi medallions and their drivers in New York and other cities like Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia have been hobbled by the flood of app-based services, like Uber Technologies Inc. and Lyft Inc. There are more than 80,000 vehicles used for these two companies in NYC alone, more than triple the number in 2015, regulators say. They now dwarf the roughly 13,500 yellow cabs, whose numbers have risen by only a few thousand since the 1940s. The competition has led to declines in yellow-cab trips and fare revenue, even as the overall number of passenger trips in for-hire vehicles has soared.

Medallions change hands most frequently through private sales and auctions, nowadays often following bankruptcies and foreclosures. Buyers such as Marblegate have paid less than $200,000 apiece for medallions in recent auctions, down from the record $1.3 million they garnered in 2013.

Distressed investors typically buy assets in industries in which disruption has caused prices to decline, wagering they have fallen too far. Investors see New York as the city where traditional taxis – which have the exclusive right to pick up street hails in Manhattan – have the greatest chance of long-term survival. One million passengers hop in a cab or for-hire vehicle each weekday across the city, according to regulators.

"As long as there's a hail system and a central business district, there will always be business for them," said Matthew Daus, a lawyer at Windels Marx Lane & Mittendorf LLP.

Monarch Alternative Capital LP cofounder, Andrew Herenstein, said his firm is also interested in buying medallions if prices fall further.

Marblegate, which manages $1.3 billion, began buying up medallions last fall at prices between $175,000 and $200,000. The firm isn't trying to call a bottom, according to people familiar with the firm's strategy. Instead, it plans to operate its own fleet of taxicabs, and has promised to improve working conditions and benefits for drivers.

A large portion of the medallions Marblegate owns were once the property of Evgeny "Gene" Freidman, also known as the "Taxi King." In May, Freidman pleaded guilty to one count of criminal tax fraud related to the taxi business and agreed to cooperate with federal prosecutors in their probe of President Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen. Cohen and Freidman were business partners in the taxi industry. Proceeds from the sale to Marblegate were used to pay Freidman's creditors.

By operating its own fleet, Marblegate's returns could be significantly higher. Aleksey Medvedovskiy, chief executive of NYC Taxi Group, a fleet operator based in Brooklyn, said that some of the better owner-operators today earn about $30,000 annually per medallion, or a 17% return on their $175,000 investment.

Source: Wall Street Journal

ABANDONED TAXIS CLUTTER QUEENS NEIGHBORHOOD

Queens Residents are angry because they say they've been unable to get the city to remove dozens of taxis parked illegally in their Jackson Heights neighborhood. None of the taxis parked at a block-long abandoned gas station have license plates or medallions.

CBS2's crew counted about 60 taxis parked haphazardly, with some of the bumpers on the sidewalk amid bags of garbage. Officials say many of the taxis were owned by Gene Friedman, a controversial businessman once dubbed the "Taxi King." Friedman partnered with President Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, who city officials believe may now own some of the abandoned vehicles.

Councilman Daniel Dromm (D-25th) says he's been trying to get the city to remove the taxis for months, taking his constituents' complaints to the Taxi and Limousine Commission, Consumer Affairs and the Department of Buildings (DOB). In response, the DOB fined the property owners $5,280. An agency spokesman says a hearing on the matter is scheduled for December. The councilman says he hopes the television exposure will push the city to act faster.

Zinc Realty, which owns the gas station where the taxis are parked, is apparently in bankruptcy. Records indicate the company was owned by Gene Friedman, who did not return calls and texts from CBS2 seeking comment.

Source: CBS New York

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LIVERY NEWS

TEENS SLAP, ROB LIVERY DRIVER

Three teenage passengers refused to pay their Bronx Livery driver, then slapped and robbed him of $100 in cash, cops said in September. Police released surveillance video of the trio, believed to be in their mid-teens, in the back of the victim's black Toyota RAV4.

Footage of the alleged assailants can be viewed here: www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-metro-teens-slap-cab-driver-steal-money-20180923-story.html.

Police say the hooligans hopped into the Livery vehicle on Colden Ave. near Boston Rd. in Allerton around 5:30pm on Sept. 10. Once inside, they began arguing with the 31-year-old driver about payment. As the quarrel escalated, one teen slapped the driver in the face while another swiped $100 from him.

Authorities hope the surveillance footage will help the public recognize the crooks. One was last seen wearing a gray sweatshirt with a picture of a lion on the front. Another was wearing a white hoodie.

Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1 (800) 577-TIPS. All calls will be kept confidential.

Source: New York Daily News

ADOLESCENTES GOLPEAN Y ROBAN A CONDUCTOR DE VEHÍCULO DE ALQUILER

Tres adolescentes se negaron a pagarle al conductor del vehículo de alquiler del Bronx en el que viajaban, a quien luego de darle una bofetada le robaron $100 en efectivo en el mes de septiembre, informó la policía. Las autoridades difundieron un video de vigilancia del trío, cuyas edades oscilarían entre 15 y 17 años, en el asiento trasero del Toyota RAV4 negro de la víctima.

Se puede ver el video de los presuntos agresores en www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-metro-teens-slap-cab-driver-steal-money-20180923-story.html.

Según el informe, los vándalos abordaron el vehículo de alquiler el 10 de septiembre, alrededor de las 5:30 p. m., en Colden Ave. cerca de Boston Rd., en Allerton. Una vez adentro, empezaron a discutir con el conductor de 31 años acerca del pago. Al subir de tono la discusión, uno de los adolescentes le dio una bofetada en el rostro al conductor mientras que otro le robaba $100.

Las autoridades esperan que el video de vigilancia ayude al público a reconocer a los malhechores. La última vez que se vio a uno de ellos, vestía una sudadera gris con una foto de un león en la parte delantera. Otro llevaba puesta una sudadera con capucha blanca.

Se solicita a cualquier persona que tenga información que llame a Crime Stoppers al 1 (800) 577-TIPS. Todas las llamadas serán confidenciales.

Fuente: New York Daily News

LIVERY DRIVER ATTACKED MAN WALKING TO BROOKLYN SYNAGOGUE

Police say a Livery driver assaulted a 62-year-old man as he walked to synagogue at about 7:20am on the morning of Sunday, October 14, in Brooklyn. The victim, Lipa Schwartz, was on his way to his daily service when he said the driver jumped out of his vehicle and started attacking him. The savage beating happened on 13th Avenue by 46th Street.

Another member of the Hasidic community tried to help, but the attacker then chased after him.

An arrest was made quickly on the scene. Staten Island resident, Farrukh Afzal, 37, drove for a car service in Brooklyn. He has been arrested numerous times.

Schwartz says he has no idea why Afzal attacked him, but he said he thinks it was because he is Jewish.

Afzal was arraigned on charges of attempted assault in the second degree, assault in the third degree, menacing and harassment.

The car service where Afzal worked said they fired him after the incident.

The TLC released a statement saying, "The driver is not licensed by the TLC, and has [been given summonses] by the TLC in the past for unlicensed operation of an unlicensed vehicle and being an unlicensed operator."

Afzal's wife says her husband is mentally ill and acts out when off his medication.

"He's schizophrenic," Riaz Afzal told the ***Daily News***. A few weeks prior to the incident, "he had a court order to get his medicine" but refused. He moved out of their family home in Staten Island shortly afterwards, she added.

The couple, who were married 20 years ago, has six kids. According to Riaz, her husband began to show signs of mental illness about a decade ago.

Sources: ABC7 New York, New York Daily News

CONDUCTOR DE VEHÍCULO DE ALQUILER ATACA A HOMBRE QUE SE DIRIGE A UNA SINAGOGA EN BROOKLYN

La policía informó que el domingo 14 de octubre, alrededor de las 7:20 a. m., el conductor de un vehiculo de alquiler agredió a un hombre de 62 años que iba caminando a una sinagoga en Brooklyn. La víctima, Lipa Schwartz, se dirigía al servicio diario cuando –dijo– el conductor saltó del vehículo y empezó a agredirlo. La salvaje golpiza se produjo en 13th Avenue a la altura de 46th Street.

Otro miembro de la comunidad jasídica trató de prestar ayuda, pero el agresor comenzó a perseguirlo. Se procedió al inmediato arresto del chofer en el lugar del incidente. Farrukh Afzal (de 37 años), residente de Staten Island, trabajaba como conductor en un servicio de automóviles de Brooklyn y había sido arrestado varias veces.

Schwartz afirma no tener idea de por qué Afzal lo agredió, pero piensa que fue por su condición de judío.

Afzal fue procesado por intento de agresión en segundo grado, agresión en tercer grado, amenazas y hostigamiento.

En el servicio de automóviles donde trabajaba Afzal informaron haberlo despedido después del incidente.

La Comisión de Taxis y Limusinas (***Taxi and Limousine Commission, TLC***) emitió una declaración en la que afirma que "El conductor no tiene licencia de la TLC y la Comisión [le ha enviado citaciones] en el pasado por conducir sin licencia un vehículo sin licencia".

La esposa de Afzal dice que su marido sufre una enfermedad mental y reacciona mal cuando no toma la medicación.

"Es esquizofrénico", declaró Riaz Afzal al ***Daily News***. Semanas antes del incidente, "recibió una orden judicial que lo intimaba a tomar su medicación", pero se rehusó a hacerlo. Al poco tiempo, abandonó la casa de su familia en Staten Island, agregó.

La pareja, que lleva 20 años casada, tiene seis hijos. Según Riaz, su marido comenzó a mostrar signos de enfermedad mental hace aproximadamente una década.

Fuentes: ABC7 New York, New York Daily News

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LIVERY NEWS

LGA MOVES HOLDING LOTS FOR UBER AND LYFT

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announced that it would close Lot P4 at LaGuardia Airport effective Wednesday, Oct. 10. The lot had served as the for-hire vehicle waiting area for Terminals C and D. In its place, the Port Authority said it will use the Citi Field Marina Lot starting Oct. 11.

Terminal pickups will continue to be allowed curbside at Terminals C and D, the Port Authority said. Drivers using the Terminal A and B hold lots will not be affected by the change. Yellow taxis will not be affected by the change either, the agency said.

Source: Queens Daily Eagle

EL AEROPUERTO LAGUARDIA TRASLADA LOS ESTACIONAMIENTOS DE ESPERA PARA UBER Y LYFT

La Autoridad Portuaria de Nueva York y Nueva Jersey anunció que cerraría el estacionamiento P4 del aeropuerto LaGuardia a partir del miércoles 10 de octubre. Dicho estacionamiento se había usado como área de espera de vehículos de alquiler para las Terminales C y D. En su lugar, la Autoridad Portuaria dijo que desde el 11 de octubre usará el estacionamiento Citi Field Marina.

La Autoridad Portuaria informó que en las Terminales C y D se podrán seguir recogiendo pasajeros al borde de la acera. Ni los conductores que usen los estacionamientos de espera de las Terminales A y B ni los taxis amarillos se verán afectados por el cambio, aseguró la agencia.

Fuente: Queens Daily Eagle

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Photo Credit
David Pollack

A demonstration was held down the street from the Javit's Center on west 37th Street by NYClass, an organization "committed to gaining protection for NYC carriage horses and all animals." This emergency demonstration was held after two horses died of colic in one week. Longtime owners of the stable, Neil and Pat don't want their carriage drivers to lose their jobs and stated their horses are well cared for.

FEATURE

10 GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE & RECOVERY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Holiday Season is almost here — the season of crowded stores, whiny kids, irritable customers and stressed-out employees. If you're a business owner, the holidays are a precarious time. When fuses are short and wallets are shrinking, customers expect great service, says author Maribeth Kuzmeski. Fail to provide it or fail to instantly implement a recovery plan on those occasions when you do drop the ball, and you may find yourself experiencing a not-so-merry 2019.

"Every business owner knows things will go wrong from time to time," says Maribeth Kuzmeski, author of the book … *And the Clients Went Wild! How Savvy Professionals Win All the Business They Want* (www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com) and *The Connectors: How the World's Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life* (www.TheConnectorsBook.com). "It's how you handle these episodes that counts. And at the holidays, the stakes are higher. People have higher expectations and a lower tolerance for mistakes. Without a good service recovery plan, you can easily lose the disgruntled customer, everyone she knows, and possibly a lot of people she doesn't know if she takes her tale to cyberspace."

According to Kuzmeski, many companies spend piles of money and time on big customer service initiatives in order to woo new customers – but they end up losing their regular customers over little things. When you consider the 80/20 rule – a maxim stating that most businesses get 80% of their revenue from 20% of their existing client base – it's clear that you can't afford to let that happen. The solution, says Kuzmeski, is to a) stave off disasters by taking some common-sense preventive measures and b) develop some service recovery techniques and make sure everyone who interacts with your customers knows them. She offers the following advice:

Learn to recognize (and truly understand) your customers' situations. Provide an individual care approach for your customers. For example, someone shopping with children will have very different needs from, say, an elderly couple shopping for gifts for their grandkids. Therefore, you must train your customer service people to recognize these key differences and adjust their responses accordingly.

"Teach service employees to understand the context of a situation and to sympathize with customers," says Kuzmeski. "For example, they might give the kids something to keep them occupied so mom can focus on shopping. Meanwhile, the employees might keep a close eye on the elderly couple in case they need any extra help looking at a product on a high shelf. When your customer service people are attentive and proactive, often they can solve a problem before it becomes one."

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

Make sure you always follow through. Don't tell someone you will be with him in a moment if you know that's not really feasible. He'll just stand around impatiently for a while, start to feel annoyed and then go elsewhere – probably heading straight to a competitor. Instead, find a co-worker to help him out. If you know that he's going to be waiting for a while, be honest about it.

"Great customer service isn't necessarily about getting it right every single time," says Kuzmeski. "I think most people understand that occasionally even the best companies are going to fall short. But what your customers absolutely do have to see from you is that you are doing your level best to deliver on everything you've promised them."

Be very specific with customers (vagueness is a sure path to lost business). When handling a service issue, let the customer know what is going to happen and when it is going to happen. The more information a customer has, the less anxious she feels.

"While hearing that someone is going to address a problem is nice, hearing exactly how it will be solved is more comforting," says Kuzmeski. "Let's say you have an online store that sells handmade candles and you accidentally ship the wrong order to a woman who plans to give them out at her annual holiday party. Yes, you should assure her that you'll correct the mistake right away – but you should also let her know exactly when her candles will arrive and assure her that you'll pay for the rush delivery.

"When people know the specifics, they feel more in control of the problem and are more willing to partner with you on solutions," she adds. "On the other hand, if you're vague about timelines and end up interfering with the customer's holiday plans or even making her worry needlessly – well, do you think she will ever order from you again?"

Extend a peace offering. In the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it is all-too-easy to get caught up in your own stress, the million things you have to do for your business and the other million things you have to do for your family.

"If this stress gets the best of you and you don't handle a client properly, immediately reach out and make it right," advises Kuzmeski. "Even the simplest of gestures can be effective: Offer an apology when you've made a mistake. Then, make things right by extending a peace offering. It doesn't need to be anything extravagant. It can be as simple as a handwritten note, a refund, or a coupon."

Have a standard service protocol, and some key "recovery phrases" at the ready. Make sure all employees understand the customer service plan and that everyone knows how to work together to solve customer problems. Creating standards, procedures and methods of dealing with clients and servicing their needs can really help when it comes to resolving conflicts or handling a dissatisfied customer. You might even consider giving employees "key words" to use in tricky situations, says Kuzmeski.

"Sometimes people have good intentions but just don't know what to say," she adds. "It's not unusual for a well-meaning employee to get flustered and say the wrong thing, which only exacerbates the situation. You don't have to provide a rigid script – just a few phrases like 'I'm so sorry this happened to you' or 'I would feel the same way if I were in your shoes' can calm a customer down and salvage the relationship."

Give frontline employees more power. It's important to empower your employees to become connectors. Often, they might think offering a discount or a coupon is the right way to handle a situation, but they may be worried that you, their leader, won't approve. Make sure employees know they can and should do exactly what it takes to keep the customer coming back – even if it costs the company a little in the short run.

"It's better to give a customer a price break than to lose the hundreds of dollars he may spend with you in the future," says Kuzmeski. "Express it to employees that way so they can truly understand it that way and make a smart decision."

Look for ways to reward employees for saying "yes." Have you ever considered how easy it is for employees to say "no" to customer requests? The truth is, saying "yes" usually creates more work for employees and forces them to take risks. And frankly, it seems that some service people don't feel like they are being paid to say "yes." It's too much hard work. But what if employees were incentivized for "yes"? "Yes, I can do that for you over the phone right now." "Yes, I can add that to your order." "YES, I can do some hard work for you even though it would be easier for me to just say no."

Admittedly, it may not be practical to rebuild your entire pay structure around incentiving yeses and penalizing nos, says Kuzmeski. But you can create a "culture of yes" in other ways.

"Why not occasionally 'catch' people saying yes to customer requests and reward them on the spot?" she suggests. "You might keep a stack of $10 gift cards on hand to give to yes-sayers, or perhaps send them home an hour early, with pay? It doesn't have to cost a lot of money to reward people for creating happy customers – and your bang for the buck can be impressive indeed."

Don't assume your customers will give you a second chance. Think about it this way: If a customer has taken the time to call you about a service problem between the holiday parties he's attending, his kids' holiday plays, and so on, you are already getting lucky, so you'd better take care of it immediately. You don't always get a chance to make it right. Often, customers will just move on. In fact, for each client who does complain, there are nine others who'll just disappear without bothering to tell you why.

"Remember, your competition is constantly trying to sell the same product cheaper, faster and better than you – especially during the holidays," says Kuzmeski. "Don't make it any easier for them by providing inadequate customer service."

Remember, your clients can be your best (or your worst!) marketing tool. The stronger your brand, the more credible and visible you are and the easier it becomes for others to do business with you. Impactful contact with customers leads to confidence and trust. It differentiates you from competitors, makes your clients feel important, gives them something to talk about, and brings in the referrals you deserve.

"If you take a bad experience and turn it into a great one – by comping the customer's order or perhaps giving her a gift card to a local restaurant – she will talk about it," says Kuzmeski. "Obviously, that's a far better alternative than having her out griping to everyone about how your company did her wrong and how she's never doing business with you again."

Ask for feedback. Obviously, you don't have to sit around, anxiously wondering when a problem is going to arise. There is a way for you to avoid some (unfortunately, not all!) client conflicts. You can do it by ensuring that customers aren't suppressing problems. And you do that by constantly asking for feedback. It's amazing how rarely businesspeople do this, says Kuzmeski. They're usually just keeping their fingers crossed that all is well. But a sincere inquiry about a client's satisfaction is a true pathway to making a connection.

"Don't be afraid to engage your clients," says Kuzmeski. "Ask them what you can do better, how you can improve. Supply them with feedback surveys so that they can anonymously share their thoughts, ensuring that they are as honest as possible. As an incentive around the holidays, you might want to offer a discount to any customer who is willing to fill out the survey. Asking for feedback is a great way for you to rectify any possible or growing problems before they become so great that they sour a client relationship."

And by the way: Whatever you do, don't give your clients a horror story they can tweet, blog or YouTube into national prominence.

"The internet has really amplified the consumer's voice," notes Kuzmeski. "It's increased her power exponentially. You don't want to be the subject of the Horrendous Holiday Customer Service story that goes viral this holiday season, and believe me, there will definitely be one. Focus on customer service. Emphasize the importance of keeping the customers you have happy. Remember, you can absolutely keep and create loyal customers in today's economy, but you have to have the service chops to take care of them. Make your customers and your relationships with them a priority – always! If you make this commitment now, you'll be looking at a very bright 2019."

Maribeth Kuzmeski, MBA, is the author of five books and the founder of Red Zone Marketing, LLC, which consults with businesses from entrepreneurial firms to Fortune 500 corporations on strategic marketing planning and business growth.

IATR OUTLOOK

THE SCHOHARIE, NY TRAGEDY & STRETCH LIMOUSINE REGULATORY REFORM

The recent tragic limousine crash that took the lives of 20 people in Schoharie, NY, is heartbreaking. While a small New York State town is mourning the loss of life from the deadliest transportation disaster in almost a decade, policymakers across the U.S. may be re-examining the regulations surrounding stretch limousines to ensure more uniform and heightened safety laws and protocols are in place. This article will explore the implications of this high-profile crash, the response of legislators, investigators and policymakers… and what may happen next. Past and current stretch limo industry trends, safety protocols, as well as the regulatory framework on the federal, state, and local level will also be explored and analyzed.

What We Know Now

We do not yet know what caused or contributed to the Schoharie crash, though the circumstances surrounding the incident are highly unusual. The question everyone is asking is how does a limousine crash, in a quiet part of town – with no skid marks on the road – lead to the death of 17 passengers, the driver and two pedestrians?

In the early afternoon of October 6, 2018, a 2001 Ford Excursion that had been stretched to seat 18 people crashed at the junction of New York state routes 30 and 30a in Upstate New York. The intersection – situated at the bottom of a hill on a long and winding two-lane rural road – was notoriously dangerous. For reasons that are not yet known, the vehicle blew through the intersection without stopping and into a parking lot, where it struck a parked vehicle and two pedestrians before careening into a gully. Autopsy results confirmed all 20 victims died from the impact of the accident; it was described as "multiple severe traumatic blunt force injuries."

The 17 passengers – including four sisters, two brothers, and their friends – were celebrating a birthday, taking a mid-day trip for wine and beer tasting. The limousine had been a second choice for the group, since the bus they intended to book broke down on the day of the celebration.

On the surface, the details of the limousine crash show many alarming factors: The driver did not hold the required commercial driver's license to operate the vehicle. The limousine itself had failed its vehicle inspection and had a collection of violations that deemed it unsafe to drive. The inspection report of September 28, 2018 states that the brakes were out of service. Interestingly, two days before the crash, the owner of the limousine tried to sell it for $9,000 in an ad posted on Craigslist. Contradicting the inspection report, the ad states that the vehicle had accrued 180,000 miles, could carry 18 passengers, was "DOT Ready" and fully serviced.

The Response of Regulators & Legislators So Far

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is currently investigating the crash, while federal and state legislators and government transportation officials have already proposed legislation and called for investigations and regulatory changes to improve the safety of stretch limousines. Local prosecutors have granted federal safety investigators only limited access to the limo involved in the crash because of the ongoing criminal investigation against the limo company's operator.

The vehicle is in the possession of the New York State Police since Nauman Hussain, the operator of the company that owns the vehicle, was charged with criminally-negligent homicide. It may be weeks before the NTSB is allowed to fully examine the limo.

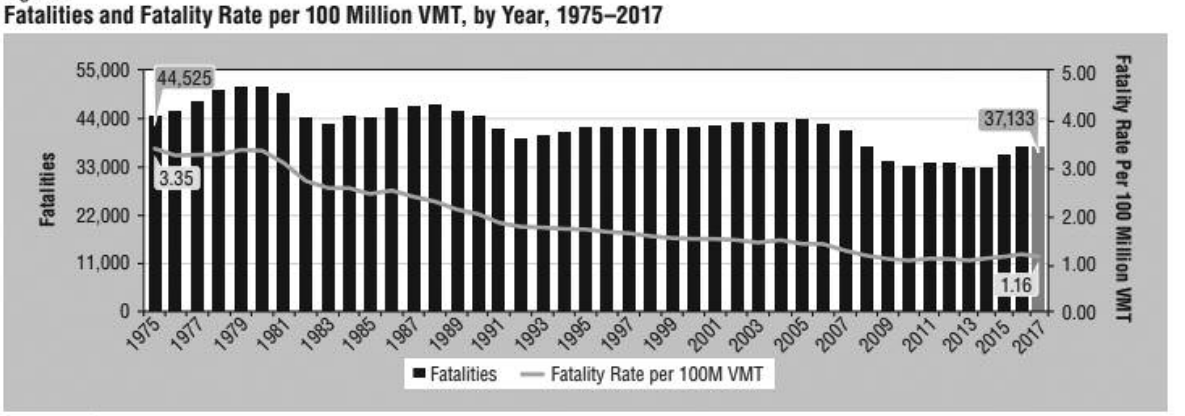
It has been widely reported that the vehicle should not have been on the road after it failed inspection, and state inspectors placed a sticker on the vehicle declaring it "unserviceable" the month before. As for the driver, he lacked the required commercial driver's license to operate the limo. As of October 19, 2018, state police were still awaiting the results of toxicology tests for the driver.

New York State Senator Simcha Felder introduced legislation (S9177) that would require stretch limos be taken off the road after 10 years, impose a minimum liability insurance coverage of $2 million, create new procedures if a vehicle fails a safety inspection and require that inspection results be displayed on a "license plate" sized sticker on the vehicle's exterior and on the NYS Department of Transportation website. The law would apply to limos that have been stretched to seat 10 or more people, including the driver.

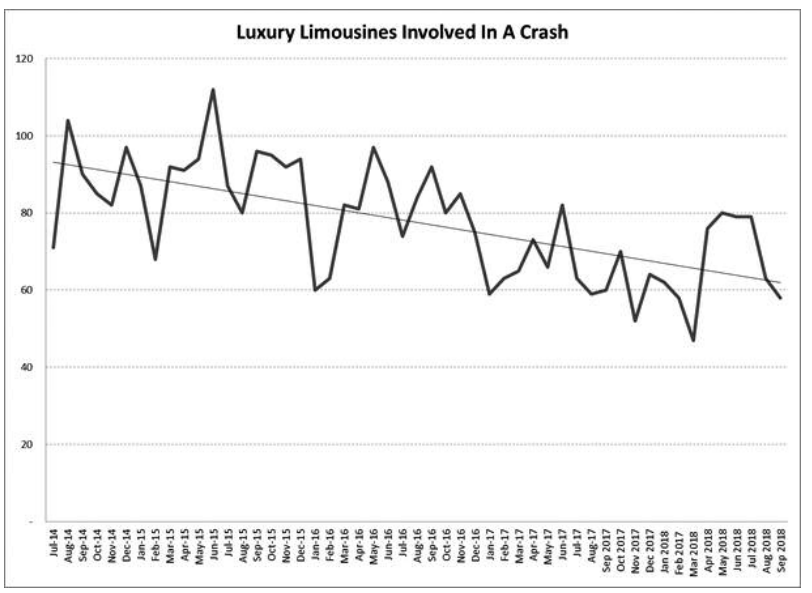
Under the bill, the state could impound a vehicle that fails inspection if the owner fails to correct a violation within 10 days, and it would be a class E felony to drive a vehicle that failed inspection. In addition, stretch limo drivers would be required to complete a safety training course and pass the course exam.

U.S. Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) and U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) called on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to devise new federal safety standards for stretch limos. Specifically, the senators asked NHTSA to evaluate the construction of stretch limousines, address the safety gaps, identify regulatory changes to improve the safety of these vehicles and develop specific requirements to inspect stretched vehicles to ensure that only structurally-sound vehicles are allowed on the road. The senators asked the agency to review whether limos should be

Figure 1
Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT, by Year, 1975–2017



Sources: FARS 1975–2016 Final File, 2017 ARF; Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): FHWA.



Source: NYC TLC.

Continued on page 18

Continued from page 17

classified as commercial vehicles, subject to requirements under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Act (FMCSA), which would then require limo drivers to carry a commercial driver's license and undergo more extensive training. The vehicles themselves would also be subject to more rigorous inspection, repair and maintenance.

What Limo Crash Statistics Show

While the magnitude of the Schoharie, NY crash has caused intense media attention, available statistics reveal that, as demonstrated in the NHTSA chart below, the number of motor vehicle fatalities in 2017 declined slightly by 1.78%, as compared to 2016 (37,133 vs. 37,806). Limousine accidents accounted for only one death crash out of 34,439 fatal accidents in 2016, the last year for which data is available. NHTSA data also shows there were just 12 crashes involving large limos from 2012 to 2016, with a total of 12 fatalities.

As set forth in the chart below, based on vehicle crashes in NYC tracked by the TLC, there seems to be a decline in limousine crashes over the years (July 2014-Sep 2018), and zero cases involving critical injury/fatality. However, due to the size of these vehicles, like buses and trains, when high impact crashes occur, even if not frequent, the risk of serious bodily injury or death is elevated.

Unfortunately, Not the First Tragic Limo Crash

The birthday celebration-turned-tragedy on October 6, 2018 repeats many of the same issues with the stretch limousine industry that have not been addressed in previous accidents. Three years prior, on July 18, 2015, a similar limousine accident in Suffolk County, Long Island prompted the Suffolk County Supreme Court Special Grand Jury to investigate the facts and circumstances of the limousine crash in which the front of a pick-up truck drove into the limousine's side. In this investigation, the Grand Jury issued a 159-page report that provided a list of legislative, executive and administrative recommendations intended to prevent future accidents of its kind.

Another similar limousine crash took place in Cranbury, N.J., in which a truck driver collided with a 2012 Mercedes-Benz limo van, killing one passenger, severely injuring four other passengers and leaving five others with minor injuries. According to an NTSB report of the crash, all passengers in the limo van had not been wearing their seatbelts when the crash occurred, despite limo van occupants being required by New Jersey and Delaware law to wear seatbelts. The report also found that the limo van operator, Atlantic Transportation Services, did not inform the passengers that they were required to wear seatbelts, nor were there any placards in the vehicle prompting passengers to wear seatbelts.

In San Mateo, Calif., a limousine had caught fire, killing five of the nine passengers on May 4, 2013. The converted 1999 Lincoln Town Car limousine had been carrying two people in excess of its capacity, with only seven passenger seats allowed, while carrying nine passengers. The rear doors of the vehicle were compromised due to the fire leaving the small pass-through of the partition into the driver's compartment as the only available exit from the vehicle.

The limousine crash prompted the State of California to amend § 27375 of the Vehicle Code, requiring modified limousines to be equipped with at least two rear side doors and one or two rear windows, so that rear seat passengers or all passengers of the vehicle may open in case of a fire or other emergency for immediate exit. The amendment also required, among other things, for owners or operators of a limousine to instruct all passengers of safety features at the beginning of any trip, as well as to disclose to the contracting party and passengers whether the limousine meets safety requirements.

The Evolution of the Stretch Limousine Industry & the Regulatory Landscape

In the 1980s and 1990s, unregulated coachbuilders were modifying vehicles aftermarket to create stretch limousines that included hot tubs, beds or private rooms, and even an articulated limo that bent when turning corners. Bigger was better in the eyes of passengers and limo companies alike. One of the key safety issues involved is the structural integrity of the vehicle when, after the manufacturing process, coachbuilders cut the chassis and extend the car's length.

In April 1987, a groom and best man were killed when the limousine riding from the wedding to the reception was hit while crossing an intersection and split in half. While the trend of creating super-stretch limousines may be fading, many older vehicles remain on the road. Also, a new trend of excess has emerged with after-market modifications to party buses – with the addition of adding dance floors and poles, stairs to access the roof, and modifications that may not involve the structural integrity of the vehicle, but which raise other safety concerns.\

One of my first official acts when I became Chair of the New York City Taxi & Limousine (TLC) was to reign in the stretch limousine business. Working with the New York City Council, the TLC was able to close a loophole that left limousines seating more than 11 passengers out of the City's reach. Closing this loophole meant heightened inspections and scrutiny in an industry that was growing increasingly unsafe. The result is one of the most effective safety regulations in the United States and beyond.

In New York City, all TLC-licensed vehicles except for taxicabs must undergo a safety and emissions inspection when the vehicle owner applies for a new or renewal for-hire vehicle license. The initial and renewal inspections must be completed at the TLC's Safety and Emissions Division facility. Beyond these TLC inspections, the vehicles must be inspected twice more in the first year (a total of three times per year for each licensed vehicle) by the NYS Department of Transportation, and meet inspection standards set by the State DMV, except for stretched vehicles, which only require two inspections a year. TLC procedures require stretch limo owners to bring a letter from the coachbuilder proving that the vehicle was stretched by a manufacturer-certified stretch limousine builder.

Unlike most areas of the country, anyone who wants to operate a stretch limousine in New York City must prove that the vehicle was modified by a manufacturer-certified stretch limousine builder.

Following national media coverage of fatal limo crashes, coupled with other reports of limousine fires and tire blowouts, NHTSA pushed Ford, General Motors and the limousine industry to develop testing to ensure limousines complied with federal safety standards. As a result, Ford formed a vehicle certification program called "Quality Vehicle Modifier" (QVM) and General Motors created its own "Fleet Cadillac Master Coachbuilders" (CMC) program. Through these programs, Ford and GM distributed information explaining how to convert certain vehicles into limousines that met Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. The manufacturers also certified coachbuilders to perform after-market modifications on certain vehicles in accordance with automotive engineering standards.

The programs limit conversions to specific vehicles that are specifically engineered, designed and built for heavy-duty application and coachbuilder conversion. QVM and CMC coachbuilders are required to adhere to specific engineering and quality control guidelines, which are designed with the vehicle capabilities in mind. QVM rules state that only Lincoln MKT Town Cars are approved for conversion into a stretch limousine and that these vehicles may be stretched a maximum of 120 inches. The CMC only allows modifications of the XTS Professional Vehicle Chassis. These programs provide manufac-

"LIKE" TAXI & LIVERY TIMES FOR BREAKING NEWS STORIES

turer approval, oversight, an extended limited warranty on major components, and – most importantly – safety. They are not, however, mandatory for licensing outside of New York City.

New York State law does not define "stretch limousines." Given their seating capacity, these vehicles tend to be classified as buses. Vehicles that are designed to carry more than 10 people, including the driver, are classified as buses and must obtain operating authority from the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

Recently, the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) changed its vehicle safety inspection regulations for stretched or modified vehicles. Now, the DMV will only inspect such vehicles if the NYS Department of Transportation has determined the vehicle is not a "bus," subject to NYSDOT's jurisdiction. Vehicles that require operating authority will undergo a NYSDOT safety inspection as part of the operating authority application process. The purpose of this regulatory change is to ensure that stretched or modified vehicles that require NYSDOT operating authority undergo a NYSDOT safety inspection.

Similar to federal FMCSA regulations, NYSDOT regulations further require driver pre-trip inspection and post trip review reports. The pre-trip inspection must check the service brakes, parking brake, steering mechanism, tires, wheels and rims, lights, horn, windshield wipers, lighting devices and reflectors, mirrors, and emergency equipment, and exits. The post-trip inspection report shall note any additional mechanical or safety defects not listed on the pre-trip inspection report that the driver becomes aware of prior to the end of the tour of duty. During the scheduled NYSDOT Safety Inspection, the vehicle operator must present its vehicle maintenance and driver file/records, which include the pre-trip and post trip review reports and maintenance exams.

Commercial vehicles that are used to transport passengers could come within the jurisdiction of federal, state and/or local regulators depending on the vehicle size, seating capacity and whether the limousine transports passengers across state lines. There is disjointed governance and inconsistent regulation among the states and localities, especially with regard to stretched vehicles, with differing standards.

Since the plethora of government agencies base their differing definitions and jurisdiction on seating capacity, one of the threshold questions is whether a stretch limousine is to be treated as a bus or a for-hire vehicle. The grey areas and loopholes in State law make it possible to evade New York City's jurisdiction by designing the vehicles to carry 10 or more people, including the driver, and registering the vehicles as buses with the NYSDOT, which inspects these vehicles.

What Happens Next? Regulatory Reform?

In the aftermath of the Schoharie, NY crash, legislators and government transportation officials may be looking closely at their laws and transportation policies regulating the stretch limousine and party bus industries. There are many directions new regulations could take. For instance, it is possible legislators could pass a mandatory vehicle retirement age for stretched limousines that are not part of a manufacturer's program. NYC's TLC is the only agency in the U.S. that has implemented regulations for taxicabs to be retired and replaced by new vehicles seven years after it has been placed into service, ensuring that vehicles meet the latest National Highway Traffic Safety Standards.

Another direction regulators could take would be to have older stretch limousines and vehicles with higher mileage subject to more frequent and rigorous safety inspections. Any stretch limousine that was not modified by a manufacturer-certified stretch limousine builder could be subjected to heightened inspections and required to be equipped with crash avoidance technology and telematics devices that record driver behavior and vehicle diagnostics.

In February 2014, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio released the Vision Zero Action Plan, with the goal to end traffic-related deaths in the city. As the regulator of more than 120,000 for-hire vehicles, the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission is uniquely positioned to help make this a reality and has taken a range of safety-related initiatives to help achieve the Vision Zero goal. In 2015, the TLC began the Vehicle Safety Technology (VST) Pilot program to study the use of innovative built-in and after-market technologies designed to improve driving habits and reduce crashes, such as electronic data recorders (or "black boxes"), cameras with event-based recording and live video feeds, driver alerting/collision avoidance systems and analytics platforms.

Over 2,000 vehicles were officially involved over the course of the three-year pilot. The March 2018 final report on the VST found no strong evidence of a substantial impact on driver behavior but noted that "trends in general adoption and insurance company acceptance of these systems are promising." The TLC concluded that, based on the pilot, the agency would not pursue rulemaking to mandate use of VST systems in TLC-regulated vehicles at that time. Also, New York City implemented reforms in 1998 for all TLC-licensed drivers, requiring mandatory drug testing, probationary licensing, mandatory defensive driving courses, and the lowest point thresholds for removing drivers from the road for traffic convictions. Regulators may explore adoption of similar standards for drivers in their jurisdictions.

In terms of driver vetting on the federal level, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), which regulates interstate buses and trucks, also regulates limousines with a seating capacity of more than 11 passengers. FMCSA has rigorous rules to ensure that drivers receive medical certifications and now uses technology to ensure that drivers cannot work longer than a certain number of hours consecutively. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) require companies that operate vehicles for-hire with a designed seating capacity of more than eight (including the driver), among other commercial motor vehicles (CMVs), to register with the FMCSA and undergo a safety inspection if they operate interstate. Many states, including New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, require all commercial motor vehicle carriers to register with FMCSA and obtain a USDOT number, even if the carrier does not cross state lines.

The FMCSA, which is a sub-division of the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT), tracks and regularly audits CMV operations to ensure they comply with the FMCSRs. These regulations include driver qualification, vehicle inspection and maintenance requirements, and driver hours of service (HOS). Under the FMCSRs, every commercial motor vehicle must be inspected every 12 months by a qualified inspector who has training or certification to inspect and maintain commercial motor vehicles – which could be the motor carriers themselves. Motor carriers are banned from using a commercial motor vehicle unless each component identified in Appendix G of 396 subchapter B has passed an inspection at least once during the preceding 12 months.

The FMCSA Electronic Logging Device (ELD) Rule, which went into effect in December 2017, requires motor carriers to install and use Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs) for more accurate HOS recording. The devices, which range from $200 to $800 each, replace paper logs and make it easier to track, manage and share RODS data. Connected to the vehicle's engine, the ELD records all activities when the vehicle is in use, not just drive time. The device also allows drivers to manually log when they are off-duty or in the sleeper berth.

Regulatory reform could be a call to action for legislators, transportation officials and vehicle manufacturers everywhere to immediately identify and implement uniform and best safety practices for limousine vehicles and drivers. However, any such regulation should be reasonable and effective, leveraging technology and providing for safety and accountability at every level.

While the cause of this most recent crash may not lead to any faults or shortcoming in government regulation, government typically reacts when there are high-profile crashes and takes a fresh look at issues and laws. In memory of the victims of this horrible crash, the families should receive some measure of comfort that the manufacturers and regulators will do everything they can to prevent future tragedies as shortcomings or gaps are identified as a result of the attention this crash has received.

Let's hope and pray that another stretch limousine crash of this magnitude never happens again!

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TAXI TALES

DESIGNATED SURVIVOR ENCOUNTER

Early one afternoon in early September 2016, after the traditional yearly summer slump was ending and business was just about to pick up, I was heading east towards the hospitals on York Avenue in search of a new passenger. Parked at a red light just before 2nd Avenue, I looked over to my right and saw a woman with two young children approaching my empty cab. It seemed that her overly exuberant kids were very excited to be taking a taxi. They were jumping with joy as their mother opened the door.

After telling me her destination, the mother explained what all the excitement was about. Her children had noticed the ad on top of my cab for a new TV show that was to debut later in the month called "Designated Survivor." I had seen the show advertised during the previous several weeks, but hadn't noticed that I had an ad for the show on the roof of my cab. This was not a cab I'd driven before.

My passenger further explained that she and her children had been away all summer in Los Angeles with her husband David Guggenheim, the show's creator. She and the kids came back home to New York for the school year while her husband remained in LA working.

Mrs. Guggenheim also mentioned that one of the main character's children in the show was named after her daughter, Penny, who was sitting in the back seat of my cab. That main character was President Kirkman, played by Kiefer Sutherland of "24" fame, and as stated before, his daughter's name in the show was named Penny.

I mentioned to the mother that I was very interested in the show's concept and that I had intended to watch it even before having them as my passengers that day. I congratulated her on the new show and wished them great success.

Just recently, I heard rumors the show had been cancelled by ABC after only two seasons, but true to the title it had been picked up for another year by Netflix. I'm looking forward to the third season, which will air in 2019.

— LHB

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

By Meera Joshi

Honor Roll

Last month, we had the great privilege to honor our city's safest professional drivers and bases, as well as to recognize drivers for achievements in accessibility and customer service. Between January 2016 and July 2018, our Honor Roll drivers completed a staggering 4.7 million trips, taking the riding public safely to their destinations. That is the equivalent of 49 round trips to the moon, which is 239,000 miles away. This is almost two-thirds of the way to Mars at its closest point, which is almost 34 million miles from Earth.

Wheelchair accessible taxi driver Ali Abubakar, a repeat honoree who spoke at the ceremony, shared his story. A father of six and a widower who lives in the Bronx, his family has undergone significant tragedy but he inspires many with his supreme patience on the road, which he credits for making him a safe driver, and his positive outlook.

"When you are patient, you can accept delays or frustrations without feeling upset or getting angry," he said. "You have a sense of calm and peace that allows you to focus on the task at hand, without getting annoyed. If you are patient, you will achieve whatever you want. With patience, you will beat everything."

Another accessible taxi driver, Hazzem El-Sisi, was recognized for completing more than a hundred Accessible Dispatch trips.

"Part of the reason that I like to do trips with Accessible Dispatch is because I have Erb's Palsy, a birth injury," he said. "Living with Erb's Palsy has given me some perspective on what it is like to be a New Yorker with a disability, and it makes me feel good to help passengers travel to where they need to go. It feels good to help

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Cuadro de honor

El mes pasado, tuvimos el gran privilegio de homenajear a nuestras bases y conductores profesionales más seguros y de dar reconocimiento a los conductores por sus logros en accesibilidad y servicio al cliente. Entre enero de 2016 y julio de 2018, nuestros conductores del cuadro de honor completaron la impresionante cantidad de 4.7 millones de viajes, al llevar a los pasajeros de manera segura hasta sus destinos. Esto es equivalente a 49 viajes de ida y vuelta a la luna, que está a 239,000 millas de distancia. Esto es casi dos tercios de la distancia a Marte en su punto más cercano, que está a 34 millones de distancia de la Tierra.

El conductor de taxi accesible para silla de ruedas Ali Abubakar, homenajeado en varias ocasiones y que habló en la ceremonia, compartió su historia. Un viudo y padre de seis que vive en el Bronx, su familia ha vivido una tragedia considerable, pero él sirve de inspiración a muchas personas con su enorme paciencia en la carretera, una cualidad a la que atribuye haberse convertido en un conductor seguro, y con su mentalidad positiva. "Si eres paciente, puedes aceptar los retrasos o frustraciones sin alterarte o enojarte", dijo. "Tienes un sentido de calma y paz que te permite concentrarte en la tarea en tus manos sin necesidad enojarte. Si eres paciente, lograrás lo que sea que desees. Con paciencia, superarás cualquier cosa".

Otro conductor de taxi accesible, Hazzem El-Sisi, recibió un reconocimiento por completar más de cien viajes de Despacho de Vehículos Accesibles. "Una de las razonas por la que me gusta hacer viajes con Despacho de Vehículos Accesibles es porque tengo parálisis de Erb, una lesión de nacimiento" dijo. "Vivir con parálisis de Erb me ha dado una perspectiva de cómo es vivir como un neoyorquino con una discapacidad, y me hace sentir bien ayudar a los pasajeros a llegar a donde necesitan ir. Se siente bien ayudar a las personas de cualquier manera".

Victor Chiofolo, el administrador de la flota de taxis Ann Service en Chelsea, creada en 1920, también habló acerca de la importancia de Vision

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people in anyway."

Victor Chiofolo, who manages the taxi fleet Ann Service in Chelsea, which dates back to the 1920s, also spoke about how important Vision Zero is to their company. Self-insured, the fleet gives drivers between two and six shifts for free if they avoid a crash for six months.

Thierno Diakhate, a taxi driver who helped the NYPD arrest a suspected bank robber, was also recognized with a mayoral proclamation.

"You're really the backbone of the city," Gale Brewer, Manhattan borough president, told the drivers. "You see. You hear. You're also the eyes and ears of our streets."

Dusk and Darkness

As daylight savings time ends on early Sunday, November 4, all drivers need to be extra cautious about the potential for crashes when it is harder to see. Fatal crashes with pedestrians typically go up 50% from September through January each year in New York City. Evenings will get darker more quickly, and pedestrians are hurt more in dusk crashes than at any other time. Our vision drops tenfold as night falls, and depth perception, color vision and peripheral vision all suffer. Pedestrians, particularly children, may also not realize how dark it is at 5:00pm and how little visibility there is for drivers. Each year, traffic crashes cause more than 200 deaths citywide, and seriously injure 4,000 people. TLC-licensed drivers, who spend many hours on the road, can make a huge difference in make that a distant memory, and we appreciate your vigilance and care on the road.

Hearing on Proposed Driver Earnings Rules

In October, the TLC also held a hearing on proposed policies to protect for-hire vehicle drivers so that they have the pay and expense transparency that yellow taxi drivers have, such as leases written in plain language that specify all costs to drivers and receipts that itemize all payments, deductions and charges. The rules also expand pay protections for taxi drivers by reducing the maximum credit card surcharge fleets can charge from $11 to $7, which can save a full-time driver more than $1,000 per year. We also proposed greater payments to drivers for Accessible Dispatch, and expanded financial restitution when drivers are overcharged on security deposits.

The TLC heard testimony from over 25 drivers, as well as other stakeholders on a wide range of pay issues. Earlier this year, labor economists from the New School and University of California, Berkeley, conducted an unprecedented analysis of for-hire vehicle driver income, and found that 85% of drivers earn less than the equivalent of the minimum wage. The proposal that the hearing was on is a minimum pay requirement, which is estimated to raise driver pay by 22%. We greatly appreciate the time that drivers and other licensees took from working to share their compelling stories with us, and we are thoroughly considering all the testimony we heard.

Attacks on TLC Officers

The TLC's uniformed service bureau has a crucial job on New York City's streets: enforcing traffic safety rules so that drivers, passengers, and those they share the street with can go home to their families, and protecting the livelihoods of drivers and other businesses who do the right thing and get their TLC license. I am sad to report that with increasing frequency, our officers face violence and harassment while they perform their jobs honorably. In the first week of October, two of our officers tried to stop an unlicensed commuter van on Flatbush Avenue that was full of passengers. The driver rammed the van twice into a TLC patrol vehicle, causing extensive damage and sending a TLC officer to the hospital. He put the lives of our officers at risk, and the lives of his passengers, who fled from the vehicle. The driver was found and arrested within days, and will be prosecuted for the assault.

The work of the TLC's officers is critical to achieving Vision Zero, the city's plan to end traffic deaths, and for making sure that unlicensed drivers don't poach trips that our licensees need to provide for their families. We are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices that New York's Proudest make, and the excellence they show in the work they do.

Until next time, please join the 410 exemplary Safety Honor Roll drivers we honored this year and drive like your family lives here!

Viene de la página 22

Zero para su compañía. La flota, autoasegurada, les da a los conductores entre dos y seis turnos gratis si evitan los choques por seis meses.

Thierno Diakhate, un conductor de taxi que ayudó al Departamento de Policía de New York (New York City Police Department, NYPD) a arrestar a una persona que se sospechaba era un ladrón de bancos, también recibió un reconocimiento a través de una proclamación del alcalde.

"Son verdaderamente el pilar de la ciudad," les dijo Gale Brewer, Presidente del Condado de Manhattan, a los conductores. "Ustedes observan. Escuchan. También son los ojos y los oídos de nuestras calles".

Anochecer y oscuridad

Debido a que el horario de verano termina en la mañana del domingo 4 de noviembre, todos los conductores deberán ser extra cuidadosos ante las posibilidades de choques cuando sea más difícil ver. Por lo general, los accidentes de tránsito fatales que involucran peatones aumentan en 50% desde septiembre hasta enero en la Ciudad de New York. Las noches se harán más oscuras más rápidamente y los peatones sufren más lesiones en choques que ocurren al anochecer que a cualquier otra hora. Nuestra visibilidad es diez veces menor al caer la noche; además, nuestra percepción de la profundidad, visión del color y visión periférica también se ven afectados. Los peatones, en especial los niños, pueden no darse cuenta de lo oscuro que es a las 5 p.m. y de la poca visibilidad que tienen los conductores. Cada año, los accidentes de tránsito causan más de 200 muertes al año en la ciudad y aproximadamente 4,000 lesiones graves. Los conductores con licencia de la Comisión de Taxis y Limusinas (Taxi and Limousine Commission, TLC), quienes pasan muchas horas en la carretera, pueden hacer una gran diferencia en haciendo que eso sea solo un recuerdo distante, y apreciamos su vigilancia y atención en la carretera.

Audiencia (hearing) sobre las reglas propuestas para las ganancias de los conductores

En octubre, la TLC también realizó una audiencia sobre las pólizas propuestas para proteger a los conductores de vehículos de alquiler (for-hire vehicle, FHV) de forma que pudiesen contar con el pago y la transparencia de gastos con la que cuentan los conductores de taxis amarillos, como contratos de arrendamientos escritos en un lenguaje simple que especifiquen todos los costos para los conductores y recibos que detallen todos los pagos, deducciones y cargos. Las reglas también amplían las protecciones de pagos para los conductores de taxis mediante la reducción del recargo máximo por uso de tarjeta de crédito que pueden cobrar las flotas desde $11 a $7, lo cual puede ahorrarle a un conductor a tiempo completo más $1,000 al año. También propusimos pagos mayores para los conductores para el Despacho de Vehículos Accesibles y la restitución financiera expandida cuando se le cobre de más a los conductores en depósitos de garantía.

La TLC escuchó los testimonios de alrededor de 25 conductores y de otras partes interesadas sobre un gran número de problemas relacionados al pago. A principios de este año, economistas laborales de New School y de la Universidad de California, Berkeley, llevaron a cabo un análisis sin precedentes de los ingresos de los conductores de vehículos de alquiler (FHV), y determinaron que el 85% de los conductores gana menos que el equivalente al salario mínimo. El tema de la audiencia era la propuesta de un requerimiento de pago mínimo, el cual se estima que aumente el pago a los conductores en un 22%. Apreciamos el tiempo que se tomaron los conductores y otros titulares de licencias para dejar el trabajo y venir a compartir sus fascinantes historias con nosotros, y estamos tomando en consideración de detalle todos los testimonios que oímos.

Ataques a los funcionarios de la TLC

La oficina de servicios uniformados de la TLC tiene un trabajo fundamental en las calles de la Ciudad de New York: hacer cumplir las reglas de seguridad de tránsito para que los conductores, pasajeros y aquellos con quienes comparten las carreteras puedan ir a casa con sus familias y proteger el sustento de los conductores y otros negocios que hacen lo correcto y obtienen su licencia de la TLC. Me entristece informar que nuestros funcionarios se enfrentan con mucha más frecuencia a casos de violencia y acoso mientras desempeñan su labor de manera honorable. En las primeras semanas de octubre, dos de nuestros funcionarios intentaron detener una camioneta de pasajeros sin licencia en Flatbush Avenue que se encontraba llena de pasajeros. El conductor embistió la camioneta dos veces contra el vehículo patrulla de la TLC, lo cual causó un gran daño y envió a uno de los funcionarios de la TLC al hospital. Esta persona puso en riesgo la vida de nuestros funcionarios y la vida de sus pasajeros, quienes se escaparon del vehículo. El conductor fue encontrado y arrestado en los días siguientes y será enjuiciado por el ataque.

El trabajo de los funcionarios de la TLC es fundamental para el éxito de Vision Zero, el plan de la ciudad para acabar con las muertes por accidentes de tránsito, y para asegurar que los conductores sin licencia no realicen los viajes que nuestros titulares de licencias necesitan hacer para proveer a sus familias. Apreciamos profundamente los sacrificios que realiza New York's Proudest y la excelencia que muestran en el trabajo que hacen.

Hasta la próxima, ¡únanse a los 410 conductores seguros ejemplares del cuadro de honor que homenajeamos este año y conduzcan como si su familia viviera aquí!

THE FISHBOWL

LIFE IS CHEAP

By Larry Fisher

As those of us in the taxi industry know, life has become cheap here in these United States. The suicides of seven of our brethren hammer home that point. The responses by our locally-elected officials have been paltry, the one-year cap on new app-based vehicles would suggest.

The fact is that Uber and Lyft have, so far, performed regulatory arbitrage on the system and out-gamed us. Politicians blow with the wind but rarely make any policy that stands for doing the right thing that may negatively impact their electability. Witness the behavior of Mayor DeBlasio a few years ago as he folded like a cheap suit when Uber fought his cap idea. That should have been disqualifying for his reelection.

The reality is that life has become cheapened by several developments, including both domestic and foreign. Besides the taxi suicides, black men seem to be targeted by under-trained or racist rogue policing in various cities in this country. The questionable circumstances surrounding many of these murders gives rise to suspicions that it is indeed intentional. Vladimir Putin's government has contributed greatly to the sense that life is cheap if one bucks his authority. Several dead bodies across the global landscape are testament to that fact. President Bashar al Assad of Syria is viewed as a mass murderer of his own people, including women and children, as his country has endured the ravages of a civil war.

In the last few years, journalism has been added to the list of occupations fraught with danger. In 2017 alone, 65 reporters were killed, 39 of them murdered to prevent them from reporting on corruption and other undesired material. It appears that they were directly targeted by dictatorships and rogue regimes like Syria and Mexico.

This brings us to the latest atrocity at the Saudi Arabian Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey. The barbarism exhibited in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi is unfathomable. That he was an esteemed reporter for an American newspaper, a resident alien of this country, is only part of the problem. Many rumors surround this story. Did the US intelligence know in advance that this plot was taking shape and failed to inform Khashoggi, as is their duty? If so, who knew, and who failed to perform their duty? Is it possible that the leader of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, would not have known and approved this execution in advance? Is this murder a message to journalists to be careful what you report about dictators and other leaders?

Aside from the murder of Khashoggi itself, the next most disturbing aspect of this affair is the reaction by President Trump, who has been all too willing to provide cover for the Saudis with comments about a "rogue killer" committing this act. That he is willing to countenance murder for an alleged arms deal totaling $114 billion (so far only $14 billion on order) is testament to his lack of humanity and his ability to be bought. Worse yet is the response by Evangelical leader Pat Robertson who said, "we've got an arms deal that everybody wanted a piece of... it'll be a lot of jobs, a lot of money come to our coffers. It's not something you want to blow up willy-nilly."

This is a religious leader? Selling arms is something that a religious leader should be against in the first place. Is he saying murder is OK if the price tag is $114 billion? There is so much wrong with this picture. Are we now living in a global version of the Mafia, where the five families are Russia, China, North Korea, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and murder is how the people are kept in line?

The United States, with its free press and open financial system, is supposed to be a necessary cog in keeping the lid on the murderous ways of these rogue leaders. Have we become complicit in the notion that life is cheap?

The answer in the taxi industry is obvious. Lip service is what we get, plus the appearance of concern by those in leadership. It's insufficient to bring those poor souls back, and insufficient to prevent more from occurring

Larry Fisher entered the NYC transportation industry in 1982 as a yellow taxi driver, and has also worked as a black car driver. In 1987, he became a lender for Progressive Credit Union, then took the position of lending supervisor in 2003 for Melrose Credit Union – which he held until he retired in 2016. Currently, Mr. Fisher is a consultant for his own firm, LAF Consulting Services Corp. He can be reached at: lafisher292@gmail.com.

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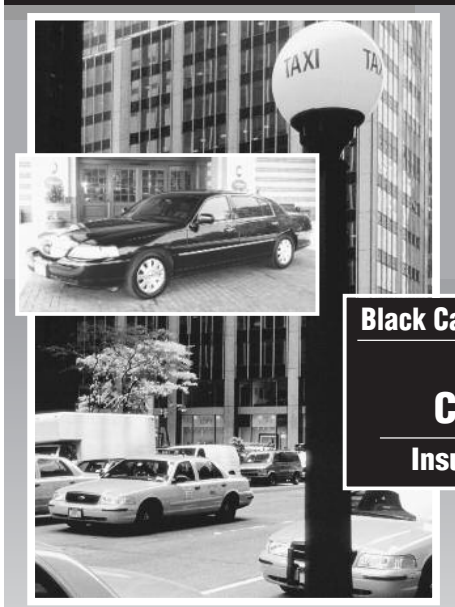

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THE TAXI ATTORNEY

By Michael Spevack

Hello everybody… I hope that you are working hard and making good money. This month, I want to talk about using the internet to plead to or pay a traffic ticket in New York City.

The internet is a powerful tool for fighting or paying or tracking traffic tickets received in New York City. As I have discussed in past articles, and as every TLC driver should know, for traffic tickets you receive in New York City returnable at the Traffic Violations Bureau, a court system created and run by the New York State Department of Motor vehicles in the five boroughs of New York City (which is the only relevant court run by DMV for purposes of this article), you may NOT plea bargain the ticket, which is a big detriment to motorists looking to protect their licenses. However, for these types of tickets you have the absolute right to confront your accuser, the police officer, and have a speedy trial.

These trials are very fast, and the emphasis is on speed NOT due process, so it is always helpful to have a lawyer assist you in NYC traffic court.

If you have a traffic ticket returnable in NYC Traffic Violations Bureau Court, simply go to the website https://dmv.ny.gov/. Go to "Licenses, Permits and IDs," scroll down to "Tickets Points and Penalties" and click on "Plead and Pay Tickets." Enter your NYS driver's license motorist ID (which is nine digits long) and your ticket number. If you don't have a driver's license number from NYS, then enter your name, date of birth and ticket number. In all cases, enter your email address twice. Then, hit enter.

You will be directed to a web page which lists all of your open summonses. You can see a date for each hearing if one is set, and you can enter a "guilty" or "not guilty" plea or plead guilty to a ticket or tickets on this page. If you want to adjourn a ticket or pay one ticket, click "take no action" for other open tickets, if you have them.

You cannot have a hearing over the internet, which is probably a good thing because it is far better to examine the police officer who issued the summons in person rather than over an internet connection. You can take adjournment of your ticket once by computer, providing it is at least one day prior to your hearing.

I hope that this article has been helpful. It is a good idea to speak to a lawyer if you have a traffic ticket returnable in the Traffic Violations Bureaus located in New York City's five boroughs.

Michael Spevack is a 1992 graduate of NYU School of Law and has been a lawyer in good standing in New York State since 1993. He has been helping for-hire vehicle drivers in New York City since 1995, when he opened his own law firm dedicated to "helping individuals, not large corporations." Mr. Spevack can be reached at 212.754.1011; he also welcomes visitors to his office at: 97-77 Queens Blvd, Suite 1120, Rego Park, NY 11374.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

HOLIDAY AND WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

By Bertram Merling
Loss Control Coordinator,
Hereford Insurance Company

The Holiday Season starts at the end of this month with Thanksgiving, which means worsening traffic and colder weather that is sure to bring some challenging driving conditions. The following will help you navigate the coming months more safely.

Holiday Safety Tips

Thanksgiving marks the beginning of holiday traffic, with approximately 100,000 extra vehicles entering New York City on a daily basis, so please heed the following:

- Be patient, courteous and considerate of all motorists to help avoid a road rage incident.
- Remember that the person driving next to you could park their vehicle in a garage and become your next passenger.
- Tourists boost the city's economy. During difficult times we must show them how much we appreciate them by presenting a helpful and positive image.
- Plan to eat a holiday dinner at the end of your work shift. Eating a large dinner may make you drowsy. Driving while drowsy is as dangerous as driving while intoxicated.
- Remember that New York City Traffic Department Agents can issue summonses for "blocking the box."
- Historically, more people Drive While Intoxicated (DWI) during the holiday season. Be prepared to use your defensive driving skills.

Holiday Parties

Holiday Parties mean more people will be Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) over the next month or two. Use extra caution during the holiday season.

- Holiday parties mean that people who have been drinking will often take a taxi or black car, as suggested by public service announcements. Be prepared to be more patient than usual as passengers may be intoxicated. Just remember that they are doing the right thing. By taking your vehicle-for-hire, they are keeping the roads safer for everyone.
- Passengers are sometimes depressed during the Holiday Season for personal reasons. Spread joy by being extra nice to passengers. You will feel good about it, and it will help them through difficult times.

Winter Driving Tips

Thousands of motorists get stranded on our nation's roads during the winter months. Some die; others suffer injuries and frostbite; still others endure delays and the inconvenience of waiting for someone up ahead to be towed or pushed out of trouble. Most of these situations could be avoided if people simply followed these suggestions:

- Stay off the road when traveler's warnings are issued. When police and weather officials issue winter storm alerts, they mean business and they're talking to you. Many motorists wind up stranded on highways because they leave home or work after being warned that roads are impassible.
- If you're away from home and road conditions suddenly become impassible, stay where you are. As much as you might want to get home, you surely don't want to get stuck in a snowdrift halfway there. Don't bet your life (or anyone else's) on a four-wheel drive vehicle. In a full-scale blizzard, you're not much better off than someone in a sedan – especially if he's home and you're up to your axles in snow.

"Winterize" Your Vehicle

Many motorists find themselves stuck or stranded each winter because of car trouble that could have been avoided by simple preventive maintenance. The following items should be checked before the first snow hits and service stations are jammed:

- Battery charge and condition
- Radiator coolant, hoses, thermostat, defroster/heater, wiper blades, washer fluid
- Spark plugs, engine timing
- Tire tread
- Headlights, taillights, turn signals, brakes
- Use winter-grade oil

Pothole Alert

Changing weather conditions can cause potholes. Always be on the lookout for potholes as the temperature rises following a snowstorm. Potholes can cause severe damage to your vehicle. Hitting a large one can also cause a serious injury to you and/or your passengers.

- Maintain a slower speed than usual when potholes are visible.
- If you see a pothole repair crew it probably means there are potholes nearby.
- If you see a particularly large or dangerous pothole, report the location to the Department of Transportation, and to your base so other drivers can be alerted.
- Sun glare often accompanies pothole season. When your vision is impaired by sun glare, use extra caution, especially when negotiating a turn in a pedestrian area.

Bertram Merling is the Loss Control Coordinator for Hereford Insurance Company. He welcomes your questions and comments, and can be reached at 718.361.9191 ext. 7235, or via email at bmerling@herefordinsurance.com

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TAXI AND FOR-HIRE VEHICLE RELIEF STANDS

Taxi and For-hire Vehicle relief stands allow drivers to park their vehicles for up to one hour. This affords drivers the opportunity to leave their vehicles and take care of personal needs. Taxi relief stands should not be confused with taxi stands, which are locations where drivers can wait in their cars to pick up passengers.

DOT is not responsible for regulating taxis. Taxis are regulated by the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. DOT regulates taxi relief stands.

The type column indicates if the relief stand is for taxis alone, or for both taxis and For-Hire Vehicles (FHVs).

Staten Island currently has no relief stands.

The following information was found at www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/taxirelief.shtml (***as of July 24, 2018***). We recommend checking back periodically, in the event changes are made to these lists.

MANHATTAN

Type	Street	Cross Streets
Taxi/FHVs	10 Ave (E. side)	W 26 St & W 28 St
Taxi/FHVs	11 Ave (E. side)	W 45 St & W 46 St
Taxi/FHVs	3 Ave (W. side)	E 14 St & E 15 St
Taxi/FHVs	3 Ave (W. side)	E 15 St & E 14 St
Taxi/FHVs	6 Ave (E. side)	Thompson St & Grand St
Taxi/FHVs	6 Ave (W. side)	W 22 St & W 23 St
Taxi/FHVs	6 Ave (W. side)	W 38 St & W 39 St
Taxi/FHVs	6 Ave (W. side)	W 39 St & W 40 St
Taxi/FHVs	6 Ave (W. side)	W 55 St & W 56 St
Taxi/FHVs	8 Ave (W. side)	W 46 St & W 47 St
Taxi	9 Ave (E. side)	W 30 St & W 29 St
Taxi	Ave A (W. side)	E 2 St & E. Houston St
Taxi/FHVs	Church St *E Rdway (W. side)	Franklin St & White St
Taxi/FHVs	E 116 St (S. side)	3 Ave & 2 Ave
Taxi	E 15 St (N. side)	Irving Place & Union Square E
Taxi	E 23 St (N. side)	1 Ave & 2 Ave
Taxi	E 26 St (S. side)	3 Ave & 2 Ave
Taxi	E 27 St (S. side)	Park Ave S & Madison Ave
Taxi	E 28 St (N. side)	Park Ave S & Lexington Ave
Taxi/FHVs	E 29 St (S. side)	Madison Ave & 5 Ave
Taxi	E 32 St (N. side)	Madison Ave & Park Ave S
Taxi	E 77 St (S. side)	1 Ave & 2 Ave
Taxi	E 78 St (N. side)	Lexington Ave & 3 Ave
Taxi	E 78 St (S. side)	Lexington Ave & 3 Ave
Taxi	E 86 St (N. side)	Henderson Pl & York Ave
Taxi	E 87 St (S. side)	1 Ave & 2 Ave
Taxi/FHVs	Grand St (N. side)	Forsyth St & Chrystie St
Taxi/FHVs	Madison Ave (W. side)	E 26 St & E 27 St
Taxi/FHVs	Maiden Ln (S. side)	Front St & South St
Taxi	Park Row (E. side)	Ann St & Beekman St
Taxi/FHVs	South St (W. side)	Wall St & Gouverneur Ln
Taxi	University Pl (E. side)	E 13 St & E 14 St
Taxi	W 33 St (N. side)	9 Ave & 10 Ave
Taxi	W 39 St (S. side)	8 Ave & 9 Ave
Taxi	W 41 St (N. side)	10 Ave & 11 Ave
Taxi	W 55 St (S. side)	10 Ave & 11 Ave
Taxi/FHVs	W 181 St (S. side)	Pinehurst Ave & Fort Washington Ave
Taxi/FHVs	West St (E. side)	Laight St & Vestry St

QUEENS

Type	Street	Cross Streets
Taxi	31 St (W. side)	34 Ave & 35 Ave
Taxi	31 St (E. side)	37 Ave & 36 Ave
Taxi	31 St (E. side)	38 Ave & 37 Ave
Taxi	34 St (W. side)	37 Ave & 38 Ave
Taxi/FHVs	35 St (S. side)	Starr Ave & Bradley Ave
Taxi/FHVs	36 St (E. side)	Skillman Ave & 43 Ave
Taxi	43 Ave (N. side)	35 St & 36 St
Taxi/FHVs	43 Ave (N. side)	11 St & 12 St
Taxi	44 Rd (S. side)	21 St & 11 St
Taxi/FHVs	43 Ave (N. side)	36 St & 37 St
Taxi	49 St (W. side)	Newtown Rd & Northern Blvd
Taxi/FHVs	45 Ave (S. side)	Jackson Ave & 23 St
Taxi/FHVs	47 Ave (S. side)	11 St & Vernon Blvd
Taxi	55 St (E. side)	Queens Blvd & Roosevelt Ave
Taxi	64 St (W. side)	34 Ave & 35 Ave
Taxi/FHVs	61 St (E. side)	Roosevelt Ave & 39 Ave
Taxi	Queens Blvd (S. side)	50 St & 51 St
Taxi/FHVs	Pearson St (W. side)	Jackson Ave & DeadEnd
Taxi	Queens Blvd (N. side)	55 St & 54 St
Taxi	37 Ave (N. side)	32 St & 31 St
Taxi/FHVs	Van Dam St (W. side)	Queens Blvd & Skillman Ave

BRONX

Type	Street	Cross Streets
Taxi/FHVs	E 233 St (S. side)	Carpenter Ave & White Plains Rd
Taxi	Park Ave (E. side)	E 135 St & E 138 St
Taxi	Park Ave (W. side)	E 135 St & E 138 St
Taxi/FHVs	Pelham Pkwy S (S. side)	Wilson Ave & Eastchester Rd
Taxi/FHVs	W 231 St (N. side)	Albany Cr & Broadway
Taxi/FHVs	West Kingsbridge Rd (S. side)	Sedgwick Ave & Webb Ave

BROOKLYN

Type	Street	Cross Streets
Taxi	4 Ave (W. side)	3 St & 6 St
Taxi/FHVs	4 Ave (E. side)	Prospect Ave
Taxi	N 6 St (N. side)	Berry St & Wythe Ave
Taxi	New Utrecht Ave (N. side)	55 St & 13 Ave

NEWS

2018 NYC GRIDLOCK ALERT DAYS

New York City is finally officially acknowledging what many locals already knew: The city has many more than just 10 so-called "gridlock alert days." City officials increased the number of gridlock alert days to 16 for 2018, beginning on September 24.

Transportation Commissioner Polly Trottenberg said the city added six days related to the U.N. General Assembly when heads of state and many other dignitaries were in town.

A gridlock alert day is a day when an influx of additional vehicles adds to the already heavy traffic on Manhattan streets. Former DOT Commissioner "Gridlock Sam" Schwartz coined the term in the 1980s to describe the 10 most congested days in the city.

Schwartz used data that determined 7 mph was the average speed of cars on gridlock alert days. Now, between app-based car services and increased biking, the DOT estimates the average speed of cars is around 4 mph.

Other U.S. cities have adopted "gridlock days" to describe their own dramatic traffic influxes. Schwartz believes New York's DOT should add a few more – "such as around Labor Day or around the Memorial Day weekend – at least an alert for those people trying to get out of town," Gridlock Sam said.

Source: Fox5 New York

2018 Gridlock Alert Days

There were seven gridlock alert days between September 23 and October 1. The following gridlock alert days close out the year:

- **Friday, November 16**
- **Wednesday, November 21**
- **Wednesday, November 28**
- **Friday, December 7**
- **Wednesday, December 12**
- **Thursday, December 13**
- **Friday, December 14**
- **Wednesday, December 19**
- **Thursday, December 20**
- **Friday, December 21**

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NEWS

MTA GETS RARE PRAISE FOR PARATRANSIT SERVICE

More than a dozen riders at a September board meeting had high praise for a year-long pilot that allowed 1,200 of the MTA's 150,000 paratransit riders to summon a yellow or green taxi using the Curb app. They waited only a few minutes – yet paid the same $2.75 fare as those who ordered a white bus 24-hours in advance.

"Being part of the e-hail program restores dignity to those with disabilities," said Debra Nussbaum Cohen, who is blind and mobility impaired.

The year-long pilot cost $60 million dollars. The program was set to expire in October.

"I'm urging you to expand the program, so hundreds more on the waiting list, including me and all Access-a-Riders can travel at will, as all other MTA riders," said Monica Bartley with the Center for Independence of the Disabled.

Source: WNYC

E-COMMERCE CYBERATTACKS SPIKE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Digital Identity Company, ThreatMetrix, identified 251 million fraud attempts in 2017's fourth quarter, a 113% growth over the same time period in 2016. The report also revealed an increased attack volume originating from Russia.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that all possible precautions be taken to avoid identity theft or falling victim to a phishing scam.

The Q4 2017 Cybercrime Report from San Jose, Calif.-based ThreatMetrix underscores the pressure facing retailers during this period. Almost 193 million transactions were rejected as fraudulent during last year's Holiday Season.

Source: Credit Union Times

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NEWS

CARS KNOWN TO RUN FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER-MILLION MILES

To determine which new vehicles are most likely to "keep on trucking" past 250,000 miles, ***Forbes*** cross-referenced the predicted reliability ratings for new vehicles published annually by ***Consumer Reports (CR)*** and subscriber surveys received for over one million vehicles from the 2005 through 2014 model years. The vehicles were ranked according to 17 potential problem areas, ranging from major components like the engine, transmission and brakes, to issues with paint, trim and interior accessories. The study further narrowed down the highest-ranked cars according to which models ***CR*** specifically recommended for a combination of high marks in their own extensive road tests, as well as owner satisfaction surveys conducted with ***Forbes*** subscribers.

10. **Toyota Sienna:** According to the study, the Toyota Sienna minivan is particularly well suited for long road trips. The ***CR*** reliability rating was 55% above average. The vehicle seats as many as eight passengers, with second row riders enjoying available reclining captain's chairs and their own airline-style footrests. There is also a long list of entertainment and safety features offered, and it's the only minivan to offer optional all-wheel-drive and a specially-equipped mobility version.

9. **Lexus RX 350 / 450h:** The vehicle's ***CR*** reliability rating fell 57% above average and applied to both gasoline and hybrid-powered versions. The RX luxury midsize five-passenger crossover sedan rated high for amenable performance, comfort and a roomy interior, plus myriad available features. The 450h hybrid gets 30 mpg in city/highway driving.

8. **Mazda Mazda6:** Considered an affordable "driver's car," the midsize Mazda6 sedan got a ***CR*** reliability rating 57% above average. It delivers tenacious handling with a roomy and handsome interior that looks and feels like it belongs in a more expensive luxury car.

7. **Volkswagen Passat:** The Passat offers admirable performance and a voluminous interior with more back seat legroom than many larger full-size cars and trucks; and received a ***CR*** reliability rating 59% above average. This rating applied only to models equipped with the 1.8-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine.

6. **Audi Allroad:** The Allroad is essentially an Audi A4 station wagon with standard all-wheel-drive. It received a ***CR*** reliability rating 61% above average. This "family-friendly" all-wheel-drive vehicle is roomier and more practical than a sedan, but more maneuverable and less bulky than a comparably sized crossover.

5. **Subaru Forester:** The Forester drives well and comes standard with what's widely accepted as being among the best all-wheel-drive systems in the industry. Its ***CR*** reliability rating was 62% above average for the base, non-turbocharged versions of this compact crossover SUV.

4. **Toyota Prius / Plug-In Prius:** Prius models rank highly in the ***CR*** reliability report (63% above average), with the basic 50-mpg gas/electric model and even-more-fuel-efficient plug-in hybrid version. The only concern – which is the case for any hybrid – is the potential cost of replacing the battery pack. Toyota's warranty extends to eight years or 100,000 miles on the Prius' battery, after which it costs about $2,500 to replace. Still, with gas prices on the rise, Prius owners who put heavy mileage on their vehicles will come out winners in the end.

3. **Lexus ES 350 / 450h:** Though not known for its sportiness, this midsize sedan does a great job of getting you from one point to another without fuss or fury. Its ***CR*** reliability rating was 63% above average and was applied to both the V6 gasoline-powered ES 350 and the 40-mpg 300h hybrid model.

2. **Toyota Camry / Camry Hybrid:** Among the world's best-selling sedans for its easygoing manners and accommodating passenger cabin, the Camry got a ***CR*** reliability rating 66% above average. This rating applies only to four-cylinder-equipped models and the 41-mpg hybrid-powered versions.

1. **Scion xB:** Although it may soon be dropped from the model line, the boxy compact xB wagon is a solid performer and is roomy enough to carry four tall adult riders in comfort. The vehicle got a ***CR*** reliability rating 81% above average and features a voluminous cargo area when the rear seatbacks are folded flat.

Source: Forbes

No left turn?

NEWS

7TH TRAGIC DRIVER SUICIDE IN NYC THIS YEAR

Fausto Luna, a 58-year-old For-hire Vehicle (FHV) driver, was the seventh reported driver in New York City to commit suicide this year, when he jumped in front of a New York City subway train on September 26, in the Washington Heights neighborhood where he lived.

Advocates say the death points to continuing hardships faced by drivers since the advent of app-based transportation providers entering the NYC market, and comes after the suicides of six other New York City yellow cab and Black Car drivers this year.

New York's City Council approved a temporary cap on ride-hail licenses in August, but there are already more than 100,000 for-hire vehicles on the city's streets, up from 63,000 in 2015.

Advocates say drivers are falling into despair because there are simply too many drivers competing for fares. Meanwhile, the value of yellow taxi medallions has plunged from more than $1 million to $200,000, forcing some medallion owners into bankruptcy.

Uber, the company Mr. Luna worked for, described him as a highly-rated longtime driver who had consistent earnings over time. He reportedly had become depressed about growing debts leading up to his death, according to the ***New York Daily News***.

"The for-hire vehicle industry is in a far-reaching crisis that is affecting thousands of families across our city right now," said Ryan Price, executive director of the Independent Drivers Guild. Price added that app-based drivers, along with drivers across the industry, face "mounting bills and punishing shifts."

Ira Goldstein, executive director of the Black Car Fund, said the death is further proof that drivers need more mental health counseling.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Luna's untimely passing is just the latest evidence that the for-hire vehicle industry must address this crisis swiftly and comprehensively," Goldstein said. "That is why the Black Car Fund is partnering with the Independent Drivers Guild to deliver mental wellness counseling, emergency response, psychologists, social workers and other helpful services directly to drivers."

At a gathering in Washington Heights in honor of Mr. Luna, activists yelled at Taxi and Limousine Commissioner Meera Joshi, as she left the vigil, which she attended to show her respect. Ms. Joshi and the TLC have become the target of drivers' ire.

Joshi had announced that she would be attending the vigil, which was held near the train station where Mr. Luna died. The drivers who heckled her represented just a small portion of the roughly 50 attendees.

TLC spokesman Allan Fromberg disputed the idea that Joshi was chased away. He and Joshi left the vigil after a group of people "with a very different agenda... essentially hijacked it with some of the most hateful and divisive language I've ever heard," he said. "When it became clear that their bullying tactics wouldn't allow for anyone to say or hear any constructive messages, we left so as not to allow this group to continue to detract from the unity that by all rights should have been at the center of the event. Under no circumstances, however, does this in any way diminish our commitment to drivers, or dissuade us from the work we're doing to help them."

Joshi's attendance at the vigil was otherwise viewed as a positive gesture.

Sources: US News, Washington Heights Patch

NYC JAZZ CLUBS & VENUES

Birdland
Classic Theater District jazz club with roomy red environs, a large bar & Cajun-influenced food.
315 W. 44th St.

Blue Note
Legendary jazz musicians take the stage at this intimate club that also serves American eats.
131 W. 3rd St.

Smoke Jazz & Supper Club
A cozy venue with clean sight lines & good sound featuring jazz, blues & Latin acts, plus eats.
2751 Broadway

Jazz Standard
One of NYC's largest jazz clubs, featuring new & established musicians, plus BBQ from Danny Meyer.
116 E. 27th St.

Village Vanguard
Best known for iconic 1960s gigs by John Coltrane, this club continues to feature exceptional jazz, and lives up to its name.
178 7th Ave. S.

Smalls Jazz Club
Tiny no-frills space delivers live jazz bands & jam sessions at modest prices.
183 W. 10th St.

Mezzrow Jazz Club
Intimate, relaxed lounge featuring live jazz pianists & a full bar, plus a simple snack menu.
163 W. 10th St.

Arthur's Tavern
Live bebop, rhythm & blues, Dixieland jazz & more are presented at this circa-1937 tavern (cash only).
57 Grove St.

ShapeShifter Lab
Performance venue with shows nightly – plus art exhibits, video capture, sessions & master classes.
18 Whitwell Pl.

Swing 46 Jazz and Supper Club
This jazz & supper club offers live music, swing dancing & free lessons.
349 W. 46th St.

Iridium
Intimate basement jazz club, long associated with Les Paul, which features national & local performers.
1650 Broadway

The **Jazz** Gallery
Non-profit cultural center & performance space showcasing progressive jazz music.
1160 Broadway

Bill's Place
Jazz legends play the small no-frills room & you can bring your own alcohol. Reservations needed.
148 W. 133rd St.

Zinc Bar
Live jazz headlines this subterranean club known for its African, Latin & Brazilian rhythms.
82 W. 3rd St.

The Stone
Performance venue for experimental & avant-garde music, with a different musician curating monthly.
Avenue C & 2nd Street

Jazz at Kitano
Intimate spot in the Kitano Hotel boasts live music most nights, eclectic fare & Sunday jazz brunch.
66 Park Ave.

Showman's Jazz Club
Intimate nightspot with a down-to-earth, nostalgic vibe featuring live jazz & blues & a full bar.
375 W. 125th St.

Cotton Club
Legendary supper club for jazz & gospel, offering Southern-style dining & a buffet brunch.
656 W. 125th St.

55 Bar
Modest cover charges & some major talents make this cozy downstairs music club a local stalwart.
55 Christopher St.

Dizzy's Club Coca Cola
Upscale, intimate jazz club in Lincoln Center serving Southern-accented fare & themed cocktails.
10 Columbus Cir.

Cleopatra's Needle
Jazz joint where admission's free, the food's Mediterranean & the talent includes veteran acts.
2485 Broadway

Minton's Playhouse
Revival of a famed nightclub serving up Afro-Asian-American fare, weekend brunch & live jazz.
206 W. 118th St.

Paris Blues
Enduring old-school haunt for live jazz shows in cozy digs, plus cocktails & TVs showing sports.
163 W. 121st St.

The Django
Cavelike, Paris-inspired jazz venue & cocktail bar under the Roxy Hotel, with live acts Wed–Sat.
2 6th Ave.

Nublu Classic
Live jazz, world music & more are presented at this compact club with its own record label.
62 Avenue C

Ginny's Supper Club
Updated soul food & craft cocktails plus live music in the basement of Red Rooster.
310 Lenox Ave

Café Carlyle
Luxe, mural-lined cabaret at the Carlyle Hotel with a dress code & many celebrity appearances.
35 E. 76th St.

Jazz At Lincoln Center
The largest theater in Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall was designed for live-music acoustics.
10 Columbus Cir.

DROM
This gypsy-themed lounge hosts global roster of acts, ranging from jazz & funk to hip-hop.
85 Avenue A

Bar Next Door at La Lanterna di Vittorio
La Lanterna di Vittori's next-door nook offers coffee, wine & light bites plus live jazz nightly.
129 Macdougal St.

The Cornelia Street Cafe
Circa-1977 Greenwich Village hangout with casual, all-day dining & a downstairs performance space.
29 Cornelia St.

The Flatiron Room
Classy nightspot with a vintage vibe housing a collection of 750+ brown spirits & live jazz shows.
37 W. 26th St.

DAILY & WEEKLY TAXICAB DRIVER BILL OF RIGHTS

LEASE CAPS

		MON	TUES	WEDS	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	WEEKLY
Standard	AM	$105	$105	$105	$105	$105	$105	$105	$630
	PM	$115	$115	$120	$129	$129	$129	$115	$737
Hybrid	AM	$108	$108	$108	$108	$108	$108	$108	$648
	PM	$118	$118	$123	$132	$132	$132	$118	$755

LEASES

- Lease agreements must be in writing
- Leases must be signed by the owner and driver
- Owners must provide drivers with a copy of the lease
- Leases must include:
  1. Lease start & end date
  2. Shift start & end time
  3. All charges and TLC rules allowing the charges (see below)

PERMITTED CHARGES

1. Credit card surcharge
   a. Up to $11/shift (daily drivers)
   b. Up to $66/week (weekly drivers)
2. Security deposit
3. Late vehicle return charge of up to $25 for each hour late
4. Cancellation fee
5. State and local taxes
6. Gasoline surcharge
7. Parking or red light tickets, if driver is allowed to challenge the ticket
8. Owners must keep:
   a. All MTA taxes
   b. Taxi Improvement Fund surcharges
   c. Tolls if owner's E-ZPass® is used

PROHIBITED CHARGES

Owners must not:
1. Charge drivers for service and maintenance of vehicle
2. Request or accept tips

CREDIT CARD FARES

Owners must pay drivers all credit card fares at the end of each shift (for daily drivers) or week (for weekly drivers) at no cost to the driver.

RECEIPTS

- Owners must provide drivers with receipts for all payments & credits
- Receipts must include:
  1. Date
  2. Driver name
  3. Medallion number
  4. Reason for charge or credit
  5. Amount charged or credited
  6. TLC rule permitting each charge or credit

WORKERS COMPENSATION

Drivers may file for Worker's Compensation if injured while working on the job as a taxi driver.

NO RETALIATION

Owners may not retaliate against drivers who make complaints to the TLC against owners for breaking TLC rules.

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO REPORT A RULE VIOLATION
call 212-676-1201
email DRIVERPROTECTION@TLC.NYC.GOV

NYC
Taxi & Limousine Commission

DON'T LET REPORTING YOUR ACCIDENT TO US, BE THE LAST THING YOU DO...

WHY SHOULD THIS BE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- Take advantage of the coverage you already have
- Get the care you need
- Avoid out of pocket medical expenses
- Avoid potential permanent disabilities
- Get back to work quicker
- Avoid loss of full income
- Be at your best working potential

DON'T LAG BEHIND DON'T WASTE TIME.

REPORT YOUR ACCIDENT QUICKLY AND HAVE PEACE OF MIND!

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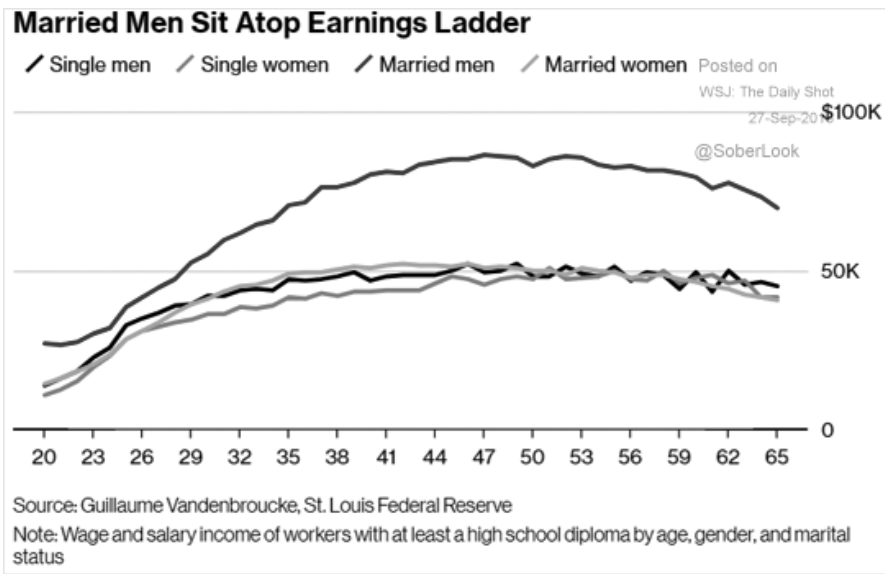
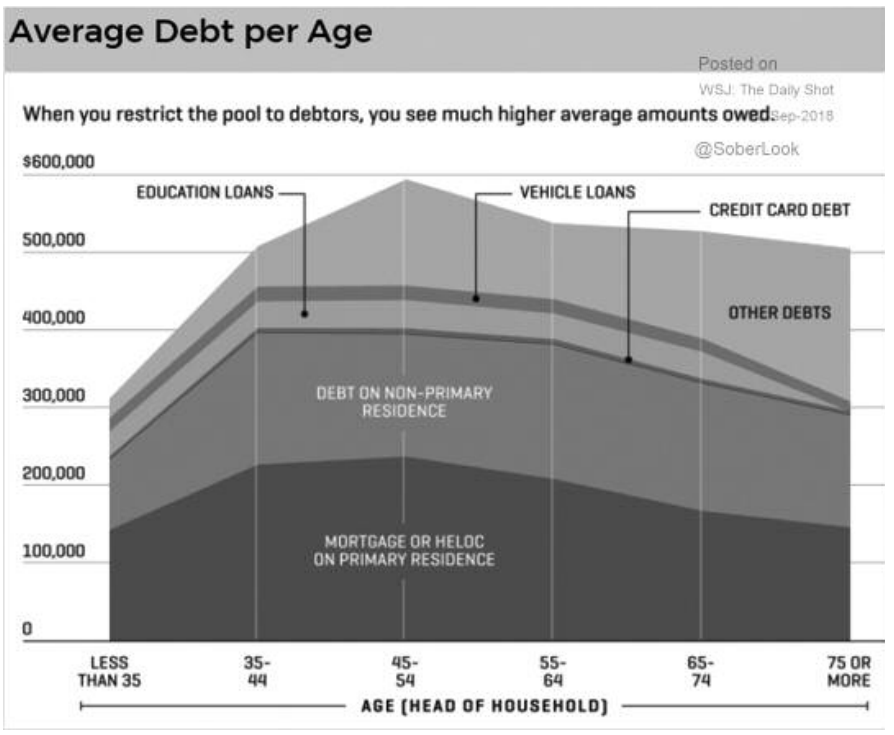


Earnings by age_ gender and marital status (use comma instead of underscore between age and gender)



Consumer debt levels by age

Highest wage gains in the last 12 months

NEWS

BASES RECEIVE LIVERY FUND CANCELLATION NOTICES

A number of Livery bases failed to pay their membership dues to Hereford Insurance Company, the carrier for the New York Independent Livery Driver Benefit Fund (NYILDBF). The Membership payments were due by 9/15/18. The bases that failed to pay were sent Notice of Cancellation on 9/30/18.

What Does This Mean?

The failure of these Livery bases to pay their membership payments means that they have no Workers' Compensation coverage with the Fund and unless they have a private policy of full Workers' Compensation coverage, they are in violation of the law. If these Bases did not pay their premiums immediately, they were subject to fines from the Workers' Compensation Board, suspension of their base license and/or at risk for personal liability in the event the driver of an affiliate vehicle is injured while working

Penalties for Non-Compliance

The Bases that do not comply are subject to stop work orders issued by the Worker's Compensation Law and suspension of their Base license by the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission. Additionally, uninsured Bases will be subject to penalties imposed by the Workers' Compensation Board as per Section 160-hhh(f) of the Executive Law.

For more information, visit: www.newyorkliveryfund.com.

TLC APPROVE 3RD FLAT-FARE APP FOR YELLOW AND GREEN TAXIS

On May 29, 2018, TLC approved the Flex Fare Pilot Program, which allows licensed E-Hail apps to offer passengers binding, up-front fare quotes when booking a yellow taxi or a Street-Hail Livery through a mobile app. Wapanda has been added as an approved app in the Flex Fare Pilot Program.

The complete list of companies approved to participate are:

- Waave Inc. – http://www.waave.co
- Myle Technologies Inc. – http://ridemyle.com
- Wapanda Inc. – http://www.wapanda.co

Drivers will receive Flex Fare trip offers through E-Hail apps. The offers will include the fare drivers would receive if they choose to accept. Drivers are not required to accept these offers. Drivers will not use the taximeter during these trips. Passengers will pay for these trips, including any tips, in the E-Hail app and companies will pay the drivers directly. Drivers must continue to use the taximeter for all street hail trips.

Drivers interested in participating should reach out to an approved company. To learn more about the pilot or to see the most up-to-date list of participants, visit the TLC website: http://www.nyc.gov/flexfare.