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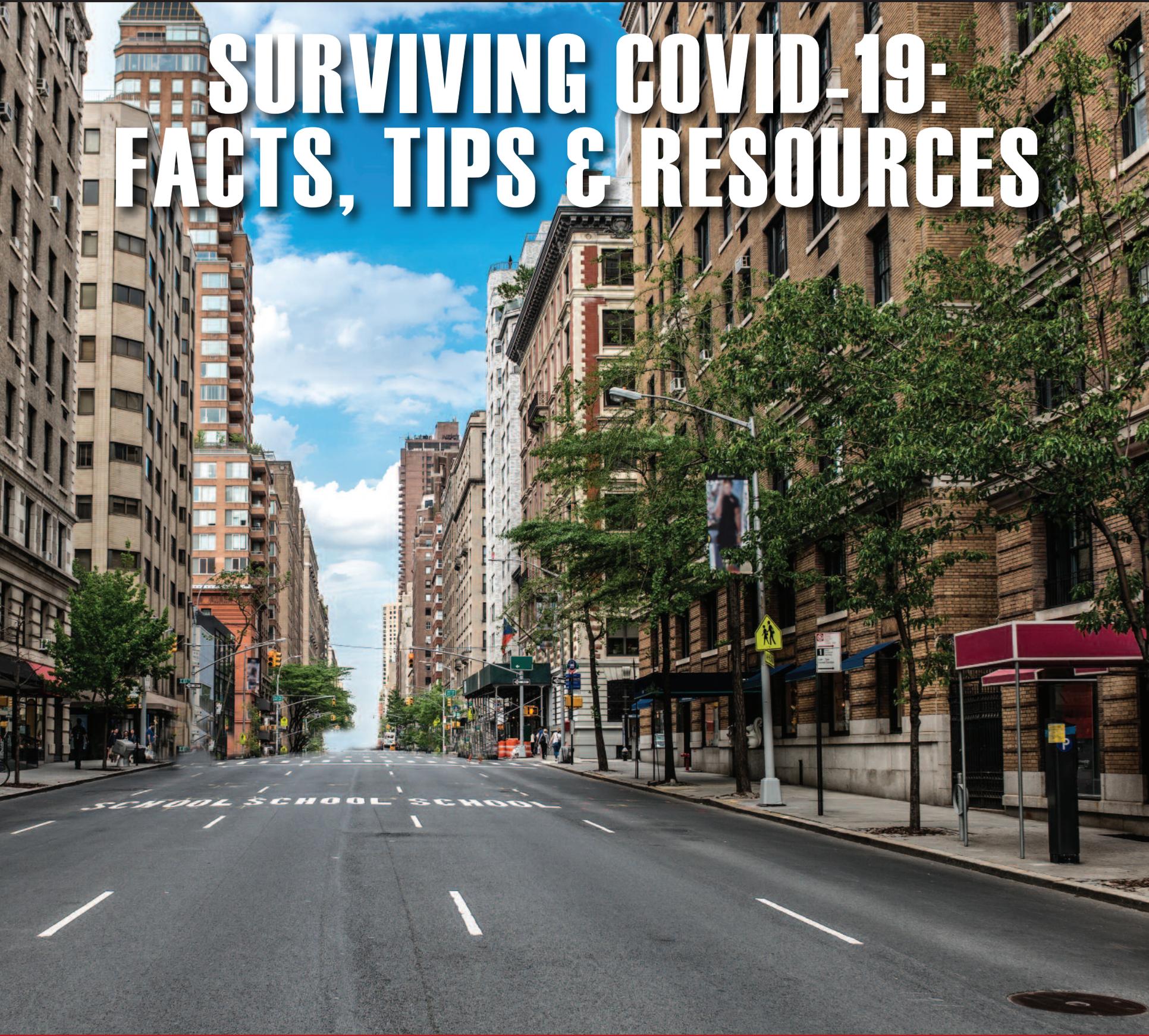
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## TIMES

*An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries*



# SURVIVING COVID-19: FACTS, TIPS & RESOURCES

**I.C. DRIVERS TO GET  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
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**CLEANING AND  
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# EDITOR'S NOTES

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AS INDUSTRY IS SLAMMED BY PANDEMIC

New York City has been through more than its share of crises – including 9/11, Superstorm Sandy and the Great Recession – but the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) hit at a particularly difficult time for our industry, as our drivers and traditional FHV and Taxi businesses were already struggling terribly.

I've been reading panicked comments on Facebook and hearing from drivers and business owners desperate for some assurances, and for good reason. We still really don't know exactly what we're dealing with at this point, and that's scary.

To help alleviate some of those fears and inform our readers, I collected useful information from multiple resources to hopefully blunt the impact the pandemic will have on your life, health and livelihood. I tried to cover as many topics as possible to help our drivers and business owners in this time of uncertainty – including access to potential financial assistance and resources for finding out if you qualify.

**Please share this information with as many people as possible: [www.taxiliverytimes.com](http://www.taxiliverytimes.com).**

The tips and information in the first section of my editorial came from the website of industry insurance company, INSHUR and the CDC website. But things are changing rapidly, and I also recommend staying current on news and avoiding potential rumors or misinformation by texting COVID to 692-692 and/or checking [nyc.gov/taxi](http://nyc.gov/taxi) for updates specific to TLC licensees. Commissioner Aloysee Heredia Jarmozuk urges TLC-licensed drivers, vehicle owners and operators to follow the text updates closely to get the latest information on what precautions to take.

### How Can Professional Drivers Avoid Coronavirus?

Professional drivers meet many different people each day and are rightfully concerned. So, how can you keep working and stay healthy? There are no guarantees, but if you follow the tips below, you dramatically increase your chances of avoiding infection. It is ESSENTIAL to note that anyone can catch COVID-19, and even if you are not in a high-risk group, you could be actively spreading the disease to people who could die from it, if you aren't following the proper protocols.

**IMPORTANT: If you are in a high-risk group, it is recommended that you stay home.** The CDC website is an excellent resource for more information and updates. Visit it here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

### People who are at higher risk for severe illness

COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding its risk factors. Based on available information and clinical expertise, **older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. This includes:

- People aged 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] >40) or certain underlying medical conditions, such as those with diabetes, renal failure or liver disease
- People who are pregnant should be monitored since they are known to be at risk with severe viral illnesses, however, to date data on COVID-19 has not shown increased risk

### How does COVID-19 spread?

Although the method of infection has not been fully determined, the World Health Organization (WHO) says it most likely spreads between humans in tiny droplets from sneezes and coughs, or via hand to hand contact. It can also remain active on a variety of surfaces, so be careful to keep your vehicle clean,

## LO QUE NECESITA SABER EN MOMENTOS EN QUE LA PANDEMIA AZOTA LA INDUSTRIA

La ciudad de Nueva York ha superado ampliamente su cuota de crisis – incluyendo el 11 de septiembre, la “supertormenta” Sandy y la Gran Recesión– pero la pandemia causada por el coronavirus (COVID-19) se abatió sobre la ciudad en un momento particularmente difícil para nuestra industria, en que los conductores y los negocios de taxis y de vehículos de alquiler tradicionales ya atravesaban terribles dificultades.

Estuve leyendo comentarios de pánico en Facebook y enterándome de conductores y dueños de negocios desesperados por alguna seguridad, y por una buena razón. En este punto, aún no sabemos a ciencia cierta a qué nos enfrentamos, y eso es aterrador.

Para aliviar algunos de esos temores e informar a nuestros lectores, recabé información útil de numerosos recursos para mitigar, quizá, el impacto que la pandemia tendrá en su vida, en su salud y en su sustento. Traté de cubrir la mayor cantidad de temas posible para ayudar a nuestros conductores y dueños de empresas en estos tiempos de incertidumbre, entre ellos, el acceso a posible ayuda financiera y recursos para averiguar si reúnen los requisitos.

**Comparta esta información con tantas personas como pueda: [www.taxiliverytimes.com](http://www.taxiliverytimes.com).**

Los consejos y la información que figuran en la primera sección de mi editorial fueron extraídos del sitio web de una aseguradora de la industria, INSHUR y del sitio web de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC). Pero como todo cambia a cada momento, también recomiendo estar al corriente de las noticias y evitar posibles rumores o información falsa, para ello envíe el mensaje de texto COVID al 692-692 o consulte [nyc.gov/taxi](http://nyc.gov/taxi) donde obtendrá información actualizada específica para personas con licencia de la Comisión de taxis y limusinas (Taxi and Limousine Commission, TLC). La delegada Aloysee Heredia Jarmozuk insta a los conductores, dueños de vehículos y operadores con licencia de la TLC, a seguir de cerca las actualizaciones de texto para obtener la última información sobre las precauciones a tomar.

### ¿Cómo pueden evitar el coronavirus los conductores profesionales?

Los conductores profesionales interactúan con diferentes personas todos los días y están legítimamente preocupados. Entonces, ¿cómo puede seguir trabajando y mantenerse sano? No hay garantías, pero si cumple los siguientes consejos, aumentará drásticamente sus posibilidades de evitar la infección. Es ESENCIAL tener presente que cualquier persona puede infectarse con el COVID-19, y aun si usted no pertenece a un grupo de alto riesgo, tendría posibilidades de propagar activamente la enfermedad a personas que podrían morir a causa de ella, si no cumple con los debidos protocolos.

**IMPORTANTE: Si pertenece a un grupo de alto riesgo, es recomendable que permanezca en su casa.** El sitio web de los CDC es un excelente recurso para obtener más información y actualizaciones. Visítelo aquí: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

### Personas expuestas a un riesgo más alto por enfermedades graves

El COVID-19 es una enfermedad nueva y existe escasa información respecto de sus factores de riesgo. En función de la información disponible y de la experiencia clínica, los adultos mayores y las personas de cualquier edad afectadas por enfermedades graves subyacentes pueden estar expuestas a un mayor riesgo de contraer una enfermedad grave por el COVID-19. Esto incluye a:

- Personas de 65 años o más
- Personas que viven en asilos de ancianos o centros que brinden atención por períodos largos
- Personas con enfermedad pulmonar crónica o asma moderada a grave
- Personas que sufren cardiopatías (enfermedades del corazón) graves
- Personas inmunodeprimidas, por ejemplo a causa de tratamientos oncológicos, de trasplantes de médula u otros órganos, de inmunodeficiencias, de VIH o SIDA mal controlados, y de uso prolongado de corticosteroides y otros medicamentos que debilitan el sistema inmunario.
- Personas de cualquier edad con obesidad grave o mórbida (índice de masa corporal [IMC] >40) o con determinadas patologías subyacentes, como diabetes, insuficiencia renal o enfermedad hepática
- Las embarazadas deben someterse a controles ya que, como se sabe, están expuestas a enfermedades virales graves; sin embargo, los datos sobre el COVID-19 a la fecha no han mostrado que tengan un mayor riesgo

### ¿Cómo se propaga el COVID-19?

Si bien no se ha determinado con certeza el método de infección, la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) afirma que lo más probable es que se propague entre los seres humanos mediante gotitas pequeñas expelidas al estornudar o toser, o mediante el contacto de manos. También puede permanecer activo en una variedad de superficies, así que tenga la precaución de mantener limpio el vehículo, limpiarse las manos vigorosamente y, si tocó una superficie

clean your hands vigorously and try your best to not touch your face, if you have touched a surface that may not be clean.

The value of wearing a paper face mask is still undetermined. Cheap, disposable masks are often ill-fitting and leave gaps for air to circulate. It seems likely that most people pick up the virus from hand contact, and then touch their face with unclean hands. A mask will not guard against that.

#### What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

Symptoms can take up to 14 days to appear, which is why Coronavirus is so hard to spot. However, clear signs of infection are high temperature (fever), coughing, sneezing and shortness of breath.

#### How can I avoid catching or spreading Coronavirus?

Good hygiene is key:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 30 seconds – use a hand sanitizer gel if soap and water are not available.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are clearly unwell – but remember that refusing rides could be viewed as discriminatory, which is illegal.
- Keep disinfectant wipes in the car and clean inside surfaces regularly.
- Keep plenty of tissues in the car. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow (never your hands, if possible). Dump used tissues in the trash immediately.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

The following are specific, in-depth tips for hand washing, provided by the Black Car Assistance Corporation:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 30 seconds. Rub your hands together vigorously, scrubbing all surfaces, including backs of hands, between fingers, under fingernails and wrists. Rinse your hands well while keeping them lower than your elbows so the dirty water runs down the drain and not up your arms. Always wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, touching someone who is sick, or when using public restrooms.
- Dry your hands well using paper towels and to turn off the faucet. If you are in a public restroom, use a paper towel to open the restroom door. Air dryers in bathrooms often carry germs as they pull air from the bathroom. Paper towels are much more sanitary. Always have clean napkins on hand; some public restrooms only have air dryers.
- If soap and water aren't available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers. Be sure to buy sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol. When using a gel, rub the gel over all hand surfaces until your hands are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol kills the germs. If your hands look dirty, use soap & water.

The BCAC also recommends practicing other good health habits, like getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, managing stress, drinking plenty of fluids, and eating nutritious foods to help fend off viruses.

Driver-members of the Black Car Fund have access to FREE telemedicine and a host of other benefits. You can sign up at the Drivers Benefits website.

#### Keeping your vehicle clean and safe

The New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission is encouraging drivers to clean their vehicles daily, at a minimum. It would seem wise to clean it more often; some drivers are spraying their cars between each customer.

“Pay special attention to disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as door handles, arm rests and seatbelts,” the TLC said in a statement. Add to that list: credit card readers and backseat touch screens in cabs.

According to media outlet, Kiplinger, the primary surfaces you need to worry about will be those that you (or others) have touched with their hands or coughed/sneezed on. They may be painted metal, plastic, vinyl, leather or cloth, and include exterior door handles, steering wheel, shifter, control stalks (and other controls), armrests, seats and seatbelts (don't forget the buckles). Most of these items aren't as durable as, say, a countertop or bathroom sink, so beware of products using chlorine bleach (at any dilution) and watch out for wipes that might use it as an in-

que pueda no estar limpia, trate de evitar tocarse la cara.

Aún no se ha determinado la conveniencia de usar mascarillas faciales de papel. Normalmente, las mascarillas descartables económicas no se ajustan bien y dejan espacios por donde circula el aire. Algo que parece probable es que la mayoría de las personas contraen el virus por el contacto de manos, y luego se tocan la cara con las manos sucias. Una mascarilla no brinda protección contra eso.

#### ¿Cuáles son los síntomas del coronavirus?

Los síntomas pueden tardar hasta 14 en manifestarse, motivo por el cual el coronavirus es tan difícil de detectar. No obstante, signos claros de infección son temperatura alta (fiebre), tos, estornudos y dificultad para respirar.

#### ¿Cómo puedo evitar contraer o propagar el coronavirus?

La buena higiene es fundamental:

- Lávese las manos a menudo con jabón y agua tibia durante un mínimo de 30 segundos; si no dispone de agua y jabón, use un desinfectante de manos en gel.
- Trate de evitar el contacto cercano con personas que claramente están enfermas, pero recuerde que rechazar viajes puede interpretarse como un acto discriminatorio, lo cual es ilegal.
- Lleve toallitas húmedas desinfectantes en el auto y limpie regularmente las superficies interiores.
- Lleve muchos pañuelos de papel en el auto. Cúbrase la boca y la nariz con un pañuelo de papel o bien tosa o estornude en el pliegue interno del codo (nunca se cubra con las manos, si es posible). Arroje los pañuelos de papel usados a la basura de inmediato.
- No se toque los ojos, la nariz ni la boca si no tiene las manos limpias.

Los siguientes son consejos detallados y específicos para el lavado de manos, proporcionados por la Black Car Assistance Corporation:

- Lávese las manos a menudo con jabón y agua tibia durante 30 segundos. Frótese las manos vigorosamente, refregando todas las superficies, incluso el dorso de las manos, entre los dedos, debajo de las uñas y las muñecas. Enjuáguelas bien, manteniéndolas más abajo que los codos para que el agua sucia descienda hasta el drenaje y no suba por sus brazos. Siempre lávese las manos después de toser, estornudar, sonarse la nariz, tocar a una persona enferma, o cuando use baños públicos.
- Séquese bien las manos usando toallas de papel y cierre el grifo. Si está en un baño público, use una toalla de papel para abrir la puerta del baño. Los secadores de aire de los baños suelen tener gérmenes porque utilizan aire del baño. Las toallas de papel son mucho más higiénicas. Tenga siempre a mano servilletas limpias; algunos baños públicos tienen solamente secadores de aire.
- Si no hay agua y jabón disponibles, use toallitas de mano húmedas descartables con alcohol o desinfectantes en gel. Asegúrese de comprar desinfectantes que contengan como mínimo un 60 % de alcohol. Cuando use un gel, fróteselo sobre todas las superficies de las manos hasta que estas estén secas. El gel limpia sin necesidad de usar agua; el alcohol mata los gérmenes. Si sus manos se ven sucias, use agua y jabón.

Además, la Black Car Assistance Corporation (BCAC) recomienda poner en práctica otros hábitos saludables, como dormir mucho, estar físicamente activo, controlar el estrés, tomar abundante líquido y comer alimentos nutritivos para protegerse de los virus.

Los conductores miembros del Black Car Fund tienen acceso a telemedicina GRATUITA y a muchos otros beneficios. Puede inscribirse en el sitio web de Beneficios para conductores.

#### Mantenga su vehículo limpio y seguro

La Comisión de Taxis y Limusinas (TLC) de la Ciudad de Nueva York insta a los conductores a limpiar sus vehículos todos los días, como mínimo. Sería aconsejable limpiarlos más seguido; algunos conductores los higienizan con un rociador entre un pasajero y otro.

“Preste especial atención a desinfectar las superficies y los objetos que se tocan con frecuencia, por ejemplo, las manijas de las puertas, los apoyabrazos y los cinturones de seguridad”, recomendó la TLC en un comunicado. Agregue a esa lista: los lectores de tarjetas de crédito y las pantallas táctiles del asiento trasero en los taxis.

Según un medio de difusión, Kiplinger, las superficies por las que más debe preocuparse son aquellas que usted (u otras personas) hayan tocado con las manos o sobre las que hayan tosido o estornudado. Pueden ser de metal pintado, de plástico, de cuero, de tela o vinílicas, e incluyen las manijas exteriores de las puertas, el volante, la palanca de cambios, los controles de la palanca (y otros controles), los apoyabrazos, los asientos y los cinturones de seguridad (no olvide las hebillas para abrochar los cinturones). La mayoría de estos elementos no son tan duraderos como, por ejemplo, una encimera o el lavabo del baño, así que tenga cuidado con los productos que usen un blanqueador con cloro (en cualquier dilución) y con las toallitas húmedas que puedan contenerlo entre sus ingredientes. Si bien esta sustancia química ciertamente elimina los gérmenes, los expertos en limpieza completa de automóviles (y los fabricantes) advierten que puede provocar un daño irreparable al interior del auto, y si entra en contacto con los cinturones de seguridad, puede desgastar su tela y poner en riesgo la seguridad. De modo similar, Kiplinger recomienda evitar los limpiadores a base de peróxido, los cuales

redient. While this chemical will certainly kill germs, car detailing experts (and manufacturers) warn that it may do irreparable damage to your car's interior, and if it gets on your seat belts, weaken their fabric and compromise safety. Similarly, Kiplinger also recommends avoiding peroxide-based cleaners, which may also cause damage.

Kiplinger recommends alcohol-based products (like hand sanitizers). The CDC says the best approach is to take two steps: clean, then disinfect. So, you could use a gentle household cleaner, an existing car-specific cleaner, or just soap and water (in a cloth) to first clean the hard surfaces, if they are visibly dirty. If electronics are involved, keep the amount of liquid to a minimum. It is suggested that you use a microfiber cloth to get the most dirt off with the fewest scratches. Then, go back and do a wipe down with a germ-killing product.

For leather, which can include steering wheels, Kiplinger suggests that for every few times you use a virucidal, you should also consider a wipe with a leather-care product that contains some moisturizers (for the leather's sake, not yours).

As an FHV driver, you will likely be racking up miles on your car. If that means you need to go past a service interval because your repair shop or dealership has shut down due to coronavirus, don't sweat it too much. According to Kiplinger, if your vehicle has been well-maintained, just as a healthy body, it can weather a minor disruption in regular maintenance. If you're close to or over an interval, and your car has a conventional dipstick, you could add more new oil up to the indicated maximum as a way to spruce up your oil a bit with fresh detergents and protectants. But don't overfill; that can pose serious engine hazards.

#### What if I catch the Coronavirus?

If you think you may have been infected, don't rush to your doctor's office or local hospital. You may spread the virus further. ISOLATE yourself at home and CALL the hospital emergency department for advice. Avoid contact with others as much as possible and maintain very strict hand hygiene. Stay off work for 14 days to ensure you don't have the virus. This is better than spreading it. Above all, don't panic. Most people who catch the virus recover without lingering effects.

Reported symptoms can range from mild to severe, and can include fever, cough or shortness of breath. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear between 2 and 14 days after exposure.

#### Guidance for home self-monitoring

During your 14-day home self-monitoring period, check yourself for fever twice daily and remain alert for a cough or shortness of breath. If these symptoms arise, you are asked to stay at home and avoid going outside for the entire period. You should not attend work, school, public events or group gatherings. If you have fever or symptoms, call the NYC Health Department at 347-396-7990.

#### Financial assistance for businesses

The New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) announced a program to provide relief for small businesses in NYC seeing a reduction in revenue. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees that have seen sales decreases of 25% or more will be eligible for zero interest loans of up to \$75,000 to help mitigate losses. In addition, businesses with fewer than five employees may receive a grant to cover 40% of payroll costs for two months to help retain employees.

Eligible business owners who would like to learn more about these programs should visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/sbs/businesses/covid19-business-outreach.page>. There, you can fill out the form for the loan program or apply for the grant.

New York's Governor Cuomo also announced a 90-day relief program on mortgage payments (commercial and residential) and is implementing a program suspending foreclosures. The state is also waiving overdraft ATM, late fees, overdraft fees and credit card fees for state-chartered banks.

According to *Crain's New York Business*, those seeking trial loan modifications should get a 90-day grace period to do so; and banks should not report late payments to credit agencies.

Collections on state-owned debts – including fees owed to state agencies and debt on property damage, breach of contract, oil spill cleanup and removal – are frozen for at least 30 days.

The Governor called on all public utilities companies to suspend service shutoffs for customers impacted by Covid-19. The order is in effect during the outbreak but does not specify an end date.

también pueden ocasionar daños.

Kiplinger recomienda el uso de productos a base de alcohol (como los desinfectantes de manos). Los CDC indican que el método más efectivo consiste en dos pasos: limpiar y luego desinfectar. De modo que puede usar un limpiador doméstico suave, un limpiador existente específico para autos, o simplemente agua y jabón (en un paño) para, primero, limpiar las superficies duras, si están visiblemente sucias. En el caso de componentes electrónicos, restrinja la cantidad de líquido al mínimo. Se sugiere usar un paño de microfibra para quitar la mayor cantidad de suciedad con la menor cantidad de rayones. Luego, pase un trapo con un producto germicida.

Para superficies de cuero, que pueden incluir los volantes, Kiplinger sugiere que por cada par de veces que use un virucida, considere también la posibilidad de limpiarlas con un producto para cuidado de cuero que contenga algunos humectantes (para proteger el cuero, no a usted).

Como conductor de un vehículo de alquiler, lo más probable es que recorra muchísimas millas en el auto. Si eso significa que tiene que dejar pasar un servicio porque su taller de reparaciones o su concesionario han cerrado debido al coronavirus, no se preocupe demasiado. Según Kiplinger, si su vehículo ha tenido un buen mantenimiento, como ocurre con un cuerpo sano, puede soportar una pequeña interrupción del mantenimiento regular. Si se acerca a un intervalo o se pasó de la fecha, y su auto tiene una varilla convencional para medir el nivel de aceite, puede agregar más aceite nuevo hasta el máximo indicado como una forma de renovar un poco su aceite con detergentes y protectores nuevos. Pero no lo llene demasiado, ya que podría exponer al motor a serios riesgos.

#### ¿Qué ocurre si contraigo coronavirus?

Si cree que puede haberse infectado, no corra al consultorio de su médico ni al hospital local, ya que podría propagar aún más el virus. AÍSLESE en su casa y LLAME al servicio de urgencias del hospital para que lo aconsejen. Evite el contacto con otras personas tanto como sea posible y mantenga una higiene de manos muy estricta. No vaya al trabajo por 14 días para asegurarse de no tener el virus. Esto es mejor que propagarlo. Sobre todo, no entre en pánico: la mayoría de las personas que contraen el virus se recuperan sin efectos persistentes.

Los síntomas notificados pueden variar de leves a graves, e incluir fiebre, tos o dificultad para respirar. Los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC) consideran que los síntomas del COVID-19 pueden presentarse entre 2 y 14 días después de la exposición.

#### Guía para hacer un autocontrol en casa

Durante su período de 14 días de autocontrol en casa, tómese la fiebre dos veces por día y esté siempre atento a accesos de tos o dificultad para dificultad para respirar. Si se presentan estos síntomas, se le solicita que permanezca en su casa y evite salir por todo el período. No debe asistir al trabajo, a la escuela, a eventos públicos ni a reuniones grupales. Si tiene fiebre o síntomas, llame al Departamento de Salud de la ciudad de Nueva York al 347-396-7990.

#### Ayuda financiera para las empresas

El Departamento de Servicios para Pequeñas Empresas (Small Business Services, SBS) de la ciudad de Nueva York anunció un programa para brindar alivio a las pequeñas empresas de la ciudad de Nueva York que hayan registrado una merma en sus ingresos. Las empresas con menos de 100 empleados que hayan registrado una caída del 25 % o más en sus ventas serán candidatas para recibir préstamos sin intereses de hasta \$75,000 para ayudarlas a mitigar las pérdidas. Además, las empresas con menos de cinco empleados pueden recibir un subsidio para cubrir el 40 % de los costos de nómina durante dos meses para ayudarlas a retener a los empleados.

Actualmente, este recurso no está disponible para conductores que sean contratistas independientes, pero los líderes de la industria están impulsando firme y activamente un cambio en los requisitos de elegibilidad para que también ellos tengan acceso a este recurso.

Los dueños de empresas elegibles que deseen obtener más detalles sobre estos programas deben visitar: [www1.nyc.gov/site/sbs/businesses/covid19-business-outreach](http://www1.nyc.gov/site/sbs/businesses/covid19-business-outreach). Allí, podrán llenar el formulario para el programa de préstamos o solicitar el subsidio.

Por su parte, el gobernador Cuomo de Nueva York anunció un programa de alivio de 90 días para los pagos de hipotecas (comerciales y residenciales) y está implementando un programa que suspende las ejecuciones hipotecarias. El estado también está exonerando los sobregiros de cajeros automáticos, los cargos por pagos atrasados, los cargos por sobregiro y los cargos de tarjetas de crédito para los bancos autorizados por el estado.

Según *Crain's New York Business*, quienes pretenden modificaciones de prueba de los préstamos deben acceder a un período de gracia de 90 días para hacerlo; y los bancos no deben informar los pagos atrasados a las agencias de crédito.

El cobro de deudas con el estado –incluidos los cargos adeudados a agencias estatales y las deudas por daños a la propiedad, incumplimiento de contrato, limpieza y eliminación de derrames de petróleo– se congelarán por 30 días como mínimo.

El Gobernador exhortó a todas las empresas de servicios públicos a suspender los cortes de servicios a los usuarios afectados por el Covid-19. La orden estará vigente durante el brote, pero no se especifica una fecha de cese.

Lo que queda pendiente y lo que podría suspenderse:

- El 23 de marzo el senador del estado de Nueva York Michael Gianaris presentó un proyecto de ley que, en caso de aprobarse, permitiría una

What's still due and what might get suspended:

- New York State Senator Michael Gianaris introduced on March 23 a bill that would, if passed, provide 90 days of rent forgiveness to commercial and residential tenants who closed or lost work due to Covid-19.
- Brooklyn and Manhattan borough Presidents Eric Adams and Gale Brewer have proposed a renter's choice program that, if passed, would allow renters to put their cash security deposit towards their monthly rent. The measure would unlock \$8 billion in savings, the presidents said.
- Legislative proposals and eviction and foreclosure moratoriums notwithstanding, rent is still due at the end of the month, though allowing for the delay in mortgage payments could create room for landlords to grant leniency to their tenants. Though utility services cannot be shutoff and late sales taxes will not face late fees, the payments are still due, as are payroll and insurance costs.
- At the City level, Mayor Bill de Blasio has also announced two relief efforts – a grant program for very small businesses and a zero-interest loan program.

#### **TLC is hiring TLC-licensed drivers to perform “essential” deliveries**

TLC announced that it is looking for TLC-licensed drivers to help NYC “with important work related to COVID-19, such as delivering food to senior citizens who need to stay home.” To take part, sign up at DeliveryTLC: <https://cv19engagementportal.cityofnewyork.us/#/display/5e7634997ad67502161607c2..>

The TLC notes that the initial need for drivers may be small, but they expect that need to increase significantly as more residents request meal deliveries. Drivers will be paid \$15/hour, plus reimbursement for gas mileage and tolls. Drivers will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you are not initially selected, the TLC may still reach out to you in the days ahead as demand increases.

If you have any issues signing up, contact [supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov).

#### **Paid sick leave and job protection act for employees**

On March 18, Governor Cuomo signed legislation (A10152/S8090), which went into effect immediately, to address the needs of employees affected by COVID-19 who are subject to mandatory or precautionary orders of quarantine or isolation.

- Employers with 10 or fewer employees and a net income of less than \$1 million will provide job protection for the duration of the quarantine order and guarantee their workers access to Paid Family Leave and disability benefits (short-term disability) for the period of quarantine including wage replacement for their salaries up to \$150,000.
- Employers with 11-99 employees and employers with 10 or fewer employees and a net income greater than \$1 million will provide at least 5 days of paid sick leave, job protection for the duration of the quarantine order, and guarantee their workers access to Paid Family Leave and disability benefits (short-term disability) for the period of quarantine, including wage replacement for their salaries up to \$150,000.
- Employers with 100 or more employees, as well as all public employers (regardless of number of employees), will provide at least 14 days of paid sick leave and guarantee job protection for the duration of the quarantine order.
- New York State is waiving the 7-Day waiting period for Unemployment Insurance benefits for people who are out of work due to COVID-19 closures or quarantines.

On March 18, the Governor also signed into law the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201), a relief package that, among other things, extends employee paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave benefits and includes tax credits to employers. The leave provisions went into effect April 2, and will remain in effect until December 31, 2020.

- The Act temporarily expands FMLA coverage and paid sick leave for employees impacted by COVID-19, including caring for individuals with COVID-19.
- The Act changes the current employee threshold for FMLA coverage from only covering employers with 50 or more employees to now (temporarily) covering employers with fewer than 500 employees. The eligibility requirement is reduced to cover any employee who has worked for the employer for at least 30 days before the first day of leave. The Act allows the Secretary of Labor to exempt small businesses with fewer than 50 employees if the required leave would jeopardize the

condonación del alquiler por 90 días para inquilinos tanto comerciales como residenciales que hayan cerrado o perdido trabajo debido al Covid-19.

- Los presidentes de los distritos de Brooklyn y Manhattan, Eric Adams y Gale Brewer, han propuesto un programa de elección de los inquilinos que, en caso de aprobarse, les permitiría a estos asignar sus depósitos de garantía en efectivo a pagar el alquiler mensual. La medida desbloquearía \$8 mil millones en ahorros, sostuvieron los presidentes.
- Más allá de las propuestas legislativas y de las moratorias de desalojos y ejecuciones hipotecarias, los alquileres aún vencen a fin de mes, si bien el hecho de permitir la postergación de los pagos hipotecarios podría crear las condiciones para que los arrendadores sean indulgentes con sus inquilinos. Aunque las empresas de servicios públicos no pueden cortar los servicios y los impuestos sobre ventas pagados fuera de término no estarán sujetos a cargos por pagos atrasados, siguen siendo exigibles los pagos, los costos de nómina y los de seguro.
- A nivel de la ciudad, el alcalde Bill de Blasio ha anunciado, además, dos iniciativas de alivio: un programa de subsidios para empresas muy pequeñas y un programa de préstamos sin intereses.

#### **La TLC está contratando conductores con licencia de la TLC para realizar entregas “esenciales”.**

La TLC anunció que busca conductores con su licencia para ayudar a la ciudad de Nueva York “en tareas importantes relacionadas con el COVID-19, por ejemplo, entregar alimentos a ancianos que deban permanecer en su casa”. Para participar de esta iniciativa, inscribirse en DeliveryTLC: <https://cv19engagementportal.cityofnewyork.us/#/display/5e7634997ad67502161607c2..>

La TLC señala que la necesidad inicial de conductores puede ser escasa, pero que espera que esta aumente considerablemente a medida que más residentes soliciten envíos de comida. A los conductores se les pagarán \$15/hora, más el reembolso del combustible y los peajes. Los conductores se seleccionarán por orden de inscripción. Aun si no resulta elegido inicialmente, la TLC puede contactarlo en días subsiguientes a medida que aumente la demanda.

Si tiene algún problema para inscribirse, envíe un mensaje de correo electrónico a [supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov).

#### **Ley de licencia paga por enfermedad y protección laboral para los empleados**

El 18 de marzo, el gobernador Cuomo sancionó una ley (A10152/S8090), que entró en vigencia en forma inmediata, para responder a las necesidades de los empleados afectados por el COVID-19 que estén sujetos a órdenes obligatorias o precautorias de cuarentena o aislamiento.

- Los empleadores con 10 o menos empleados y un ingreso neto de menos de \$1 millón brindarán protección laboral mientras dure la orden de cuarentena y garantizarán a sus trabajadores acceso a la licencia familiar paga y a los beneficios por discapacidad (discapacidad a corto plazo) durante el período de la cuarentena, incluido el reemplazo de sus salarios hasta \$150,000.
- Los empleadores con 11 a 99 empleados y los que tienen 10 o menos empleados y un ingreso neto de más de \$1 millón concederán al menos cinco (5) días de licencia paga por enfermedad y protección laboral mientras dure la orden de cuarentena, y garantizarán a sus trabajadores acceso a la licencia familiar paga y a los beneficios por discapacidad (discapacidad a corto plazo) durante el período de la cuarentena, incluido el reemplazo de sus salarios hasta \$150,000.
- Los empleadores con 100 o más empleados, así como todos los empleadores públicos (independientemente de la cantidad de empleados que tengan), concederán al menos 14 días de licencia paga por enfermedad y garantizarán protección laboral mientras dure la orden de cuarentena.
- El estado de Nueva York está dejando sin efecto el período de espera de 7 días para los beneficios del seguro de desempleo para aquellas personas que no estén trabajando debido a cierres o cuarentenas por el COVID-19.

El 18 de marzo, el Gobernador también sancionó la Ley Familias Primero en Respuesta al Coronavirus (H.R. 6201), un paquete de alivio que, entre otras cosas, extiende la licencia paga por enfermedad, y amplía los beneficios de licencias pagas por motivos familiares y por motivos médicos de los empleados, e incluye créditos fiscales para los empleadores. Las disposiciones sobre las licencias comenzaron a regir el 2 de abril y seguirán en vigencia hasta el 31 de diciembre de 2020.

- La Ley amplía transitoriamente la cobertura de la Ley de Licencia Médica y Familiar (Family and Medical Leave Act, FMLA) y la licencia paga por enfermedad para los empleados afectados por el COVID-19, incluidos los que cuiden a personas con COVID-19.
- La Ley modifica el límite actual de empleados para la cobertura de la FMLA de cubrir solamente a empleadores con 50 o más empleados a cubrir ahora (transitoriamente) a los empleadores con menos de 500 empleados. El requisito de elegibilidad se reduce para cubrir a cualquier empleado que haya trabajado para el empleador durante al menos 30 días antes del primer día de licencia. La Ley autoriza al Ministro de Trabajo a eximir a las pequeñas empresas con menos de 50 empleados si la licencia requerida pone en riesgo la viabilidad de su negocio.
- Según la Ley, los empleados elegibles pueden tomar hasta 12 semanas de licencia con protección del empleo para cuidar a su hijo (menor de 18 años) si la escuela o el lugar de cuidado del menor están cerrados o

viability of their business.

- Under the Act, eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave to care for their child (under age 18) if the child's school or place of care is closed or the childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.
- The first 10 days of Emergency FMLA may be unpaid. An employee may elect to use accrued paid leave (vacation or sick leave) to cover any portion of the 10-day unpaid period. After the 10-day period, the employer generally must pay full-time employees at two-thirds the employee's regular rate (capped at \$200 per day) for the number of hours the employee would otherwise be normally scheduled. The total amount payable is \$10,000 per employee.
- The Act provides refundable tax credits for employers providing paid sick leave or paid FMLA as required by the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. Employers will be entitled to a refundable tax credit equal to 100% of the qualified sick leave wages paid for each calendar quarter in adherence with the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. The amount of qualified family leave wages taken into account for each employee is capped at \$511 per day if caring for themselves or \$200 if caring for a family member or child for up to 10 days per employee in each calendar quarter, capped at \$10,000 per calendar quarter. If the credit exceeds the employer's total liability under Revenue Code section 3111(a) or 3221(a) for all employees for any calendar quarter, then the excess credit is refundable to the employer.

#### The industry has helped the city in need before, it can do it again

In an opinion piece that ran in *Crain's New York Business*, written by Ron Sherman, president of the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, he rightly pointed out that, "Drivers, dispatchers and managers are quiet heroes" who have helped New Yorkers get through countless emergencies.

"Today, we are anxious about Covid-19, like everyone else in the city," said Sherman. "But we are working – every day, every night. Our fleets are open. We are cleaning our taxis incessantly, every time they enter and leave our garages, and drivers are cleaning many more times throughout their shifts."

With travel from abroad restricted, empty cruise ships, Broadway shut down, museums closed, concerts off, schools closed and restrictions requiring people to work from home in many industries, it's not surprising that business is way down.

Mr. Sherman asked that the city, "Enable nurses, home health aides and emergency services personnel to qualify for Access-a-Ride taxi fares, a service the industry has quietly been performing with excellent results for the past couple of years. Allow drivers to temporarily keep all surcharges including the \$2.50 congestion surcharge that was done in anticipation of a citywide congestion pricing fee, which has been delayed; the 50-cent MTA fee; and the 30-cent taxicab improvement fund fee (to support wheelchair accessibility). Such an emergency action could immediately offset the steep losses being incurred by taxi drivers during this crisis."

Mr. Sherman also encouraged the city to immediately commence a public-awareness campaign encouraging New Yorkers to practice social distancing, good hygiene and taking safe, regulated and clean taxi rides.

It would certainly be a good start and could literally save lives – both of the drivers who need the income and the people who need to be transported.

The following are some useful sources and links:

- Track the virus: [www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/](http://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/)
- About Coronavirus: [www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus](http://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus)
- Virus protection: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- If you are harassed because of your race, nation of origin, or other identities, please report it by calling 311 and say "human rights." The NYC Commission on Human Rights is here to help you.
- If you need mental health services, contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text WELL to 65173. This confidential help line is staffed day and night by trained counselors who can offer crisis counseling and connections to behavioral health treatment in more than 200 languages.
- If you have fever or symptoms, call the NYC Health Department at 347-396-7990.

In closing, I just want to wish everyone my best. For those of you who contract the virus, I wish you a speedy and full recovery. For those who have lost friends or loved ones, I offer my deepest condolences. We WILL get through this!

si el proveedor de servicios de cuidado infantil no está disponible debido al COVID-19.

- Los primeros 10 días de la FMLA de Emergencia pueden ser no remunerados. Un empleado puede elegir usar sus licencias pagas acumuladas (vacaciones o licencias por enfermedad) para cubrir cualquier parte del período no remunerado de 10 días. Después del período de 10 días, el empleador generalmente debe pagar a los empleados que trabajan jornada completa dos tercios de la tarifa regular del empleado (\$200 por día como máximo) por la cantidad de horas que el empleado de otro modo normalmente trabajaría. El monto total pagable es de \$10,000 por empleado.
- La ley ofrece créditos fiscales reembolsables a aquellos empleadores que otorguen las licencias pagas por enfermedad o la FMLA paga estipuladas por la Ley de Licencia Paga de Emergencia por Enfermedad. Los empleadores tendrán derecho a recibir un crédito fiscal reembolsable equivalente al 100 % de los salarios de licencia por enfermedad autorizados pagados por cada trimestre calendario en cumplimiento de la Ley de Licencia Paga de Emergencia por Enfermedad. El monto de los salarios por licencia familiar que califique que se toman en cuenta para cada empleado asciende a \$511 por día, como máximo, si el empleado está cuidando de sí mismo, o a \$200 si está cuidando a un familiar o a un hijo durante un lapso de hasta 10 días por empleado en cada trimestre calendario, hasta un tope de \$10,000 por trimestre calendario. Si el crédito excede la responsabilidad total del empleador conforme a las secciones 3111(a) o 3221(a) del Código de Rentas para todos los empleados por cada trimestre calendario, el empleador tiene derecho a que se le reembolse el resto del crédito.

#### La industria ya ha ayudado a la ciudad en casos de necesidad y puede volver a hacerlo

En un artículo de opinión publicado en *Crain's New York Business* por Ron Sherman, presidente del Consejo de Comercio de Taxis Metropolitanos (Taxicab Metropolitan Board of Trade), el autor con toda justicia señaló que, "Los conductores, los operadores y los gerentes son héroes anónimos", que han ayudado a los neoyorquinos a afrontar incontables emergencias.

"Hoy estamos ansiosos respecto del Covid-19, como todo el mundo en la ciudad", aseguró el Sr. Sherman. "Pero estamos trabajando todos los días, día y noche. Nuestras flotas están disponibles. Limpiamos los taxis de manera incesante, cada vez que entran o salen de los garajes, y los conductores los limpian muchas veces más durante sus turnos".

Con la restricción de los viajes del exterior, los cruceros vacíos, Broadway paralizada, las escuelas y los museos cerrados, los conciertos cancelados y las restricciones que exigen a la gente trabajar desde sus casas en muchos sectores, no es de extrañar que el negocio haya decaído.

El Sr. Sherman pidió que la ciudad, "habilite enfermeras, asistentes de salud a domicilio y personal de servicios de emergencia que califiquen para las tarifas de los taxis que ofrecen Access-a-Ride, un servicio que la industria ha estado prestando calladamente con excelentes resultados durante los últimos años. Que se permita a los conductores mantener transitoriamente todos los recargos, incluido el recargo de \$2.50 por congestión que se implementó en anticipación a las tarifas de congestión en toda la ciudad, lo que se ha postergado; el impuesto de 50 centavos de la Autoridad Metropolitana de Transporte (Metropolitan Transportation Authority, MTA); y la tarifa de 30 centavos del Fondo de Mejoras para Taxis (Taxi Improvement Fund, TIF) (destinada a apoyar el acceso para sillas de ruedas). Dicha medida de emergencia podría compensar de inmediato las enormes pérdidas que han sufrido los taxistas durante esta crisis".

El Sr. Sherman también instó a la ciudad a lanzar de inmediato una campaña de concienciación pública que aliente a los neoyorquinos a poner en práctica el distanciamiento social, a mantener una buena higiene y a viajar en taxis limpios regulados y seguros.

Ciertamente sería un buen comienzo y podría literalmente salvar vidas, tanto de los conductores que necesitan el ingreso como de las personas que necesitan ser trasladadas.

A continuación se incluyen algunas fuentes y vínculos útiles:

- Seguimiento de la propagación del virus: [www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/](http://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/)
- Acerca del coronavirus: [www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus](http://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus)
- Cómo protegerse del virus: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Si sufre hostigamiento por motivos de raza, nacionalidad u otras identidades, notifíquelo llamando al 311; cuando se comunique diga "human rights" (derechos humanos). La Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la ciudad de Nueva York está aquí para ayudarle.
- Si necesita servicios de salud mental, llame a NYC Well al 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) o envíe el mensaje de texto WELL al 65173. Esta línea de ayuda confidencial cuenta con asesores capacitados permanentes (de día y de noche) que pueden ofrecer orientación ante la crisis y contactos para obtener tratamiento de salud conductual en más de 200 idiomas.
- Si tiene fiebre o síntomas, llame al Departamento de Salud de la ciudad de Nueva York al 347-396-7990.

Para finalizar, solo quiero enviar a todos mis mejores deseos. A quienes contraigan el virus, les deseo una pronta y total recuperación. A quienes hayan perdido seres queridos o amigos, les hago llegar mis más sinceras condolencias. ¡VAMOS a superar esto!

**TAXI DAVE**

# THE WORLD HAS CHANGED

By "TAXI DAVE" POLLACK

Here I sit on March 25th, at the same computer I have written my editorial with for many years, except this time I am in quarantine.

For those of you who have been associated with the New York City taxi industry at any point from the 1960s to the present time, it's extremely likely you're familiar with the Greenbaum family name – it's known throughout the taxi insurance world. Andy and Pearl started their brokerage in the 1960s, and the rest is history, as Pearl became the largest taxi insurance broker in New York City.

Pearl Greenbaum passed away this month, coincidentally, when we were just learning about the coronavirus. Pearl was a Great-Grandmother some 15 times over, with 8 grandchildren from the 3 children she raised.

There I was, all dressed and ready to leave for her funeral to pay my respects, but I decided to check my email first. There, I found an email from the Greenbaum family stating that Pearl's funeral would be "Livestreamed" and people should not attend because of the Coronavirus!

Huh? I had never heard of such a thing before, but of course the Greenbaum's foresight is apparently as good regarding health issues as it is regarding insurance issues. I prayed for her while at home, while watching her funeral livestreaming and wishing the Greenbaum family my sincerest sympathies.

Yes, the world has changed this month.

Neil Greenbaum's dad Andy and my dad (Phil) drove yellow cabs together back in the early 1960s and became best friends for the remainder of their lives. Pearl's legacy will live on forever. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Five years ago, long before most of us could have conceived of a "Coronavirus pandemic," we still had what is left of a once

thriving taxi industry, where drivers were earning up to \$500 per shift by driving some 30 fares over 12 hours, and medallions were transferring for hundreds of thousands of dollars. More recently medallions were sold at auction for \$130K-\$152K and drivers are grossing closer to \$250 a shift, after unlimited app-based competition stole the passengers of the once all-hailing public.

All that changed again this month with the coronavirus pandemic.

What is a medallion worth? Like many things in life, it's worth what someone is willing to pay for it.

There are empty cabs sitting in front of Penn Station, the busiest taxi stand in America, with no pedestrian traffic on a weekday during rush hour. How do drivers pay for their shifts? Some fleets went to a 50/50 split of metered fares to make driving yellow more attractive, as medallion lease rates are reportedly at an all-time low.

You still see yellow cabs in Manhattan, but the passengers are almost as invisible as the coronavirus.

An Uber driver was recently reportedly driving with the coronavirus, and that is when reality kicks in. The majority of Manhattanites DO NOT own cars, so the question is: Would passengers risk becoming ill by taking the subway, a bus, an Uber or a hailing a cab?

Who could have dreamed that partitions in taxis would turn out to be such an asset, in such an odd and mysterious way? Who ever thought that Times Square would look like an abandoned ghost town? Who thought an apartment in Manhattan would be a burden and make you stir-crazy due to density? Who could have imagined this sci-fi episode of the Twilight Zone becoming a reality?

The real question is: How do we contain the coronavirus from spreading and de-

stroying our industry? Mind you, at best, the coronavirus kills far times more people – on a percentage basis – than other viruses humans have been exposed to, so it is as serious as a heart attack.

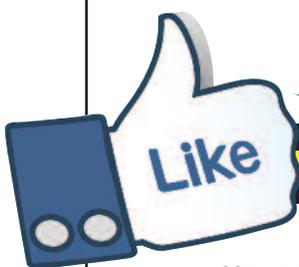
The stimulus package that recently passed allows for trillions of dollars to be inserted into American businesses, big and small. But what about taxi drivers? All those who drive for a living need to earn money just to survive and working in a tin can on wheels is subject to much less than six feet from a passenger, thereby possibly spreading any sickness, or becoming contaminated from a passenger.

I get that seniors need their Meals on Wheels, as I remember 30 years ago orchestrating scores of yellow cab drivers delivering Thanksgiving dinners to the homebound. I get emergency workers needing to travel to hospitals and doctor's offices, as EMTs, police, fire, sanitation etc. need to travel in order to keep us safe. I get that food (and toilet paper) deliveries are a necessity for the masses.

What I don't GET is why the federal government hasn't mandated a quarantine for all professional drivers and continue to pay them as others are being paid to stay at home. Are we looked down upon as expendable? God, I hope not. But exponential mathematics determines how one "infected" driver can ignite an epidemic, as can one infected passenger.

If New York City is the epicenter of the American coronavirus, we need to do everything possible to prevent spreading it and causing deaths – including drastic measures. Me? I have already lost everything that I have managed to save in my life due to the downturn of the yellow taxi industry, but I am still alive and refuse to lose my life to a virus that can be stopped if we all realize that the world has truly changed. We MUST change with it.

*David "Taxi Dave" Pollack is an industry veteran, spokesperson and advocate for drivers in New York City. He can be reached via email at [taxihail@aol.com](mailto:taxihail@aol.com). He encourages people with comments or questions to reach out to him, and each month we publish those letters, comments and photos.*



## TAXI & LIVERY TIMES

An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries



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# RELIEF FOR OUR INDUSTRY:

## Independent Contractor Drivers, Gig Workers Can Receive Unemployment Benefits, Plus \$600

On March 27, a \$2 trillion, bipartisan stimulus bill was signed by the president to help millions of Americans stay afloat during the coronavirus pandemic. Its components include stimulus payments to individuals, expanded unemployment coverage, student loan changes, different retirement account rules and more.

Under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, included in the stimulus bill, Independent Contractors – which includes FHV drivers and “gig” workers – can receive half the average unemployment benefit in their state, plus an additional \$600 per week.

The new assistance program was created to help qualify self-employed workers unable to file for regular unemployment insurance.

The following are excerpts from a New York Times column, titled: “F.A.Q. on Stimulus Checks, Unemployment and the Coronavirus Plan.”

**How large will the stimulus payments be?** *Most adults will get \$1,200, although some will get less. For every qualifying child age 16 or under, the payment will be an additional \$500. This will be a one-time payment. Future bills will need to be written for additional payments.*

**You DO NOT need to apply to receive your payment, if the Internal Revenue Service already has your bank account information. It will transfer the money to you via direct deposit based on the recent income-tax figures it already has.**

**Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he expects most people to get their payments within three weeks.**

**To ensure you get your money and that the check didn't “get lost in the mail,” a paper notice will be mailed out no later**

*than a few weeks after your payment has been disbursed. That notice will contain information about where the payment ended up and in what form it was made. If you can't locate the payment at that point, contact the IRS using the information on the notice.*

**How do I know if I will get the full amount?** *Single adults with Social Security numbers who have an adjusted gross income of \$75,000 or less will get the full amount. Married couples with no children earning \$150,000 or less will receive a total of \$2,400. Taxpayers filing as head of household get the full payment if they earned \$112,500 or less. Above those income figures, the payment decreases until it stops altogether for single people earning \$99,000 or married people who have no children and earn \$198,000. A family with two children will no longer be eligible for any payments if its income surpassed \$218,000.*

**You can't get a payment if someone claims you as a dependent, even if you're an adult. In any given family and in most instances, everyone must have a valid Social Security number in order to be eligible. There is an exception for members of the military.**

**Do college students get anything? How about Veterans and people receiving Social Security retirement and disability payments?**

*College students do not get a check if anyone claims them as a dependent on a tax return. Usually, students under age 24 are dependents in the eyes of the IRS if a parent pays for at least half of their expenses.*

**People who receive Social Security retirement and disability payments will get a stimulus payment, as will eligible**

*unemployed people and veterans.*

*Even U.S. citizens living abroad will get a payment, as long as they meet the income requirements and have a Social Security number.*

**What year's income should I be looking at? 2019. If you haven't prepared a tax return yet, you can use your 2018 return. If you haven't filed that yet, you can use a 2019 Social Security statement showing your income to see what an employer reported to the IRS.**

*If you haven't filed tax returns recently, it could complicate your ability to get a stimulus check. It is advised that you file a return immediately, at least for 2018, according to the I.R.S. website. “Those without 2018 tax filings on record could potentially affect mailings of stimulus checks,” the site says.*

**If you're worried about money that you owe that you cannot pay, the IRS recommends consulting a tax professional who can help you request an alternative payment plan or some other resolution.**

**What if my recent income made me ineligible, but I anticipate being eligible because of a loss of income in 2020? The plan does not help people in that circumstance currently, but you may benefit once you file your 2020 taxes. The payment is technically an advance on a tax credit, available for the entire year. So, it will depend on how much you earn. You may also be able to file for unemployment or for one of the new loans for small business owners or sole proprietors.**

**Who will be eligible for Unemployment Benefits? The expanded program includes far more workers than are usually eligible for unemployment benefits, including self-employed people and**



part-time workers.

*Independent contractors, “gig” workers and freelancers WILL be covered. Self-employed workers will also be eligible for the additional \$600 weekly benefit provided by the federal government.*

*Those who are unemployed, are partly unemployed or cannot work for a wide variety of coronavirus-related reasons will be more likely to receive benefits. How much you will receive depends on the state you live in.*

*You are also eligible if your employer shut down your workplace because of coronavirus. If you are unemployed, partly unemployed or unable to work because your employer closed down, you’re covered.*

*The average worker earns about \$1,000 a week, and unemployment benefits often replace roughly 40 to 45% of that. The expansion will pay an extra amount to fill the gap. Under the plan, eligible workers will get an extra \$600 per week on top of their state benefit. But some states are more generous than others. According to the Century Foundation, the maximum weekly benefit in Alabama is \$275, but it’s \$450 in California and \$713 in New Jersey.*

*If a worker was making \$1,100 per week in New York, they would be eligible for the maximum state unemployment benefit of \$504 per week. Under the new expansion, they would get an additional \$600 of federal pandemic unemployment compensation, essentially replacing the original paycheck.*

**What if I’m a part-time worker who lost my job because of a coronavirus reason, but my state doesn’t cover part-time workers? Am I still eligible? Yes. Part-time workers are eligible for benefits, but the benefit amount and how long benefits will last depend on your state. They are also eligible for the additional \$600 weekly benefit.**

**What if I have Covid-19 or need to care for a family member who has it? If you’ve received a diagnosis, are experiencing symptoms or are seeking a diagnosis – and you’re unemployed, partly unemployed or cannot work as a result – you will be covered. The same goes if you must care for a member of your family or household who has received a diagnosis.**

**What if my child’s school or day care**

**shut down? If you rely on a school, a day care or another facility to care for a child, elderly parent or another household member so that you can work — and that facility has been shut down because of coronavirus — you are eligible.**

**What if I’ve been advised by a health care provider to quarantine myself because of exposure to coronavirus? And what about broader orders to stay home? People who must self-quarantine are covered. The legislation also says that individuals who are unable to get to work because of a quarantine imposed as a result of the outbreak are eligible.**

**How long will the unemployment payments last? Many states already provide 26 weeks of benefits, though some states have trimmed that back while others provide a sliding scale tied to unemployment levels. The bill provides all eligible workers with an additional 13 weeks. So, participants in states with 26 weeks would be eligible for a total of 39 weeks. The total amount cannot exceed 39 weeks, but it may be shorter in certain states.**

*The extra \$600 payment will last for up to four months, covering weeks of unemployment ending July 31.*

**How long would the broader program last? Expanded coverage would be available to workers who were newly eligible for unemployment benefits for weeks starting on Jan. 27, 2020, and through Dec. 31, 2020.**

**Will I receive help if I’m already receiving unemployment benefits? Yes. Even if you’re already receiving unemployment benefits for reasons unrelated to the coronavirus, your state-level benefits will still be extended by 13 weeks. You will also receive the extra \$600 weekly benefit from the federal government.**

*If you’ve already exhausted your benefits, eligible workers can generally reapply. How much you get and for how long depends on the state where you worked. Everyone gets at least another 13 weeks, along with the extra \$600 payment.*

**How long will I need to wait for benefits? States have been incentivized to waive the one-week waiting period, but it’s unclear how long it will take to process claims – es-**

**pecially with state offices so strained by a flood of them.**

**How does the aid for small businesses and nonprofits work? Good news here, as you may be eligible for forgivable loans.**

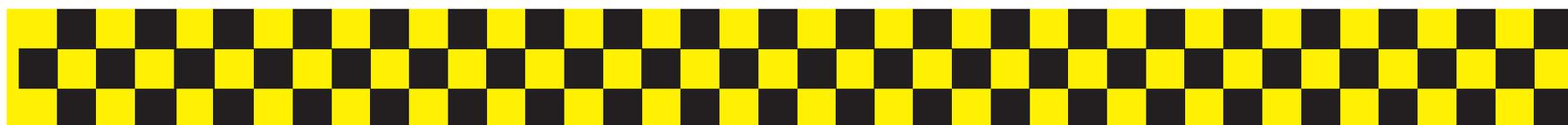
**Is there any relief for renters in the bill? Yes. The bill puts a temporary, nationwide eviction moratorium in place for any renters whose landlords have mortgages backed or owned by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and other federal entities. This will last for 120 days after the bill passes, and landlords also can’t charge any fees or penalties for non-payment of rent.**

**A few additional facts:**

- You do not pay income taxes on the stimulus payment.
- Even if your income tax refunds are currently being garnished because of a student loan default, this payment will not be garnished.
- The bill temporarily suspends nearly all efforts to garnish tax refunds to repay debts, including those to the IRS itself. But this waiver may not apply to people who are behind on child support.
- The bill excludes workers who are able to work from home, and those receiving paid sick leave or paid family leave. New entrants to the workforce who cannot find jobs are also ineligible.
- Your credit score is not supposed to be affected if you take advantage of any virus-related payment relief, including a student loan suspension.
- Internet service providers can still cut off your service for non-payment. It is also not illegal for utility providers to cut off your service for non-payment.

Additional information – including details about student loans, retirement accounts and charitable contributions – is available in the original *New York Times* article, which can be viewed here: <https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-stimulus-package-questions-answers.html>.

*Sources: USA Today, The New York Times*



# TAXI NEWS

## CABBIES RALLY AT CITY HALL FOR HELP TO EASE FINANCIAL BURDENS

Taxi drivers and their advocates packed the steps of City Hall on March 4, demanding the de Blasio administration provide relief for struggling medallion owners. As the value of taxi medallions surged past a million dollars each, many drivers took out loans to buy them, or borrowed against them. But then the value of the medallions crashed as drivers for apps like Uber and Lyft flooded the city. Many drivers got squeezed financially, unable to make their loan payments. Nine drivers have killed themselves in the last two and a half years.

“Let’s end this nightmare now,” said industry advocate, Bhairavi Desai. “We have a fair solution; we have a just solution; we have a simple solution. All we need is the city to come to the table.”

Drivers organized a campaign to get the de Blasio administration to create a program for giving some debts. A City Council-led committee responded with a proposed bailout, using public and private money – an idea supported by Mayor de Blasio’s new Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) Chairwoman.

In February, the state attorney announced she will sue for more than \$800 million, alleging that the TLC inflated the value of medallions, leading drivers to buy them at unsustainably high prices. Taxi advocates hope that the state attorney general’s intention to sue the city for fraud over the inflated taxi medallion values will pressure the city to take action quickly, before an official lawsuit is filed.

Source: NY1

## LARGEST HOLDER OF TAXI-MEDALLION LOANS PAUSES COLLECTIONS

New York City’s largest holder of taxi medallion loans announced in March it will hold off on collecting mortgage payments, as taxi drivers are crushed by the coronavirus outbreak. Marblegate Asset Management, a private equity firm that recently purchased a portfolio of 3,500 distressed medallion loans, announced a 30-day payment holiday for individual drivers who own their medallions.

The firm will push back the payments for a month to “help owner-drivers manage their medallion loans... and keep their cars on the road during this challenging period.”

Bhairavi Desai, executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, called the offer a “good start,” but added that more help will be necessary. “There are barely enough fares right now to meet basic costs of living: groceries, utilities, internet. That’s how dire it is.”

Marblegate purchased the loans at auction for \$350 million on Feb. 20 from

the National Credit Union Administration, a federal regulator that took over the medallions from multiple failed credit unions. The deal rattled drivers, who hoped the city could lead an effort to raise enough money for a bailout.

Marblegate has since met with drivers and the alliance and pledged to continue considering “measures to ease the burden on owner-drivers and their families during this emergency.”

Desai said Marblegate should make sure the payments are deferred automatically and not rely on drivers calling. Marblegate’s action should be followed by other lenders and mark the start of a discussion around restructuring debt for drivers who own medallions, added Desai.

“Owner-drivers operate cars with partitions, many wheelchair accessible, and are seasoned drivers,” Desai said. “There is a public health interest in keeping the sector going.”

Source: Crain’s New York Business

## ARREST WARRANT ISSUED FOR “TAXI KING” IN MARCH

A state Supreme Court judge ordered the arrest of disgraced former “taxi king” Gene Freidman for skipping court and refusing to surrender either his three prized Ferraris or a six-figure sum. The order, making Freidman a wanted man, was issued March 4, by civil court Judge Nancy Bannon.

It is “ordered that the defendant, Evgeny Freidman, stands committed for the aforesaid contempt of court; and it is further ordered that the Sheriff of the City of New York shall... arrest the said defendant,” wrote Bannon.

With Freidman beset by crushing debt to everyone from the city and state to a former landlord, a bankruptcy judge ruled in 2016 that the taxi mogul must surrender over 46 of his cabs and the medallions that go with them.

In 2017, the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission stripped Freidman of 800 medallions shortly before his arrest for tax fraud. In 2018, Ferrari Financing Services took him to court for defaulting on monthly payments for his trio of luxury cars – including a 2014 Ferrari F12, a 2014 Ferrari FF and a 2015 Ferrari 458, according to court filings. In Jan. 2020, Freidman was ordered to either surrender the rides within 30 days or cough up \$575,558.

Source: New York Post

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March 27, 2020

**AIRPORT OPERATIONS BULLETIN #20-05**

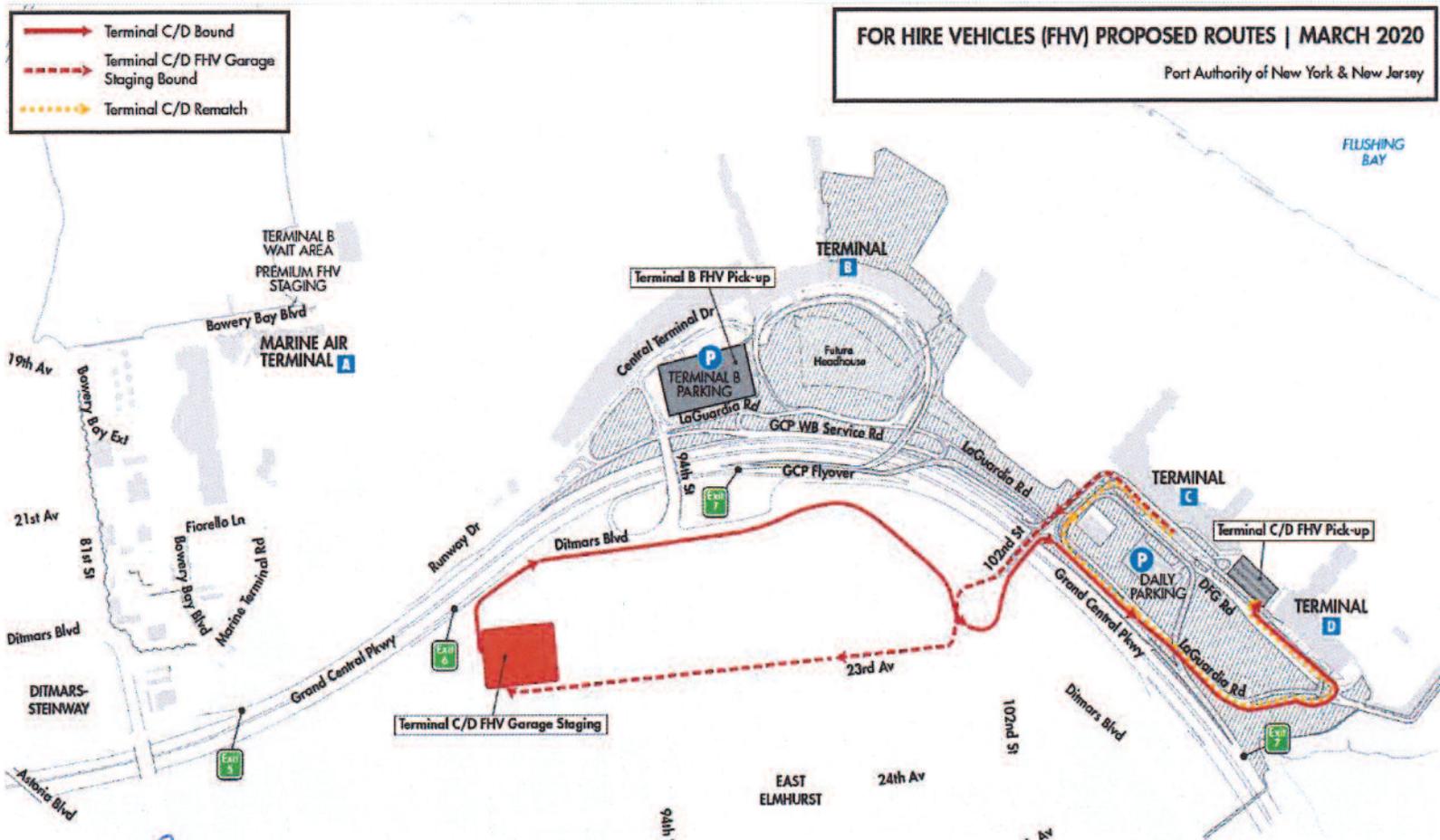
**TO: All Airlines, LaGuardia Airport Stakeholders and Port Authority Staff**  
**SUBJECT: FHV (For-Hire-Vehicle) Staging for Terminals C and D – Facility Change**

On Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00pm, The Port Authority of NY & NJ will be closing the FHV Staging Area located at the World’s Fair Marina, which is used by For-Hire-Vehicles (FHVs) and Car Services picking up customers at the Terminal C/D FHV Pickup Area.

Starting Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00am, all FHVs serving Terminals C and D will be required to stage at a new FHV Staging Area located at 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 90<sup>th</sup> Street (the former “The Parking Spot” location).

Please note that the existing FHV Pickup Area located between Terminals C and D is not affected by this move.

A map of the new FHV Staging Area location, and routing to and from the Terminal C/D FHV Pickup Area, is below.



*FOR*  
 Christopher Rhoads  
 Manager – Airport Operations  
 LaGuardia Airport



# LIVERY NEWS

## DANGEROUS VEHICLE ABATEMENT BILL BECOMES LAW

Mayor de Blasio, on Feb. 26, signed the Dangerous Vehicle Abatement bill into law. The new law targets the most reckless drivers by allowing the City to seize and impound vehicles with 15 or more school speed camera violations or 5 or more red light camera violations during a 12-month period, unless the registered owner or operator completes a driver accountability course.

The law will take effect on February 26, 2021 and apply to red light camera and school speed camera violations incurred after October 26, 2020. The program will run for three years, at which point the Mayor and Council will decide to renew or modify this effort.

New York City school zone speed cameras issue violations to vehicles traveling more than 10 miles per hour over the posted speed limit. Both speeding and red-light violations carry a \$50 fine. DOT currently operates more than 600 speed cameras in school zones around the five boroughs. By the end of 2021, the number of cameras across the city is expected to reach 2,000. The city also operates red-light cameras at 150 intersections.

The bill, which was introduced by Council Member Brad Lander and passed City Council with an overwhelming majority, is the latest step in the Administration's Vision Zero plan. Officials estimate that the new law will affect about 3,000 to 6,000 vehicles, or less than 1% of the nearly 2 million vehicles registered in the city.

"We are putting all drivers on notice that if you behave recklessly behind the wheel, there will be real consequences," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "This law will make our streets safer for all New Yorkers."

"We know that vehicles with the highest number of red light and speed camera violations are significantly more likely to be involved in serious crashes," added DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg. "Through an unprecedented program of education and enforcement, including the possible loss of a vehicle, this new law will help us change driver behavior so we can keep driving down traffic deaths and serious injuries."

"The Dangerous vehicle abatement program will ensure that only the safest drivers remain on the road and will create a deterrent for drivers who refuse to correct their actions," concluded Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Transportation Committee.

*Source: NYC.gov*

## NY LIVERY DRIVERS ACCUSED OF DELIVERING DRUGS TO NORWALK

Three New York Livery drivers have been arrested for allegedly delivering large quantities of drugs to the Norwalk area. Norwalk police said they began receiving information in early December about New York livery drivers delivering narcotics in the area and arrested the suspects in late Feb.

Police said they seized 10 Xanax bars, 13 bags of powder cocaine, pure fentanyl, 30 Oxycontin pills, around \$3,000 in cash and a 2015 Ford Explorer with Livery Plates on it.

Miguel Nunez, 25, of Jamaica, NY; Jimmy Salcedo, 25, of Babylon, NY; and Wilber Lora-Espinal, 25, of NYC were arrested. The charges include possession of a controlled substance within 1,500 feet of a school, possession of narcotics with intent to sell, possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell, failure to keep drugs in their original container, possession of marijuana and possession of a controlled substance.

*Source: NBC Connecticut*

## EL PROYECTO DE PELIGROSOS SE CONVIERTE EN LEY

El 26 de febrero, el alcalde de Blasio, convirtió en ley el proyecto de ley de Disminución de Vehículos Peligrosos. La nueva ley apunta a los conductores más imprudentes al autorizar a la ciudad a incautar vehículos con 15 o más infracciones de exceso de velocidad captadas por cámaras de áreas escolares o 5 o más infracciones captadas por cámaras que emiten fotomultas por pasar semáforos en rojo durante un período de 12 meses, a menos que el propietario o el operador registrados asistan a un curso de responsabilidad para conductores.

La ley comenzará a regir a partir del 26 de febrero de 2021 y se aplicará a infracciones captadas por las cámaras que emiten fotomultas por pasar semáforos en rojo y por las de control de velocidad de áreas escolares, en las que se hubiera incurrido después del 26 de octubre de 2020. El programa estará en vigencia por tres años, al cabo de los cuales el alcalde y el Concejo decidirán la renovación o modificación de esta iniciativa.

Las cámaras de control de velocidad situadas en las áreas escolares de la ciudad de Nueva York emiten infracciones a los vehículos que circulan a más de 10 millas por hora por encima del límite de velocidad indicado. Tanto las infracciones por exceso de velocidad como las emitidas por pasar semáforos en rojo están sujetas a una multa de \$50. Actualmente, el Departamento de Transporte (Department of Transport, DOT) maneja más de 600 cámaras de control de velocidad en áreas escolares de los cinco distritos. Está previsto que para fines de 2021 la cantidad de cámaras distribuidas en la ciudad ascienda a 2,000. La Municipalidad también opera cámaras que emiten multas por pasar semáforos en rojo en 150 intersecciones.

El proyecto de ley, presentado por el concejal Brad Lander y aprobado en el Concejo Municipal por una abrumadora mayoría, es el último paso del plan Visión Cero del gobierno. Los funcionarios estiman que la nueva ley afectará a unos 3,000 a 6,000 vehículos, o a menos del 1 % de los casi 2 millones de vehículos registrados en la ciudad.

"Estamos avisando a todos los conductores que si son imprudentes al volante, sufrirán consecuencias concretas", aseguró el alcalde Bill de Blasio. "Esta ley hará nuestras calles más seguras para todos los neoyorquinos".

"Sabemos que los vehículos con mayor cantidad de infracciones registradas por las cámaras al cruzar semáforos en rojo o exceder el límite de velocidad son los que tienen muchas más probabilidades de provocar accidentes graves", agregó la delegada del Departamento de Transporte, Polly Trottenberg. "A través de un programa de educación y cumplimiento de las normas sin precedentes, que incluye la posible pérdida del vehículo, esta nueva ley nos ayudará a cambiar la conducta de los conductores para seguir reduciendo el número de víctimas fatales y heridos graves en accidentes de tránsito".

"El programa de Disminución de Vehículos Peligrosos garantizará que solo sigan circulando los conductores más seguros y creará un elemento de disuasión para aquellos conductores que se niegan a corregir sus acciones", concluyó el concejal Ydanis Rodriguez, presidente del Comité de Transporte.

*Fuente: NYC.gov*

## CONDUCTORES DE VEHÍCULOS DE ALQUILER DE NUEVA YORK ACUSADOS DE TRANSPORTAR DROGAS A NORWALK

Tres conductores de vehículos de alquiler de Nueva York fueron arrestados por transportar presuntamente grandes cantidades de drogas al área de Norwalk. La policía de Norwalk indicó que a principios de diciembre empezaron a recibir información sobre la distribución de narcóticos en el área por parte de conductores de vehículos de alquiler de Nueva York y que arrestaron a los sospechosos a fines de febrero.

La policía reportó haber incautado 10 barras de Xanax, 13 bolsas de cocaína en polvo, fentanilo puro, 30 comprimidos de Oxycontin, aproximadamente \$3,000 en efectivo y un Ford Explorer 2015 con placas de vehículos de alquiler en su interior.

Los conductores Miguel Nunez, de Jamaica, NY; Jimmy Salcedo, de Babylon, NY; y Wilber Lora-Espinal, de la ciudad de Nueva York, todos ellos de 25 años, fueron arrestados. Los cargos incluyen tenencia ilegal de una sustancia regulada dentro de un radio de 1,500 pies de una escuela, tenencia ilegal de narcóticos con intención de venta, tenencia ilegal de una sustancia regulada con intención de venta, no conservación de los fármacos en sus envases originales, tenencia ilegal de marihuana y tenencia ilegal de una sustancia regulada.

*Fuente: NBC Connecticut*

## FHV DRIVER SUFFERS VICIOUS ATTACK IN FEB.

A brutal attack left For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) driver Mohammed Al-Gahaffi clinging to life. The veteran driver took a group of five passengers on a long-haul trip from Privileged Gentlemen's Club in Queens to Second Ave. and E. 62nd St. on the Upper East Side early Feb. 5. The passengers got into an argument with Al-Gahaffi, 54, at the end of the ride, at about 4:30am. The fight quickly escalated and spilled onto the sidewalk, and Al-Gahaffi was punched in the face and knocked to the ground.

Friends of Al-Gahaffi and industry advocates offered a \$5,000 cash reward for information leading to the arrest of the assailants. Police released surveillance images of two women and three men suspected in the attack. Images of the alleged assailants can be viewed at: <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-uber-driver-assaulted-reward-20200301-hhvtar7jqbhd5mdzbigl6h6eku-story.html>

After the attack, Al-Gahaffi was hospitalized in critical condition, with a cracked skull and bleeding in his brain. Members of his family said doctors had to remove a piece of his skull due to swelling in his brain.

"He started to move his arms and started to move his legs and to make gestures," said Mohammed Al-Gahaffi, the victim's nephew, who shares his uncle's name. "Whenever we say 'You're OK' he gives us a thumbs up."

Al-Gahaffi's ex-wife Mary Rosado, 55, said she was told a sixth suspect has been cooperating with police.

Al-Gahaffi has driven cabs and FHVs in New York City for more than 30 years.

The Yemeni American Merchants Association put up the cash reward for information on the suspects. The group's co-founder Debbie Almontaser said Al-Gahaffi has a 21-year-old daughter who is a refugee in Ethiopia, after fleeing war-torn Yemen. Al-Gahaffi was working to save money to get his daughter to the U.S., but was having difficulties securing a visa for her, said the association's executive director, Abraham Ay-ash.

*Source: The Daily News*

## CONDUCTOR DE VEHÍCULO DE ALQUILER SUFRE FERROZ ATAQUE EN FEBRERO

Una brutal agresión dejó a Mohammed Al-Gahaffi, conductor de un vehículo de alquiler (*For-Hire Vehicle, FHV*), al borde de la muerte. El veterano conductor llevó a un grupo de cinco pasajeros en un viaje de larga distancia desde el Privileged Gentlemen's Club en Queens hasta Second Ave. y E. 62nd St. en Upper East Side en las primeras horas del 5 de febrero. Al finalizar el viaje, alrededor de las 4:30 a. m., los pasajeros comenzaron a discutir con el señor Al-Gahaffi, de 54 años. La riña rápidamente subió de tono y continuó en la acera, donde el conductor recibió un golpe en el rostro y fue derribado.

Amigos de Mohammed Al-Gahaffi y defensores del sector ofrecieron una recompensa de \$5,000 en efectivo por toda información que conduzca al arresto de los agresores. La policía difundió imágenes de vigilancia que muestran a dos mujeres y tres hombres sospechosos de haber perpetrado el ataque. Las imágenes de los presuntos agresores se pueden ver en: <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-uber-driver-assaulted-reward-20200301-hhvtar7jqbhd5mdzbigl6h6eku-story.html>

Después de la agresión, el señor Al-Gahaffi fue hospitalizado en estado crítico, con fractura de cráneo y hemorragia cerebral. Miembros de su familia indicaron que la hemorragia obligó a los médicos a retirarle parte del cráneo.

"Empezó a mover los brazos y las piernas y a hacer gestos", comentó Mohammed Al-Gahaffi, sobrino y homónimo de la víctima. "Siempre que le decimos 'Estás bien', nos hace la seña del pulgar para arriba".

La exesposa del señor Al-Gahaffi, Mary Rosado, de 55 años, dijo que le informaron que un sexto sospechoso estaba colaborando con la policía.

El señor Al-Gahaffi fue chofer de taxis y vehículos de alquiler en la ciudad de Nueva York durante más de 30 años.

La Asociación de Comerciantes Yemeníes Estadounidenses puso el dinero de la recompensa para obtener información sobre los sospechosos. La cofundadora del grupo Debbie Almontaser comentó que el señor Al-Gahaffi tiene una hija de 21 años quien vive como refugiada en Etiopía, luego de escapar de Yemen, devastada por la guerra. El conductor agredido estaba trabajando para ahorrar dinero a fin de traer a su hija a los EE. UU., pero tenía dificultades en obtener una visa para la muchacha, indicó el director ejecutivo de la asociación, Abraham Ay-ash.

*Fuente: The Daily News*

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**TAXI & LIVERY TIMES**



**FOR  
BREAKING  
NEWS!**

# FEATURES

## CLEANING AND MAINTAINING YOUR CAR IN THE CORONAVIRUS ERA

As a For-hire Vehicle (FHV) driver, you are being counted on to keep your vehicle clean and safe – both for you and your passengers – as we continue to deal with spread of COVID-19. When it comes to cleaning your car, the primary surfaces you need to worry about will be those that you – or others – have touched with their hands or coughed/sneezed on. Those surfaces will generally be painted metal or plastic (exterior door handles), plastic or vinyl (steering wheel, shifter, control stalks and other controls, and armrests and seats, leather (seats, possibly steering wheel and more) and fabric (seats and carpets).

Most of these aren't as durable as, say, a countertop or bathroom sink, so we need to narrow down the cleaning methods recommended by the Centers for Disease Control for fighting COVID-19. Mainly, forget about using chlorine bleach, at any dilution, and watch out for wipes that might use it as an ingredient. While this chemical will certainly kill germs, car detailing experts (and manufacturers) warn that it may do irreparable damage to your car's interior, and if it gets on your seat belts, weaken their fabric and compromise your safety. Similarly, avoid peroxide-based cleaners, which may also cause damage.

Lysol wipes and their generic equivalents should be fine, if they are alcohol-based products (like hand sanitizers). These, of course, are in high demand.

The CDC notes that the best approach is to take two steps: clean, then disinfect. So, you could simply use a gentle household cleaner, an existing car-specific cleaner, or even just soap and water (in a cloth) to first clean the hard surfaces.

Since there are electronics involved, keep the amount of liquid to a minimum, and it is suggested that you use a microfiber cloth to get the most dirt off with the fewest scratches. Then you can go back and do a quick wipe down with a germ-killing product. Don't forget the seat-belt buckles.

Since CDC guidelines suggest fabrics are unlikely to be a germ vector, there is less to worry about. Leather is a harder call, particularly if it's on your steering wheel. We'd suggest that for every few times you use something virucidal on a leather-wrapped steering wheel, you also consider a wipe with a leather-care product that contains some moisturizers, for the leather's sake, not yours.

Whenever possible, keep your windows down.

### Car in quarantine?

Quarantines and the like may affect driving patterns. Caring for an elderly relative or friend who's not supposed to go out may also mean caring for their vehicle, for example. A few tips about that:

Machinery likes to be exercised. The best way to keep up a car is to drive it, at least once every two weeks, in a way that

it gets fully warmed up – at least 10 miles, preferably at highway speeds.

Just turning a car on and idling it for a while doesn't count; in fact, it's probably a negative. Drive it.

Gas with ethanol in it goes bad quickly, in a matter of a few months. If you don't think you'll make it through a tankful by the time this is all over, add fuel stabilizer, like you would to a lawnmower or snowblower.

### Car on overtime

As an FHV driver, you will likely be racking up miles on your car. If that means you need to go past a service interval because your repair shop or dealership has shut down due to coronavirus, don't sweat it too much.

"Those who may be concerned about driving past their normal maintenance schedule can take heart in the knowledge that a well-maintained vehicle, just as a healthy body, can weather a minor disruption in regular maintenance," says Tony Molla, vice president, industry relations for the Automotive Service Association.

If you're close to or over an interval, and your car has a conventional dipstick, you could add more new oil up to the indicated maximum as a way to spruce up your oil a bit with fresh detergents and protectants. But don't overfill, which can pose serious engine hazards.

*Source: Kiplinger*

## WORKING FROM HOME REQUIRES RAMPED-UP CYBERSECURITY

As businesses move their employees to work remotely to try to combat the spread of the coronavirus, shifting into the cloud has so far had little turbulence, but don't get over-confident. Working from home comes with risks, especially if you are dealing with the data of important clients and your own business.

The Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency issued an alert in March that cyber actors are likely to ramp up phishing attacks and look for other vulnerabilities in home networks. Part of the problem is that companies spend thousands of dollars each year building a secure internal network, while people at home rarely have such resources.

"When is the last time you updated the firmware on your home wireless router," asks Justin Cappos, an associate professor at NYU Tandon School of Engineering. "Probably never."

One way most companies boost security is by having employees connect to a virtual private network (VPN) that provides workers access to files in a server where the company has stronger control over security settings. Now is also a good time to strengthen company passwords – including adding a password-manager app – and for employers to set up two-factor authentication.

If people are working from a home laptop, the most important thing they can do is make sure all software updates are downloaded and installed. Those updates are generally there to solve security issues.

*Source: Crain's New York Business*



## FEATURE

## FHV DRIVERS AND THE COVID-19 DISASTER

By STEVEN J. SHANKER, ESQ.

I have always had an affinity for helping For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) Drivers in New York City. These are the people who truly move NYC.

Over the years we have seen the number of FHVs on the road grow and grow, all while the pay they receive has been dramatically reduced by the sheer number of new entrants to the market. While the demand of the consumer has surely increased over the years, such demand has not grown at the same rate as supply of vehicles and FHV drivers. Despite this, FHV drivers get up every day and transport us to work, school, medical facilities and to visit friends and family. We rely upon FHV drivers more now than ever.

Remember the days when you could be standing on a street corner and waiting for a yellow cab to arrive. If you were lucky, not only did someone not steal your cab at a nearby street corner, but you were very fortunate if you were able to hail a cab and get a ride within 15-20 minutes. Back then there was no such thing as Uber and Lyft, and there was no smartphone application to summon a vehicle to your location within 3-5 minutes.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, FHV drivers were barely making ends meet. FHV insurance renewals occurred last month, leaving FHV drivers short on cash. Between car payments, insurance, vehicle maintenance and all other business expenses, FHV drivers still had little left at the end of the day to pay for food and shelter for themselves and their families. In essence, before the COVID-19 outbreak, times were bad for FHV drivers – but now, this pandemic is causing disaster for the entire industry.

I have heard firsthand reports of massive layoffs at FHV Bases and truly unheard of ramifications that are getting only worse as each day passes. The airports are empty, which means most FHV bases are on the verge of a complete business stoppage. With virtually no one using FHVs, drivers have no way to make money in the industry and it does not look like things are going to get better anytime soon.

How long can an FHV base stay open with no income and ongoing bills to pay, even with layoffs of operators and dispatchers?

In the meantime, FHV drivers all have to put food on the table and pay the rent. How does one do this when you are essentially out of work? The bills FHV drivers have don't get paid on their own. For the over 100,000 FHV drivers in NYC, this is a recipe for disaster. Questions are coming in asking me, "when will this end?", "what will I do in the meantime?" "how do I feed my family when I have no work?"

These are all genuine and valid questions. No one in the FHV industry is immune to the effects that this virus has caused. It is a vicious cycle. If an FHV

base is not receiving calls, then drivers will have no one to transport. If drivers have no one to transport, then they will be unable to pay the rental on their vehicle or their vehicle loan. If an FHV driver cannot pay their vehicle rental, then the rental companies will not be able to pay their loan, thus a loss of the vehicle for the rental company and the driver.

When will this cycle end? The reality is that no one knows for sure. Some industry experts are predicting as low as 2-3 weeks but potentially up to 2 to 3 months or more.

So, the real question is, what do you do? I would like to believe some FHV drivers have some savings to be able to weather the ill effects of having no income for a few weeks. But we all know that most in the FHV industry are lucky to still be operating, much less to have a savings account to weather this storm.

No one could have predicted, much less prepared for this disaster. One thing that eats at me the most is this: FHV bases have traditionally had a base of operations where drivers could come in with their issues and concerns and ask questions. Some FHV base owners deal directly with their affiliated drivers. Some bigger bases have Driver Relations personnel to help drivers with issues, questions and problems.

At times like this, having someone to talk to, someone to get information from, someone to listen to who is genuinely concerned about the FHV drivers' quandary is invaluable. FHV base owners are doing their best to work as a team and to help their affiliated drivers however possible.

On the other hand, what is Uber and Lyft doing for their affiliated drivers? I have not seen anything being done by Uber and Lyft, except emails they've been sending out. This has to be the most impersonal way to help or console an affiliate in their time of need.

Uber and Lyft want undying loyalty from their affiliates, but in times of despair, they have proven to not be there for their drivers. Uber and Lyft do not have a traditional base of operation, like the traditional FHV bases. Uber and Lyft do not even have a dedicated telephone number for a driver to call to seek help, aid relief or even just to hear the sound of the voice of someone with compassion for the drivers' dire circumstances.

As a technology company, Uber and Lyft have a great product. BUT, as a company, Uber and Lyft have no heart and no soul.

I am sure Uber and Lyft, as corporate entities, had issues of their own to deal with when this virus struck, but that is no excuse for their radio silence when it comes to the FHV drivers who made Uber and Lyft what they are.

I have seen emails from Lyft saying that they are supporting delivery of med-

ical supplies and providing access to necessary medical transportation, especially for low-income individuals and supporting delivery of meals for those in need, including kids who receive free or subsidized lunch at school, and home-bound seniors. This seems to be a PR campaign for Lyft to make it seem like it is helping out the community in its time of need.

But what about their affiliated drivers? At a time like this, they need a human contact and human compassion, not just the hope of more rides being made available.

I have also seen emails from Uber telling its customers to stay home, if possible, especially if they are feeling sick. This will help limit the spread of the virus. The email called "Uber with Care" gives tips to customers advising them to wash their hands, cover their mouth and open the window.

This is all great for the customer, but what about the FHV driver? The most Uber said about its drivers is, "Drivers and delivery people are working extra hard right now doing critical work to support your community. Please show your appreciation with a tip – a little kindness can go a long way."

Perhaps Uber should practice what it preaches by being kind to its drivers. Kindness to drivers can go a long way, but only if you practice what you preach. At this point in time, Uber is the antithesis of kind to its drivers. Uber's lack of compassion for its drivers is pathetic. They should be ashamed of themselves. Their inability to put themselves in the shoes of their drivers and offer even a modicum of humanity to them shows their lack of corporate soul. Uber does not deserve their drivers' blood, sweat and tears.

The character of a company is the combination of its ethical/moral compass, its integrity and judgement. A company with an inherently good and gracious character thinks of the greater good, and how its judgement and decisions influences that common good.

Mostly, company character is about what is done when those who rely upon it in their time of need. That is the true measure of corporate integrity. When this is all over things may never be the same moving forward, but I truly hope that the drivers' affiliated with Uber and Lyft reconsider the companies that they choose to work with, based on how they were treated in their time of need.

Despite Uber and Lyft's lack of compassion and empathy for its drivers, there are others out there doing all they can for FHV drivers, simply because it is the right thing to do. Myself, Doug Ver Mulm and Aparna Srinivasan have created a GoFundMe Campaign to help support FHV drivers in their time of need. Governor Cuomo has determined FHV services to be an "essential" business, while the rest of

New York City is “on-pause.” To do this work, FHV drivers put themselves and their families at risk of contracting COVID-19. The three of us are trying to raise this money to help FHV drivers who continue to support their community in this time of need. We are currently accepting applications from drivers and hope to raise funds to help them at least cover their major expenses, like insurance.

Our goal is to raise a minimum of \$30,000. If we achieve this goal, we can provide stipends to approximately 100 FHV drivers. If we exceed this goal, we will use those funds to cover additional drivers that apply. Check out this link about our fundraising efforts and if you are interested in donating. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-new-york-city-rideshare-drivers>.

While big public corporations like Uber and Lyft seem to care less about providing assistance to drivers, Doug, Aparna and myself want to do all we can to help the industry survive, especially FHV drivers.

Doug Ver Mulm is the CEO of Stable Insurance, a new digital insurance broker for the FHV industry. Stable has and continues to redesign insurance for the FHV industry by combining technology and expertise, thus enabling the NYC FHV insurance industry to be brought into the 21st century by making the act of obtaining and managing your policy easier and faster.

Aparna Srinivasan is the CEO of SpotOn, a revolutionary new service, that gives you and your pet the convenience of a ride without being turned away by a traditional

ride-sharing service. According to Aparna, SpotOn isn't just a ride-hailing service reimagined for pets and their owners; it's more than that. Because dogs, cats, and even teacup pigs are so much more than merely “pets” to their families, Aparna envisioned a service that ensures that SpotOn's drivers will provide safe rides for their charges. The ride-hailing app lets you customize your ride. Aparna is a pet-owner and dog-lover herself who gives back to the furry community by, among other things, partnering with a local shelter. Every time someone takes a ride with SpotOn, one of the partner organizations receives a free ride.

I got involved with Doug and Aparna in the GoFundMe campaign because I know firsthand that people all around the FHV industry who are employed are being laid off on a massive scale, but they have some short-term options like unemployment.

As independent contractors, FHV drivers do not have the luxury of filing for unemployment. For years I have been an advocate of creating a system for the provision of benefits to FHV drivers and others in the ever-growing “gig economy.” Such benefits include medical, vision, banking services, disability, retirement, and individual savings accounts to be used for the proverbial “rainy day.” If this type of program were in place now, the stakeholders in the FHV industry would have a better fighting chance to weather this storm. It is precisely this type of benefits plan that I am working on providing to FHV drivers and other independent contractors. I will

continue to do my best to make this plan a reality, so in the future, the FHV community has more of a safety net to fall back on when hard times hit.

If we all do what we can to help one another, we will all weather this storm together. When we eventually make it out alive and rebuild the FHV industry, I am hopeful that NYC FHV drivers consider who was there when they were in need of aid and support. Was it your base, your insurance carrier, your friend and/or family member? If Uber and Lyft were not there for you in your time of need, then why would you go back to them?

Everyone reacts to these situations differently. Some people get angry, feel sorry for themselves, and cast blame; other people remain calm, create an action plan to move forward, and look for a trace of blue in the dark skies ahead. The fact is, the way you respond to these situations in the short term can impact your long-term success and happiness.

As George S. Patton said, “The test of success is not what you do when you are on top. Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.” I for one will continue to do my part to help the FHV industry survive and make it even more vibrant for the future. I hope others join me.

*Steven J. Shanker, Esq. is General Counsel to the Livery Roundtable, Inc. and the New York Independent Livery Driver Benefit Fund.*

# TAXI & LIVERY TIMES

*An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries*

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# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

By ALOYSEE HEREDIA  
JARMOSZUK



## COVID-19

As I write this, a global pandemic is strongly affecting our city and country. The best way to stay up to date on the current news and avoid potential rumors or misinformation is to text COVID to 692-692, as well as check [nyc.gov/taxi](http://nyc.gov/taxi) for updates specific to TLC licensees. This will give you real-time updates through NYC's official emergency notification system.

If you go to the TLC homepage, you can find the latest COVID-19 news and resources specific to our licensees.

TLC-licensed vehicles have been designated as essential services, and drivers can continue to work for-hire during this period.

Our Long Island City facility is open and operational, but capacity for in-person visits has been reduced. Only individuals with existing appointments will be served. If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please follow the instructions in your appointment confirmation email.

If you have questions or need help, we can answer your questions remotely. Please email [licensinginquiries@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:licensinginquiries@tlc.nyc.gov).

OATH remains open but is rescheduling hearings for anyone who requests a new hearing date. Please visit their website for more information. You can email all requests for settlements to [settlements@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:settlements@tlc.nyc.gov).

Our Woodside inspection facility remains open and operational. Owners with existing appointments should appear for their scheduled inspection. If you have a notice of violation, you should correct the defect and appear for reinspection as directed.

If you would like to place your for-hire vehicle license on hold for up to 90 days, please visit [bit.ly/fhvstorage](http://bit.ly/fhvstorage).

The City is looking for TLC-licensed drivers to help with important work related to COVID-19, such as delivering food to senior citizens who need to stay home. Please visit [nyc.gov/deliverytlc](http://nyc.gov/deliverytlc) if interested, and email [supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov) if you encounter technical issues signing up.

Multiple lenders are working with taxi loan borrowers to stop collecting monthly loan payments or lower them. We are urging all lenders to take this action to support taxi owners. Please contact your lender to learn if you are eligible for relief during this crisis.

City assistance is available for any New Yorker who needs it. Please visit the HRA website for information on SNAP (food stamps), cash assistance, Medicaid and other resources, or call 311.

We have heard disturbing reports of New Yorkers facing discrimination related to fear of coronavirus. If you are harassed because of your race, nation of origin, or other identities, please report it by calling 311 and say "human rights." The NYC Commission on Human Rights is here to help you.

If you need mental health services, please contact NYC Well at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or text WELL to 65173. This is a confidential help line staffed every day, every hour by trained counselors who can offer crisis counseling and connections to behavioral health treatment in more than 200 languages.

The TLC is dedicating its every thought and its every effort to helping our Drivers & Operators weather this crisis. You are on the frontlines putting passengers at ease every day, providing safe and reliable service as the world changes around us, and we are grateful.

Mientras escribo esto, una pandemia está afectando fuertemente a nuestra ciudad y a todo el país. La mejor manera de mantenerse informado sobre las noticias actuales y evitar los posibles rumores o información falsa es enviar un mensaje de texto con la palabra COVID al 692-692, y visitar [nyc.gov/taxi](http://nyc.gov/taxi) para las actualizaciones específicas a los titulares de licencias TLC. Así recibirá actualizaciones en tiempo real a través del sistema de notificación de emergencia oficial de NYC.

Si visita la página de inicio de TLC, puede encontrar las últimas noticias y recursos acerca del COVID-19 en relación con nuestros titulares de licencias.

Los vehículos con licencia de TLC han sido designados como servicios esenciales, y los conductores pueden continuar trabajando, transportando pasajeros durante este período.

Nuestras instalaciones en Long Island City están abiertas y operando, pero se ha reducido la capacidad para visitas en persona. Se dará servicio solo a las personas con citas existentes. Si necesita cancelar o reprogramar su cita, siga las instrucciones que se encuentran en el correo electrónico de confirmación de su cita.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o necesita ayuda, podemos responder a sus preguntas de manera remota. Por favor, envíe un correo electrónico a [licensinginquiries@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:licensinginquiries@tlc.nyc.gov).

Las oficinas de OATH permanecen abiertas, pero se están reprogramando las audiencias para todos los que soliciten una nueva fecha de audiencia. Por favor, visite su sitio web para más información. Puede enviar por correo electrónico todas las solicitudes de conciliaciones o acuerdos de multas a [settlements@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:settlements@tlc.nyc.gov).

Nuestras instalaciones de inspección en Woodside permanecen abiertas y en operación. Los propietarios de vehículos con citas existentes deben presentarse a su inspección programada. Si tiene un aviso de violación, debe corregir el defecto y presentarse para una nueva inspección como se indica.

Si desea poner en pausa la licencia de su vehículo por hasta 90 días, visite [bit.ly/fhvstorage](http://bit.ly/fhvstorage).

La Ciudad está buscando a conductores con licencia de TLC para ayudar con trabajos importantes relacionados con el COVID-19, como entregar comida a personas mayores que necesitan quedarse en casa. Por favor, visite [nyc.gov/deliverytlc](http://nyc.gov/deliverytlc) si está interesado, y envíe un correo electrónico a [supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov](mailto:supportnyc@tlc.nyc.gov) si tiene problemas técnicos al iniciar sesión.

Varias entidades de crédito están trabajando con prestatarios de taxis para dejar de cobrar los pagos mensuales o reducirlos. Instamos a todas las entidades de crédito a que tomen medidas para apoyar a los propietarios de taxis. Por favor, contacte a su entidad de crédito para averiguar si es elegible para asistencia durante esta crisis.

La asistencia de la Ciudad está disponible para cualquier residente de Nueva York que la necesite. Por favor, visite el sitio web de HRA para información sobre SNAP (cupones para alimentos), asistencia en efectivo, Medicaid y otros recursos, o llame al 311.

Hemos escuchado informes perturbadores de residentes de Nueva York que han sido víctimas de discriminación en relación con el miedo al coronavirus. Si usted es víctima de discriminación debido a su raza, nacionalidad u otra identidad, denúncielo llamado al 311 y diga "derechos humanos". La Comisión sobre los Derechos Humanos de NYC está aquí para ayudarlo.

Si necesita servicios de salud mental, contacte a NYC Well llamando al 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) o envíe por mensaje de texto la palabra WELL al 65173. Es una línea de ayuda confidencial con consejeros capacitados disponibles todos los días a toda hora para brindar asesoramiento de crisis y conexiones a tratamiento de salud conductual en más de 200 idiomas.

La TLC dedica todos sus esfuerzos para ayudar a los Conductores y Operadores a enfrentar esta crisis. Usted está en la primera línea para tranquilizar a los pasajeros todos los días, brindar un servicio seguro y confiable a medida que el mundo cambia a nuestro alrededor, y estamos agradecidos.

Gracias,  
Comisionada Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk

*Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk is the recently-appointed Commissioner/Chairwoman of the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission.*



## THE FISHBOWL

By LARRY FISHER

# LEAD, FOLLOW OR GET OUT OF THE WAY

I have something in common with Donald Trump. We both lost our grandfathers in the same way around the same time. My grandfather died in the flu epidemic of 1918. He died in the first wave in late 2017, at the age of 44, leaving a family of five children, including my mother, who was then only five weeks old. Trump's grandfather, Friedrich Trump suddenly fell ill in May 1918, and died a day later.

The science of what became known as the "Spanish Flu" is way beyond my pay grade. What is known is that the flu did not emanate from Spain. But, due to minimal journalistic reportage from United States, Germany, United Kingdom and France, while Spain enjoyed relative freedom of the press, the "Spanish Flu" moniker stuck even though it is more likely that the disease emanated from the United Kingdom.

Journalists and politicians have weaponized xenophobia for political purposes for decades. Now, Trump and his minions like to characterize the current pandemic as the "Chinese Virus." The purpose of this racism will not cure the disease or prevent the spread. Nor will attacking journalists. Manipulating the statistics won't ei-

ther. But here we are.

Governor Andrew Cuomo has never been a favorite of mine. Cuomo damaged the taxi industry by allowing the Green Cabs, and then encouraging the proliferation of Uber upstate. His intellect seemed to pale in comparison to his father, Mario. The warmth that is exhibited on a nightly basis on CNN by his brother Chris has been lacking. But, the Governor has risen to the occasion, exhibiting competence, truth telling and warmth. His intellect does not seem to be lacking either. His press conferences during the ramp up of this pandemic rival Rudolph Giuliani's during the aftermath of 9/11. Citizens need to know the truth in order to comply with governmental directives willingly. Moreover, Governor Cuomo is standing behind his actions because he is willing to save lives not the stock market.

As the majority of New Yorkers are compliant, there are many people nationwide who believe themselves to be invulnerable: The youth seen on Florida beaches and in bars on St Patrick's Day are just a couple examples.

Some think the pandemic is a

media invention or hoax, while others say the death rate for young people is very low. Nonetheless, I wouldn't want to be in a hospital now for any reason, whether it be for a broken bone or otherwise. I wouldn't want to contract this virus which turns into pneumonia. The dry cough, the fever, the shortness of breath may not kill you, but you might wish you were dead. And pray that you don't get sick enough to require more advanced remediation in the form of ventilators, which are in extremely short supply.

The empty streets indicate the lack of business for taxi drivers. Traffic may be reduced so driving down second avenue without a fare can be done more quickly. Woo hoo.

The duration of this hardship is uncertain, as is the future of the taxi industry and the city. Until virus testing is more widespread, there is no way of knowing who the spreaders are, especially when they are asymptomatic. They can be frequent taxi users, so be careful when handling money or credit cards. My guess is that the partition never was more appreciated than it is today. Hang tough and we'll all get through this. This is temporary.

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*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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## IATR OUTLOOK

By Matthew W. Daus, Esq.



# HOW TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS CAN SURVIVE the COVID-19 Pandemic & Prepare for Economic Recovery

The public health impact on society and the economic impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on most businesses and on the entire transportation industry has been nothing short of catastrophic, putting it mildly. This new normal is beyond surreal, and our world in general, and the mobility world, will never be the same again. In just a few short days, business dropped to a stand-still and most transportation companies have ceased operations, laid off employees, deactivated drivers, received account and event cancellations or bill collection deferment requests, parked their vehicles on lots, and are struggling to manage cash flow and reduce costs to a trickle in order to live to fight another day.

My heart and prayers are with everyone at this difficult time, and I am here to help in any way that I can. A little more than a week ago, when the government started seriously considering quarantines and lock downs and air travel ceased, the alarm bells starting ringing loudly. The situation became eerily reminiscent of the weeks following 9/11, when I had just taken the helm as Commissioner/Chair/CEO of the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission. Having lived through the 9/11 crisis from a government insider's viewpoint, including the economic aftermath and recovery, there are some similarities. However, this is an entirely new and different threat and disaster that I do not believe anyone ever realistically expected or thought would happen in our lifetimes. The economic repercussions will be felt for a long-time, and may be worse than the Great Recession, 9/11, and Hurricanes Sandy or Katrina combined.

So, what should transportation companies, or whatever is left of them, do to survive? In my view, every company should act on two fronts: (1) take care of your shop, doing what needs to be done to survive temporarily to keep the lights on, even if just dimly lit for now; and (2) reach out to your industry organizations and get involved to fight for relief money as soon as possible.

In terms of internal triaging, the primary objective of transportation businesses right now should be to: ensure the health and safety of employees, drivers and passengers; deploy risk management measures to avoid liability; and to triage policies and business decisions in light of the immediate and impending severe economic impact of this pandemic.

On the outside front, any relief that for-hire regulators can provide is minimal, and a small "band aid" for a large open wound given the dire economic consequences we are facing. The most pressing relief will come from financial aid, including emergency loans and grants, which are intended to help kick the can down the road, until economic life begins anew. These are matters for the federal, state and local governments, and

will only be obtained by aggressive lobbying by trade organizations – which is starting to happen already – and media stories casting a spotlight on our devastated industry – which has not yet happened, but which will soon. This will prompt the legislators to act, and hopefully there will be some money left.

As a transportation lawyer now, I still have that public service mentality, so I have been trying to help the industry any way I can. I thought the best way I could do that immediately would be to hold a comprehensive emergency webinar, where my law firm, Windels Marx, would help transportation companies explore how to mitigate liabilities and risks – or potential lawsuits and disputes – that may inevitably arise many months after we are on the road to recovery, and which could pose setbacks if labor, contracting, insurance, and other issues are not handled properly. The last thing your company needs to be dealing with are the repercussions of acting in haste without counsel, and without keeping our collective cool. Also, the government has not yet issued any comprehensive or specific guidance or protocols for transportation companies, including motorcoach, bus, limousine, black car, livery, taxi, paratransit/NEMT, or other related private modes – as there is mostly a government focus on public transit and air travel right now.

COVID-19 reactions, facts, policies and the true extent of the threat are a constantly moving target, changing day-by-day. Since this is the first time in modern history anything like this has happened, many companies (including transportation providers) did not have contingency plans in place and everyone is making it up as they go along – often, by reacting to news events and official guidance. We seek to fill this information gap through the webinar we held and the informational resources we are making available to everyone for free throughout the crisis. I assembled top experts in multiple areas of legal discipline that work for our Transportation Practice Group that I have chaired for the last 10 years, including the following disciplines: labor and employment, tax, contracts, finance, civil rights, torts and insurance, regulatory and legislative.

The webinar was held on Friday, March 20, 2020, entitled "Emergency Webinar on COVID-19 Transportation Industry Risk Mitigation & Resiliency." We had hundreds of attendees from all over the world, including but not limited to all modes (public transit, taxi, limousine, bus, NEMT, TNC, black car, and transportation industry trade organizations representing all such modes), as well as transportation regulators, the federal government, and universities. We fielded hundreds of questions and have provided counsel to a plethora of clients, friends and colleagues.

The webinar can be viewed for free, on

demand, at this link: <https://bit.ly/3duv3PF>.

In addition to the webinar, we have prepared three documents for transportation industry stakeholders to be used as resources for the coronavirus pandemic:

- COVID-19 Resource Guide for Transportation Companies (<https://bit.ly/3bnV9l8>);
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) by Transportation Companies About COVID-19 (<https://bit.ly/2WHp43N>); and
- COVID-19 Risk Management Checklist for Transportation Companies (<https://bit.ly/39cKRDg>).

Detailed instructions on how to use the above documents were provided during the webinar, during which we fielded extensive questions. Your company or organization is welcome to download and distribute the PowerPoint presentation used during the webinar, the webinar itself and all other materials therein and above. This is the least we can do to help.

Another new initiative I am deploying at Windels Marx are daily transportation news updates relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. This news service provides our friends, clients and colleagues with comprehensive real-time developments that only focus on transportation and mobility impacts. There are few sources out there that are devoted to providing dedicated coverage and developments of all transportation modes and sub-modes, internationally, nationally and locally.

To sign-up for this free news service, please email my Executive Assistant, Kim Ramkishun, at [kramkishun@windels-marx.com](mailto:kramkishun@windels-marx.com).

This article summarizes some of the many topics covered during the two-hour webinar and raises the potential lawsuits or claims and other risks which need to be managed. The below is just a sampling; to probe further I recommend listening to the webinar, reviewing and using the checklists, and if you have any questions or need help, reach out to me directly at [mkaus@windels-marx.com](mailto:mkaus@windels-marx.com) or at 212-237-1106.

## The State of the Industry

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the various sectors of the ground transportation industry particularly hard. Due to the cancellation of major events like March Madness and the suspension of professional sports, limousine service has declined by 85% or more in impacted cities. Corporate black car service is down by three-quarters due to the imposition of travel restrictions and employees working from home. Community car services have lost two-thirds of their business as non-essential trips for shopping, travel or commuting have diminished. With the loss of tourism, taxicab service has

dropped by more than 50%. Some lenders have offered extending due dates for payments on loans to support taxi owners who are necessarily reducing their taxicab lease rates to keep their taxicabs operating.

The decline in business has been seen in the bus and motorcoach industries as well. In some instances, commuter bus services have either been scaled back or suspended. The “safe distance” requirements had already affected ridership. Tour bus companies have suspended services since there is no customer demand. With the shutdown of school districts in impacted areas, school buses are idle. In some districts, however, the operators are still being paid a percentage of their payroll and other expenses based on their contracts. But, this relief is not uniform in all school districts. For non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) operators, the story is largely the same. Business is down by one-half across the nation. Government contracts have provided some business, but the reduction of non-essential trips has impacted the industry. In addition, national and regional NEMT brokers have canceled shared rides. With the reductions in the number of overall trips, the “pie” has shrunk further and taxicabs and other for-hire vehicles that contract to provide trips have seen their services evaporate.

In addition to transportation providers, the pandemic has impacted the vehicle leasing and rental industry. Rental reservations at airports are down dramatically and cancellations are at unprecedented levels. Rental companies normally purchase 1.75 million each year, but the industry leaders are already predicting that they will reconsider future purchases as their fleets are underutilized. In response, the large vehicle rental companies have joined together to ask Congress to treat the industry with the same consideration as the airline industry for any financial relief. The companies are seeking relief from minimum airport payments from those airports that receive federal funding. In addition to government support, the larger fleet owners are seeking to reduce their payments to lenders through loan workouts.

#### **Labor & Employment Liability & Civil/Consumer Rights Risks Worker Classification Lawsuits & Labor Department Enforcement**

Each state differs in how independent contractors are classified and have standards to determine if the purported employer is exercising control over the drivers. For example, in New York, the determination of whether an employer-employee relationship exists turns on whether the alleged employer exercises control over the method or means by which the worker performs the job. No single factor is determinative, and courts will examine all factors relevant to assessing the degree of control exercised by the purported employer. One factor the courts look at is whether the employer provides equipment or supplies for the worker to use to perform the work. To avoid worker classification issues, businesses whose

drivers are independent contractors should allow drivers to be absent from work without prior permission. Businesses should review the independent contractor agreements. If they do not have such agreements, the businesses should utilize such agreements.

#### **Civil Rights, Employment Discrimination & Consumer Laws**

The New York City Human Rights law makes it illegal for a TLC-licensed driver to refuse service because of a passenger’s actual or perceived “race, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, disability, marital status, partnership status, sexual orientation, uniformed service or alienage or citizenship status.” New York’s General Business Law § 396-r prohibits “unconscionably excessive prices” for essential goods and services during an “abnormal disruption of the market” or other cause of an abnormal disruption of the market

requiring employee contributions to benefit costs. As alternatives to layoffs, businesses could assess whether expected job attrition will address the organization’s needs or permit affected employees to transfer to other vacant positions within the organization to address departmental budgetary issues. Businesses may consider furloughing employees. Furloughs allow for cash savings, while providing the impacted employees with access to benefits. Furloughs are a temporary remedy that allows for fast re-hiring when circumstances improve and also maintains some level of employee morale.

When necessary, layoffs should be appropriately planned. Ordinarily, the WARN Act would require advance notice. In circumstances such as this with the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a strong argument that exceptions to the notice requirement apply. Businesses may consider first terminating employees with substan-



which results in the declaration of a state of emergency by the governor.” Transportation providers should review their policies and pricing guidelines to ensure compliance with such anti-discrimination laws, or any provisions enacted during emergencies.

#### **Layoffs**

Transportation businesses in all sectors are facing the immense economic pressure to “downsize” their workforce as they reduce services to meet the diminished ridership demands. Before deciding upon a reduction in the workforce, employers should consider whether other, less problematic, measures would achieve the necessary savings. These may include hiring freezes, salary freezes, elimination of discretionary bonuses, or reductions in work hours with proportionate pay cuts. Employers may also consider reducing or eliminating certain fringe benefits and re-

standard performance grades, terminating recently-hired employees during introductory periods before benefits are awarded, or terminating temporary and part-time workers, transferring their duties to existing full-time employees. Finally, to avoid company-wide layoffs, some employers devise early retirement programs or request volunteers for separation with incentives to encourage acceptance such as enhanced severance benefits. Although less drastic, such actions present their own legal complexities and demand appropriate planning to achieve the desired savings and avoid the pitfalls associated with standard layoffs. Care should be given to avoid discriminatory layoffs, including both intentional and unintentional disparate treatment. Severance, in exchange for a release, is recommended.

#### **Negligence and Tort Liability Mitigation and Insurance Coverage Issues**

Continued from page 25

### **Potential Liability to Customers, Clients & Contractors**

Businesses that have contact with the general public could be targets of claims that their negligence led to a contract worker, customer, or client's exposure to an infection of COVID-19. In the case of a virus, there may be a duty to warn such third parties, or to prevent access to certain facility areas or vehicles. To reduce risk of liability, companies should identify risk levels in their business settings and determine appropriate control measures to implement to address the specific exposure risks, including staying up-to-date and following guidelines established for employers by the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Transportation companies may protect themselves against potential claims for the above-referenced actions in a variety of ways, including 1) following guidelines established by WHO, CDC, and OSHA to protect against exposure to the virus; 2) developing an infectious disease preparedness response plan that considers and addresses the risk level of the worksite and job tasks; 3) ensuring employees implement basic infection prevention measures; and 4) performing routine environmental cleaning. Businesses should review their emergency operations to determine what procedures and coordination are designated for a pandemic, and there are detailed items on the Windels Marx Checklist to do so.

### **Workers' Compensation Claims**

While "ordinary diseases of life" (i.e., those to which the general public is equally exposed) are generally excluded from workers' compensation insurance programs, if an employee can establish a direct causal connection to the workplace, there may be a valid argument for workers' compensation insurance coverage. To the extent that other claims for employee-related coronavirus illness do not qualify for workers' compensa-

tion benefits, coverage might still be afforded under certain insurance policies. Business should review their insurance policies for relevant provisions.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Transportation providers may have insurance coverage addressing business interruption or other claims from employees or customers related to the COVID-19 emergency. Businesses interested in proactively managing their exposure should review their existing policies and confer with their broker to evaluate the adequacy of existing coverage and review the types of policies that may exist to provide coverage for coronavirus and other infectious disease related losses.

### **Contractual Liabilities Amid the COVID-19 Crisis**

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised questions as to whether the outbreak and ensuing government restrictions will excuse non-performance of otherwise binding contracts. Changing COVID-19 developments impact a party's ability to potentially excuse contractual nonperformance through multiple legal theories, including without limitation, force majeure provisions. The results will depend on the contractual language, the state law governing the contract, and purpose of the contract.

### **Force Majeure Provisions**

Force majeure clauses can excuse a party's nonperformance under a contract when extraordinary events prevent a party from fulfilling its contractual obligations. As defined by the leading treatise on contracts, a force majeure clause provides a means by which the parties may anticipate, in advance, a condition that will make performance impracticable. When parties find that their contracts are silent on the force majeure issue, parties should assess alternative common law mechanisms for excuse of non-performance. In the present circumstances, impossibility of performance via various government declarations would enable a viable

argument that performance was rendered impossible "by law." As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to develop, businesses should take proactive steps to ensure continuity of operations sufficient to meet existing contractual obligations and evaluate whether their counterparties are doing the same. There are potentially multiple grounds to excuse non-performance due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing government actions, which requires particular examination of the contractual language and the case law of the relevant jurisdiction.

### **Transportation Related Legislation, Rules and Emergency Declarations FMCSA**

On March 13, 2020, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued an Emergency Declaration exempting commercial drivers assisting in COVID-19 relief efforts from hours-of-service regulations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). The declaration covers the transportation of passengers designated by government authorities for medical, isolation, or quarantine purposes and persons necessary to provide medical or emergency services. With regard to the electronic logging device rule, since the hours-of-service rules do not apply when operating under declaration of emergency issued under 49 CFR 390.23, drivers/fleets do not have to maintain a record of duty status. However, for future reference, drivers should explain the activity in the log "remarks" section without completing the detailed grid.

### **State & Local Emergency Orders and Regulations**

Are Transportation Company Employees/Drivers Essential Workers? New York Governor Andrew Cuomo directed that all businesses and not-for-profit entities implement, to the maximum extent possible, any telecommuting or work from home policies and ordered all businesses to reduce the number of employees who show up to the workplace by various percentages. All em-



ployers in the state were ordered to reduce the in-person workforce at any work locations by 100% no later than March 22 at 8:00pm. Similar orders have been issued by the governors of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania. All but Louisiana consider transportation providers essential services exempt from the restrictions. Transportation providers should review any relevant state emergency orders and local travel restrictions for guidance and disseminate those operational parameters to drivers and customers.

**Group or Shared Ride Bans:** On March 17, 2020, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio signed an executive order (No. 101) banning all pooled ridesharing. The ban remains in effect for 5 days unless extended. The ban applies only to those who would not otherwise be riding together but are traveling on the same route. The only exception is for paratransit. Uber and Lyft had announced earlier that same day that they would be suspending those services. Given the concerns with spreading the coronavirus, transportation providers in other localities may expect similar restrictions, and should consult and disseminate shared ride or other restrictions included in such emergency orders.

**For-Hire Vehicle Plates in Storage:** On March 19, 2020, the NYC TLC announced that, effective immediately, the agency will allow For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) owners to place their TLC Vehicle License(s) in storage for up to 90 days. The “pause” for operating these FHVs during this time is critical since there is a cap on the issuance of FHV licenses in place. The execution of the TLC Industry Notice will still require additional procedural adjustments given that the suspension of the FHV license for 90 days contemplates in-person appearances at the TLC and the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles. Transportation providers will need to monitor updates from their regulatory agencies for compliance as “normal” regulations are suspended or modified, and signing up for our e-mail distribution list for COVID-19 Transportation Updates will get you the latest on this and other news from regulators.

#### Grants, Financial Relief and Assistance

In this crisis, transportation businesses have seen immense business disruption. For these stakeholders, relief is being “rolled out” and expanded at the federal, state, and

local level.

#### Government Assistance

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has funds available for small businesses in states affected by COVID-19. The program offers up to \$2 million in low-interest loans to small businesses. In NYC, the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) has a program to provide relief for small businesses seeing a reduction in revenue because of COVID-19. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees may be eligible for zero-interest loans of up to \$75,000. Businesses with fewer than five employees may receive a grant to cover 40% of payroll costs for two months to help retain employees, up to \$27,000 per business.

#### Tax Payment Deferral

On March 20, 2020, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced that the deadline for filing taxes for “all American and businesses” would be extended to July 15, 2020. Some states have already extended the tax filing and payment deadlines as well. Additional tax relief and updates may be included in the stimulus package that is being considered by Congress.

#### Tax Credits for Paid FMLA and Sick Leave and Grant of \$1 Billion Dollars for Emergency Unemployment Insurance (Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201))

On March 18, 2020, the President signed into the law the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201). The Act provides refundable tax credits for employers providing paid sick leave or paid FMLA as required by the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. In the case of gig workers and others who are self-employed, the Act provides a similar refundable credit against the self-employment tax.

#### Industry Support – Lobbying Efforts & Programs

**The Push for Financial Aid by National Industry Trade Groups:** A number of ground transportation associations have formed a coalition to coordinate efforts for action by the federal government that is germane to this industry. Thus far, the coalition includes The Transportation Alliance, American Bus Association, Global Business Travel Association, United Motorcoach Association, Near Airport Parking Industry Trade Association, and National Limousine Associa-

tion. The Coalition wants the transportation industry deemed a national “essential service” and seeks \$12 billion in immediate cash grants and additional financial support for fleet operators as key items for action by Congress.

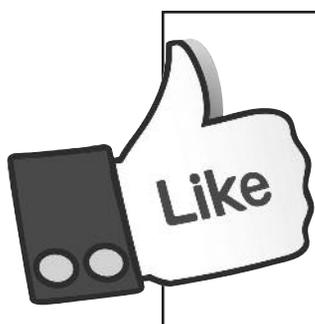
**NY Black Car Fund Benefits:** In addition to these government programs and industry organization efforts, support is available from the industry itself. For example, black car drivers in New York are eligible for telemedicine – a critical public health resource during this particular crisis – paid for by The Black Car Fund as part of its Driver Wellness Program. Drivers and their families can consult with a doctor for a non-emergency consultation by phone, secure online video, or through the MDLIVE App (<https://driversbenefits.org/benefits/drivers-telemedicine/>). Trade associations and other non-government organizations may expand available resources and business operators should review the member pages for resources and information sharing.

#### Our Path Forward... United Together!

Although the information I have included herein is current as of this writing, the past few weeks have shown that the state of the government relief programs, restrictions on travel, and the economic downturn during this pandemic are shifting rapidly. It is highly likely that the number of positive coronavirus cases will be significantly higher than the approximately 43,963 cases in the U.S. now. The coming days and months are going to be very difficult for everyone. We will all get through this together, united in purpose and resolve, and we will recover stronger than before. We need to make “resilience” our middle name, and keep optimistic for your employees, drivers and family.

Do not lose hope. Remember: This will end! It is just a matter of time. Most of all, please know that our prayers and best wishes are with all of you and your families to stay safe and healthy. Godspeed!

*Professor Matthew W. Daus, Esq. is President, International Association of Transportation Regulators (<http://iatr.global/>); Transportation Technology Chair, City University of New York, Transportation Research Center at The City College of New York (<http://www.utrc2.org/>); and Partner and Chairman, Windels Marx Transportation Practice Group (<http://windelsmarx.com>). He can be reached at [mdaus@windelsmarx.com](mailto:mdaus@windelsmarx.com) or 212.237.1106.*



**TAXI & LIVERY  
TIMES**

*An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries*

**FOR BREAKING NEWS!**



# THE TAXI ATTORNEY



By MICHAEL SPEVACK

Hello everybody... This month, I want to talk about what to do if you are pulled over for a traffic ticket. I have been fighting traffic tickets since 1995 for professional drivers and it never ceases to amaze me that drivers feel that they can talk their way out of an “undeserved” summons by simply reasoning with the police officer.

Let me tell you right now. If an officer pulls you over, he or she believes that you did something wrong. The officer WILL NOT listen to you in the vast, vast majority of cases. In some cases, the officer may take offense at your behavior and give you more tickets or seek to arrest you for failing to cooperate with an officer.

What is my point in telling you this? Simple. When an officer pulls you over, be quiet and listen to do what the officer tells you to do. Do not argue. Do not attempt to be funny. Do not attempt to run away. Do not make yourself memo-

rable. In my opinion the best strategy to get a ticket dismissed is to be “forgettable” during a traffic stop. **DO NOTHING THAT MAKES AN OFFICER REMEMBER YOUR TRAFFIC STOP.**

Simply comply with the officer’s requests. If they want your license, rate card or reggy, give it to them. If they tell you to open your glove compartment, open it. If they ask if you know why you were pulled over, simply say “I have no idea.”

Let your favorite lawyer or representative help you in court to convince a judge that the ticket should be dismissed. It is far better to write down why you think you are innocent at the time of the stop then to argue with the officer about why you have been stopped.

Take your notes to your lawyer or representative and explain your side of the case to them as soon as you get a chance. This is helpful to the lawyer.

Sometimes, if the officer forgets you, the judge will dismiss this case because of incomplete recollection or no independent recollection.

Be safe and smart if stopped for a traffic ticket and be quiet and polite and do what the officer instructs you to do. It may just be your best defense.

Thank you for reading this article. Until next month, be well.

*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.*

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# DEFENSIVE DRIVING

## APRIL BRINGS SHOWERS AND POTHOLES

By BERTRAM MERLING

### April Showers Bring Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning, which can be extremely dangerous, occurs when a thin sheet of water gets between your tires and the road. It can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

- If your car feels like it is gliding out of control, get a good grip on your steering wheel. Take your foot off the gas pedal. Do not stomp on the brake pedal, let the car slow down by itself. This will help prevent skidding and will assist you in regaining control of your vehicle.
- Always control and adjust your speed according to road and weather conditions.
- It's essential to increase the space between you and the car in front of you. The distance and time required to safely stop your vehicle on a wet and slippery surface increases dramatically.
- New York State Law requires headlights in all inclement weather.

- Keep your distance.
- Slow down, control your speed. Avoid fast accelerations.
- Go easy on the brakes.
- All moves should be slow and deliberate.
- Be extra cautious on bridges and exit ramps.

### Pedestrian Accidents

All vehicles must yield to all pedestrians at all times and locations. In NYC, millions of pedestrians cross intersections daily, at all hours of the day and night.

- Avoid frightening or angering pedestrians by blowing your horn or moving at an excessive speed towards them. These actions can lead to someone banging on the hood of your vehicle or falling down and making a fraudulent claim.
- Always call the police and make a report if you are involved in an incident or an accident with a pedestrian. Do not leave the scene or you can be arrested, even if you know your vehicle did not make contact with them.

- Always anticipate unsafe acts by pedestrians observed talking on a phone, conversing with another pedestrian, eating, listening to headphones or just not paying attention to their surroundings while crossing an intersection.
- Use extra caution if pedestrians are senior citizens. Their hearing and vision may be impaired.
- Always anticipate pedestrians crossing in between double-parked vehicles.
- Beware of pedestrians jaywalking in front of a bus loading passengers.
- Please use extra caution as it begins to get dark out. Visibility is diminished and it takes time for your eyes to adjust to the change.

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*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](mailto:bmerling@herefordinsurance.com)*

### In Slippery Conditions

## NEWS

## NYC PUBLIC ADVOCATE TO RIDERS: USE LEGIT COMMUTER VANS

Public Advocate Jumaane Williams announced in March he is working with the New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) to help New Yorkers discern between licensed and unlicensed commuter van drivers, in the name of safety. Without regulations from the city, unlicensed “dollar van” operators could pose a danger to their passengers and others going about their lives, according to Williams.

It is believed the shady services far outnumber certified vans, causing confusion among the public and stripping legal drivers of essential income. Williams hopes the TLC will increase enforcement of laws set in place to protect the public, which could result in fines for those operating without a license, according to Williams.

“We’re asking people who use the vans, that have no other choice for transportation to get to work, to look for stick-

ers, check the license plate and to look for the New York City commuter van logo,” Williams said. “We want everybody to make a living, I know the gentlemen who are driving probably woke up trying to figure out how to feed their family. We know that, which is why we have the capacity to bring other vans online in a legal way.”

Winston Williams, who owns Blackstreet Van Lines, said competition in Flatbush on Utica Avenue is tough and estimated that drivers who are licensed are outnumbered by up to ten to one.

“A lot of [the unlicensed vehicles] are Pennsylvania or out of state plates and not carrying the right insurance or the drivers may not be licensed properly to operate the vehicles in the way they’re using them. The unfortunate thing about it is they’ve overshadowed the authorized commuter vans.”

According to Winston Williams, the

cost to go legitimate as a commuter van operator is only about \$500 and the public advocate said previous legislation passed while he was in City Council that provides a pathway for drivers to gain approval from the TLC.

“The TLC takes this issue seriously, and we look forward to working with Public Advocate Williams to deepen these critical efforts together,” TLC Chair Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk stated.

For approval, an application must go through the TLC first and then to the city Department of Transportation for approval after a series of meetings and judgements, Williams said.

According to the proprietor of Blackstreet, one deterrent to van services taking the legal route could be the cost of insurance, which he says has been on the rise.

*Source: amNY*

## ACCESS-A-RIDE CARRIER SHUTTERING AFTER LOSING MTA CONTRACT

CareRide, one of the MTA’s carriers for its popular e-hail Access-a-Ride program, will shutter this summer and lay off its entire staff. The Ridgewood-based company filed a worker adjustment and retraining notification with the Department of Labor March 3, announcing it will lay off 221 employees because the MTA did not renew its contract, which expires May 31.

Julian Gonzales, director of human resources at CareRide, said they lost the business because the company was “out-

bid.” Layoffs will affect mostly drivers but also include support staff, office personnel and management, Gonzales said.

The 11-year-old company currently provides transportation to residents with disabilities or health conditions that prevent them from using public buses and subways through the MTA’s Access-a-Ride program.

The program will go through major changes this year, doubling the number of participants but limiting the number of trips to 16 per month and capping their

per-ride subsidy at \$15.

New York City Transit awarded a three-year, \$116.5 million contract to Curb Mobility last year, which operates credit-card-payment and e-hailing technology for about 7,000 yellow cabs and 3,000 green cabs.

The MTA declined to comment on who outbid CareRide but did say the agency redid its Access-a-Ride contracts, as it does periodically, to ensure competition.

*Source: Crain’s New York Business*



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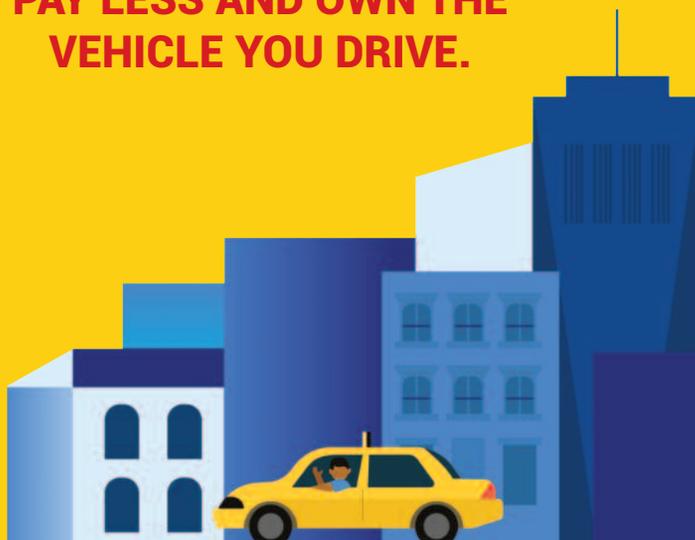
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## NEWS

## MORE SPEED CAMERAS COMING TO STATEN ISLAND

Yellow ribbons are wrapped around utility poles all over Staten Island, a signal to drivers that they are entering a speed camera zone. Staten Island resident Scott Nicholls started the Facebook group "Staten Island Speed Cameras," which is behind the effort. It comes after the state and city approved a huge increase in the number of speed cameras citywide – from 140 to 750 nearly two years ago.

More than 80 of the cameras are on Staten Island. The Facebook group keeps a running list of the locations in the borough and asks members to identify any new sites. It also asks members to mark the actual camera zones with a yellow ribbon.

Under the new law, cameras can be placed anywhere within a quarter-mile of a school. Previously, the cameras only could be placed on a street where a school is located. The cameras generated more than \$10 million in fines across the city this past January alone.

City Councilman Steve Matteo has proposed legislation that would require the city to post signs alerting drivers to the camera-enforced speed zones. A hearing on his bill has not been scheduled. Traffic safety advocates call Matteo's proposal unnecessary. The city's Department of Transportation (DOT) says the cameras work, deterring speeding wherever they're installed.

The cameras record an average of 104 speeding violations a day in the first month after installation. After 18 months at the same location, the number of violations falls to an average of 35 a day – a decline of nearly 70%, according to the DOT.

*Source: NY1*

## WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FHV DRIVER ROBBERY

A New Brighton resident, who was accused of attacking a For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) driver after leaving a Mariners Harbor bar 16 months ago, pled guilty in March to a robbery charge, which will put her behind bars for up to three years. Jamyra Taylor, 25, was charged with robbery, assault, grand larceny, petit larceny and criminal mischief in connection with the Nov. 3, 2018, incident.

The victim, a 35-year-old man, told police he was driving a 2018 white Toyota when he picked up three women from a Mariners Harbor tavern. The driver started driving toward Taylor's Prospect Avenue home when a dispute arose regarding the destination, the complaint said.

The driver stopped his car around 11:30pm on Goethals Road North, near the Goethals Bridge, after the women sitting in the passenger and rear seats punched him in the head and body, according to the criminal complaint and police.

The women also bashed the driver in the head with his own metal thermos and snatched \$350 from the center console of his car, the complaint said. When the victim stepped out of the cab and tried to call the police, the suspects threw his cell phone on the ground, rendering it unusable. The suspects allegedly kicked and dented the victim's vehicle before fleeing.

Taylor pleaded guilty March 2, in state Supreme Court, St. George, to third-degree robbery to satisfy all charges against her. In exchange, she'll be sentenced April 13 to one to three years in prison.

*Source: silive.com*

## GOOD SAMARITANS CATCH VAN DRIVER WHO FLED ACCIDENT SCENE

A "dollar van" driver tried to run from the scene after plowing into a bicyclist in Brooklyn on March 7, only to be chased down and held for cops by good Samaritans, police said. The woman cyclist was turning from Avenue U onto Flatbush Avenue in Marine Park at around 5:15pm,

when she was hit. She was sent flying and her bike was left mangled under the van's rear wheels, police said.

The 42-year-old driver ditched the van, but witnesses tackled him a block away and held him until police arrived. He was taken to the 63rd Precinct station house.

The woman was taken to the hospital in critical condition, bleeding, with a cracked skull.

The van had Pennsylvania plates, not licensed by the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission.

*Source: New York Post*

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**FOR  
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# TAXI AND FOR-HIRE VEHICLE RELIEF STANDS

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

## QUEENS

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

## BRONX

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

## BROOKLYN

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



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