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TAXI & LIVERY

TIMES

An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries

POST-PANDEMIC SURGE BRINGS OPPORTUNITY TO TRADITIONAL TAXI AND LIVERY COMPANIES



LA OLA POSPANDÉMICA BRINDA OPORTUNIDADES A LAS EMPRESAS TRADICIONALES DE TAXIS Y VEHÍCULOS DE ALQUILER

PRICE GOUGING AS PANDEMIC ENDS

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- BY STEVEN J. SHANKER, ESQ.

FHV DRIVER KILLED BY SUSPECTED DRUNK



EDITOR'S NOTES

SEIZE THE MOMENT

We live in strange and tumultuous times. The pandemic has taken New York City's already-chaotic transportation industry, shaken it up like a bag of Scrabble tiles, and emptied it back into the streets – giving traditional Livery and Taxi companies a chance to regain some of the ground lost over the past decade.

In May, a Ford Motor Company executive named Sunny Madra Tweeted about a 20-minute Uber ride from Midtown to JFK Airport that cost him \$248.90, due to “surge pricing” – just \$13.50 less than his cross-country flight to San Francisco. Every time that happens... every time there's a no-show... every time some rookie who was lured by empty promises, hoping to earn a quick buck gets lost on his way to a destination, it's an opportunity for traditional Livery and Taxi services, and the drivers who perform their work, to win back riders.

There are no easy roads back to “normal,” but it's more important than ever for drivers who want a better future to show their customers what it's like to ride in a vehicle driven by a professional, who knows the streets of NYC so well that their GPS is just a backup to help steer them around traffic, who can offer real advice to tourists looking for a place to eat or a sight to see.

New Yorkers know the deal by now. They've read the news. They know about the devastation wrought on the industry and the tremendous pain felt by drivers and base owners, and they want to do the right thing.

High-Volume For-Hire Vehicle (HVFHV) bases like Uber and Lyft aren't going anywhere – it's silly at this point to wish otherwise – but a lot of people WANT to go back to hailing an iconic NYC Yellow Taxi or returning to their traditional Car Service. Meanwhile, drivers that work for HVFHV companies are caught in a Catch-22. If too many of them flood back to their base chasing surge pricing fares, they'll end up back where they started: There will be too many cars on the road, rates will tumble back down, and everyone will suffer.

Despite the fact that the city reached herd immunity (more than 70% vaccinated) and the mayor's claims that NYC is “fully open,” people are still hesitant to go out as often as they once did, some executives are still working from home, and business may not fully rebound for some time. But there is a lot more work to be had. In fact, the local airports, the Port Authority and Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) have taken steps to alert drivers when more vehicles are needed – including sending regular updates through the taxi network's internal messaging system and creating Twitter feeds to post information about airport hold lots, where cabs wait to be dispatched to a terminal.

APROVECHAR EL MOMENTO

Vivimos tiempos extraños y convulsionados. La pandemia se ha apoderado de la ya caótica industria del transporte de la ciudad de Nueva York, la ha sacudido como una coctelera y la ha devuelto vacía a las calles, dando a las empresas tradicionales de taxis y vehículos de alquiler la oportunidad de recuperar parte del terreno perdido durante la última década.

En mayo, un ejecutivo de Ford Motor Company llamado Sunny Madra tuiteó sobre un viaje en Uber de 20 minutos desde Midtown al aeropuerto JFK que le costó \$ 248.90, debido al “aumento variable de tarifas”, solo \$ 13.50 menos que su vuelo de costa a costa hasta San Francisco. Cada vez que eso sucede... cada vez que un vehículo no se presenta... cada vez que un novato atraído por promesas vacías, con la esperanza de ganar dinero rápido, se pierde en su camino a un destino, es una oportunidad para los servicios tradicionales de vehículos de alquiler y de taxis, y los conductores que realizan su trabajo, para recuperar pasajeros.

No hay caminos fáciles para volver a la “normalidad”, pero es más importante que nunca que los conductores que desean un futuro mejor muestren a sus clientes cómo es viajar en un vehículo conducido por un profesional, que conoce las calles de Nueva York tan bien que su GPS es solo un respaldo para ayudarlos a evitar el tráfico, quienes pueden ofrecer consejos valederos a los turistas que buscan un lugar para comer o un sitio para ver.

Los neoyorquinos ya saben cómo es por ahora. Han leído las noticias. Saben de la devastación que sufrió la industria y del tremendo dolor que sienten los conductores y propietarios de bases, y quieren hacer lo correcto.

Los vehículos de alquiler con grandes volúmenes de viajes (*High Volume For-Hire Vehicle Services, HVFHV*) como Uber y Lyft no se van a ir; a esta altura es una tontería desear lo contrario, pero mucha gente QUIERE volver a llamar a un icónico taxi amarillo de Nueva York o regresar a su tradicional servicio de automóvil. Mientras tanto, los conductores que trabajan para empresas HVFHV están atrapados en un círculo vicioso. Si muchos de ellos regresan a su base buscando tarifas de aumento variable, terminarán donde comenzaron: Habrá demasiados autos en la carretera, las tarifas volverán a desplomarse y todos sufrirán.

Pese a que la ciudad alcanzó la inmunidad colectiva o “de rebaño” (más del 70 % de personas vacunadas) y a las afirmaciones del alcalde de que la ciudad de Nueva York está “completamente abierta”, la gente todavía duda en salir con tanta frecuencia como antes, algunos ejecutivos todavía trabajan desde su casa, y es posible que el negocio no se recupere completamente durante algún tiempo. Pero hay mucho más trabajo por hacer. De hecho, los aeropuertos locales, la Autoridad Portuaria y la Comisión de Taxis y Limusinas (Taxi and Limousine Commission, TLC) han tomado medidas para alertar a los conductores cuando se necesiten más vehículos, incluido el envío de actualizaciones periódicas a través del sistema de mensajes internos de la red de taxis y la creación de tuits para publicar información sobre las áreas de espera del aeropuerto, donde los taxis aguardan ser despachados a una terminal.

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The following are actual Tweets from JFK's holding lot and the TLC:

JFK Taxi Hold Lot Supply

6/11/21, 1:07 PM: Drivers wait time at the CTH is 58 minutes and there are approximately 105 spaces available. We anticipate over 14,000 arriving passengers between 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Passenger activity is considered high. You can also call the CTH Hotline at 1-800-695-0201.

6/13/21, 5:07 AM: CTH hold lot has approximately 300 spaces available. There are approximately 7,307 passengers arriving between 5:00 am and 9:00 am. Passenger activity is considered high. You can also call the CTH Hotline at 1-800-695-0201.

NYC TLC

6/12/21, 11:00 AM: Taxis are needed at Moynihan Train Hall in Manhattan on 31st Street between 8th and 9th Avenues. Moynihan Train Hall serves all Amtrak passengers entering and departing NYC, as well as many LIRR passengers.

6/12/21, 1:00 PM: Flights are increasing at LaGuardia and JFK Airport, per @PANYNJ. More yellow taxis are needed at JFK Airport from 5:00-7:00 pm and at LGA Airport from 5:00-10:00 pm.

According to a New York Times article, in mid-June there were about 6,000 cabs on the road, "up from 2,200 in April 2020, at the pandemic's height," the article noted. "[But] that represents fewer than half of the total pool of 13,500 medallions."

Travelers are complaining there aren't enough Taxis and Tweeting about being gouged by HVFHV companies. Livery bases and Taxi companies are desperately searching for drivers to cover the work that has started to pour in. I just hope this opportunity isn't squandered. The industry is already teetering on the edge.

I commend, and I am genuinely thankful for the recent efforts by the TLC and the Port Authority, but I would really like to see the city do more. They have promised millions of dollars to assist struggling Taxi medallion owners, with a program that seems insufficient and doesn't appear to be particularly well thought out. How about helping drivers and medallion owners earn a better living by spending some money educating consumers, by promoting apps that drive business to traditional companies. This is an opportunity for the city to truly help an industry that is struggling, that it failed to protect. Do more. Please.

Los siguientes son tuits reales del área de espera del aeropuerto JFK y la TLC:

Información del área de espera de taxis de JFK

11/6/21, 1:07 p. m.: El tiempo de espera de los conductores en el área central de espera de taxis (CTH) es de 58 minutos y hay aproximadamente 105 espacios disponibles. Anticipamos que llegarán más de 14,000 pasajeros entre la 1:00 p. m. y las 6:00 p. m. La actividad de los pasajeros se considera alta. También puede llamar a la línea directa de CTH al 1-800-695-0201.

13/6/21, 5:07 a. m.: El área de espera CTH tiene aproximadamente 300 espacios disponibles. Entre las 5:00 a. m y las 9:00 a. m. llegan aproximadamente 7,307 pasajeros. La actividad de los pasajeros se considera alta. También puede llamar a la línea directa de CTH al 1-800-695-0201.

TLC de la ciudad de Nueva York

12/06/2021, 11:00 a. m.: Se necesitan taxis en Moynihan Train Hall en Manhattan en 31st Street entre las avenidas 8th y 9th. Moynihan Train Hall acoge a todos los pasajeros de la red estatal interurbana de trenes de pasajeros (Amtrak) que llegan y parten de la ciudad de Nueva York, así como a muchos pasajeros del Ferrocarril de Long Island (LIRR).

12/06/2021, 1:00 p. m.: Los vuelos están aumentando en los aeropuertos LaGuardia y JFK, según @PANYNJ. Se necesitan más taxis amarillos en el aeropuerto JFK de 5:00 a 7:00 p. m. y en el aeropuerto LGA de 5:00 a 10:00 p. m.

Según un artículo publicado en el New York Times a mediados de junio, había alrededor de 6.000 taxis en la carretera, "en comparación con los 2200 que circulaban en abril de 2020, en el punto álgido de la pandemia". "[Pero] eso representa menos de la mitad del total de 13,500 licencias".

Los pasajeros se quejan de que no hay suficientes taxis y tuitean que son estafados por las empresas de HVFHV. Las bases de vehículos de alquiler y las empresas de taxis buscan desesperadamente conductores para cubrir el trabajo que ha comenzado a llegar. Solo espero que esta oportunidad no se desperdicie. La industria ya está al borde del abismo.

Felicito y estoy realmente agradecido por los esfuerzos recientes de la TLC y la Autoridad Portuaria, pero realmente me gustaría que la ciudad hiciera más. Prometieron millones de dólares para ayudar a los propietarios de licencias de taxis en dificultades, con un programa que parece ser insuficiente y no estar particularmente bien pensado. ¿Qué tal si ayudan a los conductores y propietarios de licencias a incrementar sus ingresos gastando algo de dinero en educar a los consumidores, mediante la promoción de aplicaciones que dirijan los negocios a las empresas tradicionales? Esta es una oportunidad para que la ciudad realmente ayude a una industria agobiada a la que no logró proteger. Hagan más. Por favor.



FROM WHERE I SIT



PRICE GOUGING AS THE PANDEMIC ENDS

BY "TAXI DAVE" POLLACK

As seasoned New Yorkers, it is rare when someone, something, or even an international corporation can pull the wool over our eyes to be taken advantage of. Yet sadly, I was totally screwed by a car rental company.

Everyone has heard of car rental companies such as Hertz, Budget, Enterprise, National, Alamo, Thrifty, Dollar and Avis, but few have heard of SIXT. SIXT is the newest in the United States but has been around longer than most of the above. They are a high-end car rental company, usually renting cars like Mercedes, and BMW at prices similar to the other companies... at least they used to be.

About two months ago, the national media spoke about a real shortage of rental cars at airports as the pandemic was winding down and that more people would be renting cars at major airports around the country. Apparently, during the pandemic, the media explained that all car rental companies were selling off major portions of their vehicle fleets, as opposed to letting them sit idle. This made perfect sense to me – so instead of waiting, my knee-jerk reactors kicked in and I went online that evening to secure a car rental.

We have not seen our grandchildren in Florida for about 16 months, so I figured

I would splurge by paying about \$100 (including all taxes or so I believed) a day for a very nice car. In all transparency, SIXT prices were about 25% higher than the others, but there were never any long lines, and the vehicle was a Mercedes, so I figured "what the heck."

This amount was without their insurance, which they try very hard to guilt you into paying for. As a former insurance broker, I know my private car insurance company, Allstate, covers virtually everything on any rental car. Their hard-core insurance sales pitch, with virtually every text, drove me crazy, but I did not yield to their tactics.

All communications must be done online, so I booked a car for four days on my cell phone. When I got my confirmation, the bill was for over \$600! Looking closer, they were charging me for five days, apparently because my return time on a Tuesday, was an hour later than the pickup time on Friday. I also thought \$125 a day was ridiculous.

We went back and forth with texts, as I told them how I wanted to be charged for four days, and I would make my pickup time on Friday the same time as my return time on Tuesday. They said NO! So, I asked SIXT to then give me a five-day car rental, meaning I would pick the car

up on Thursday in Florida at 12:30, and I would return it at 12:30 on Tuesday.

They agreed, but in the few hours that passed, they told me that their prices went up, and I would now have to pay an additional \$116 for my five-day rental. I had enough, I told them to cancel the entire rental, figuring I would go to another car rental company. They then told me **MY CANCELLATION FEE WOULD BE \$346!!!** I kept the five-day reservation.

On Thursday in Florida, I picked up my car at about 2:00 instead of 12:30. I thought that meant I could bring my car rental back at 2:00 on Tuesday. **WRONG.** If I brought the car back after 12:30 on Tuesday I would be charged for yet another full day! What a scam.

I brought the car back at 12:29 Tuesday, even though my flight was scheduled to take off at 3:45. For a five-day rental, my cost was \$712, about 50% higher than other car rental companies... and that's without any of their insurance!

In my opinion they totally take advantage of the public. Some would call this price gauging. I believe their tactics and rules are those of predators and do not serve the best interests of the people of the United States.

NOW HEAR THIS: DO NOT EVER RENT A CAR FROM SIXT!

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. He encourages people with comments or questions to reach out to him, and each month we publish those letters, comments and photos.



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

MORE TAXIS NEEDED AT AREA AIRPORTS!

“Flights have increased at LaGuardia and JFK Airports, and more Yellow Taxis are needed for arriving passengers, particularly in evenings, per @PANYNJ. Please visit @lgataxi and @TaxiJFK to check capacity at the hold lot, and the number of Taxis recently dispatched.”

– NYC TLC

VEHICLE RETIREMENT EXTENSION BILL FOR TAXIS

On May 28, New York’s City Council introduced a bill to provide an automatic 6-month retirement extensions for any taxicab and a 12-month extension for accessible taxicabs. The bill can be viewed by clicking here.

GOOD SERVICE BEHAVIORS VS. BAD ONES

“When you are talking about a service there’s often a huge difference in quality from one company to another, [due to] the behavior of the people providing the service. Bad behavior in our industry hurts a lot more than in most industries. If a rider is dissatisfied with your company, they might stop using your company altogether... but the bad behavior of a certain driver might [also] convince a passenger to take the bus next time.”

Good Behaviors

- Accept every trip and remember that one trip leads to another.
- Drive at a safe speed and avoid abrupt stops or sharp turns.
- Clean your car before every shift; check for back seat debris between trips.

– *The Transportation Alliance*

CHECK IF YOUR VEHICLE HAS RECALLS

Click here to check the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) website to see if your vehicle has any recalls. Checking the site regularly can help improve safety and potentially save you money.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES SPIKED LAST YEAR

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and CNN, 38,680 people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2020. That’s the largest projected number of deaths since 2007, despite a 13.2% decrease in miles traveled from the prior year.

HELP BATTLE RACISM

The NYC TLC has published a request for information to develop an implicit bias and anti-racism professional development training course for its licensed drivers. Learn more by clicking here.

Drivers: Click [HERE](#) to Get **FREE** financial counseling, legal services and other resources at the Owner-Driver Resource Center.

TAXI NEWS

TLC PASSES RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE MORE ELECTRIC CARS

The New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) unanimously passed a resolution on May 4 to make way for more electric taxis, as some yellow cab companies are already opting to go green with Teslas. Some of the benefits: No gasoline, no engine check and no transmission problems.

The pilot program – pursuant to section 52-27(a) of the TLC’s rules – will test whether more battery electric vehicles (BEVs), “defined as vehicles that are fully-electric, use rechargeable batteries, and do not use gasoline, can be used safely and efficiently for taxi use.”

Until now, the TLC permitted the use of only one BEV model: the Tesla Model 3. Medallion Owners and Agents have shown a desire to add more variety, but there have been issues related to the technology, according to the TLC: “All vehicles approved for use as taxis cannot have a horsepower that exceeds 295. This prohibits most BEVs from being approved... both a conceptual and practical level. On a conceptual level, BEVs’ motor outputs are measured in kilowatts, not horsepower, so the concept of horsepower does not apply to BEVs. On a practical level, many BEVs, if their kilowatt output is converted to horsepower, would exceed the 295-horsepower limit in TLC’s rules.”

The TLC’s reasoning: “BEVs instantly achieve power while gas combustible engines must build revolutions per minute (RPMs) through acceleration until the vehicle reaches its maximum power.” This means many recent BEVs have acceleration rates that may be dangerous for drivers unfamiliar with driving them.

Horsepower is not the only obstacle to widespread adoption of BEVs in the taxi fleet. There is currently a lack of readily available charging infrastructure, giving some drivers “range anxiety” – the concern that their vehicles will not have enough charge to make it to the closest charging station. This anxiety may be compounded when driving a taxi, where a driver does not know if a passenger’s destination will put the vehicle beyond its battery range or anywhere near a charging station.

Despite obstacles, BEV designs, battery technology and charging infrastructure have improved enough to warrant piloting more BEVs for taxi use, the TLC says. To address potential safety concerns about acceleration, particularly surrounding drivers who lease BEVs for short periods and do not regularly drive BEVs, the TLC will permit medallion owners who wish to put their medallions on BEVs to apply under the following conditions:

- The BEV the Medallion Owner puts forward for certification meets all the requirements for hacking up a vehicle as a taxi contained in 67-05.1 of TLC’s Rules, with the exception of the re-

quirements contained in 67-05.1(f)

- The BEV does not have a 0-60 mph acceleration rate faster than 4.4 seconds
- The Participant certifies that all TLC Licensed Drivers that operate a BEV as a taxicab will be trained, and can demonstrate their ability to safely operate the BEV to the Participant prior to operating the BEV as a taxicab

Pursuant to Chapter 52, Subchapter C of the Commission’s Rules, participation in the TLC Pilot Program is subject to the following terms:

- **Duration.** The TLC Pilot Program will commence when the first BEV is certified for use as a taxi and will continue for a maximum of 12 consecutive months. The Chairperson can terminate the TLC Pilot Program at any time.
- **Pre-Qualification Conditions.** Each Participant in the TLC Pilot Program must enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Chairperson, to be approved by the New York City Law Department, obligating the participant to adhere to all requirements of this Resolution.

MOUs will be accepted only from Medallion Owners or Agents. It should be noted that participating in the Pilot does not remove a Medallion Owner’s obligation to place a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle into service.

During the Pilot Program, Chairwoman, Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk will review data, including but not limited to:

- Trip records and crash data, to evaluate the range (both distance and time) of BEV taxis
- The impact of a BEV’s range on the length of driver shifts
- The rate of crashes involving BEVs, as compared to non-BEVs

A final report, including a recommendation on whether to commence rulemaking, will be issued to the TLC within six months of the conclusion of the Pilot. Ms. Heredia Jarmoszuk will commence rulemaking, if warranted, within six months of the issuance of the final report.

United Taxi Management already has four Tesla taxis, and the company’s president, Savis Tsitiridis, is planning to add more electric cars.

“It’s definitely the way of the future,” said Tsitiridis, who installed charging stations at a nearby car wash, but acknowledges that a lot more chargers need to be strategically placed around the city. “There’s a cost savings, charging the vehicle versus spending 25 to 30 dollars per shift.”

An additional \$30 million is now available through New York State’s Drive Clean Rebate program to encourage the

lease or purchase of all-electric cars (EV) or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The program is aimed at increasing vehicle affordability and helping more New Yorkers lower their carbon footprint. The program incentive levels for drivers changed on June 30. They include updated rebate levels to incentivize EVs with longer all-electric ranges and EVs with a base MSRP of less than \$42,000. There are an increasing number and variety of EV models available, with more than 50 models currently available in New York. Of those models, 15 have a range of more than 200 miles and are eligible for the rebate. Eligible vehicles under the Drive Clean Rebate include EVs, plug-in hybrids and fuel cell electric cars. New rebate levels as of June 30, 2021 are:

- Cars with a range of 200 miles or more: \$2,000
- Cars with a range of 40-199 miles: \$1,000
- Cars with a range of less than 40 miles: \$500

New York State is also investing in the rapid build-out of its charging infrastructure with more than 7,000 charging stations currently installed statewide. The Charge Ready NY program provides \$4,000 per charging port with an additional \$500 per port for stations installed in disadvantaged communities and can be combined with New York State’s 50% tax credit for charging station installation to boost savings.

For more information about the TLC’s pilot, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/tlc/downloads/pdf/bev-pilot-resolution.pdf>. You can also watch the TLC meeting at: <https://livestream.com/nyctaxi/050421commeeting>.

Sources: CBS New York, My Twin Tiers, NYC TLC

WOMAN DIES AFTER BEING STRUCK BY CAB IN TIMES SQUARE

A woman died after being hit by a Yellow Taxi in Times Square in June, police said. The cab driver was traveling eastbound on West 46th Street at about 4:00am when the woman, 57, was struck as she tried to cross 8th Avenue outside the crosswalk, the NYPD said.

Cops responding to a 911 call found the fatally injured woman lying in the road. She was pronounced dead at Mount Sinai Roosevelt Hospital.

The cab driver remained on the scene following the fatal collision. No arrests were made at that time. An investigation is ongoing, according to the NYPD.

Source: New York Post

LIVERY NEWS

FHV DRIVER KILLED BY SUSPECTED DRUNKEN DRIVER IN QUEENS

A For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) driver was killed by an alleged drunken driver in a crash on the morning of Jun 13 in Queens. Family identified the victim as 47-year-old Mohammed Hossain, a father of three who resided in Brooklyn.

The incident happened at around 4:00am at the intersection of Fresh Pond Road and Elliott Avenue in Maspeth. Police say 22-year-old Erik Chimborazo was drunk when he ran a red light and T-boned Hossain's car. Surveillance video showed the impact of the crash.

Hossain was taken to Wyckoff Hospital where he was pronounced dead. His passenger also suffered minor injuries.

Authorities say Chimborazo left the scene on foot, but later returned and was arrested. He was later charged with vehicular manslaughter, driving without inspection, driving without insurance, driving without a license, and DWAI (Driving While Ability Impaired).

Hossain's wife received the tragic news just after 8:00am that morning. A GoFundMe has been set up for Hossain's family.

Source: ABC 7 New York

CHOFER DE VEHÍCULO DE ALQUILER MUERE AL SER EMBESTIDO POR CONDUCTOR PRESUNTAMENTE EBRIO EN QUEENS

El conductor de un vehículo de alquiler (*For-Hire Vehicle, FHV*) murió a manos de un conductor presuntamente ebrio en un accidente registrado en la mañana del 13 de junio en Queens. La familia identificó a la víctima como Mohammed Hossain, de 47 años, padre de tres hijos que residía en Brooklyn.

El incidente ocurrió alrededor de las 4:00 a. m. en la intersección de Fresh Pond Road y Elliott Avenue en Maspeth. Según la policía, Erik Chimborazo, de 22 años, estaba ebrio cuando pasó un semáforo en rojo y embistió la parte lateral del auto de Hossain. El video de vigilancia captó el impacto del accidente.

El Sr. Hossain fue llevado al hospital Wyckoff donde fue declarado muerto. Su pasajero también sufrió heridas, aunque estas fueron leves.

Las autoridades informan que Chimborazo abandonó el lugar a pie, pero luego regresó y fue arrestado. Posteriormente, fue acusado de homicidio culposo vehicular, conducir sin inspección, conducir sin seguro, conducir sin licencia y conducir en estado de ebriedad.

La esposa del Sr. Hossain recibió la trágica noticia poco después de las 8:00 a. m. de esa mañana. Se creó una página GoFundMe para la familia de Mohammed Hossain.

Fuente: ABC 7 New York

WOMAN HAS FRIGHTENING ENCOUNTER WITH FAKE FHV DRIVER AT BAY PLAZA MALL

It all started when a 20-year-old woman got into the vehicle of a man pretending to be a For-Hire Vehicle (FHV) driver at the Bay Plaza Mall in the Bronx this past May. When the driver began to assault her, it became apparent there was a serious problem. Luckily, the woman was able to fend off her attacker, get out of his vehicle and flee.

Police arrested the driver, Christopher Richards and charged him with forcible touching, sexual abuse and harassment.

The woman's mother, Monica Hargraves says she recalls the disturbing details her daughter experienced after getting into what she thought was a legal FHV. She also shared tips with News 12 on how to prevent a similar situation, after the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) confirmed Richards was not licensed by them.

- For-hire vehicles only provide prearranged service reserved through a base or smartphone app.
- Vehicles can generally be identified by for-hire vehicle license plates, which typically begin with the letter "T" and end with the letter "C."
- The vehicle must also show a TLC vehicle inspection decal in the lower passenger side of the front windshield.

Richards was released and faced a June court date.

Source: News 12 The Bronx

MUJER TIENE ATERRADOR ENCUENTRO CON FALSO CONDUCTOR DE VEHÍCULO DE ALQUILER EN EL CENTRO COMERCIAL BAY PLAZA

Todo comenzó cuando una mujer de 20 años se subió al vehículo de un hombre que se hizo pasar por conductor de un vehículo de alquiler (*For-Hire Vehicle, FHV*) en el centro comercial Bay Plaza en el Bronx el pasado mes de mayo. Cuando el conductor comenzó a atacarla, se hizo evidente que había un problema grave. Afortunadamente, la mujer pudo defenderse de su atacante, salir del vehículo y huir.

La policía arrestó al conductor, Christopher Richards, y lo acusó de contacto forzado, acoso y abuso sexual.

La madre de la mujer, Monica Hargraves, dice que recuerda los detalles inquietantes que experimentó su hija después de entrar en lo que ella pensó que era un vehículo de alquiler legal. También compartió consejos con News 12 sobre cómo prevenir una situación similar, después de que la Comisión de Taxis y Limusinas (*Taxi & Limousine Commission, TLC*) de la ciudad de Nueva York confirmara que Richards no tenía licencia de dicha entidad.

- Los vehículos de alquiler solo brindan un servicio preestablecido reservado a través de una base o de una aplicación de teléfono inteligente.
- Los vehículos generalmente se pueden identificar mediante placas de vehículos de alquiler, que generalmente comienzan con la letra "T" y terminan con la letra "C".
- También deben mostrar una calcomanía de inspección de la TLC en el parabrisas delantero del lado inferior del pasajero.

Richards fue liberado y se enfrentó a una audiencia judicial en junio.

Fuente: News 12 The Bronx

“LIKE” TAXI & LIVERY TIMES



FOR BREAKING NEWS STORIES

LIVERY NEWS

GETTING BACK TO LIFE WITHOUT PANDEMIC-RELATED ANXIETY

As more people receive vaccines, life as we knew it before the pandemic is starting to return.

We are seeing restrictions relax on travel and businesses, small gatherings are allowed, and many are eager to get back to normal routines and activities. But after more than a year with limited places to go and things to do, some people may feel anxious and hesitant about stepping back into everyday activities.

As the world slowly returns to normal, some can feel anxious about even simple, everyday activities when they haven't done them for a long time. Plus, the safe spaces we created in our homes during the height of the pandemic may now make us feel less safe and more fearful when stepping outside the bubbles we've created.

To a certain extent, COVID-related distress manifests in much the same way as any other response to any other stressful activity. Some emotional signs of distress may include increased irritability, anger, intense sadness, or even emotional numbing.

Behavioral changes may include a loss of interest in things once enjoyed, social withdrawal, and increased use of substances such as tobacco and alcohol. Some common physical effects of distress can also include changes in appetite, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and poor sleep. Other manifestations may include increased headaches, muscle tension, and stomach problems.

Understanding your feelings and taking deliberate steps to deal with situations that cause fear and anxiety can help. A few tips may be helpful as you navigate your way back into the world.

Dealing With Your Feelings

The first steps to dealing with any feelings of fear and anxiety is to realize that those feelings are normal. Then focus on controlling those things you can, and acknowledge what things you can't.

"Some of the things under your control include physical distancing, wearing a mask, and washing your hands," says Philip J. Fizur, PsyD, a clinical health psychologist at Cooper University Health Care. "But you can take it even further and control things like eating well (although the occasional indulgence can be a nice way of coping), exercising regularly, building good sleep habits, and avoiding excessive use of substances like alcohol and tobacco."

For anything outside of your control, mindfulness-based interventions can help build your comfort, flexibility, and ability to adapt to situations that cause fear and anxiety. By staying connected to what is happening in the present moment, we re-engage our senses and our anxiety tends to decrease.

To get back into daily routines and activities you previously enjoyed, Dr. Fizur suggests focusing on a specific activity or situation you need to get reacclimated to – going back into an office to work or just going to the grocery store, for example – and making a plan to take small, actionable steps to get back in the swing of things. Try to make it a habit again.

"Taking this approach can be helpful by allowing the process of natural habituation to occur, but also helps us to bolster our sense of control and strengthen our ability to process our emotions," Dr. Fizur says.

Helping Others Deal with COVID-Related Anxiety

If you notice that a family member or friend struggling with pandemic-related anxiety, simply pointing out that you've noticed some changes in them and asking how they are doing could help. Just the question serves as an invitation for them to talk about their feelings. It's important not to pressure loved ones into expressing their feelings. Rather, you should just reinforce that you are there for them when they are ready to talk, or if they need help.

Some other strategies to help family members and loved ones:

- Acknowledge and support their struggle.
- Ask if they want advice (and only give it when asked) or just

VOLVER A LA VIDA SIN ANSIEDAD RELACIONADA A LA PANDEMIA

A medida que más personas reciben vacunas, la vida tal como la conocíamos antes de la pandemia está empezando a regresar. Estamos viendo que las restricciones en los viajes y los negocios se relajan, pequeñas reuniones están permitidas, y muchos están ansiosos por volver a las rutinas y actividades normales. Pero después de más de un año con lugares limitados a donde ir y cosas que hacer, algunas personas pueden sentirse ansiosas e indecisos acerca de volver a las actividades cotidianas.

A medida que el mundo vuelve lentamente a la normalidad, algunos pueden sentirse ansiosos incluso por actividades cotidianas simples cuando no las han hecho durante mucho tiempo. Además, los espacios seguros que creamos en nuestros hogares durante el apogeo de la pandemia ahora pueden hacernos sentir menos seguros y más temerosos al salir de las burbujas que hemos creado.

Hasta cierto punto, la angustia relacionada con COVID se manifiesta de la misma manera que cualquier otra respuesta a cualquier otra actividad estresante. Algunos signos emocionales de angustia pueden incluir mayor irritabilidad, enojo, tristeza intensa o incluso entumecimiento emocional.

Los cambios de comportamiento pueden incluir una pérdida de interés en cosas que antes disfrutaba, aislamiento social y un mayor uso de sustancias como el tabaco y el alcohol. Algunos efectos físicos comunes de la angustia también pueden incluir cambios en el apetito, fatiga, dificultad para concentrarse, y falta del sueño. Otras manifestaciones pueden incluir aumento de dolores de cabeza, tensión muscular y problemas estomacales.

Comprender sus sentimientos y tomar medidas deliberadas para lidiar con situaciones que causan miedo y ansiedad puede ayudar. Algunos consejos pueden ser útiles mientras navegas por su camino de regreso al mundo.

Lidiando con sus Sentimientos

Los primeros pasos para lidiar con cualquier sentimiento de miedo y ansiedad es darse cuenta de que estos sentimientos son normales. Entonces concéntrate en controlar esas cosas que puedas y reconocer lo que no puedes.

"Algunas de las cosas bajo su control incluyen distanciamiento físico, usar una máscara y lavarse las manos", dice Philip J. Fizur, PsyD, un psicólogo clínico de salud en Cooper University Health Care. "Pero puedes llevarlo aún más lejos y controlar cosas como alimentarse bien (aunque la indulgencia ocasional puede ser una buena manera de sobrellevarlo), hacer ejercicio regularmente, construir buenos hábitos de sueño y evitar el uso excesivo de sustancias como el alcohol y el tabaco".

Para cualquier cosa fuera de su control, las intervenciones basadas en la atención que pueden ayudar a construir su comodidad, flexibilidad y la capacidad para adaptarse a situaciones que causan miedo y ansiedad. Al mantenernos conectados con lo que está sucediendo en el momento presente, re-involucrar nuestros sentidos y nuestra ansiedad tiende a disminuir.

Para volver a las rutinas y actividades diarias que usted disfrutaba previamente, el Dr. Fizur sugiere enfocarse en una actividad o en una situación específica a la que necesita volver a incorporar – el volver a la oficina para trabajar o simplemente ir al supermercado, por ejemplo – y hacer un plan para tomar pequeños pasos prácticos para volver al ritmo de las cosas. Trata de que sea un hábito de nuevo.

"Tomar este enfoque puede ser útil al permitir que se produzca el proceso de habituación natural, pero también nos ayuda a reforzar nuestro sentido de control y fortalecer nuestra capacidad para procesar nuestras emociones", dice el Dr. Fizur.

Ayudar a otros a lidiar con la ansiedad relacionada con COVID

Si usted observa que un miembro de la familia o amigo está luchando con la ansiedad relacionada con la pandemia, simplemente señalando que has notado algunos cambios en ellos y preguntar cómo están haciendo podría ayudar. Sólo la pregunta sirve como una invitación para que hablen de sus sentimientos. Es importante no presionar a sus seres queridos para que expresen sus sentimientos. Más bien, sólo debe reforzar que usted está allí para ellos cuando están listos para hablar, o si necesitan ayuda.

Algunas otras estrategias para ayudar a los miembros de la fa-

need space to vent and feel validated.

- Listen more than you talk.
- Resist the urge to judge or impose your own beliefs.
- Relate to what they are going through if you can – without taking over the conversation.
- Reinforce your openness to help them.
- Encourage them to seek professional help if their distress is interfering with their quality of their life.
- Offers suggestions of resources that may help – but only if they ask for them.

If you or a loved one is feeling reluctant to leave the house, or washing hands and surfaces far beyond public health recommendations, or constantly checking on the well-being of loved ones, may suggest an anxiety-related illness caused by COVID that may require professional help.

Resources if You or a Loved One Need Extra Support

Often the best way to deal with pandemic-related anxiety and fear is to stay connected to your family members and friends. But if you need additional support, Dr. Fizur notes there are other resources available that may help.

- COVID Coach – a free app for everyone produced by Veterans Affairs that supports self-care and mental health during the pandemic
- FACE COVID – a structured guide (as a downloadable PDF) to putting steps in place to respond to the COVID pandemic
- Find a Therapist – a resource from Psychology Today to find professional help
- Therapist referrals – you can call the number on the back of your insurance card for referrals

Source: Cooper Health

milia y a sus seres queridos:

- Reconocer y apoyar su lucha.
- Pregunte si quieren un consejo (y solo lo dan cuando se les pregunte) o simplemente necesitan espacio para desahogarse y sentirse validados.
- Escucha más de lo que tú puedas hablar.
- Resista al el impulso de juzgar o imponer tus propias creencias.
- Relacionarse con lo que está pasando si usted puede– sin hacerse al mando de la conversación.
- Refuerce su disponibilidad para ayudarles.
- Anímelos a buscar ayuda profesional si la angustia está interfiriendo con calidad de vida de ellos.
- Ofrece sugerencias de recursos que pueden ayudar – pero solo si ellos lo piden.

Si usted o un ser querido se siente reacio a salir de la casa, o lavarse las manos y las superficies mucho más allá de las recomendaciones de salud pública, o verificar constantemente el bienestar de sus seres queridos, puede sugerir una enfermedad relacionada con la ansiedad causada por COVID que puede requerir ayuda profesional.

Recursos en Caso que Usted o un Ser Querido Necesitan Apoyo Adicional

A menudo, la mejor manera de lidiar con la ansiedad y el miedo relacionados con la pandemia es mantenerse conectado con los miembros de su familia y amigos. Pero si necesita apoyo adicional, el Dr. Fizur señala que hay otros recursos disponibles que pueden ayudar.

- COVID Coach – una aplicación gratuita para todos los casos producido por Asuntos de Veteranos que apoya el autocuidado y la salud mental durante la pandemia
- FACE COVID – una guía estructurada (como PDF descargable) para poner en marcha pasos para responder a la pandemia del COVID
- Find a Therapist– en el recurso de Psychology Today puede encontrar ayuda profesional
- Referido a Terapeutas – Usted puede llamar al número en la parte de atrás de su tarjeta de seguro de salud para un referido

Source: Cooper Health

The World's Largest No-Kill Animal Rescue and Adoption Organization



Every year, an estimated 2 million homeless pets are euthanized. Our goal: a no-kill world where all homeless pets find loving homes. Here are some sweet, beautiful animals that desperately need a home.
#GetYourRescueOn



Beaver is a big boy from Louisiana with an even bigger personality. This handsome fawn colored masterpiece was rescued with an injured leg which we promptly repaired for him. Beaver would do best in a home with adults and older children with a fenced in yard as he is strong and very playful. He is still working on his obedience and doing a great job but this should be continued into his home. Come meet this amazing Louisiana dreamboat! #GetYourRescueOn

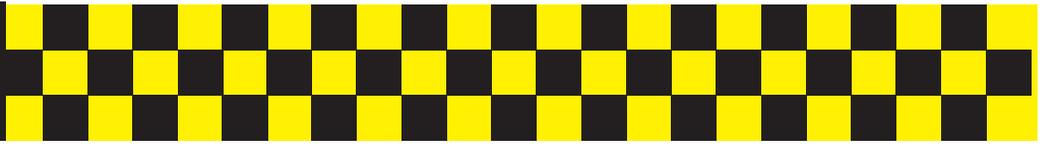
When 1 year old **Pebble** was offered a chance at a safe indoor life, she was frightened by the prospect. We placed her in a quiet space where she could take all the time she needed to learn to trust humans. Time shared with like-minded feline friends introduced her to a whole new world of possibilities. We've found that Pebble feels most confident when she's with other cats so we are seeking an experienced home with a cat who will ease her into her new life as a family member. Children 12 years old and older will show her the patience she deserves to have a successful transition. Pebble has proven to be very devoted to her cat friends; if your cat would enjoy sharing tender moments with a gentle companion, Pebble is ready to join your home! #GetYourRescueOn



Alice is a sweet, playful southern girl looking for a nice quiet home to enjoy herself in. She came to us very pregnant with nowhere else to go. After giving birth to almost a dozen puppies and being pampered here, it is this momma dog's time to shine. Alice is playful and enjoys running around with her humans. She prefers to be the center of attention so no other pets should be in the home. Will you be this gorgeous girl's new mom or dad? #GetYourRescueOn

For information on how to meet our adoptable pets, please e-mail kristied@animalleague.org, call 516-883-7575 or visit animalleague.org/adopt.

FEATURES



INFORMATION FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW

If it has been at least two weeks since you received your last dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, you are now considered “fully vaccinated.” You are armed with our best weapon against a virus that has killed more than 3.8 million people worldwide and upended our lives in unimaginable ways. That is truly something worth celebrating.

But before you throw caution to the wind (or throw a party), it’s important to remember the coronavirus is still spreading, and many people are refusing to get vaccinated – so some precautions are still necessary to protect yourself and the people around you. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published specific guidance about what the fully vaccinated can do and cannot do, and AARP asked experts to answer other common questions.

Here are 10 things you should know now that you’ve been jabbed.

1. You still need a mask, but only in some situations - People who are fully vaccinated no longer need to wear a mask in most indoor and outdoor settings, large or small, the CDC said on May 13. However, masks will still be required on planes, buses, trains and other forms of public transportation, as well as in transportation hubs like airports and train stations. CDC Director Rochelle Walensky also noted that health care facilities “will continue to follow their specific infection-control recommendations.” Businesses and workplaces can set their own guidance.

“If things get worse, there is always a chance we may need to make a change to these recommendations, but we know that the more people are vaccinated, the less cases we will have, and the less chance of a new spike or additional variants emerging,” Walensky said.

Immunocompromised individuals should talk to their health care provider before ditching their masks. “They may need to keep taking all precautions to prevent COVID-19,” the CDC says.

2. You could still catch COVID-19 - Although all three vaccines authorized for emergency use in the US have been proven highly effective against severe disease and death from COVID-19, there’s still a chance you could get infected – also known as a breakthrough case.

No vaccine prevents illness 100% of the time, according to the CDC. However, real-world studies show the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are 94% effective against hospitalization from COVID-19 among fully vaccinated adults. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was 66.1% effective in multi-country clinical trials and 72% effective in US trials.

“The whole point of a vaccine is that it prevents you from dying or ending up in the hospital,” says Purvi Parikh, MD, an allergist and immunologist at NYU Langone Health. “But you may still get sick.”

3. You could infect someone else -

There’s also a small chance you could get infected with the virus and not even realize it, and then transmit it to someone who is not vaccinated, says Kristen Marks, MD, an infectious disease specialist at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine who leads COVID-19 vaccine trials.

Researchers are still studying whether the vaccines prevent the asymptomatic spread of the virus, she says. Early data indicates that they likely do, and Walensky pointed to this as a reason for the agency’s updated mask guidance for vaccinated individuals. Still, research is ongoing.

4. You can visit friends and family - After a year-plus of keeping a distance from friends and family, fully vaccinated people can gather indoors or outdoors with others, without wearing masks or physical distancing, the CDC says. That means you can visit (and hug!) your unvaccinated children and grandchildren. What’s important is to keep unvaccinated households from mingling, since “prevention measures are still recommended for unvaccinated people,” the CDC says.

5. You don’t have to quarantine after exposure - You do not have to quarantine or get tested after an exposure to someone with the coronavirus, as long as you aren’t experiencing any symptoms, the CDC says. If you develop a cough, fever, shortness of breath, diarrhea or other symptoms of COVID-19, however, you should get tested.

6. You should keep your vaccine record card handy - In the future, you may need proof of vaccination to travel, work in certain industries or attend large events, Parikh says. Several other countries already have a validation system in the works, and a number of private companies in the US are working on creating a digital passport that would include your vaccination status. “Obviously, your vaccine card is your main proof right now,” Parikh adds.

Your card may also come in handy to confirm which vaccine you received, and when you received it, if a booster dose is required. If you didn’t hang onto your card, the provider that administered your vaccine should have an electronic or paper record.

7. Pack your bags: You can travel - Because people who are fully vaccinated are less likely to get and spread COVID-19, they can now travel “at low risk to themselves” in the US, the CDC says. Fully vaccinated travelers don’t need a covid test before or after domestic travel, unless required by their destination. They also don’t need to self-quarantine after a trip.

When it comes to international travel, fully vaccinated individuals do not need to get tested before leaving the US, unless required by their destination. However, a negative test is required before returning to the States. What’s more, fully vaccinated travelers do not need to self-quarantine following international travel.

Just remember: The coronavirus is still spreading in many areas throughout the

world, so it’s a good idea to pay attention to the statistics in your destination and check on any local travel requirements before you finalize your trip.

8. It’s a good time to go to the doctor or dentist - Countless Americans put their health care on hold due to the pandemic. Now that you’re vaccinated, it’s time to schedule that colonoscopy, dental cleaning or elective surgery you’ve been putting off. “Being vaccinated, now is the safest it has been to have surgery in well over a year,” says Beverly Philip, MD, president of the American Society of Anesthesiologists.

The only screening you may want to hold off getting right away is a mammogram. Many women develop swelling in the lymph nodes in their underarm after vaccination, the CDC says. Although the swelling is a normal sign that your body is building protection to the coronavirus, it could cause a false mammogram reading – so some experts recommend waiting four to six weeks after you are fully vaccinated to get a mammogram.

9. You may need a booster shot - Marks says there are two reasons we might need a booster shot: if our immunity wears off naturally or if the virus changes so much that the immunity we have from the current vaccines proves inadequate. Researchers still don’t know how long immunity from the vaccines will last.

“We’re collecting data,” Marks says. “The phase 3 trials only started last summer, and the data lags a few weeks behind that.”

The current vaccines provide some protection against the coronavirus variants circulating right now. But a few contain a mutation that may allow the virus to elude some of the antibodies produced through vaccines. The vaccine manufacturers are working to create booster shots or updated versions of their shots to improve protection against those variants. Chances are we will have to get some kind of COVID-19 shot on a regular basis, perhaps even every year, like the flu shot.

10. A return to normal hinges on herd immunity - Before life can get totally back to normal, experts say that we first need to reach herd immunity – when enough Americans are vaccinated to significantly slow the spread of the virus. Estimates of when we will reach that point range from this summer to early 2022.

“I’m very optimistic about summertime, when rates will naturally reduce and the number of people we’ve been able to vaccinate will make it so that the virus is not being transmitted as quickly,” Marks said. “The wild card is the variants.”

Factors that will affect that timeline include the percentage of Americans willing to get the vaccine, how quickly a vaccine for children of all ages is authorized and how well the vaccines work against more contagious variants of the virus.

FEATURE

BUSINESS TRIPS COULD BE SLOWER, GREENER AFTER THE PANDEMIC

According to a recent survey by American Express, almost 70% of the people polled are in favor of expanding sustainable travel, for both leisure and business – particularly amid shifts in working culture. Before the pandemic, there wasn't a huge demand for flight-free travel from the corporate world. But many companies had embarked on setting ambitious carbon reduction targets before the pandemic, and cutting travel was regarded as one way to achieve those.

That could mean a new trend towards rail travel, instead of air travel. The emerging work-from-anywhere trend could further accelerate flight-free travel, with some organizations influencing these decisions.

"It's increasingly center stage for our clients, they understand rail offers an ef-

fective way to help reach their carbon reduction targets," said Jason Geall, vice president and general manager Europe, American Express Global Business Travel. "But sustainability is not the whole story. Corporates are also aware of the train's total trip benefits. On a time-elapsd basis, the plane might beat the train. But when you consider the total trip, rail offers a journey with fewer interruptions and a more productive traveler experience."

He cited one client in North America that is now amending its travel policy to encourage travelers to take the train for trips under 300 miles and/or two hours. The enhanced policy applies to the "US Northeast Corridor" but will later include Europe and Asia.

Another customer is seeking advice on

how it can use its online booking tool to actively substitute rail for air. "We started in Germany with data analysis to understand the company's travel patterns and where they can use the train rather than the plane. We will start working in other countries in the months ahead," Geall said. He added that Amex GBT was also committed to rail before the pandemic, and in Europe it was facilitating six million rail transactions each year.

Rival agency CWT said it too was seeing more clients implement or analyze travel policies incorporating rules around when to choose rail. "This no doubt will continue to rise as governments consider mandating short-haul journeys to be made by road or rail, rather than by air," the company said.

Source: Skift



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

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FEATURE

LIVERY ROUNDTABLE HELPS PUSH THROUGH LEGISLATION FOR THOSE STRUGGLING IN THE INDUSTRY

By STEVEN J. SHANKER, Esq.

As you all know, the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) created the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program (FPUC), which provides an additional \$600 a week in unemployment benefits provided by the federal government on top of each state's standard jobless benefit for those who have lost their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic. Beyond the extra \$600 a week, the federal government funded 13 additional weeks of unemployment insurance benefits for workers who have exhausted their state benefits. Thus, workers in New York were eligible for 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. With this program, most people were able to receive 39 weeks of unemployment insurance. This ended in July 2020.

Livery Bases (and other businesses in New York State) found relief through the state's "Shared Work Program". The Shared Work Program gave employers an alternative to laying off employees when they have downturns in business. Rather than laying off a percentage of the workforce to cut costs, an employer can reduce the hours and wages of all or a group of employees. The employees whose hours and wages have been reduced can receive partial unemployment benefits to supplement their lost wages. The Shared Work Program helps employers avoid some of the burdens that accompany a layoff situation and helped employees by sparing them the hardships of full unemployment.

The Shared Work Program also allowed employees who suffered a reduction in hours to collect partial unemployment benefits. Under the Shared Work Program, the weekly amount of unemployment benefits one could receive was connected to the percentage your hours and wages have been reduced. The Shared Work allows you to collect partial unemployment benefits if your hours and wages have been reduced by 20% to 60%. For instance, if your work hours and wages have been reduced by 20% on a given week, you may receive 20% of your unemployment weekly benefit rate.

No one could have predicted that the pandemic would last as long as it has. Similarly, no one could predict that in January of 2021, eight months after the first federal

aid of \$600 per week was launched, there would be another federal enhanced benefit, this time of \$300 per week. The problem is that although a Shared Work Program may be approved for up to 53 weeks, employers are limited to a maximum of 26 weeks of Shared Work unemployment benefits.

Given that the CARES Act ended December 26, 2020, Livery bases (and other businesses in New York State) were no longer eligible for the Shared Work program because the maximum of 26 weeks of Shared Work unemployment benefits had expired. As a result of the problems facing the livery industry, The Livery Round Table (LRT) started searching for a solution to the problems we faced. As a result of the efforts of The Livery Round Table, particularly, Dr. Avik Kabessa, a founding member of the LRT, it was discovered that there was an anomaly in the language of the New York Shared Work Program, as compared to the Federal CARES Act.

The New York State Shared Work Program language places a cap on companies to be only eligible able to use the Shared Work program to provide partial unemployment benefits for 26 weeks in a year. Under New York law, unemployment benefits are only available for 26 weeks, regardless of the total amount collected in those 26 weeks.

On the other hand, Section 2108 of the Federal CARES Act allows an employee to be paid up to 26 times the normal rate of their eligible benefits. Thus, employees in New York who have employees with reduced hours are at a disadvantage over fully unemployed persons.

For example, under New York law, a fully (100%) unemployed person is allowed to collect up to \$504 (the maximum weekly benefit in New York) per week for 26 weeks. On the other hand, a person who suffered a 50% reduction in hours and collects \$252/week (half of what the fully unemployed person collects), would only be eligible to collect such benefits for 26 weeks.

Under the federal law, the person who suffered a 50% reduction in hours is eligible for 52 weeks (double the number of weeks the fully unemployed can collect un-

employment) of partial unemployment benefits, instead of 26 weeks under the New York state law, and the state is eligible for the reimbursement of that expense.

Due to the problems the industry faced and being armed with this anomaly, a potential solution via "corrective legislation" arose. In other words, we needed to find a New York State Senator to sponsor a bill and find a New York Assembly member to do the same.

As you know, for a bill to become law, it must be identical in language in the Senate and in the Assembly, it needs to pass in the Senate and in the Assembly, and then it needs to be signed into law by the Governor.

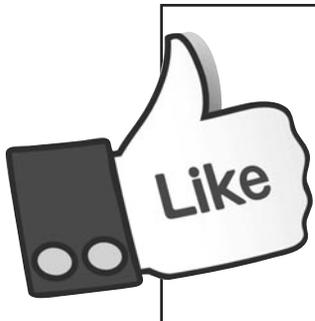
Thankfully, we found New York State Senator Jessica Ramos to champion our cause, and she was able to pass the bill in the Senate on March 1, 2021. Unfortunately, finding an Assembly member to sponsor the bill and to pass it was much harder and took longer. Luckily, we were able to locate Assembly member Latoya Joyner to sponsor the bill in the Assembly.

It gives the LRT great pleasure to announce that on May 25, 2021, the Senate and the Assembly passed the bill, which is now waiting Governor Cuomo's signature for it to become law.

Thanks to the hard work of the LRT, once the bill is signed into law, employees who remain partially unemployed will be able to immediately benefit from this legislative action.

Let us hope that in short order we will not need to use the Shared Work Program or unemployment and that all employees will be back to work full time as if it were pre-COVID. But it is satisfying to know that when times were tough, the LRT thought outside of the box to find a solution to a problem. It is gratifying to know that we made a change for the benefit of not just the livery industry, but for the entire workforce in general. I am grateful.

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



An Insider's Look at Both NYC TLC Regulated Industries

FOR BREAKING NEWS!



FEATURE

NYC TLC VOTES TO REMOVE EV EXEMPTION, BUT DRIVERS STILL WANT ABILITY TO OWN THEIR OWN CAR

Revel has failed in its attempt to add a fleet of 50 EVs to launch an NYC rideshare service. While many drivers are against new fleets arising, they still want a way to own their own car

By DAWOOD MIAN

"It is not sustainable to allow an unlimited number of new vehicles to the road in a city that is all too familiar with the choke of traffic congestion...What we will not allow is the opportunity for another corporation — venture capitalists or otherwise — to flood our streets with additional cars." - TLC Chair Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk

The NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission's (TLC) voted to remove the EV exemption on the FHV License Pause (aka TLC Plate Cap), which allowed drivers and fleets to still add new electric vehicles to the NYC for-hire fleet. The vote to remove the exemption passed 5-to-1. Commissioner Bill Aguado, who represents the Bronx, did not support the exemption removal, while Commissioners Lauvienska Polanco and Nora Constance Marino were not present. The 2.5 hour virtual Zoom meeting had strong voices, including environmental groups like the Sierra Club, comment during the public session.

Frank Reig, CEO & Co-Founder of Revel, said removing the exemption would, "guarantee a monopoly for the Silicon Valley ride-share giants, the status quo of gas cars and drivers without rights." In addition, he addressed the concerns around the prospect of Revel adding thousands of cars.

"Revel isn't going to flood the streets with thousands of cars at once, like other operators have in the past,...In fact, we literally can't do that. The for-hire electric fleet needs charging infrastructure, and this city has none of that." - Frank Reig, CEO & Co-Founder of Revel

On the other hand, TLC Chair Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk shared an incredible statistic that **86,000** of c.96,000 of the City's licensed for-hire vehicles haven't completed a single trip since **March 1, 2021!**

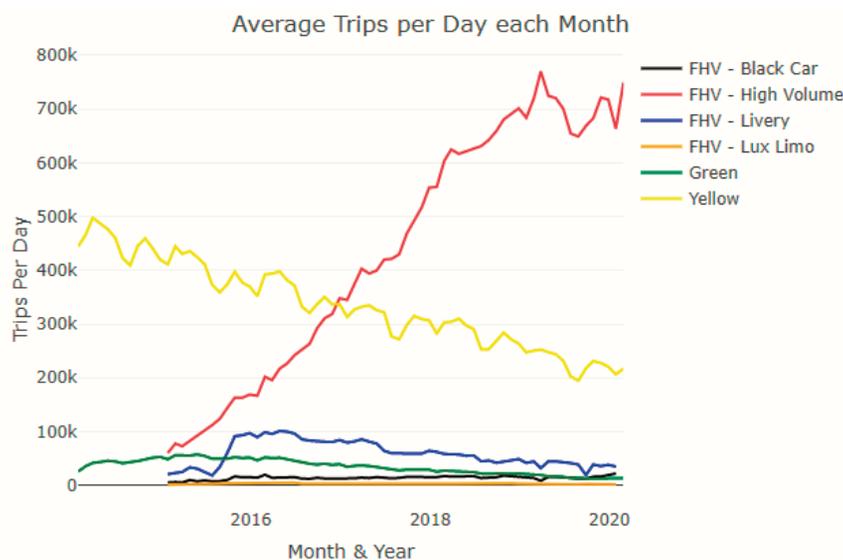
"Why would the TLC license more vehicles when there are so many that are not in use right now...There is no shortage of licensed vehicles right now in New York City. The number of licensed vehicles outweighs the demands for rides by passengers. These are facts, and this is the math, and this is our reality." - TLC Chair Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk



Photo Credit: Revel / Wall Street Journal

One Driver, One Plate & Yellow Cab Medallion

During the meeting several drivers and driver advocates, some against the Revel fleet being allowed, suggested the TLC create a mechanism to allow individual drivers to add their own plate. IDG director Aziz Bah made the point that many drivers were trapped in punishing leases controlled by large fleet companies because they could no longer acquire their own for-hire vehicle license. While some of the financial math ([link to AutoMarketplace](#)



article on FHV lease math) and TLC fleet statistics mentioned were misleading/incorrect, the overall point is an interesting one. In fact, during the virtual call the TLC Chair nodded her head in agreement each time the subject was brought up. Essentially, drivers who would like to own their own car/FHV license, but currently rent, argue that a new medallion system is aris-

ing via a few fleets owning thousands of for-hire vehicle licenses. It's an interesting point.

In principle, I agree that after a certain threshold is met (i.e., number of years as a licensed TLC driver) it probably does make sense to grant a TLC driver the option of owning his or her own FHV license. However, the issue that arises is less to do with the large corporate fleets that have arisen due to Uber and Lyft, but more to do with protecting the value of the the NYC Yellow Cab Medallion. Medallions have fallen over 90% from all-time highs of c.\$1 million and are rumored to be trading in private markets at c.\$100,000 at

this point (I personally have spoken to someone who claims to have acquired a Medallion at \$75,000 during the depths of the pandemic!). There is also a well publicized government-funded Medallion relief proposal that is being fought over as the industry continues to recover. Although the Yellow Cab Medallion still gives the sole right to "hand hailing" in NYC, the market share of "hand hail" vs. "e-hail" has collapsed and represents less than 20% of total trip market share as consumer habits have permanently changed. **If a "one driver, one plate" policy is allowed, Medallion values would collapse below \$50,000 in my opinion as their only value at that point would relate to "hand hailing" rights.**

I believe the next great debate in the TLC community will relate to the concept of each driver having the ability to own their own plate after they've reached certain criteria (i.e., years as a TLC licensed driver or trips completed). For example, in London they effectively have a "one driver, one license" rule, but only after a driver passes a very difficult test called "The Knowledge", which takes years to prepare for. Another solution would be to institute "lease caps" to ensure large fleets don't take unfair advantage of their for-hire vehicle licenses. There are many potential solutions and as time goes on I expect there to be more focus and media around this subject.

What do you think?

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 (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



IATR OUTLOOK

THE CERTS ACT PROGRAM:

How Transportation Companies Can Apply for COVID-19 Relief Grants!

**Deadline:
July 19,
2021**



By MATTHEW W. DAUS, Esq.

In 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt worldwide. Here, in the United States, many businesses and industries suffered immeasurable loss and are still looking for ways to recover. With mandatory quarantines, stay-at-home orders, school shutdowns and curfews in effect throughout the U.S., the transportation industry suffered immensely. Opportunities to provide passenger transportation services were limited to essential workers and many transportation service providers lost 80% or more of their revenue between 2019 and 2020.

While the federal government jumped in to assist other industries with COVID-19 relief packages, the transportation industry was left waiting for relief. In the meantime, transportation service providers were limited to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), which had restrictive guidelines that limited the use of funds.

Finally, on December 21, 2020, Congress passed the Bipartisan-Bicameral Omnibus COVID Relief Deal, a new COVID-19 relief bill which included the transportation industry under the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Act Program. Now, with shutdowns ending, COVID-19 vaccines available, and quarantine orders lifted, businesses and people are looking forward to returning to normal – and whatever that may be.

After being especially hit hard by the pandemic shutdowns, corporate transportation companies providing services with motorcoaches and school bus operators received some good news. Many have been waiting for the CERTS Act Grant Program funding information. On May 6, 2021, the U.S. Department of Treasury finally issued guidelines for the CERTS Act program, including eligibility, application requirements and grant funding information. With these companies facing such heavy losses in the past year due to the drop in business travel, these grants – not just another loan program – can provide needed funds to these operators as the economy slowly opens up.

On June 17, 2021, the U.S. Department of Treasury updated the guidelines for the CERTS Act program and opened the portal for applications on June 21, 2021. Under the CERTS Act Program, the

U.S. Department of Treasury will provide up to \$2 billion in grants to motorcoach companies, school bus companies, passenger vessel companies, and pilotage companies.

The CERTS Act Program was initially projected to be a fund of \$8 billion; however, \$12 billion in funding for state departments of transportation were added to the plan and deducted from other areas, including CERTS Act funding. Now that the guidelines have been released, transportation service providers have more information about what they can expect from the CERTS Act program.

The application process for the CERTS Act grants will be submitted to the Treasury Department via an online portal. The online portal opened on June 19th and applicants will have only 4 weeks to submit their grant applications – the deadline being July 19th! Applications will be reviewed and approved in the order submitted. In other words, the sooner companies submit their applications, the better.

The CERTS Act program does not allow applicants to request specific grant award amounts. Instead, the grant award will be based on the total applicant pool. The great news is that CERTS Act grants are non-competitive, which means all eligible companies that submit an application by the deadline and are approved by Treasury will receive a grant award. This is a big deal for transportation service providers, as this is funding that companies will not have to pay back at any point in the future. The goal of the CERTS Act program is to make transportation service providers whole again after the unexpected and difficult circumstances faced in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Who is Eligible for CERTS Act Grants?

Based on the final language in the guidelines, the CERTS program is for motorcoach, school bus, passenger vessel, and pilotage vessel transportation service providers who were in business on March 1, 2020. The eligible transportation service provider must have experienced a revenue loss of 25% or more between calendar year 2019 and 2020 as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19.

The eligible transportation service provider will have either:

- 500 or less employees (full-time, part-

time or temporary), and not be the affiliate, subsidiary or parent to any other entity with more than 500 employees; or

- 500 or more employees (full-time, part-time or temporary), and not received a loan under the Airlines Loan Program or the National Security Loan Program under the CARES Act.

The CERTS Act grants are intended to restore companies, to the extent possible, to the revenue earned in 2019. Treasury will review and consider any COVID-19 federal assistance the company has received and subtract that amount from the overall revenue loss in 2020. A company is ineligible if the COVID-19 federal assistance already received exceeds or equals the total amount of revenue earned in calendar year 2019. This includes assistance provided under the CARES Act, PPP or any other COVID-19 relief program funds. Participation in these federal assistance programs does not disqualify the company unless the other COVID-19 assistance amounts to more than the total revenue earned in 2019.

As an example, if “Bus Company A” made \$100,000 in 2019 and in 2020 the same company only made \$50,000 due to COVID-19 the amount of revenue lost from 2019 to 2020 is \$50,000, or 50%. During 2020, the same business received a PPP loan for \$20,000. When considering eligibility for the CERTS Act Program, the Treasury will consider Company A’s total loss in 2020 of \$50,000 minus the PPP loan of \$20,000, making the maximum grant consideration \$30,000. Under the current guidelines, Company A could not receive more than \$30,000 in CERTS Act grant funding. CERTS guidelines do not specify whether the Treasury will consider only the forgivable portion of any COVID-19 federal assistance received.

Motorcoach & School Bus Company Eligibility

In addition to meetings, these financial requirements, each company must qualify as a transportation service provider under one of the four eligible industries. To qualify for the CERTS Act program as a motorcoach transportation service provider, a company must be registered as an interstate carrier at the federal level or an intrastate carrier at the state level and

provide passenger transportation services. A company must have at least one over-the-road bus which it uses in its principal business operations. A company must operate its vehicles on a fixed route, commuter service, tour, or charter service model.

Under the recently-released Treasury Department guidelines, the requirements to qualify as a school bus transportation service provider were significantly updated and changed. Under the May 6, 2021 guidelines, a school bus company was to provide its USDOT registration number, for the Treasury to validate the company with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). If the school bus company did not have a USDOT registration number, the Treasury was to review the State registration number or other unique identifying number issued by the State or local agency, for the purpose of validating the company against information from State departments and agencies that issue school bus registrations.

A school bus company was also required to provide a copy of its primary or largest contract(s) with a school, school districts, or State department of education for which it provides school bus services to transport students to and from school and/or education-related events, activities and competitions. A school bus company might be required to submit additional information to help determine eligibility, such as the vehicle license plate numbers for its school buses and the customer names, points of contact, and contract service periods for the school bus contracts upon request by the Treasury.

Under the June 17, 2021 guidelines, a school bus company must provide a current certificate of insurance with liability coverage as a school bus company, which describes operations as school bus transportation of students. The treasury will rely on this information to validate the school bus company in addition to a sampling of the Vehicle identification numbers (VIN), license plate numbers, and model years for a limited number of the company's school busses and the name of a school, school district, or State department of education which the company provided school bus services for.

School bus services includes transporting students to and from school and/or for education-related events in or after 2019. These updated guidelines no longer require a USDOT registration number, although a company may still provide one if the company is registered with FMCSA. The updated guidelines no longer limit eligibility to school bus providers with long term contracts with a school or school district which in turn widens the applicant pool.

Each CERTS application must be linked to a federal tax return. All information reported on the application must match the information reported on the

linked federal tax return. The primary factor in calculating the grant amount will be the difference in total annual revenues reported on the 2019 and 2020 tax returns. Companies that applied for and were granted an extension to file 2020 tax returns are also eligible to apply, these companies must provide a copy of their application for an extension to file or a copy of the IRS's electronic acknowledgment.

Limousine and Black Car Companies May Also Be Eligible!

A limousine or black car company may also be eligible for a CERTS grant, if the company provides motorcoach or school bus services. If the company provides a mix of services, the Treasury will review the company's completed application and determine the principal business that the company is engaged in. The company is only eligible for a CERTS grant if the principal business is an eligible transportation service, meaning the company must generate the most revenue from either motorcoach services or school bus services. If the application for CERTS is approved by Treasury, the CERTS grant can be used for allowable expenses in any part of the company's business including black car and limousine related expenses.

Even Companies in Bankruptcy May Be Eligible for CERTS Act Grants

Federal assistance for the transportation industry has taken its time to arrive, and, during the past year, many transportation service providers had no choice but to file for bankruptcy as a result of the effects of the pandemic shutdown. Luckily, the CERTS Act Program does not immediately disqualify transportation service providers that have filed for bankruptcy. If a company remains operational, or is no longer operational but not out of business, has met all other CERTS Act requirements, and is in bankruptcy under Chapter 11, the company is eligible for CERTS Act funds so long as the bankruptcy was filed after March 1, 2021.

If a company is out of business, dissolved, or filed for bankruptcy prior to March 1, 2021, the company is not eligible for CERTS Act grants. If the bankruptcy was filed under or converted to Chapter 7 at any point, the company is not eligible for CERTS Act grants.

How CERTS Act Grants Can Be Used

Unlike PPP loans, the CERTS Act grant funds have a wider range of allowed uses. CERTS Act grants are intended to cover payroll costs, the acquisition of services, equipment, PPE and protection measures from COVID-19 for workers and customers, continued operations and maintenance of existing equipment and facilities, rent, leases, insurance, and interest on regular debt service.

The CERTS Act grant funds will be

distributed equitably among the four eligible transportation industries based on an analysis of their industry size and cost structure. This analysis will be based on the actual applicant pool, meaning the number of companies from each industry that apply for the CERTS Act grants and the need identified based on these applications. Fund allocation will be determined after the application period closes on July 19, 2021 and based on actual data from eligible applicants in the pool.

Once the application period closes, the Treasury Department will publish the amount allocated to each of the four industries and use those allocations to determine the grant-sizing formula. The grant-sizing formula will set minimums and maximums for CERTS Act grant awards. The primary factor in grant-sizing will be the company's lost revenues from 2019 to 2020. The CERTS Act grant amount, when combined with any other COVID-19 Federal assistance, will not exceed the total revenue earned by the company in 2019.

Register & Get Prepared to Apply for CERTS Act Grants!

After months of waiting, as of June 21, 2021, the CERTS application portal is officially open and accepting applications. The portal will be open for a total of four weeks, closing on July 19, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

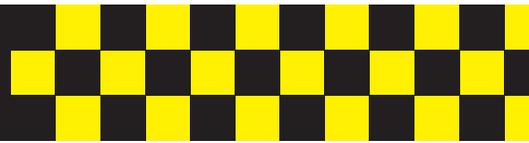
To apply, interested companies should register to obtain an ID.me username and password. Companies can also register for updates from the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Interested companies should gather copies of tax returns, income statements, and payroll information for the years 2019 and 2020. Companies should also determine the total of any prior COVID-19 federal aid received including EIDL, PPP, Main Street Lending Program loans, and any other COVID-19 related grant or loan. Given the more flexible allowed use of the grants, the time and effort to prepare a CERTS Act grant applications is likely worthwhile.

For assistance in completing the CERTS applications beginning to end, for review of your draft application before submitting, or just to ask any questions whatsoever, contact me at mdaus@windelsmarx.com or at 212-237-1106.

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 or 212.237.1106.

THE TAXI ATTORNEY



By MICHAEL SPEVACK

Hello everybody... This month, I want to talk about the most common ticket issued by police in New York State (including the NYPD): Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) section 1110A. The VTL is the section of New York State statutes that contains the rules of the road for motorists and section 1110A of same is the most frequently written summons in NYS.

Section 1110A announces that it is a traffic violation to disobey a traffic device. What is a traffic device? It's any sign or pavement marking.

As you are aware, New York City is full of traffic signs and pavement markings and as you are on the road many hours a day, it is probable that at some point in your career driving a yellow cab or FHV you will receive such a ticket.

A conviction in traffic court will result in a monetary fine as well as 2 points on your NYS driving record. It is imperative to fight any 1110A ticket you receive from a qualified lawyer who has experience doing so because points add up quickly and your TLC and/or DMV driving privilege is at stake.

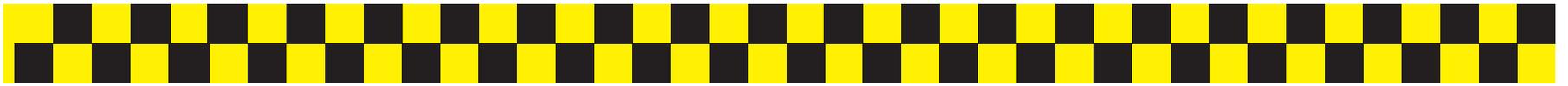
At the time of the traffic stop for an 1110A ticket, after the police officer has left the scene, write down some notes that might be useful in defending yourself in court, such as the location of the sign and its condition, etc.

A qualified traffic ticket attorney like myself welcomes the opportunity to speak to you about your traffic stop and will charge you a reasonable fee to represent you in traffic court in NYS or New York

City. Since you are a professional driver, it is in your best interest to have a lawyer represent you in traffic court to protect your livelihood.

Thank you for reading my article. Until next month and always, 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.



CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE

If you or someone you know is suffering from depression, there is a free, confidential helpline called NYC Well that is always available and accessible in 200 languages. You can call 1-888-NYCWell, or text “WELL” to 65173. However, if you are ever in immediate danger of harming yourself or others, please call 911.

Arabic

إذا كنت تعاني أنت أو أي شخص تعرفه من الاكتئاب، فهناك خط مساعدة مجاني، وموثوق يُطلق عليه اسم NYC Well وهو متاح دومًا ويمكن الوصول إليه بـ 200 لغة مختلفة. يمكنك الاتصال برقم 1-888-NYCWell، أو كتابة كلمة “WELL” إلى رقم 65173. في حين، إذا كنت معرضًا لخطر محقق قد يؤدي إلى إيذاء نفسك، أو إيذاء الآخرين، فالرجاء الاتصال برقم 911.

Bengali

যদি আপনি বা আপনার পরিচিত কেউ হতাশায় ভুগছে, তাহলে তার জন্য NYC Well নামক একটি বিনামূল্যের গোপনীয় হেল্পলাইন আছে, যেটি সর্বদা 200টি ভাষায় উপলভ্য। আপনি 1-888-NYCWell নম্বরে ফোন করতে পারেন অথবা 65173 নম্বরে “WELL” টেক্সট করতে পারেন। তবে, আপনি যদি নিজেকে বা অন্যকে আঘাত করবেন এমন পরিস্থিতি হয় তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 911 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Chinese

如果您或您认识的人患有抑郁症，可以使用一个叫做 NYC Well 的热线电话，此热线免费、保密，并提供200种语言，全天候可用。您可以拨打 1-888-NYCWell，或编辑短信 “WELL” 至 65173。但是，如果您当下正有伤害自己或他人的危险，请拨打 911。

French

Si vous ou l'une de vos connaissances souffrez de dépression, sachez qu'il existe un service d'aide téléphonique gratuit et anonyme appelé NYC Well disponible à tout moment en 200 langues. Appelez le 1-888-NYCWell, ou envoyez « WELL » au 65173. Toutefois, si vous risquez de vous faire mal ou de faire mal aux autres dans l'immédiat, appelez le 911.

Hindi

यदि आप या आपका परिचित कोई व्यक्ति अवसाद से पीड़ित हैं, तो NYC Well नामक एक निशुल्क, गोपनीय हेल्पलाइन है, जो हमेशा उपलब्ध रहती है और 200 भाषाओं में पहुंच योग्य है। आप 1-888-NYCWell पर कॉल कर सकते हैं, या “WELL” लिख कर 65173 पर टेक्स्ट संदेश भेज सकते हैं। लेकिन, यदि कभी भी आप खुद को या दूसरों को नुकसान पहुंचाने के तत्काल खतरे में हों, तो कृपया 911 पर कॉल करें।

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਜਾਣ-ਪਛਾਣ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਪੀੜਤ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ NYC Well ਨਾਮਕ ਇੱਕ ਮੁਫਤ, ਗੁਪਤ ਹੈਲਪਲਾਈਨ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ 200 ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਹੁੰਚਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਤੁਸੀਂ 1-888-NYCWell 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ, ਜਾਂ “WELL” ਲਿਖ ਕੇ 65173 'ਤੇ ਟੈਕਸਟ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਭੇਜ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਪਰ, ਜੇ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਖੁਦ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਂ ਦੂਸਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਖਤਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਵੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 911 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ।

Russian

Если Вы или кто-то из Ваших знакомых страдаете от депрессии, бесплатная конфиденциальная телефонная линия помощи NYC Well всегда доступна на 200 языках. Вы можете позвонить по телефону 1-888-NYCWell, или отправить смс “WELL” на номер 65173. Однако, если Вы оказались в непосредственной опасности и можете навредить себе или другим, позвоните по номеру 911.

Spanish

Si usted o alguien que usted conozca sufre depresión, existe una línea telefónica gratuita y confidencial llamada NYC Well que siempre está disponible y accesible en 200 idiomas. Puede llamar al 1-888-NYCWell, o enviar un mensaje de texto con la palabra “WELL” al 65173. Sin embargo, si existe el riesgo inmediato de lastimarse o dañar a otros, llame al 911.

Urdu

اگر آپ یا آپ کا کوئی جاننے والا افسردگی (ڈپریشن) کا شکار ہے، تو NYC Well کے نام سے ایک بلا معاوضہ اور رازدارانہ ہیلپ لائن موجود ہے جو ہمیشہ دستیاب اور 200 زبانوں میں قابل رسائی ہے۔ آپ 1-888-NYCWell پر کال کر سکتے ہیں یا 65173 پر “WELL” ٹیکسٹ کر سکتے ہیں۔ تاہم، اگر آپ کو کبھی بھی اپنے آپ کو یا دوسروں کو نقصان پہنچانے کا فوری اندیشہ ہو تو براہ کرم 911 پر کال کریں۔

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

SUMMER DRIVING AND WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

By BERTRAM MERLING • LOSS CONTROL COORDINATOR, HEREFORD INSURANCE COMPANY

Summer driving isn't just about beating the heat, it's important to watch out for pedestrians (especially children) and bicyclists. This month, we also offer tips on what to do in the unfortunate event of an accident... plus, how to avoid getting struck from behind.

Summer Driving

- School is out, so be especially alert for children at all hours of the day.
- Warmer weather also means more pedestrians and bicyclists, so be careful.
- Keep your car cool for your passengers' comfort. Don't wait for them to request air conditioning, it takes time to reach a comfortable temperature. New York City buses and subways are air conditioned and cost much less than a ride in an FHV or taxi. Fuel costs will rise when using your air conditioner, but the higher gratuities you receive should more than pay for it.
- Maintain a comfortable temperature in your car to reduce your risk of succumbing to road rage. Spending hours in a hot car can make people tired and irritable.
- Be courteous to all the tourists. They rely on you for helpful hints and information and provide a tremendous boost to the City's economy.

NEVER Leave the Scene of an Accident Prematurely

- If you get in any accident – no matter how insignificant or minor it may seem – DO NOT leave the scene without exchanging information with

everyone involved. Many uninjured pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists will say they are okay at the accident scene, only to file a claim after the fact.

- Call the police to the scene any time a pedestrian asks you to do so. If you leave the scene of an accident with an alleged pedestrian injury you may be arrested and charged with a crime. It's better to spend time at the scene, rather than dealing with the hassles later.

In the Event of an Accident

- Always take pictures of the cars involved and of the scene of the accident (close up and from a distance). Save all photos and videos you take at the scene and provide them to your insurance broker.
- Always notify your broker or insurance company as soon as possible.
- Always (when conditions permit) move to the shoulder or a "safe area" to prevent further damages or injuries.
- Remember the 3 C's when offering your version of the accident: Calm, courteous and consistent.
- Always obtain complete information from all involved (other drivers and passengers).
- Always complete the accident report on the scene of the accident. Be sure to obtain all responding police or emergency personnel badge and ID numbers.
- Always obtain the names of witnesses, including addresses and phone numbers.

- Never "make a deal" for damages at the scene and never offer to pay for anything, even if you think you are at fault.
- Never leave the scene, even in a minor accident, especially if a pedestrian is claiming an injury, regardless of what happened.
- Never administer aid unless you are licensed to do so. Instead, call 911.

Rear-End Collisions

- Rear-end collisions are caused by drivers tailgating, and not maintaining safe following distances. Always maintain a safe following distance and add time and distance when you are tired or stressed, or if the road is wet and slippery.
- Always anticipate that a taxi or FHV may stop suddenly and without warning to respond to a street hail.
- Do not proceed when the traffic signal turns green without scanning the entire area first, to be sure vehicles are not making unsafe last-minute turns.
- Always be aware of surrounding vehicles. Do not fall victim to insurance fraud, which can occur when a vehicle in front of you stops for no apparent reason, and the vehicle next to you (conspiring with the vehicle in front of you) prevents you from taking evasive action. Always try to keep a clear lane on all sides when traveling on the highway.
- Texting or using a cell phone while driving may cause a driver to go slow and cause a rear-end collision. Keep your distance.



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



THE FISHBOWL

LAST CHANGE

BY LARRY FISHER

In recent days, there has been a spate of articles speaking to the comeback of taxis as the riders' transportation mode of choice over the app-based companies. Currently, it appears that the app-based companies have become much more expensive relative to taxis due to manpower shortages (surge pricing?) or trying to make back last year's losses. Or maybe, the venture capital has dried up and is no longer subsidizing the fares.

Whatever the reason, it is a window for the medallion taxi to make a comeback!

In the 30-plus years that I was associated with the taxi industry, whenever I attended a party or informal get together with family or friends, when the conversation drifted to the world of taxi, I heard a litany of complaints. Why does shift change have to happen at the same time for everyone at the worst possible time, afternoon rush hour? How do these taxi drivers get the arrogance to refuse to take me to the airport or the boroughs? As a person of color, why do these taxi drivers always pass me by?

Now is the time to self-correct some of the errors of our ways of the past. No more refusals. No more rolling down the window and asking, "Where you going?" Get the passengers in the car and take them where they want to go. Period. Paragraph. End of story.

Take them to Brooklyn. Take them to

the airports. Take all people everywhere. Do not let Uber and Lyft back in. Crush them. Get the taxi-based apps to market their product so that when a taxi gets a job to the boroughs, a potential ride back to Manhattan can be connected.

Fleets need to continue to be innovative by structuring shifts in different ways. Eight-hour shifts, 6am-2pm, 2pm-10pm and overnight 10pm-6am should be included, as well as the classic 12 hour shift.

Fleets need to impress upon their drivers the importance of this moment. They need to reinforce the idea that everyone who raises their hand for a taxi deserves to be served with courtesy and promptness.

The city needs to make amends to the medallion owners who they've decimated over the last seven years. The political will to do just that has been sorely lacking. But, here's an idea that would make life in the city markedly better. Traffic congestion needs to be dealt with. Even before the epidemic of app-based vehicles, traffic was bad. Closing off Broadway as a through street did much to worsen traffic. So, city policy needs to be corrective. Reduce traffic by reducing the number of app-based cars. Make all providers of surface transportation buy a medallion, green or yellow.

The taxi industry needs to lobby the city to do this as soon as possible. If traffic

is lessened, people can get to their destinations faster, freeing up the taxi for the next person.

Same with buses. The pandemic has resulted in many people opting to work from home. One major reason for that is the commute. If the city wants the economy to rebound, the commute needs to be less onerous, and faster, and taxis should be a part of that equation.

Less traffic congestion is also beneficial to those with compromised respiratory issues. Governor Cuomo talks of "building back better." Well, the last few years have taught us that the expansion of the number of app-based cars to 94,000 has made life in the city much worse. It is time to correct these poorly-thought-out mistakes of the past.

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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NEWS

ADVICE FOR BUYING AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

The allure of Electric Vehicles (EVs) has never been stronger in the US. Surveys show that at least two-thirds of American drivers are open to buying an EV.

While many people still have concerns about cost, choice and charging, those barriers are fading fast and President Biden hopes to speed things along with tens of billions of dollars in incentives.

It can feel overwhelming and exciting to shop for an EV. The following tips will help you decide which one is right for you.



What's your charging plan?

The nation's charging infrastructure may be growing fast, but anyone looking to make the switch to electric vehicles should have a charging plan. The first step is to determine where you will typically charge the vehicle. Most people do it at home, which is easiest. But with new electric cars and trucks able to drive 200 miles or more on a full charge, some drivers choose to refuel as needed at work or public charging stations.

If you plan to charge a new electric car or truck at home, there are pitfalls. While electric vehicles can be powered with typical household outlets, the process can take up to 24 hours to reach a full charge. Many owners opt to have an electrician install a faster 220- to 240-volt outlet, like those used by clothes dryers.

Anyone without an easy way to charge should pay extra attention to the real-world range of the vehicle and how it might change in different conditions. Cold weather, for example, can cut a vehicle's range substantially.

But don't stress too much. While the fear of running out of juice – often referred to as range anxiety – is real, it's often overstated, according to experts. Consumer Reports has heard from many EV owners who don't charge their cars daily because they don't need to, said Jake Fisher, senior director of auto testing for the group.

Should I buy a Tesla?

Tesla sits atop the EV market in the US, and for good reason: Though they aren't without their problems, their cars are generally beloved. Its cars and technology have also been in use longer than EVs

from other automakers, and the company even has its own easy-to-use charging network.

The landscape is changing fast, however, according to media outlet, Edmunds. Several new EVs hit the roads in early 2021, including Ford's Mustang Mach-E, Volkswagen's ID.4 and Volvo's XC40 Recharge. Many more are on the way, like the Audi Q4 e-tron SUV, BMW's i4 sedan, Hyundai's Ioniq 5 SUV and Nissan's Ariya SUV. Several start-ups are expected to start selling cars, too, including the Lucid Air sedan and Rivian's R1T pickup truck and R1S SUV.

What can you afford? (Tax credits could help.)

Yes, EVs cost more than similar gasoline-powered vehicles, but there are federal and state tax breaks, utility grants and other savings that can help to offset the cost. The federal government's \$7,500 tax credit for EVs has run out for Teslas and GM cars, but it's still available for many other EVs – like the Nissan Leaf. A new basic model Leaf costs nearly \$32,000, but after the federal tax credit, the price drops to less than \$25,000. States, cities and even utility companies offer incentives for buying EVs or installing chargers at home.

EVs are also cheaper to own. A recent Consumer Reports study found that the average EV driver will spend 60% less to power their car, truck or SUV, and half as much on repairs and maintenance (no oil changes) when compared with the average owner of a gas-powered vehicle.

Buying used could also help reduce costs, but evaluate the car you are buying

carefully, particularly the quality of the battery, because it will degrade over time.

Consider the alternatives.

As exciting as it may be to own an EV, it may not be for everyone. Many families and individuals can't afford an EV that meets their needs – and few have three rows and ample room for gear and luggage. It might be worth considering a plug-in hybrid, if you're interested but not really sure you want to commit to an EV.

For many people, a plug-in like a Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivan or the RAV4 Prime SUV essentially serves as an

EV. Toyota says the RAV4 Prime can run for 42 miles before switching to gasoline, while Chrysler says the Pacifica has 32 miles on a full charge. If used mostly for short commutes to work and trips around town, the cars would rarely use gas. Plug-in hybrids often also qualify for federal tax credits.

Source: New York Times

GROUP FORMS HUMAN CHAIN TO PROTEST ATTACK ON NY TAXI DRIVER

A human chain and rally, organized by the Natore District Association of the United States, served as a protest against an attack on Bangladeshi taxi driver, Asad Uz Zaman Ripon. The rally was held in June in the Sterling Banglabazar area of the Bronx. Participants urged government officials to take strict action to stop terrorist activities, including racist attacks.

On the night of May 23, Asad Uz Zaman Ripon, joint general secretary of the Natore District Association and a Bangladeshi taxi driver, was ambushed by attackers in the Bronx.

At the rally, Ripon offered an account of the brutal attack. Other speakers called for a fair trial for the attack and expressed concern that people in the Bronx community were being subjected to various forms of violence.

Source: Rising BD



NEWS

THE LAW NY BUSINESSES SHOULD KNOW AS CYBERTHREATS SPIKE

A recent slew of high-profile hacks raised alarms for business leaders in New York state and could bring attention to a data-protection law that took effect at the start of the pandemic last year. New York City's Law Department said in June that its computer systems were breached and had to be shut down. Officials said they did not believe any data was stolen or damaged, but Mayor Bill de Blasio acknowledged that hacks are a constant risk.

The mayor spoke a day after the chief executive of Colonial Pipeline appeared in front of Congress to explain a May ransomware attack that disrupted the fuel supply for much of the Eastern US. In June, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority admitted its systems were breached by a cyberattack in April. Meat supplier, JBS said it paid \$11 million to hackers to resolve a ransomware threat.

The run of attacks comes roughly a year after a state law strengthening cybersecurity requirements for companies in New York took effect. The Stop Hacks and Improve Electronic Data Security (Shield) Act took full effect in March 2020 – although it was overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The law tightened potential loopholes around when data breaches and cyberattacks must be reported to state authorities. Under previous law, data breaches had to be reported only if customer or personal

data was acquired by an unauthorized entity. In ransomware attacks, it is not always clear whether consumer data held by the company was acquired by hackers, or simply locked up in exchange for payment – so attacks may not have always been reported. Now companies are legally obligated to report cyberattacks in which consumer data is accessed in any form and could face fines if they do not. The law also requires that companies institute reasonable safeguards to protect consumer data.

If an attorney general investigation into a breach found a company “knowingly or recklessly” violating the Shield Act, “there is absolutely some pretty significant fines that could result in that failure,” said Ryan Blaney, head of the privacy and cybersecurity group at Proskauer Rose.

Although hacks on major corporations get the most attention, small businesses are also often targeted because they often don't have all the safeguards of a larger organization, making them an easier target. Investing in threat prevention is critical, regardless of a firm's size.

Source: Crain's New York Business



HOW NY WENT FROM COVID EPICENTER TO HAVING ONE OF THE NATION'S LOWEST POSITIVITY RATES

Gov. Andrew Cuomo in June announced that New York's seven-day average of Covid-19 positivity rates was 0.5% – the state's lowest since it began testing in March 2020. According to Johns Hopkins University data, that ties New York with Massachusetts in having the lowest positivity rate in the nation.

In January, Mount Sinai Health System was recording about a 10% positivity rate among its patients, said Dr. David Reich, the hospital's president. That same month, when Northwell Health's Covid-19 testing labs were in full force, running 16,000 tests per day during the second surge, its positivity rate was about 12%.

Positivity rates have fallen since January because of a combination of factors, said Anna Bershteyn, assistant professor in the population health department at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine.

Part of the reason is seasonality, experts agree. Although it's not clear why, coronaviruses (including Covid-19) do not spread as quickly in warmer weather. In the summer, positivity rates fell after a surge, though rates were still higher back then than they are now, Bershteyn said.

The strong push for Covid-19 vaccines since they became available in December has been another key factor. With the state moving closer to herd immunity, including people who developed antibodies from a previous Covid-19 infection, New York's rate fell precipitously in June. In fact, New York hit the 70% minimum threshold for herd immunity in mid-June.

There are concerns, however, that cases could spike again. It also remains to be seen what the severity of a combined flu and Covid-19 season will look like.

Health experts continue to exalt that testing should be emphasized even amid low positivity rates, because detected cases could be identified and quarantined more effectively, Reich said. Data has shown that rigorous testing correlates to lower Covid rates, he added.

Johns Hopkins data shows that New York had a testing rate of 560 per 100,000 individuals, the second highest after Rhode Island. Alabama, which had one of the lowest testing rates, 47.3 tests per 100,000 people, also had the nation's highest Covid-19 positivity rate: 13.5%.

“Especially with schoolchildren who have yet to be able to take the vaccine, we need to ensure that mass screenings and some sensible precautions, such as mask wearing in certain situations, remain in place,” Reich said.

Source: Crain's New York Business

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