

## **Chapter 591: Taxicabs**

### **Sections:**

591.01 Regulation by the Vehicle for Hire Board

591.02 Allowing Operation of an Unlicensed Taxicab

591.03 Identification of Taxicabs

591.04 Fare Rate Schedule

591.05 Fare Rate; Posting Schedules; Changes

591.06 Taximeter Inspections

591.07 Taximeter Inspection Standards

591.08 Taxicab Vehicle Standards

591.09 Grounds for Permanent Revocation, Revocation and Suspension

591.99 Penalties

### **591.01 Regulation by the Vehicle for Hire Board**

The Board may adopt rules and regulations to supplement this chapter.

### **591.02 Allowing Operation of an Unlicensed Taxicab**

No person shall solicit, drive, operate, or otherwise be in physical control of any taxicab for the purpose of carrying the public generally as passengers for hire, gift, donation, or other consideration unless:

(a) The owner of such taxicab has obtained a City of Columbus Vehicle for Hire Owner's License issued pursuant to Chapter 587 prior to operation and such license is not under suspension or revocation;

(b) Each driver of the licensed taxicab has obtained a City of Columbus Vehicle for Hire Driver's License issued pursuant to Chapter 589 prior to operation and such license is not under suspension or revocation;

(c) The driver identification card is properly displayed while the driver is operating, driving or otherwise in physical control of a licensed taxicab; and

(d) The current decal issued by the License Section is clearly displayed in the lower right hand corner of the windshield.

### **591.03 Identification of Taxicabs**

Every person owning or operating a licensed taxicab may adopt any business name, design, color scheme or method of painting or lettering that is approved by the Director. Every taxicab shall comply with the following requirements:

(a) The identification number assigned by the Director to each taxicab shall be painted on each side and on the rear of the taxicab in letters not less than four inches and not more than eight inches in height, and with each line a minimum of one-half inch wide;

(b) The name of the owner, or the trade name under which he or she does business, shall be painted on each side and the rear of the taxicab. The side letters will not be less than four inches and not more than eight inches in height, with each line a minimum of one-half inch wide;

(c) All mandatory lettering, identification numbers and wording shall be clearly identifiable and contrast distinctly with the color of the body of the taxicab and shall be applied with non-water soluble paint, decals or adhesive-backed lettering; and

(d) Every taxicab must be equipped with an operating cruise light on the roof.

#### **591.04 Fare Rate Schedule**

All fares, charges, or fees for the use of taxicabs shall be determined by one of the following:

(a) Taximeter rate which shall be computed by a taximeter and such rate shall not be more than the maximum rate in the following schedule:

(1) For the first one-ninth (1/9) mile or fraction thereof: \$3.00

(2) For each additional two-ninths (2/9) mile: \$.45

(3) Waiting time: For each appropriate period of one minute waiting time as registered by the taximeter clock: \$.45

(b) Hourly rate which shall be computed at twenty-seven dollars (\$27.00) per hour or meter fare, whichever is greater.

(c) Special trip rate which is established for special trips as defined in C.C.C. 585.01(hh) by being submitted to the Board, approved by the Board, and filed with the Director. Such rate may exceed the maximum meter rate. The Board may require prior to the approval of the special trip rate written evidence that the fare-paying passenger or organization sponsoring the passenger has been notified of the lower taximeter rate and agrees to the special trip rate.

(d) Charges on trips to destinations outside the county shall not be limited by the taximeter rate but shall be mutually agreed upon by the driver and the passenger. The charge shall not exceed two dollars and twenty-five cents (\$2.25) per one-way mile.

(e) Whenever two (2) or more passengers agree to share a taxicab, the charge to each passenger shall be subject to mutual arrangement among the passengers and driver. The driver may not provide service to the passengers until he or she explains to all passengers the manner in which the fare will be calculated and obtains the oral consent of all passengers. In no event shall the mutually agreed upon charge for all the passengers exceed three-quarters ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) of the total of all the charges based on the maximum taximeter rate that would have been charged to each passenger if they had been traveling separately. Two (2) or more passengers traveling together to the same destination shall be charged no more than the meter rate plus any applicable surcharges.

#### **591.05 Fare Rate; Posting Schedules; Changes**

(a) Every owner of one (1) or more taxicabs shall maintain on file with the Director the complete schedule of rates offered and used by such taxicabs. The schedule shall set forth in detail the amounts charged by each taxicab for service under the taximeter rate, hourly rate, special trip rate, and any other surcharge which is charged by the company. Such schedule shall also be posted in the taxicab according to C.C.C. 587.11(e).

(b) Rate schedules may be changed by the owner provided that the rates in the substituted schedule are in accordance with all terms and conditions and not in excess of any maximum limit set forth in Chapters 585 through 591, unless otherwise authorized by contract with the City. No change in schedule shall become effective until one day after it is filed with the Director. No more than one (1) amended schedule shall be filed by any owner in any period of seven (7) days, unless with the consent of the Director.

(c) All fare rate schedules shall be on file with the Director and be open to public inspection.

(d) The owner shall file an amended schedule with the Director within three (3) days of the change whenever the following occurs:

(1) A new fare rate schedule becomes effective for a taxicab;

(2) A license is transferred from owner to owner;

(3) A license is transferred from vehicle to vehicle; or

(4) Any of the information on the schedule on file with the Director becomes incorrect.

### **591.06 Taximeter Inspections**

(a) It shall be the duty of the Sealer of Weights and Measures to inspect, test and seal every taximeter used at least once (1) per year. The Sealer shall keep a record of the identification number of every taximeter and the date of inspection in his or her office. The fee established by C.C.C. 2903.01 shall be charged to the owner of each licensed taxicab for each annual taximeter inspection.

(b) If the Sealer finds any taximeter not accurate or not calculating and registering in accordance with the rates filed with the Director and posted in the taxicab, he or she shall notify the Director.

(1) When a taxicab is not in service, the taximeter shall show no fare.

(2) When a taxicab is in service and the taximeter rate is used, the taximeter shall be in the calculating position.

(3) Upon the completion of service by a taxicab, the taximeter shall be returned to the non-calculating position and its indicator cleared.

(4) Whenever a taxicab owner files an amended rate schedule, in which the taximeter is altered, the taximeter on the taxicab involved shall be adjusted to the new rate and the taximeter shall be inspected, tested and sealed by the Sealer before the new rate shall become effective.

### **591.07 Taximeter Inspection Standards**

The tolerance standards used by the Sealer of Weights and Measures in testing and inspecting taximeters shall be the tolerance standards as adopted by the National Conference of Weights and Measures, recommended by the National Institute of Standards and Technology and published in the National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbook 44. Supplements or revisions to the taximeter tolerance standards as provided in the National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbook 44 shall be subject to adoption by the Board.

### **591.08 Taxicab Vehicle Standards**

(a) All licensed taxicabs shall be reasonably clean and in safe condition so as to not cause personal injury or damage the clothing or possessions of the passenger(s). Every taxicab shall be equipped with the following:

(1) Two-way radio or dispatch service; this service shall be listed in the telephone directory assistance listings by the business name of the taxicab. The two-way radio will have the capability of vehicle to base and base to vehicle communications to a person or company in a business relationship with the owner. All radios used in taxicabs shall be registered with the License Section. A reasonable time for repair of the radio will be allowed provided the License Section is notified as soon as practicable upon the determination by the owner or driver that the radio is not properly functioning. In no case shall this period of time be more than ten (10) days without the approval of the Board;

(2) A minimum of three (3) doors;

(3) Safety or shatterproof glass in all windshields and windows;

(4) A light within the passenger compartment;

(5) Manufacturer installed safety belts, which may be used at the option of the passenger, numbering no fewer than the maximum occupancy of the taxicab;

(6) Must not require the movement of a seat or any portion of a seat to gain access to another seat, with the exception of wheelchair and specialty taxicabs; and

(7) By June 30, 2014, every taxicab shall have a credit card swipe machine that is PCI compliant installed in the rear compartment of the vehicle as to allow the passenger to swipe his or her own

credit card and choose a tip amount. If the credit card machine is not functioning properly, he or she must inform any prospective passenger(s) before he or she enters the vehicle. A reasonable time for repair of the credit card machine will be allowed provided the License Section is notified as soon as practicable upon the determination by the owner or driver that the credit card machine is not functioning properly. In no case shall this period of time be more than ten (10) days without the approval of the Board.

### **591.09 Grounds for Permanent Revocation, Revocation and Suspension**

The Director may permanently revoke, revoke or suspend the license of any taxicab driver and/or owner who engages in any of the following conduct:

- (a) While on duty, refusing trip service to any orderly person(s) who desires transport for lawful purposes whether the demand is by passengers who personally engage the driver or by dispatch, unless the vehicle for hire is currently engaged with another trip or the vehicle for hire has become disabled or unsafe;
- (b) Failing to post and maintain the schedule of rates filed with the Director for that taxicab in a location that is readily visible to the passenger;
- (c) Knowingly operating a taxicab in which a taximeter is not attached or inspected, registers improperly, displays a fee in excess of the rate on file with the Director or posted in the taxicab, in which the seal affixed by the Sealer of Weights and Measures is broken or expired and failing to use a taximeter whenever transporting passenger(s) even if the driver and passenger(s) have mutually agreed to the fare amount regardless of the destination;
- (d) Collecting a fare in excess of the meter rate or showing a fare on the meter when the taxicab is not transporting passengers or packages for which the meter is being used to determine the charge, or failing to use the taximeter when transporting passengers;
- (e) Violating the fare rates for more than one passenger as described in Section 591.05 or failing to take the most direct route or the most convenient route for the passenger;
- (f) Soliciting of passengers by horn, bell or other audible signal at any location, or soliciting passengers by any means, at a facility served by a designated taxi stand. Solicitation shall not include the direction of a passenger to the first vehicle in a loading area or to courtesy phones, or other nonaudible advertising;
- (g) Parking a vehicle for hire at any taxi stand when not for hire, or when not available for hire for a period of fifteen (15) minutes or more, as evidenced by failing to return to proximity of the vehicle within that period of time unless the vehicle has been hired for passenger use or for pick up or delivery of a package;
- (h) Failing to, at all times, maintain a trip sheet in accordance with C.C.C. 587.10. Such entries on the trip sheet are to be made at the time of each act to be recorded, as directed in this section. All such records shall be submitted to the owner periodically as he or she determines; or
- (i) Requiring payment by cash when the vehicle for hire has a working credit card machine.

### **591.99 Penalties**

- (a) Whoever violates Section 591.02 shall be guilty of misdemeanor of the first degree.
- (b) A violation of any other section of Chapter 591 shall be grounds for the suspension, revocation or permanent revocation of the taxicab owner or driver license or in the case of a new application shall be grounds to refuse to issue such license for a determinate period of time up to ninety (90) days or permanently.