

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
TAXICAB COMMISSION



## Statement of DC Taxicab Commission Chairman Ron M. Linton

**(Washington, DC)** – I want to announce today a number of new initiatives that will improve customer service and the efficiency of the DC taxicab fleet.

We will inaugurate a new 5-day licensing process on October 1, 2014. This will significantly reduce the amount of time it takes to get a commercial driving license from the current 60 to 90 day period. Taxi companies have indicated to us that there is still a need for more drivers. So to be responsive to this industry concern we will institute the capability for a person to walk in, provide the appropriate documentation and take the public vehicle for hire driver exam. The exam will be immediately graded and with a passing score the applicant will go to DCHR to submit fingerprints and undergo a complete FBI background check. If the background report is clean the person then will return to the Commission to pick up the license. Through the cooperation of DCHR this process will take no more than five days.

We are facilitating the establishment of a system to allow text messages to be sent directly to all taxis on duty to summon service for large numbers of riders. This will enable metered taxis to respond more rapidly to high volume circumstances such as concerts, large events and special activities that attract significant crowds seeking rides around the same time. A venue must first register on our web site and then will be directed to the secure mailbox to submit a request for service. The system is being tested and will be fully functional by October 1, 2014.

On the first of October, CAPS-DC will begin transporting qualified MetroAccess dialysis patients by standard taxis. This pilot program achieves three goals. First, it improves the quality of service for participants who will now be able to book a taxi one hour prior to pick up rather than reserving a ride a day ahead and will travel without multiple stops. There will be no change in the cost to participants and companions may accompany participants with no additional charge. Second, District taxpayers will save up to \$1.8 million in the first year of operation through a reduction in the District government subsidy to WMATA for MetroAccess. And third, and the reason for DCTC involvement, is the program could add up to 66 new wheelchair accessible vehicles.

As part of the program 33 MetroAccess vans will be converted to taxi service. These vehicles will be painted in the uniform taxi color and have meters and dome lights installed. These wheelchair accessible vehicles will be available to any CAPS-DC participants who need this service. When they are not used for program participants these vehicles will be available to anyone in need of a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Otherwise these vehicles would be available to any passenger. I am particularly proud that an additional benefit of the CAPS-DC program is the increase in the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the District's taxi fleet. A requirement for taxi companies to participate in this program is the purchase of a wheelchair

accessible vehicle for every 3,000 trips through CAPS-DC. We expect 66 more wheelchair accessible vehicles on the District's street during the first year of this pilot program.

The installation of a safety device for both drivers and passengers to alert the appropriate personnel, either police, medical, or Commission enforcement officers, to an emergency situation is targeted for completion no later than June 1, 2015. In coordination with other technical upgrades the Commission will have improved analysis of trip data to better understand service patterns that will assist with policy making and setting rates.

Also, the commission recently introduced proposed regulations to encourage a more rapid transition to fuel efficient wheelchair accessible vehicles. The current Vehicle Modernization Program mandates that by 2018 no taxis will be more than 7 model years old. The proposed incentives would allow vehicle owners to extend the service life of taxis that are fuel efficient and wheelchair accessible with an objective for 100% of the District's taxicab fleet to be fuel efficient wheelchair accessible vehicles by 2020. New associations that commit to use fuel efficient wheelchair accessible vehicles by a date certain would be allowed to form under the new proposed regulations.

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