



Seattle



King County

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City of Seattle and King County For-Hire Transportation Rules

City of Seattle Director's Rule FOR-HIRE TRANSPORTATION 04-2021 and King County Public Rule LIC-8-4-PR Taximeters

Pursuant to an interlocal agreement, the City of Seattle and King County work cooperatively to regulate for-hire passenger transportation. The following Rule supersedes City of Seattle Clerk File 321468. King County adopts this Rule as new.

- I. **Purpose.** This Rule provides guidance for the testing and approval of taximeters, including smart taximeters, and an application dispatch system (ADS) when it is part of a smart taximeter system. A taximeter shall meter a trip using either an on-board diagnostic (OBD) connection or a global positioning system (GPS) connection or some combination of the two.

City of Seattle and King County rules on an ADS shall complement this Rule.

- II. **Definitions.** The following terms have the following meanings when used in this Rule:
- A. "Application Dispatch System" means the same as defined in SMC 6.310.110 and KCC 6.64.010.B.
 - B. "Director" means for King County, the manager of King County's Records and Licensing Services Division or designee, and means for the City of Seattle, the Director of Finance and Administrative Services or designee.
 - C. "Taximeter" means any instrument or device by which the charge for hire of a passenger carrying vehicle is measured or calculated either for the distance traveled by such vehicle or for waiting time, or for both, and upon which such calculated charges shall be indicated by means of figures.
 - D. "Smart Taximeter" means an integrated system of hardware and software in a taxicab which meters a trip using either an OBD or GPS connection or some combination of the two, has an integrated payment and receipting system that accepts credit cards and other electronic payments for example, electronic taxi scrip and alternative payment channels, and performs or enables functions including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Vehicle dispatching;
 - 2. Dynamic pricing;
 - 3. Driver authentication and system security;
 - 4. Automated data collection and reporting;
 - 5. Geographic location information; and
 - 6. An open application programming interface that enables industry collaboration, e-hails, and integration with transportation route planning systems and mobility aggregator services.
 - E. "Smart Taximeter System" means the system a taxi association uses to dispatch trips to, communicate with, and track the location of affiliated vehicles and drivers through the smart taximeter. A smart taximeter system may include an ADS.

- III. **Requirements.** This section applies to all taximeters, including smart taximeters. In addition to the testing and approval process, all references to taximeters in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 6.310 and King County Code (KCC) Chapter 6.64 shall apply with equal force regardless of taximeter type, including but not limited to those using an OBD connection or a GPS connection.

- A. Each taxicab shall pass a taximeter test at least once per year. Additional tests shall be required if the taximeter security seal is broken, the taxicab owner is replacing the vehicle, the taxicab owner is changing the taximeter equipment, or as the Director requires to confirm that the taximeter is functioning properly (e.g., is accurate or can produce an audit trail). The Director reserves the right to change the frequency of testing at any time.

If an alternative process for testing smart taximeters becomes available, then the Director will work with individual taxicab associations to determine the feasibility of applying such testing process to the association's affiliated vehicles.

- B. Taximeter tests for OBD connections shall be performed following procedures contained in the most recent version of Handbook 44 Specifications, Tolerances, and Other Technical Requirements for Weighing and Measuring Devices, as amended, published by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).

Taximeter tests for GPS connections and OBD/GPS combination connections shall be performed based on a checklist developed by the Director. The checklist shall cover taximeter drop, mileage, wait time, additional charges, rate variations when using an ADS, displays, receipt issuance and audit trail/event logger and any other factors the Director deems necessary to determine the taximeter's accuracy.

All taximeters, regardless of type, placed in service after the effective date of this Rule must have a Certificate of Conformance issued by the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) proving compliance with the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP) or have been approved by the Director before January 1, 2021. All taximeters must have a Certificate of Conformance issued by the NCWM no later than January 1, 2025.

- C. No taximeter test shall be performed on a vehicle during a change of vehicle until the vehicle has passed its annual safety inspection as required by SMC and KCC.
- D. All taximeter tests shall be scheduled by appointment only. If the taxicab is late for an appointment scheduled by the Director, the appointment shall be cancelled, and a \$50 monetary penalty shall be assessed against the vehicle owner.
- E. The Director shall consider a taximeter, regardless of type, to not be functioning properly unless it (1) has receipt paper and automatically prints a receipt or (2) automatically sends a receipt via email or text message at the end of each trip.

Any receipt, regardless of its medium or delivery method, must include taxicab name and number, date, start and end time of trip, distance traveled, fare, additional charges (e.g., additional passenger charge, tolls or fuel surcharge), total fare, and taxicab passenger hotline telephone number (206) 296-TAXI.

- F. A taximeter with an OBD connection shall be modified to meet the following requirements:
 - 1. Automatically print a receipt or automatically send a receipt via email or text message at the end of each trip;

2. Have statistical functions protected by a password issued by the Director to each taximeter technician; and
 3. Print or send receipts displaying the hotline telephone number (206) 296-TAXI where taxicab passengers can provide feedback on their experience.
- G. A taximeter with a GPS connection or with an OBD/GPS combination connection shall be modified to meet the following requirements:
1. Be disabled when there is no receipt paper and the system has lost the capability to issue an electronic receipt via email or text message;
 2. Automatically print or electronically transmit a receipt at the end of each trip;
 3. Have security features to protect trip and customer payment data;
 4. Activate the top light when in use as follows: the top light turns on when the taximeter is on but not operating on a trip, top light turns off when a trip is initiated, and top light turns on when the taximeter is cleared at the end of a trip; and
 5. Print or electronically transmit receipts displaying the hotline telephone number (206) 296-TAXI where taxicab passengers can provide feedback on their experience.
- H. Any taxi association using the ADS function of a smart taximeter system may vary its fares from the taximeter rates established in SMC 6.310.530.A.2 and KCC 6.64.760.A.4 Before doing so, however, the taxi association must demonstrate to the Director, consistent with applicable City of Seattle and King County rules, how the fare presented on the application dispatch system is transparent to the passenger before the passenger confirms the trip. Using an ADS to vary fares may only be done at the taxi association level.
- I. Any taxi association seeking approval from the Director to change its taximeter system to either add to or replace existing technology must submit an outreach and implementation plan to the Director. The plan shall address how the taxi association intends to communicate the taximeter change to its affiliated owners and drivers and to minimize technical issues during the new system's initial phase.
- IV. Implementation.** These requirements take effect thirty (30) days after the Director files this Rule with the Seattle City Clerk and with the King County Archives, Records Management, and Mail Services Section (ARMMS).
- V. Rule Maintenance.** The Director will periodically consult with industry stakeholders, including vehicle owners and drivers and taxicab association representatives, on taximeter testing and the prevalence of using a smart taximeter system's ADS to vary fares other than the taximeter rates established by SMC or KCC. From this consultation, the Director will determine the necessity of any changes to this Rule.
- VI. Rule Enforcement.** The Director will follow the process outlined herein, as well as the process outlined in a separate rule on an ADS, to verify the compliance of taximeters and smart taximeter systems. The Director will investigate any passenger complaints on lack of price transparency or other issues concerning taximeter or smart taximeter operation.

The Director will communicate with the state of Washington to determine an appropriate device registration fee for a smart taximeter as a successor to the current fee for a taximeter.