

# VEHICLE FOR HIRE

# RULES AND REGULATIONS

Updated: February 2023

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Chapter 1  
Department of Public Safety  
General  
Rules and Regulations

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1.1 Code Review

Any changes to the Columbus City Code-Vehicle for Hire section will be reviewed one (1) year after the date of enactment by the Vehicle for Hire Board, and a report will be submitted to the Public Safety Chair of Columbus City Council

1.2 VFH Owner fees/renewal dates - Columbus City Code 587.04

Annual license fees are determined by the Director of Public Safety. These fees are subject to review by Columbus City Council every five (5) years at the request of the Public Safety Chair. The Vehicle for Hire Board may make recommendations related to the fee structure with the Director of Public Safety having the final say.

Taxicab	\$225.00	October 31
Livery	\$225.00	October 31
Pedicab	\$50.00	June 30
Micro Transit	\$150.00	June 30
Quadricycle	\$150.00	June 30
Horse-Drawn Carriage	\$150.00	April 30

Approved: March 2021

Chapter 2  
Depart of Public Safety  
Vehicle for Hire Board  
Rules and Regulations

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2.1 Powers of the Board

The Board shall advise the License Section on the rules and regulations governing the inspection of all vehicles for hire and their appurtenances and any other matters that rise under and are reasonably consistent with Chapters 585 through 594. The Director retains all authority to approve and promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to Chapter 501.

2.2 Board Members

All Board members will be appointed by the Director of Public Safety, based upon contributions and interest in the Vehicle for Hire industry. There will be a minimum of one (1) representative for each category, per Code. Other Board members shall be appointed based upon their nexus to the Vehicle for Hire industry (e.g. Greater Columbus Airport Authority, Experience Columbus, etc.) Board appointments will be for three (3) years from the date of appointment. Each Board member shall have one (1) vote.

2.3 Attendance

Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings when scheduled. If a member is absent three (3) consecutive meetings, they shall be immediately notified, and may be removed from the Board and filled with a replacement of the same category as they represented. A Board members who no longer wishes to serve on the VFH Board may resign by notifying the Chair of the Vehicle for Hire Board in writing with no less than thirty (30) days' notice.

Approved: March 2021

Chapter 3  
Department of Public Safety  
Taxicab Vehicle  
Rules and Regulations

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### 3.1 Taxicab Vehicle Age

1. No Taxicab license shall be renewed for any vehicle older than ten (10) years old, as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
2. As of January 31, 2013, no new Taxicab license issuance or vehicle transfer shall be granted to any vehicle:
  - a. With over 200,000 miles
  - b. Older than six (6) vehicle years, as determined by the VIN
    - i. Consideration of the age of the vehicle will be waived on a Vehicle to Vehicle transfer if the replacement vehicle is newer than the vehicle being replaced
  - c. Titled with a mileage discrepancy
  - d. Titled with a rebuilt salvage

\* Please see Addendum 3.1 (a) at the end of this document

### 3.2 Mechanical Inspections of Taxicabs

All taxicabs shall be inspected annually by a certified garage. All mechanical inspections shall be valid for sixty (60) days prior to the required submission date. Certified garages/inspectors are defined as "Automotive Service Excellence" or higher.

### 3.3 Advertising

1. No passenger vehicle for hire shall display any advertising assemblies other than those outlined specifically by Rules and Regulations.
2. Each passenger vehicle for hire may display one advertising assembly. The advertising assembly may only be mounted on the top of the vehicle roof. All advertising assemblies must be approved in advance by the Support Services Administrator prior to mounting on any passenger vehicle for hire. In reviewing advertising assemblies for approval, the Support Services Administrator shall approve only those advertising assemblies that:
  - a. Do not obscure any required vehicle markings, including the color scheme.
  - b. Do not add more than eighteen (18) inches to the overall height of the vehicle.
  - c. Do not extend beyond the top of the front windshield or rear window.
  - d. Are securely mounted to the top of the vehicle.
  - e. Lighting cannot exceed 300 candle power.
  - f. Do not present a safety issue to the riding public or driver.
  - g. Do not interfere or alter the vehicle's safety features.

### 3.4 Vehicle for Hire Standards

Seats:

1. Seats must be firmly fixed and secure.
2. Seats must be clear of all materials, litter and debris.
3. No exposed wire or sharp edges either from metal or vinyl.
4. No broken springs, sagging or horizontal slippage are allowed.
5. Upholstery shall not have any visible stains or discoloration and free of offensive odors.
6. Upholstery must have no holes or tears on the seat surfaces or rear of front seats visible to rear passengers.
7. Seat covers must be permanently affixed to seat—no blankets or temporary coverings are permitted.
8. Seat belts and shoulder straps must have no visible damage and in good working condition.

Floors:

1. Covering materials will be secure and free of rips and folds.
2. Mats and carpet will not have any visible stains or discoloration and free of offensive odors.
3. Floors will be clear and free of any objects.

Other Interior:

1. No loose objects or externally mounted speakers on the rear seat deck.
2. No decorations or other objects, other than the City-issued identification or a fragrance device are permitted to hang from the mirror or other mounted fixtures.
3. Dashboards will be secure and undamaged with no loose objects.
4. Instrument cluster lights/associated sounds must be visible, functioning and shall not indicate any safety problems with the vehicle.
5. Visors will be free of holes or tears, unstained and undamaged, with no taped repairs. Visors will match vehicle's interior as nearly as possible.
6. Headliner will be free of tears and will be secured to the ceiling—not sagging or loose.
7. Headrests will be unstained, damage-free and functional.

Body:

1. Shall only have minor imperfections—no major dents or other damage.
2. Must be free of rust, cracks or other damage visible upon casual inspection. Any cited rust or damage must be repaired within fourteen (14) days of citation and re-inspected for compliance.
3. Paint must be in good condition showing no oxidation or chipping. Touch-up paint must match existing paint and blend smoothly.
4. Grilles may only have minor damage.
5. No torn, wrinkled, faded or missing lettering, striping or decals are permitted.
6. Four matching hubcaps are required.
7. No broken or cracked lights or lenses are allowed.
8. All moulding, mirrors and antennas must be securely attached and in usable condition.
9. Bumpers must be properly attached and in good condition with no holes and free of unapproved stickers and decals.
10. Cruise lights must be securely attached, free of damage and tape, and with no missing letters.

#### Trunk:

1. No flammable liquids or materials are permitted.
2. Trunk must be without major stains and odors, with some type of bottom lining.
3. Objects in trunk must be contained.
4. Trunk must have acceptable space for passenger luggage.
5. Trunk latch must be operable.

#### Tires:

1. Center tread must have a minimum tread of 2/32" and be free of all cuts or breaks. No bald spots.
2. Tires must be inflated to rated standards.

#### Windows:

1. No cracked or broken windows are permitted.
2. Windows must be without obstructions and transparent, without smudges.
3. Windows must be free of all stickers and decals except those recognized by the License Section.
4. Tinted windows must be in compliance with state law requirements.
5. All window switches and cranks must be operable.
6. Vehicle must be equipped with two front operable windshield wipers, non-streaking blades and functioning windshield washing system.

#### Doors:

1. Inside and outside door locks and handles must be fully operational and intact.
2. Handles, knobs and armrest must be fully operational and intact.
3. Door panels must be without stains, odors and must be intact with no tears. They must match vehicle interior.
4. Door hinges and tops must function properly and securely.
5. Door seals and gaskets must be intact.

#### Miscellaneous:

1. Taxicab and Livery owners have thirty (30) days to produce vehicle title, but must show proof of purchase prior to issuance of a license.
2. Peddling from the vehicle is prohibited.
3. Taxicab identification numbers may not be transferred to other vehicles currently licensed as taxicabs.
4. Vehicles must be equipped with an operable heater and air conditioner, which must be used when transporting passengers if requested.

#### 3.5 Soiled Interior Fee

In the event that a Vehicle for Hire vehicle licensed by the City of Columbus is soiled with bodily fluids or solids by an inebriated passenger, up to a \$75 cleanup fee may be added to the trip fare.

Notice of this fee must be posted in a location inside the vehicle that is plainly visible to the passengers and the taxicab driver must verbally advise the inebriated passenger of such fee and point out the posted notice prior to the beginning of the fare.

Exemptions:

1. Children or sober drivers that are ill or become ill
2. Childbirth

### 3.6 Inspections

With the exception of Taxicab and Livery Vehicles for Hire, inspections are conducted at the time of license renewal.

Taxicab and Livery Vehicles for Hire inspections are scheduled by the Support Services Administrator each year based upon coordination with other City services. These will be scheduled yearly between the months of April and June.

### 3.7 Vehicle for Hire Driver Standards

1. Clothing must be clean, without stains, discoloration or odor and without profanity or sexually suggestive images.
2. Driver must treat clients respectfully and without using profanity or unprofessional language.



Chapter 4  
Department of Public Safety  
Livery Vehicle  
Rules and Regulations

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4.1 Livery Vehicle Age

1. No new Livery license shall be issued or transferred to any vehicle older than six (6) vehicle years, and/or over 200,000 miles. Once in service, they will not be renewed for any vehicle over eight (8) years old. The vehicle year shall be determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
2. As of January 1, 2013, no Livery Owner license for a new licensed vehicle or Vehicle to Vehicle transfer shall be granted to any vehicle:
  - a. With over 200,000 miles
    - i. Consideration of the age of the vehicle will be waived on a Vehicle to Vehicle transfer if the replacement vehicle is newer than the vehicle being replaced.
  - b. Titled with a mileage discrepancy.
  - c. Titled with a rebuilt salvage.

Exemptions:

The vehicle age requirement shall not apply of the following:

1. Busses defined as motor vehicles designed for the carrying of fourteen (14) or more passengers and used for the transportation of persons for hire.
2. Classic vehicles older than twenty-five (25) vehicle years may petition the Vehicle for Hire Board for a license. Issuance shall be at the discretion of the Board.
3. Wheelchair-accessible vans.
4. Stretch limousines which have under 350,000 miles and approval from the Support Services Administrator.

\* Please see Addendum 4.1 (a) at the end of this document

4.2 Vehicle for Hire Standards

Seats:

1. Seats must be firmly fixed and secure.
2. Seats must be clear of all materials, litter and debris.
3. No exposed wire or sharp edges either from metal or vinyl.
4. No broken springs, sagging or horizontal slippage are allowed.
5. Upholstery shall not have any visible stains or discoloration and free of offensive odors.
6. Upholstery must have no holes or tears on the seat surfaces or rear of front seats visible to rear passengers.
7. Seat covers must be permanently affixed to seat—no blankets or temporary coverings are permitted.
8. Seat belts and shoulder straps must have no visible damage and in good working condition.

#### Floors:

1. Covering materials will be secure and free of rips and folds.
2. Mats and carpet will not have any visible stains or discoloration and free of offensive odors.
3. Floors will be clear and free of any objects.

#### Other Interior:

1. No loose objects or externally mounted speakers on the rear seat deck.
2. No decorations or other objects, other than the City-issued identification or a fragrance device are permitted to hang from the mirror or other mounted fixtures.
3. Dashboards will be secure and undamaged with no loose objects.
4. Instrument cluster lights/associated sounds must be visible, functioning and shall not indicate any safety problems with the vehicle.
5. Visors will be free of holes or tears, unstained and undamaged, with no taped repairs. Visors will match vehicle's interior as nearly as possible.
6. Headliner will be free of tears and will be secured to the ceiling—not sagging or loose.
7. Headrests will be unstained, damage-free and functional.

#### Body:

1. Shall only have minor imperfections—no major dents or other damage.
2. Must be free of rust, cracks or other damage visible upon casual inspection. Any cited rust or damage must be repaired within fourteen (14) days of citation and re-inspected for compliance.
3. Paint must be in good condition showing no oxidation or chipping. Touch-up paint must match existing paint and blend smoothly.
4. Grilles may only have minor damage.
5. No torn, wrinkled, faded or missing lettering, striping or decals are permitted.
6. Four matching hubcaps are required.
7. No broken or cracked lights or lenses are allowed.
8. All moulding, mirrors and antennas must be securely attached and in usable condition.
9. Bumpers must be properly attached and in good condition with no holes and free of unapproved stickers and decals.
10. Cruise lights must be securely attached, free of damage and tape, and with no missing letters.

#### Trunk:

1. No flammable liquids or materials are permitted.
2. Trunk must be without major stains and odors, with some type of bottom lining.
3. Objects in trunk must be contained.
4. Trunk must have acceptable space for passenger luggage.
5. Trunk latch must be operable.

#### Tires:

1. Center tread must have a minimum tread of 2/32" and be free of all cuts or breaks. No bald spots.

2. Tires must be inflated to rated standards.

Windows:

1. No cracked or broken windows are permitted.
2. Windows must be without obstructions and transparent, without smudges.
3. Windows must be free of all stickers and decals except those recognized by the License Section.
4. Tinted windows must be in compliance with state law requirements.
5. All window switches and cranks must be operable.
6. Vehicle must be equipped with two front operable windshield wipers, non-streaking blades and functioning windshield washing system.

Doors:

1. Inside and outside door locks and handles must be fully operational and intact.
2. Handles, knobs and armrest must be fully operational and intact.
3. Door panels must be without stains, odors and must be intact with no tears. They must match vehicle interior.
4. Door hinges and tops must function properly and securely.
5. Door seals and gaskets must be intact.

Miscellaneous:

1. Taxicab and Livery owners have thirty (30) days to produce vehicle title, but must show proof of purchase prior to issuance of a license.
2. Peddling from the vehicle is prohibited.
3. Taxicab identification numbers may not be transferred to other vehicles currently licensed as taxicabs.
4. Vehicles must be equipped with an operable heater and air conditioner, which must be used when transporting passengers if requested.

#### 4.3 Vehicle for Hire Driver Standards

1. Clothing must be clean, without stains, discoloration or odor and without profanity or sexually suggestive images.
2. Driver must treat clients respectfully and without using profanity or unprofessional language.

#### 4.4 Soiled Interior Fee

In the event that a Vehicle for Hire vehicle licensed by the City of Columbus is soiled with bodily fluids or solids by an inebriated passenger, up to a \$75 cleanup fee may be added to the trip fare.

Notice of this fee must be posted in a location inside the vehicle that is plainly visible to the passengers and the taxicab driver must verbally advise the inebriated passenger of such fee and point out the posted notice prior to the beginning of the fare.

Exemptions:

1. Children or sober drivers that are ill or become ill
2. Childbirth

Chapter 5  
Department of Public Safety  
Pedicab Vehicle  
Rules and Regulations

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5.1 Pedicab Driver Standards

1. Clothing must be clean, without stains, discoloration or odor and without profanity or sexually suggestive images.
2. Driver must treat clients respectfully and without using profanity or unprofessional language.

5.2 Pedicab Standards

1. Identification of pedicabs, the name of the owner or the business (DBA) and the Pedicab number must be placed on the top rear of the Pedicab. The lettering shall comply with the required specifications in Columbus City Code 592.03.
2. No Vehicle for Hire, which carries passengers, shall display any advertising assemblies other than specifically stated by Rules and Regulations:
  - a. The advertising assemblies or sign(s) shall not obscure any required Pedicab markings, lighting or decals.
  - b. The advertising assemblies or sign(s) shall not interfere or alter the pedicab's safety features.
3. In reference to Columbus City Code 592.06 - Protective helmet - the required sign shall be no smaller than an 8.5" x 11" landscape orientation and the font shall be at least ¼" in size. The required sign shall be posted in the passenger area and the Pedicab driver shall also advise the parent or guardian of the helmet requirement in CCC 2173.02(b) before the loading of any passengers.

Approved: March 2021

Chapter 6  
Department of Public Safety  
Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicabs  
Rules and Regulations

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6.1 License Requirements

1. All owner applicants for a license to operate a Vehicle for Hire defined as a Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab shall submit an Ohio Medical Transportation Board or successor agency Ambulette license and shall provide adequate documentation that the vehicle and each driver has met the training and qualifications required by the Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4766-3 or successor agency at the time of application to the License Section.
2. Owners/Operators of such taxicabs shall provide 24/7 dispatch service to the riding public.
3. Owners/Operators of such taxicabs shall provide priority service to passengers requesting Wheelchair/Specialty taxicab service.

6.2 Vehicle Requirements

1. No Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab license will be issued to any vehicle:
  - a. That is older than six (6) years as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
  - b. With over 200,000 miles.
  - c. Titled with a mileage discrepancy.
  - d. Titled as a rebuilt salvage.
2. All owners of taxicabs licensed as Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicabs and drivers of such Taxicabs shall comply with all existing Columbus City Codes and Vehicle for Hire Rules and Regulations pertaining to Taxicab Owners/Taxicab Drivers.
3. All Taxicabs licensed as Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicabs shall be required to accept debit/credit cards as fare payment and shall maintain the appropriate device for processing such payments within the Taxicab.
  - a. The credit card transaction device must be accessible to the passenger at the time of the transaction.
4. Owner/Operators must submit trip sheets upon demand to the License Section at any time as ordered by the License Section.
5. Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicabs licenses shall not be transferrable.
6. The owner of the Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab license shall notify the License Section immediately upon expiration of the Ambulette license and of any suspension, revocation or investigation by the Ohio Medical Transportation Board or successor agency.

6.3 Inspections

With the exception of Taxicab and Livery vehicles for hire, inspections are conducted at the time of license renewal.

Taxicab and Livery vehicle for hire inspections are scheduled by the Support Services Administrator each year based upon coordination with other city services. These will be scheduled yearly between the months of April and June.

Approved: March 2021

Chapter 7  
Department of Public Safety  
VFH Driver Licenses  
Rules and Regulations

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7.1 License Fees and Expirations

Requirement	Fee	Expiration
VFH Driver License	\$35.00	Final day of the 12th month from issuance
License ID Badge	\$5.00	N/A

7.2 Qualifications for the Professional VFH Driver License

1. Five (5) years as a licensed City of Columbus VFH driver.
2. \*Successful completions for the ECI (Experience Columbus Insider) training class.
3. Must not be in six (6)-point warning status on Bureau of Motor Vehicles abstract at any time while holding this designation.
4. No unresolved complaints with the City of Columbus.

7.3 Annual Requirements to maintain Professional VFH Driver (3-year) License

1. Present BMV Driver Abstract (not over 30 days old) to the License Section.
2. Complete BCI background check at the License Section office or any other authorized BCI Webcheck outlet.
3. \*Present proof of ECI renewal completion to the License Section.

Approved: March 2021

\*As of April 27, 2023, the Accredited Columbus Ambassador requirement has been replaced by the Experience Columbus Insider Accreditation program.

Addendums  
Department of Public Safety  
VFH Driver Licenses  
Rules and Regulations

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3.1 (a) Taxicab Vehicle Age

Through December 31, 2023, vehicle age limit for Taxicab Owner renewals has been extended by two (2) years. Hence, no Taxicab Owner license shall be renewed for any vehicle older than twelve (12) years old, as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

Approved: May 2022

4.1 (a) Livery Vehicle Age

Through December 31, 2023, vehicle age limit for Livery Owner renewals have been extended by two (2) years. Hence, no Livery Owner license shall be renewed for any vehicle older than ten (10) years old, as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

Approved: September 2022