Vehicle for Hire Rules and Regulations

I. Purpose

The City of Columbus recognizes that the Vehicle for Hire industry is a vital part of our city that benefits both residents and visitors. The purpose of these Rules and Regulations is to ensure the safety of the travelling public and all vehicle operators, as well as to maintain a fair working platform for all operators.

II. Authority

A. Pursuant to the authority granted under Chapters 501.06, the Director of Building and Zoning Services hereby adopts, establishes, and publishes these rules and regulations to be effective at the earliest time allowed by law.
B. These rules and regulations supersede all previously promulgated rules and regulations for Vehicle for Hire.

III. Definitions

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in these rules and regulations, shall have the meanings ascribed to them, except when the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

A. *Application* means a form created by the Department of Building and Zoning Services, License Section.

IV. General Rules

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

Taxicab Owner	$225.00	October 31
Livery Owner	$225.00	October 31
Pedicab Owner	$50.00	June 30
Micro Transit Owner	$150.00	June 30
Quadricycle Owner	$150.00	June 30
Horse-Drawn Carriage	$150.00	April 30
Vehicle reinspection fee	$25.00	N/A
VFH Driver (any single category)	$35.00	Varies
ID badge	$5.00	N/A

C. Taxi inspections are scheduled by the License Section each year upon coordination with other city services. These will be scheduled yearly between the months of April and June.

V. Vehicle for Hire Board

A. 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.
B. All Board members will be appointed by the Director of Building and Zoning Services, 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 six (6) years from the date of appointment. Each Board member shall have one (1) vote.
C. Board members are expected to attend quarterly meetings when scheduled. Per CCC 585.13, the Board may declare a vacancy at its discretion.
D. A Board member who no longer wishes to serve on the VFH Board may resign by notifying the Chair of the VFH Board in writing with no less than thirty (30) days' notice.

VI. Taxicab Vehicle

A. No Taxicab license shall be renewed for any vehicle older than twelve (12) years old, as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
B. As of September 1, 2024, no new Taxicab license issuance or vehicle transfer shall be granted to any vehicle:
    i. With over 200,000 miles; or
    ii. Older than twelve (12) vehicle years, as determined by the VIN; or
    iii. Titled with a mileage discrepancy; or
    iv. Titled with a rebuilt salvage
C. 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 possessing an "Automotive Service Excellence" certification or higher.
D. No passenger vehicle for hire shall display any advertising assemblies other than those outlined specifically by Rules and Regulations.
E. 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 Building and Zoning Services Administrative Coordinator prior to mounting on any passenger vehicle for hire. In reviewing advertising assemblies for approval, the Building and Zoning Services Administrative Coordinator shall approve only those advertising assemblies that:
    i. Do not obscure any required vehicle markings, including the color scheme; and
    ii. Do not add more than eighteen (18) inches to the overall height of the vehicle; and
    iii. Do not extend beyond the edge of the front or rear windshield; and
    iv. Are securely mounted to the top of the vehicle; and
    v. Lighting cannot exceed 300 candle power; and
    vi. Do not present a safety issue to the riding public or driver; and

vii. Do not interfere or alter the vehicle's safety features.

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

G. Floor standards
   i. Covering materials will be secure and free of rips and folds.
   ii. Mats and carpet will not have any visible stains or discoloration and must be free of offensive odors.
   iii. Floors will be clear and kept free of any objects.

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

I. Body standards:
   i. Body shall not have any major dents or other damage.
   ii. Body must be free of rust, cracks, or other damage visible upon visual inspection. Any cited rust or damage must be repaired within fourteen (14) days of citation and re-inspected for compliance.
   iii. Paint must be in good condition showing no oxidation or chipping. Touch-up paint must match existing paint and blend smoothly.
   iv. Grilles may only have minor damage.
   v. No torn, wrinkled, faded, or missing lettering, striping, or decals are permitted.
   vi. Four matching hubcaps are required.
   vii. No broken or cracked lights or lenses are permitted.
   viii. All molding, mirrors, and antennas must be securely attached and in usable condition.
   ix. Bumpers must be properly attached and in good condition with no holes and free of unapproved stickers and decals.
   x. Cruise lights must be securely attached, free of damage and tape, and without any missing letters.

J. Trunk
   i. No transportation of flammable liquids or materials are permitted.

ii. Trunk must be without major stains and odors.
iii. Objects in trunk must be contained.
iv. Trunk must have a bottom liner and acceptable space for passenger luggage.
v. Trunk latch must be operable.

K. Tires
i. Center tread must have a minimum tread of 2/32" and be free of all cuts, breaks, or bald spots.
ii. Tires must be inflated to rated standards.

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

M. Doors:
i. Inside and outside door locks and handles must be fully intact and operational.
ii. Handles, knobs, and armrests must be fully intact and operational.
iii. Door panels must be without stains or odors and must be intact with no tears. Panels must match vehicle interior.
iv. Door hinges and tops must function properly and securely.
v. Door seals and gaskets must be intact.

N. Taximeter Guidelines
i. Smart taximeter must clearly display the total trip cost, including extras and any additional charges during the trip and at trip completion.
ii. Front seat driver consoles must be affixed to the vehicle and not to be used as a direct communication device (e.g. cell phone).
iii. Front seat driver console screen must be a minimum of seven (7) inches measured diagonally.
iv. Screen size between five (5) inches measured diagonally permissible if a backseat console is visible to the passenger.

O. Miscellaneous
i. Taxicab owners have thirty (30) days to produce vehicle title but must show proof of purchase/ownership prior to license issuance.
ii. Peddling from the vehicle is prohibited.
iii. Taxicab identification numbers may not be transferred to other vehicles currently licensed as taxicabs.
iv. Vehicles must be equipped with an operable heater and air conditioner, which must be used if requested by transported passenger.

VII. Livery Vehicle

A. No Livery Owner license shall be renewed for any vehicle older than eight (8) years old, as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
i. The vehicle age limit requirement shall not apply to 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 VFH Board.
3. Wheel chair accessible vans.
4. Stretch limousines, which have under 350,000 miles and approval from the Director.

B. As of January 31, 2013, no new Livery Owner license issuance or vehicle transfer shall be granted to any vehicle:
   i. With over 200,000 miles
   ii. Titled with a mileage discrepancy
   iii. Titled with a rebuilt salvage

C. All livery vehicles shall be inspected annually by a certified ASE 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.

D. No passenger vehicle for hire shall display any advertising assemblies other than those outlined specifically by Rules and Regulations.

E. 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 Director of Building and Zoning Services prior to mounting on any passenger vehicle for hire. In reviewing advertising assemblies for approval, the Director of Building and Zoning Services shall approve only those advertising assemblies that:
   i. Do not obscure any required vehicle markings, including the color scheme; and
   ii. Do not add more than eighteen (18) inches to the overall height of the vehicle; and
   iii. Do not extend beyond the edge of the front windshield or rear window; and
   iv. Are securely mounted to the top of the vehicle; and
   v. Which lighting cannot exceed 300 candle power; and
   vi. Do not present a safety issue to the riding public or driver; and
   vii. Do not interfere or alter the vehicle's safety features.

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

G. Floor standards
   i. Covering materials will be secure and free of rips and folds.
   ii. Mats and carpet will not have any visible stains or discoloration and must be free of offensive odors.
   iii. Floors will be clear and kept free of any objects.

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

I. Body standards:
    i. Body shall not have any major dents or other damage.
    ii. Body must be free of rust, cracks, or other damage visible upon visual inspection. Any cited rust or damage must be repaired within fourteen (14) days of citation and re-inspected for compliance.
    iii. Paint must be in good condition showing no oxidation or chipping. Touch-up paint must match existing paint and blend smoothly.
    iv. Grilles may only have minor damage.
    v. No torn, wrinkled, faded, or missing lettering, striping, or decals are permitted.
    vi. Four matching hubcaps are required.
    vii. No broken or cracked lights or lenses are permitted.
    viii. All molding, mirrors, and antennas must be securely attached and in usable condition.
    ix. Bumpers must be properly attached and in good condition with no holes and free of unapproved stickers and decals.
    x. Cruise lights must be securely attached, free of damage and tape, and without any missing letters.

J. Trunk
    i. No flammable liquids or materials are permitted.
    ii. Trunk must be without major stains and odors.
    iii. Objects in trunk must be contained.
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    v. Trunk latch must be operable.

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    i. Center tread must have a minimum tread of 2/32" and be free of all cuts, breaks, or bald spots.
    ii. Tires must be inflated to rated standards.

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

M. Doors:

i. Inside and outside door locks and handles must be fully intact and operational.
ii. Handles, knobs, and armrests must be fully intact and operational.
iii. Door panels must be without stains or odors and must be intact with no tears. Panels must match vehicle interior.
iv. Door hinges and tops must function properly and securely.
v. Door seals and gaskets must be intact.

N. Miscellaneous
i. Livery owners have thirty (30) days to produce vehicle title but must show proof of purchase/ownership prior to license issuance.
ii. Peddling from the vehicle is prohibited.
iii. Vehicles must be equipped with an operable heater and air conditioner, which must be used if requested by transported passenger.

VIII. Pedicab Vehicle

A. Identification of pedicabs, the name of the owner or the business (DBA), and the pedicab number shall be placed on the top rear of the pedicab. The lettering shall comply with the required specifications in Columbus City Code 592.04.
B. No Vehicle for Hire shall display any advertising assemblies other than those specifically stated within Rules and Regulations:
i. The advertising assemblies or sign(s) shall not obscure any required pedicab markings, lighting, or decals.
ii. The advertising assemblies or sign(s) shall not interfere or alter the pedicab's safety features.
C. In reference to Columbus City Code 592.07, the required signage 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 advise the parent/guardian of the helmet requirement in CCC 2173.02(b) prior to the loading of any passengers.

IX. Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab Vehicle

A. License Requirements
i. All owner applicants applying for a Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab license 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.
ii. Owner/Operators of such taxicabs shall provide 24/7 dispatch service to the riding public.
iii. Owner/Operators of such taxicabs shall provide priority service to passengers requesting Wheelchair/Specialty taxicab service.
iv. Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab licenses shall not be transferrable.
v. The owner of the Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab license shall notify the License Section immediately upon
B. Vehicle Requirements
i. No Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicab license shall be issued to any vehicle:

1. Older than six (6) years as determined by the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
2. With over 200,000 miles.
3. Titled with a mileage discrepancy.
4. Titled as a rebuilt salvage.

ii. All owners of Wheelchair/Specialty Taxicabs and driver of such Taxicabs shall comply with all existing Columbus City Codes and Vehicle for Hire Rules and Regulations pertaining to Taxicab Owners/Vehicle for Hire Drivers.

iii. All operators of 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 vehicle.
1. The credit card transaction device must be accessible to the passenger at the time of the transaction.

iv. Owner/Operators must submit trip sheets upon demand to the License Section at any time as ordered by the License Section.

v. 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.

vi. Vehicle inspections are conducted at the time of license issuance and at the time of each subsequent renewal.

X. Soiled Interior Fee

A. In the event that a Vehicle for Hire vehicle licensed by the City of Columbus becomes soiled with bodily fluids or solids by an inebriated passenger, up to a $75.00 clean-up 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 VFH driver must verbally advise the inebriated passenger of such fee and point out the posted notice prior to the beginning of the fare.

B. Exemptions:
i. Children or sober passengers that are ill or become ill
ii. Childbirth

XI. Vehicle for Hire Driver

A. Driver Standards
i. Clothing must be clean, without stains, discoloration, or odor and without profanity or sexually suggestive images.
ii. Driver must treat clients respectfully and without using profanity or unprofessional language.

XII. Professional Vehicle for Hire Driver

A. Valid for three (3) years from end of issuance month

B. Any applicant who meets the following qualifications may apply for a Professional VFH Driver license:
i. Five (5) or more years as a licensed City of Columbus VFH Driver
ii. Current certification as an ECI (Experience Columbus Insider)
iii. Must not be in six (6) point warning status on Bureau of Motor Vehicles abstract at any point while holding this designation

iv. Shall not have any unresolved complaints with the City of Columbus

C. The following annual requirements must be submitted to maintain valid status:
   i. Current (dated within past thirty (30) days) BMV driver abstract
   ii. Updated BCI background check
   iii. Proof of ECI recertification

XIII. Enforcement, Denial, Revocation, Suspension and Termination

A. A violation of any section of the Vehicle for Hire Rules and Regulations shall be grounds for the suspension or revocation of the Vehicle for Hire Owner or Driver license by the Director of the Department of Building and Zoning Services.

These Rules and Regulations are hereby approved by the Director of Building and Zoning Services as of January 14, 2025.