

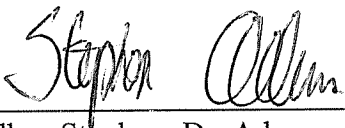


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Halifax Regional Council

October 3, 2006

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Councillor Stephen D. Adams, Chair, Taxi and limousine Advisory Committee

**DATE:** September 14, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Taxi Driver Safety Systems Report

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

On January 10 2006, a request for information was submitted to the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee from Councillor Younger (attached as Appendix A). The information report to Regional Council is to advise whether driver shields and or cameras should be a requirement of taxi licence holders and whether the security improvements should be voluntary or mandatory.

**BACKGROUND**

Recent escalation of violence towards taxi drivers.

## DISCUSSION

The Committee and Staff have undertaken the following initiatives:

- researched taxi driver safety options used in other major municipalities and a few private sector companies. The results of which are attached as Appendix B & C;
- assisted the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and labour Occupational Health and Safety with a review of relationships with various stakeholders in the industry;
- at the March 10, 2006 Committee meeting, Mr Kozubal, Secretary of the Taxicab Board of Winnipeg provided details on the initiatives undertaken by the Winnipeg , Manitoba Taxi Board regarding driver safety;
- reviewed the results of a taxi safety survey, distributed to members of the HRM taxi industry, regarding their wishes. The results of which are attached as Appendix D;
- received information from various suppliers and participated in a demonstration on safety devices currently used in the taxi industry; and
- at the June 8, 2006 Committee meeting, Mr. Vince Garnier, Provincial Manager for the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and labour Occupational Health and Safety, presented finding of the relationship review (attached as Appendix E) and again offered his Departments assistance with education & information materials.

Research results from other major municipalities and private sector companies (attached as Appendix B & C) indicate most regions mandating safety devices, leveled a surcharge on taxi rates to off set costs. The most commonly used tools in addressing taxi driver safety has been:

- vehicle cameras, recording passenger and driver activities;
- protective shields, (full shields) isolates the front seating compartment from the rear, or (individual shields) isolates the driver area only;
- GPS dispatching systems that track vehicle movements locations;
- emergency lighting system, Emergency Call 911 Help Required. System is activated by the driver when emergency assistance is required, visible by passing motorists or pedestrians;
- personal safety and crime prevention training for owners and operators.

The HRM taxi industry has indicated the preferred course of action via survey results and comments to the Taxi Advisory Committee:

- safety measures should not be mandated;
- surcharges should not be added to the taxi fare;
- owners and operators maintain the option to select their own safety measures such as but not limited to Cameras and Shields;
- establish a Government Grant or Assisted Purchase Program to assist owners and operators who wish to install safety equipment;
- establish better communications and response procedures with local police and 911 in responding to taxi industry incidents; and
- establish a personal safety and crime prevention training program for taxi owner/operator.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications as a result of this report.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Halifax Regional Council may elect to mandate taxi driver safety devices and introduce a surcharge on taxi fares to assist with the costs of the mandated safety device or devices.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Appendix A: Councillor Request for Information, dated January 10, 2006
- Appendix B: National Survey Chart, Taxi Safety Systems
- Appendix C: Private Sector Survey Chart, Taxi Safety Systems
- Appendix D: Taxi Drivers Survey Results, dated May 9, 2006
- Appendix E: Letter from the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and labour Occupational Health and Safety, finding of the relationship review, dated April 11, 2006

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report approved by: Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee.



### Councillor Request for Information

✓ **Included on Agenda**  
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office  
by Noon Thursday)

**Added Item**  
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office  
by Noon Monday)

**Date of Council Meeting:** January 10, 2006

**Subject:** Taxi Driver Safety

**Request:** Please add the above item to the January 10<sup>th</sup> agenda

**Reason:** While the issue of taxi driver safety has been debated in previous years at Council, given the recent murder of a Dartmouth taxi driver, I would like the Taxi and Limosine Advisory Committee to provide a report to Council answering whether driver shields and/or cameras should be required of taxi license holders.

Included should be commentary on the Winnipeg model whereby a \$0.25 surcharge was added to meters for 2 years to pay for the cost of installation, which uses a removable bubble type shield, thus allowing cab drivers to continue personal use of the vehicle without the shield installed.

The committee should also comment on whether any recommended security improvements should be voluntary or mandatory.

**I would like this response as:**

- Email to Mayor and/or Councillor/Municipal Clerk's Office
- Memo to Mayor and/or Councillor/Municipal Clerk's Office
- Information Report to  Community Council      ✓ Regional Council
- Recommendation Report to  Community Council       Regional Council

Andrew Younger

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Councillor

District (Number)

National Survey Taxi Safety Systems

Appendix B

Jurisdiction	Safety Device	Optional or Mandated	Cost Recovery Assistance	Results
Vancouver	Camera's Installed by February 28, 2005	Mandated BC Motor Carrier Commission February 27, 2004	Fifteen cent increase for one year on the drop rate, ended March 26, 2005	"Industry has advised that violent acts against taxi drivers have been drastically reduced". No Statistical data provided
Quebec Ministry of Transportation (Provincial)	Not aware of any systems being used	Optional	N/A	N/A
Manitoba Ministry of Transportation (Provincial)	Floating Shield & Camera's	Mandated Ministry of Transportation Camera's May 2002 Shields January 2003	A Twenty five cent surcharge added to the taxi fare for two years. - First year for the camera's - Second year for the shields	79% drop in violent acts against taxi drivers from 2001 to 2003
Mississauga	Camera's Robbery Prevention Training Voluntary system include: emergency switches, GPS dispatching & hidden microphones	Camera's mandated by Municipal By-law October 2005 Voluntary system include: emergency switches, GPS dispatching & hidden microphones	The cost of the camera's will be added to the taxi fare and amortized over five year period Still working out the details	Too early to say what the affect. The requirement was only introduced in October 2005.
City of Calgary	Camera's, Flashing Light, GPS. Shields were experimented with by a few drivers but later removed	Optional	N/A	No data Available

Appendix "B"

APPENDIX "B"

Jurisdiction	Safety Device	Optional or Mandated	Cost Recovery Assistance	Results
Saskatoon	Not aware of any systems being used	Optional	N/A	N/A
Ottawa	Camera's, GPS with AVL locating systems	Mandated Effective March 1 <sup>st</sup> 2008	Increase of ten cents to the drop rate to cover installation and maintenance costs	N/A
Hamilton	Emergency Light System. Dec 2004 Camera's and GPS by 2008	Emergency Light system mandated December 2004. Also mandated at the same time were camera's and GPS systems to be installed by 2008	Currently working on details of cost assistance program	Emergency lighting system had limited affect
Windsor	GPS dispatching system A consultants study is currently being done on this subject	Optional	N/A	N/A
Toronto	Emergency Lights, Camera's or GPS. Shields are optional	Mandated in 2000 (camera's or GPS) Recent amendment, now mandates all 3 systems must be installed by July 1 2006	No cost recovery system implemented Responsibility of the licenced owner	Licencing Division indicated the camera's have had the biggest impact and greatly reduced attacks. 1997 - 743 incidents 2002 - 314 incidents
Edmonton	Camera, GPS System, Exterior panic button & inside trunk release	All system are currently still in discussion stage to be mandated. Shields will remain optional	None at this time but discussion are still on going	N/A Systems not in place as yet
Fredericton	Not aware of any systems being used Driver Safety Training	Optional	All posts would fall to the taxicab broker and or business owner	N/A
Halifax	Camera, shield, GPS dispatching, Panic Buttons	Optional	N/A	N/A

Appendix C

Private Sector Taxi Safety Systems

Saskatoon Radio Cabs	Not aware of any systems in use. Driver assaults not a big issue, robbery is. Maybe considering camera's	Optional	N/A	N/A
Associated Cabs (Red Deer)	Camera Installed by Broker November 2002	Optional	N/A	Company Owner indicates a significant drop in violent acts against taxi drivers
Associated Cabs (Calgary)	Company installed Cameras and GPS dispatch system Company safety course for all drivers	Optional	N / A	Company indicated attacks on taxi drivers have basically been eliminated, camera's were found to be most popular option for the drivers and the public.

Appendix "D"

# **Taxi Drivers Survey Results**

Sponsored by:

**Halifax Association of County Zone Cab Drivers**

**H.I.A.A. Taxi Drivers Committee**

**Halifax Taxi Drivers Association**

**May 9, 2006**



## Appendix "D"

## PREVIEW

This survey was started in March 2006 in response to provincial and municipal concerns for taxi driver safety. There was a planned move by the Provincial Department of Labour to influence HRM to consider going beyond the status quo of this time which is that taxi drivers have a free choice whether or not to install safety devices such as cameras and shields. Many of the drivers voiced concern over this potential change of policy. This concern has led the representative organizations to undertake this survey.

Just prior to the decision to do this survey the HTDA executive committee had some surprising insights into how the policy makers view the taxi business. In a meeting with the Nova Scotia Department of Labour it was learned that from their point of view, all taxi drivers did the same job and all were equally at risk.

It was pointed out at that meeting there are at least three distinctly different types of taxi operation and three distinct areas of driver risk. The provincial official was most helpful on discovering this reality and it was he who suggested the concept of risk assessment that you see featured as part of this survey.

There will be a more complete explanation under the heading of Risk Assessment but for this preview it is worth noting that taxi driver risk in HRM falls into three categories: Extremely Low Risk, Medium Risk and High Risk.

This survey was issued with approximately 500 copies distributed in 3 zones (Dartmouth, County and Halifax) and the airport. There were 211 completed surveys returned as of May 9, 2006. The total number of taxi roof lights in HRM is 1000. With the acknowledgement that a small number of roof lights cover more than one driver we can say statistics drawn from the survey are based on returns from approximately 21% of the drivers in HRM. Commonly a survey will draw only 1500 samples from a population of 300,000 to test public attitudes. This represents .05% of that population and allows statisticians to claim their normal degree of accuracy which may be correct to within three percentage points plus or minus 27 out of 28 times. This survey because of the high sample rate, near 21%, can

confidently claim accuracy approaching that of polling professionals.

There is an anomaly associated with this survey which must be addressed in this preview. Upon receiving the return sheets it was noticed that responses were very low from the Dartmouth zone with only 7% of surveys returned.

The reason for this low rate of return is that there are no active drivers' association in the Dartmouth Zone. Further complicating that problem is that there is no designated taxi driver representative from the Dartmouth Zone on the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee to whom this responsibility might have been given (as survey coordinator).

However it must be pointed out that regardless of low returns from Dartmouth the drivers from the County Zone and the Halifax Zone stand as a reliable source of information for this survey.

As mentioned earlier survey returns equaled a total of 211. There were in fact 216 returns but 5 were spoiled and rejected. Also in this preview most answers to questions 1 through 5 do not create 211 'yes', 'no' or 'undecided' combined totals. This is because of skipped or undecipherable responses. The statistics in this report therefore are based on totals of responses to individual questions rather than on the number of 211 surveys returned.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

SHOULD TAXI COMPANIES BE REQUIRED TO TRAIN THEIR  
DISPATCHERS IN RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS?

**YES 84.4%**

**NO 4.8%**

**UNDECIDED 6.75%**

SHOULD SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS BE MANDATORY?

**YES 12.8%**

**NO 74.9%**

**UNDECIDED 12.3%**

SHOULD PROTECTIVE SHIELDS BE MANDATORY?

**YES 10.7%**

**NO 81.5%**

**UNDECIDED 7.8%**

IF "YES" TO EITHER OF THE ABOVE, DO YOU REQUIRE FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE TO PURCHASE AND INSTALL SAFETY EQUIPMENT?

**YES 91%**

**NO 8.8%**

TO PAY FOR SAFETY EQUIPMENT, WOULD YOU AGREE TO ADDING AN  
EXTRA SURCHARGE ON THE METER?

**YES 29.5%**

**NO 54%**

**UNDECIDED 16.3%**

# RISK ASSESSMENT

THIS SURVEY DOES NOT MAKE CLAIM TO A SCIENTIFIC STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RISK TO TAXI DRIVERS IN HRM. ALTHOUGH THE CONCEPT OF RISK ASSESSMENT IS A SOUND ONE THERE WAS NEITHER TIME NOR EXPERTICE TO ADEQUATELY EXPLORE THE AREA. A TRUE RISK ASSESSMENT WOULD BE DONE MORE COMPREHENSIVELY THEN BY A SURVEY. IT WOULD INVOLVE THE ENTIRE WORK FORCE OF TAXI DRIVERS AND WOULD BE A WORTHY PROJECT FOR HRM OR THE PROVINCE TO SPONSOR IF CONSIDERING PASSING LEGISLATION ON THE USE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

THE VALUES IN THIS SURVEY PLACED ON RISK ARE ARBITRARY BUT ARE BASED ON TWO HISTORICALLY EXCEPTED PRINCIPALS IN OUR BUSINESS. FIRST THAT NIGHT DRIVERS ARE AT THE HIGHEST RISK IN HRM. SECOND THAT DAY DRIVERS, AIRPORT DRIVERS AND PREARRANGED DRIVERS HAVE NEGLIGABLE RISK. WE WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO POLICY MAKERS THAT TWO EXTREMES EXIST AND THAT BLANKET POLICIES FOR SAFETY ARE NOT JUSTIFIED. THIS SECTION ON RISK ASSESSMENT SERVES THAT PURPOSE VERY WELL.

## RISK ASSESSMENT SURVEY DATA

**LOW RISK VALUES 1 to 3.5 .....55%**

**MEDIUM RISK VALUES 3.6 to 6.5.....15.6%**

**HIGH RISK VALUES 6.6 to 10.....29.4%**

**Note: The lowest risk assessment values were seen with the survey returns from Airport Licensed drivers. Their risk value averaged 1.7. One criticism of this survey was that there**

was no value lower than one. If the value had been subdivided there would have been an even lower score in this group. There is justification for this suggestion. In a telephone interview with Mr. Wayne Black of the Halifax International Airport Authority and member of the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee on April 28/06 he stated that there was no record of violence to any taxi driver whose fare originated at the Halifax International Airport.

## **CLOSING**

There is no doubt about the outcome of this survey. Taxi drivers in HRM want to maintain the status quo that is they want to have the choice to have safety shields and or cameras in their cars or not.

Before closing we would like policy makers to consider one other thing. In reference to the risk assessment we have combined the percentages for drivers at medium risk and high risk to show the total of 45%. That is 24% of the drivers in HRM are exposed to risk of ascending consideration. Also 55% of drivers are exposed to negligible risk. This suggests again that there are those who would benefit from safety equipment and those to whom it would be useless.

This survey shows also that those who would benefit from protection would be protected sooner with financial assistance to do so.

There are many observations and suggestions heard while doing this survey. One that stands out was from an interview with Kim Demont, manager of Bobs' Taxi

**in Dartmouth. She summarized the feelings of many of the drivers when she suggested that an immediate review of police and 911 response procedures should be undertaken. She recounted examples of Dartmouth taxi drivers' experiences that truly suggested dialogue and negotiation be opened with HRM Police.**

**This survey may have served its' best purpose if this concern of police response is investigated by the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee.**

# Taxi Drivers Survey

Sponsored by:

**Halifax Association of County Zone Cab Drivers**  
**H.I.A.A. Taxi Drivers Committee**  
**Halifax Taxi Drivers Association**

In the near future, HRM council will be discussing taxi driver safety. There is a possibility that HRM will choose the option of making mandatory (ie. forcing) all drivers to install surveillance cameras or protective shields, or both. We feel that the consensus of the drivers of HRM should be the determining factor in this debate. This survey is meant to find that consensus.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Values:    Low = 1  
                  Medium low = 2.5  
                  Medium = 5  
                  Medium high = 7.5  
                  High = 10

When and where do you work? Using the above chart, put the number in the boxes that applies to your driving schedule. Then, add these numbers and divide by the number of boxes you filled in

- HRM - Night only (High risk)
- HRM - Day only (Medium risk)
- HRM - Some days & nights (Medium high risk)
- Hfx. International Airport (Low risk)
- Cruise ships (Low risk)
- Prearranged (Low Risk)
- Other

My risk assessment value is ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

1. Should taxi companies be required to train their dispatchers in responding to emergency situations?  YES  NO  UNDECIDED

2. Should surveillance cameras be mandatory?  YES  NO  UNDECIDED

3. Should protective shields be mandatory?  YES  NO  UNDECIDED

4. If "YES" to either of the above, do you require financial assistance to purchase and install safety equipment?

Check one only:  NO HELP  SOME HELP  REQUIRE FULL ASSISTANCE

5. To pay for safety equipment, would you agree to adding an extra surcharge on the meter?  YES  NO  UNDECIDED

For accuracy and security, please check one of the following:

Are you an owner /driver?

Are you a driver only?

Which zone do you work in?

Halifax  Dartmouth  County  Airport

Roof Light Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Optional**

If you would like to receive information or surveys like this in the future, or if you would like to receive information about your association, please complete the following:

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Original Concept .....Bob Richards  
Garry Jollymore

Original Draft.....Garry Jollymore

Final Draft  
Halifax Taxi Drivers' Association  
Halifax International Airport Taxi Committee  
Halifax Association of County Cabs

Survey Design.....Lynn Isnor

Distribution      Thanks to Kim Demont of Bobs' Taxi,  
Office of Yellow Cab,  
Office of Casino Taxi,  
Office of Satellite Taxi,  
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April 11, 2006

Mr. Kevin Hindle  
Halifax Taxi Commission  
Halifax, NS

Sent via Fax

Dear Mr. Hindle:

Re: Application of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in the Taxi Industry

This letter is to confirm our previous discussions regarding the relationship between the parties involved in the taxi industry and how the OHS Act is to be applied should occupational health and safety issues arise.

~~The OHS Act is applied based on the employment or business relationship between the parties. I have described what I believe is the typical arrangements, but a specific set of circumstances could vary the relationship and our analysis.~~

In the relationships that exist, there is typically no employer/employee nexus. However, in most cases, there are either implied or written contracts for service.

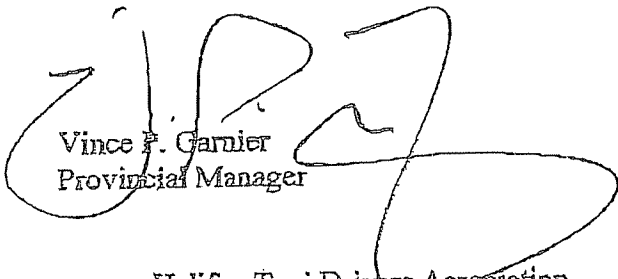
From our analysis, the license holder would have the primary responsibility for ensuring the OHS laws are complied with as the driver would usually be a "dependent contractor" within the meaning of the legislation. There may be circumstances where the taxi driver may also be the license holder. Under this circumstance, the taxi driver would be the person with the greater degree of authority and control to manage health and safety risks. Therefore, if the OHS officer believes it is necessary to take enforcement action to ensure compliance, s/he may, based on the violation, issue an Order for the license holder/driver to respond to the issue.

The broker, unless s/he is the license holder, does not have an employer/employee-like relationship with the taxi driver, based on the provisions of the OHS Act. The broker would be a contractor to either the driver or the license holder and responsible to provide some services.

The OHS Division is pleased to be able to work with the Halifax Taxi Commission and the Halifax Taxi Drivers Association to identify opportunities to increase the occupational health and safety awareness throughout the taxi industry. We look forward to suggestions on measures that may be implemented to increase the level of safety for the drivers.

Further, the OHS Division has offered to consult with the Commission and the Association, as representatives of the stakeholders, in the development of an educational booklet directed to violence in the taxi industry. I look forward to speaking with all of you on this worthy project.

Regards,



Vince P. Garnier  
Provincial Manager

c. Halifax Taxi Drivers Association