

Taxi and Limousine Commission wants to remove probationary licenses for rookie cabbies

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NEW YORK DAILY NEWS TRANSIT REPORTER

Wednesday, December 23, 2015, 9:01 PM



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The Taxi and Limousine Commission is proposing a package of rule changes that includes nixing probationary licenses for rookie taxi drivers.

The city's Taxi and Limousine Commission wants to nix probationary licenses for rookie cabbies, arguing it's too much of a burden on drivers and the agency to review thousands of newbies.

As part of a package of rule changes published this week, the proposal would overturn a Giuliani-era reform of the taxi industry for all TLC-regulated drivers.

A rep for a taxi drivers group ripped the TLC's proposal as a way to weaken standards at a time when full-time professional cabbies are facing stiff competition from part-time drivers looking to make a quick buck in the age of rideshare apps.

NYC TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMISSION WILL DELAY CRASH-TEST MANDATE FOR YELLOW CABS

"We do think it makes sense to have a different standard your first year in a profession that serves a million people a day," said Bhairavi Desai, director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance.

Right now, new drivers have less room to screw up during their first year on the road. A new driver with at least eight points on their license won't get it renewed and will have to reapply. More seasoned drivers can get 10 points on their license before it's revoked, according to the TLC.

Desai said she wants tougher standards to remain, though she would support ways for probationary cabbies to fix their bad driving.

"There's a difference between being unreasonably strict versus having a professional standard," she said.

TLC officials defended its effort to do away with the probationary period, arguing it keeps tabs on drivers who are impaired behind the wheel, get into serious collisions or caught driving recklessly too many times.

Out of nearly 30,000 probationary drivers to get reviewed this year, just 65 failed to renew their license.

To kick bad drivers off the road, the agency has Vision Zero street safety laws and a Critical Driver program that suspends cabbies who get six points within a 15-month period and pulls their licenses at 10 points.

"With already-existing programs accomplishing the same goal, removing this provision is a logical streamlining step that will help us devote more time to customer service," said TLC spokesman Allan Fromberg.

The TLC will hold a hearing on the proposals next month.

Former TLC chief Matt Daus, who helped write the Giuliani administration's taxi reforms, said the probationary period and other stringent rules improved the quality of the industry.

“We need to make sure we have proper safeguards in place to maintain New York City as the gold standard for safety,” he said.

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