



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## Finance and Administrative Services

Fred Podesta, Director

Applicant:  City of Seattle  Department of Finance and Administrative Services	Page:  1 of 6	Revises:  New		
	Publication:  04/07/2015	Effective:  5/5/2015		
Director's Rule:  CPU-07-2015	Code and Section Reference:  SMC 6.310.175			
	Type of Rule:  Code Interpretation			
	Ordinance Authority:  SMC 3.02.060			
Approved:   _____ Fred Podesta, Director			 _____ Date	

## City of Seattle Taxicab and For-Hire Vehicle Rules

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### Director's Rule – Reimbursement from the Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund

The following rule provides guidance for distributing funds to Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) drivers and owners as required by Seattle Municipal Code.

#### General

The City created the Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund (the Fund) to ensure the continued viability of accessible service throughout the city. Until August 14, 2016 or until such time that the Director promulgates additional rules, only the drivers and owners of the 45 City-licensed WATs operating on the effective date of Ordinance 124524 – August 14, 2014 – will have access to the Fund. Following that date, and based on data provided by the industry and through community input, the City will determine the Fund eligibility of additional accessible vehicles, including those affiliated with for-hire vehicle companies and with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs).

The City estimates a funding level of \$850,000 annually, \$212,500 per full quarter. The dollar amounts outlined in this rule are based on this estimate. Should the funding amount be less than that estimated for the reporting quarter, the City will prorate the Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Operating reimbursement and the Maintenance and Equipment reimbursements based on the available funding.

The costs eligible for reimbursement from the WAS fund have been divided into three categories as described below:

**Dispatched Wheelchair Passenger Trip Calls:** This category includes any trip where a Wheelchair Passenger Trip is dispatched to provide wheelchair passenger trip service. The reimbursement associated with this category was established with consideration for the additional travel time, distance and the load and unload time associated with picking up a wheelchair passenger trip.

**Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Operating Costs:** The costs associated with this reimbursement include the ongoing costs of operating a larger, less fuel-efficient vehicle. Because WATs must be wheelchair accessible, and therefore larger, the fuel efficiency is much less than that of the industry standard vehicle, the Prius. The reimbursement for this was calculated based on the difference in gas mileage between the Toyota Prius and the Toyota Sienna or equivalent vehicle:

$$\left( \left( \frac{\text{Miles traveled annually by each taxicab}}{\text{Average miles per gallon for Toyota Prius}} \right) * \text{Average cost of gasoline in Seattle} \right) - \left( \frac{\text{Miles traveled annually by each taxicab}}{\text{Average miles per gallon for Toyota Sienna}} \right) * \text{Average cost of gasoline in Seattle} \right) / 365 \text{ days in a year}$$

**Maintenance and Equipment Costs:** The costs associated with this reimbursement were calculated based on the costs of purchasing, retrofitting, or maintaining an existing vehicle to be wheelchair accessible. The industry estimates were up to \$11,000 per vehicle for ramp installation alone. The reimbursement for this category was calculated to be up to 1/3 of the cost of a vehicle retrofit and any additional associated accessible service maintenance costs annually.

#### **A. Driver Expenses**

The following expenses related to driver costs of operating a WAT in the City of Seattle are eligible for reimbursement:

1. **Dispatched WPT Calls.** Wheelchair Passenger Trips (WPT) dispatched for pickup within the Seattle city limits will be reimbursed at a rate of \$20 per trip. This is intended to account for the added pickup and drop off time associated with these trips as well as the additional costs of travelling greater distances to pick up a Wheelchair Passenger Trip call.

##### *Eligibility*

To be eligible for the Dispatched WPT Call reimbursement, documentation of the Dispatched WPT Call must be submitted to the City by the Taxicab Association on behalf of the driver(s) within 30 days following the end of the month in which the trip was dispatched. The City's Consumer Protection Unit must receive:

- A copy of the dispatch record that includes the Association name, taxi number, driver name, and time and date of the trip.
- A copy of the WPT form from the driver that includes the Association name, taxi number, driver name, time and date of the trip, and the pickup and drop off location of the requested trip.

##### *Taxi Association Obligation and Reimbursement*

The Taxicab Association must reimburse drivers on a weekly basis for WPT trips and must then submit dispatch records, corresponding WPT forms and invoices for reimbursed trips to the City of Seattle's Consumer Protection Unit for reimbursement on a monthly basis. The Taxicab Association may charge a service fee of no more than 3% of the Dispatched WPT Call reimbursement to drivers.

The Taxicab Association must also submit a monthly record of the number of shifts each WAT was in operation. For purposes of this rule only, a shift is defined as a period of no less than four hours where a driver operates a WAT within a 24 hour period.

Companies that are not in compliance with SMC 6.310.540(data reporting) and companies or licensees that are not in compliance with SMC 6.310.175 (Wheelchair Accessible Services Fund) are not eligible for reimbursement through the Fund.

##### *Driver Obligation and Reimbursement*

Drivers must submit their WPT forms weekly to their Taxicab Association. Each Taxicab Association will reimburse drivers based on matching WPT forms and dispatch records.

The City will consider eligible expenses for dispatched WPT calls starting November 12, 2014. Dispatch records, WPT forms, and invoices for trips dispatched from November 12, 2014 – April 30, 2015 must be submitted by July 31, 2015.

2. **Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Operating Costs.** To account for the higher operating costs of driving a WAT, including higher fuel costs due to larger vehicle requirements to ensure accessibility, a wheelchair accessible taxicab medallion holder may charge no more than \$15 per shift, \$105 per week, or \$420 per month less than the lease cap specified in the Director's rule on Taxicab vehicle lease caps. This wheelchair accessible taxicab lease cap change shall commence on June 1, 2015 and must be recorded on the "Taxicab Lease Summary Sheet."

## **B. Owner Expenses**

The following expenses related to owner costs of operating a WAT in the City of Seattle are eligible for reimbursement:

1. **Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Operating Costs.** Each licensee is eligible to receive up to \$15 per shift that the vehicle is in operation to offset the higher operating costs, including fuel costs, associated with operating a WAT. This reimbursement for higher operating costs is passed on to lease drivers through the reduced lease cap.

### *Eligibility*

To be eligible for this reimbursement the owner must:

- Demonstrate through dispatch records the number of shifts that the vehicle was active. For purposes of this rule only, a shift must be a minimum of four hours per day and no more than two shifts per day are eligible for reimbursement. The shifts must be performed by two different drivers.
- Operating shift data must be submitted no later than 30 days after the month in which the operating shift occurred.

### *Owner Reimbursement*

Should the funding level not be sufficient to cover the full costs associated with the WAT Operating Cost maximum reimbursement of \$15 per shift, reimbursements will be prorated based on available funds. The reimbursement period for the WAT Operating Costs and the associated lease cap change shall commence on June 1, 2015.

2. **Maintenance and Equipment Costs.** Each medallion holder is eligible for annual maintenance and equipment reimbursement at a rate of up to \$3,500 annually.

### *Eligibility*

To be eligible for this reimbursement, the medallion holder must demonstrate that the vehicle has been in operation a minimum of 30 hours per week for at least twenty-six weeks per year in the previous calendar year. Medallion holders must submit itemized receipts for maintenance and equipment costs that have been incurred in the previous

three years. Reimbursable costs must be related to the costs of installing, repairing, or replacing vehicle equipment related to wheelchair accessibility. Eligible equipment costs include:

- Accessible Ramps
- Axles
- Brakes
- Transmissions

Vehicle operation data, receipts and reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than February 28 of the following calendar year in which the vehicle was operated.

*Owner Reimbursement*

Should the total funds available in the WAS fund not be sufficient, the \$3500 Maintenance and Equipment Costs reimbursement will be prorated. The reimbursement period for the Maintenance and Equipment Costs shall commence on January 1, 2015.

**C. Reimbursement Transparency**

No later than June 15 of the following calendar year in which reimbursements from the Fund were made, the City will make publicly available by WAT (vehicle) number the annual dollar amounts reimbursed to the owner and driver(s).

Should Fund levels exceed the reimbursement amounts paid to WAT drivers and owners following two years of operation, the City will determine by rule the dispersal of the remaining funds or change in the Wheelchair Accessible Services fee to ensure continued accessible service in Seattle.

**D. Forms**

All forms and submissions described above shall be on forms and in a format approved by the Director.

**E. Minimum Fund Levels**

The Wheelchair Accessible Services shall always maintain a balance that is 5% greater than the projected disbursements in A1 for the following 30 days. If the balance is not maintained, contracted taxi associations shall be notified to prorate all payments to drivers.

**Table 1 – Reimbursement Summary**

<b>Rule Section</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Reimbursement Rate</b>	<b>Driver</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>A1</b>	Dispatched WPT Calls	\$20 per dispatched WPT request	\$20 per dispatched WPT request	Not available	Associations pay drivers and invoice the City monthly.
<b>A2 &amp; B1</b>	Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab Operating Costs	Up to \$15/shift (as prorated)	WAT lease cap: \$15 less per shift	Up to \$15/shift operated or leased (as prorated)	Owners invoice the City for every operational shift monthly.
<b>B2</b>	Maintenance and Equipment Costs	Up to \$3500/year (as prorated)	Not available	\$ Up to \$3500/year (as prorated)	City directly pays owners annually.