

ADMINISTRATION, TAXIS & ACCESSIBLE SERVICES DIVISION
Monthly Report
October 2009

TAXIS

- **Weights & Measures certification of taximeters:** The Department of Public Health, Weights and Measures (DPHWM), which inspects taximeters pursuant to state regulations, has identified a concern regarding some Pulsar brand taximeters installed with Verifone debit card equipment because the Pulsar meter is configured to accept communications from the taximeter. The Taxi Section, Booz Allen Hamilton and the Paratransit Broker are working to identify and resolve the issue, which appears to relate to the configuration of the Pulsar meter, and is apparently not a problem with the debit card equipment.

A meeting was held on October 20, attended by Dr. Rajiv Bhatia and Miguel Monroy of DPHWM, Deputy City Attorneys Robin Reitzes and Terence Howzell, Project Manager Fariba Mahmoudi, Annette Williams and Jarvis Murray of the SFMTA ATAS, Marc Soto of Veolia Transportation and Brinley Owen of Booz Allen Hamilton, consultant for the debit card project.

The primary issue related to the type of communication the meter could receive. The meters had already been modified at DPHWM request to eliminate two-way communication between the driver and the computer; however the driver's ability to input amounts for tips and extras (i.e. tolls) remained an unresolved issue.

The outcome of this meeting was that both Verifone and Wireless Edge will be required to seek "type certification" of the equipment through the State of California. Type certification can take between four months and two years. Therefore, a temporary allowance was granted by DPHWM to allow the input of tips and extras through the MDT interface for credit/debit card transactions as long as this input in no way modifies the metered fare or changes the meter's display amount. In addition, a temporary allowance was granted to enable the printing of a receipt for both paratransit debit cards and credit/debit card transactions. These allowances will remain in place until the equipment is certified by the State of California.

All previously inspected vehicles that were taken out of service due following DPHWM's prior inspections will be re-inspected, applying the referenced allowances while certification is pending.

- **New Driver Applications and Training:** The Taxi Section began accepting New Driver Applications effective 10. 27. During the first week are only accepting applications from prospective drivers who have already obtained a "Taxi Training Certification" from a certified taxi school between the dates of 09.18-10.16. The following week we will accept all applications.

This is a new function for the Taxi staff, as it used to be performed by the SFPD in the Hall of Justice.

The Taxi Section de-certified the Flag-a-Cab taxi school and is working review and approve the curriculum of a new driver school. We invited in two very seasoned drivers, Charles Rathbone and Dan Hinds to help us review the curriculum. The Taxi Driver training program includes a re-training every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Hall of Justice for drivers that receive complaints and are in violation of the regulations.

- **Regulations:** The Taxi Section staff consulted with the Hearing Section and took additional regulatory amendments to the Board on 10.20 in order to improve the hearing procedures based

on our experiences with the hearing process. The hearings involved with issuing medallions are particularly problematic, as we have designed a new process to supercede the cumbersome and irrational Proposition K procedures for new medallion issuance. The goal is to bring two more rounds of amendments, one in December and one in January, and then publish a rule book for distribution within the industry,

- **Charter Reform:** The Taxi Section has held 37 hours of town halls meetings in October, including three night meetings to accommodate day drivers. Participation has been vigorous and productive.

The last week of meetings included presentations of reform ideas by various interested parties. In November the Taxi Section will conduct extensive outreach on reform plans, with the hope of bringing a plan to the SFMTA Board of Directors in January.

- **Pending Permit Holder Enforcement Cases:** There are a number of significant medallion revocation cases that were originally scheduled to be heard in August, but that have been continued. Some of our most egregious violators will be re-scheduled until January of 2010. We expect to receive significant penalty revenue from medallion revocations in the most egregious factual cases. This will encourage other scofflaw medallion holders to turn in their medallions without putting us through lengthy appeals when they become the subject of our enforcement efforts. We hope to initiate large-scale revocation actions for blatant abusers as soon as possible. We expect to recover dozens of medallions through this enforcement process.
- **Illegal Operator Enforcement:** The Taxi Section worked with the City Attorney's Office to develop legal pleadings for California's first-ever judicial filing to remove illegal operator listings from the Yellow Pages pursuant to state law. We expect to file those pleadings within the next week before the Yellow Pages publication deadline so that we can prevent the illegal listings in the 2010 edition of the phone book.

Enforcement by the SFPD Traffic Company has been happening weekly; however, given the size of the problem the enforcement efforts have not been very visible. The Taxi Section is planning with SFPD a large-scale enforcement in order to generate publicity to educate the public about illegal operators, and to achieve higher enforcement visibility to the taxi industry.

- **Criminal Enforcement:** Criminal enforcement efforts are hampered by the fact that there is only one police officer left on the Taxi Detail, in spite of the funding that SFMTA provides for three officers and two clerks. There are pending criminal enforcement issues that we would urgently like to address, such as theft of deposits from drivers and illegal kickbacks to hotel doormen and airport personnel. There are no investigation resources available given the current makeup of the Taxi Detail.
- **Taxi Fleet Conversion to Hybrids:** The Mayor's Office inquired about the status of the conversion of the fleet, and reviewing the spreadsheet that had been developed by former employees, it was determined that there had been no data entry to update fleet information for about 6 months. The Mayor's Office loaned an intern to the Taxi Section for a few days to accomplish the data entry. Based on a rough count of un-entered data, it is highly likely that once that data is entered we will find ourselves at or near a 50% conversion status.
- **Operations and Permits:**
 - Seven additional Ramp Taxi permit offer letters were mailed out to drivers.

- 18 regular, alternative fuel and ramp medallions have been issued since the merge with SFMTA on 03.01 The first were issued in late July. Seven additional Ramp Taxi permit offer letters were mailed out in October.

Applications

| Type of Application: | Number of Applications Received: |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| New Driver | 0 |
| Public Convenience & Necessity | 4 |
| Taxi Medallion | 3 |
| Ramp Medallion | 1 |
| Color Scheme Change | 5 |

Permits Issued

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| New Driver | 112 |
| Taxi Medallion | 6 |
| Ramp Medallion | 1 |
| Color Scheme | 0 |
| Dispatch | 0 |

Other

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Number of Lost Medallions Reported | 1 |
| Temporary Medallions Issued | 1 |
| Temporary Permanent Medallions Issued | 0 |

Compliance and Training:

- With the assistance of our part-time clerk Donna Figone (on loan from Sustainable Streets), we have been able to reduce the back log of lost & found claims and increase our “possible match” items to the claims in our work queue. We receive weekly lost & found logs from every San Francisco taxi company which allow us to handle our claims. There is a week lag time in which we receive these particular reports from each company. If an item matches a description and details provided in a claim, we will personally contact the claimant and advise them of the steps they need to take to obtain their lost item. We update each service request according to the results of our search, whether the item is found or not. With Lost & Found being our highest volume of service requests, the average time it takes to resolve and/or address a claim is approximately 25 days from the date of receipt.
- Based on our reporting provided by 311, for the entire month we had 117 total interactions. The time required to process these transactions has been an average of 32 days from the time the complaint is received, until it’s resolved and/or addressed.

Complaints

| Type of Complaint | Number of Complaints |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Accidents w/Injuries | 1 |
| Failure to Comply | 6 |
| Fare Refusal | 10 |
| Impaired Driver | 1 |
| Overcharging | 8 |
| Rude & Discourteous | 26 |
| Unsafe Driving | 42 |
| Vehicle Condition | 1 |

| | |
|-------|----|
| Other | 16 |
|-------|----|

Driver Re-Training & Discipline

| Type of Disciplinary Action | Number of Disciplinary Actions |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Taxi Driver Re-Training | 51 |
| Taxi Driver Admonishments Issued | 5 |

Lost & Found

| Type of Claim | Number of Claims |
|---------------|------------------|
| Lost & Found | 120 |