



## Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Regulatory Services

**Date:** May 17, 2010  
**To:** Council Member Elizabeth Glidden  
**Referral to:** Regulatory, Energy and Environment Committee  
**Subject:** Taxicab Driver License Renewal Process

**Recommendation:** That the Regulatory, Energy and Environment Committee amend Title 13, Chapter 341 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Licenses and Business Regulations: Taxicabs. Staff recommends changes to sections 341.390 License Application; 341.420 Issuance of License; 341.425 License to be Coterminal and 341.460 Revocation to support business process improvements for the taxicab driver license procedures as well as updating the code.

### Department Information

Prepared by: Ricardo Cervantes, Deputy Director  
Licenses and Consumer Services

Approved by: Burt Osborne, Director  
Licenses and Consumer Services

Presenters in Committee: Ricardo Cervantes and Patrick Hilden

**Reviews** N/A

**Financial Impact** No financial impact

### Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Yes

City Goals:

Jobs and Economic Vitality: Businesses big and small start here, stay here, thrive here

A City That Works: 21<sup>st</sup> century government: collaborative, efficient, reform-minded

Comprehensive Plan: No

Zoning Code: No

Other: No

## Supporting Information

### Staff Report

License staff is proposing changes to the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances related to application requirements for taxicab driver licenses. These amendments are necessary to support a proposed redesign of the taxicab driver annual license renewal process. The estimated 1200 individuals with a current Minneapolis taxicab driver license would no longer be required to appear at the License office every June to renew their license, resulting in time savings for drivers who traditionally stood in line for service, sometimes in excess of an hour. Without diminishing safety and identification requirements, drivers could mail their renewal application to the License Office. This model is consistent with the division's standardized renewal procedures that have been implemented for all other license categories and is a part a business process improvement project completed earlier this year.

MCO 341.390. License Application. Proposed amendments include deleting the fingerprinting and photograph requirements and reassigning investigation of qualifications from the Police Department to the License Division. Each application for a taxicab driver license requires a criminal background report. This standard is used for all other license categories with this prerequisite. License staff conducts a thorough background check of criminal and driving records for all new and renewal license applications. This system has proven to be efficient and effective.

MCO 341.420. Issuance of License. A photograph of the applicant/licensee is required on the Minneapolis license which staff has determined to be duplicative. Every taxicab driver is required to have a valid Minnesota driver's license. All enforcement actions, whether by Minneapolis Police Officers or License Inspectors, require drivers to produce their Minnesota driver's license for identity verification. Eliminating this requirement does not impact enforcement effectiveness.

Best practices research of other regulators indicates that all jurisdictions require photographs on their taxicab driver license. A common practice includes printing photographs on identification cards which drivers wear around their necks, virtually inaccessible to passengers. Others agreed that the size and quality of the photograph on the license made it difficult for the passenger to see. Many jurisdictions use an electronic/digital system which is currently not part of our procedures.

The current Minneapolis taxicab driver license provides a false sense of safety for passengers. The license is a laminated 4" x 6" card stock posted on the dashboard. The driver's photograph is 2"x 2". The distance of this license from the passenger in the backseat, coupled with the diminished lighting in a taxicab minimizes the value of the photograph for a passenger.

In response to passenger safety, staff has redesigned the Minneapolis taxicab driver license. The five digit license number has been increased in size making it more readable. Enforcement data, including but not limited to the driver's name, Minnesota driver's license number and physical description remains listed on the reverse side of the Minneapolis license.

Thousands of dollars will be saved annually on film purchases and staff time required for processing taxicab driver renewal applications without a photograph. If we convert to an electronic system for photographs there will be considerable start up costs for the equipment, software and storage systems. Finally, a separate photo database that is interactive with our KIVA system needs to be developed and maintained. There will be significant staff time required to linking and maintaining these systems.

MCO 341.425. License to be coterminus with a Minnesota driver's license. Two amendments are recommended for this section. First, correct the spelling of the word coterminous. Secondly, this section as written is silent on the driver's obligation to

surrender their Minneapolis license if their Minnesota driver's license has been suspended, revoked or cancelled. Staff recommends adding language requiring the licensee to surrender their license to the License Division until the State of Minnesota driver's license is reinstated.

Section 341.460. Revocation of Minnesota driver's license; limited licenses; alcohol-related driving convictions. Two amendments are proposed for this section. The current language limits authority solely to revocation of a driver's license from the State of Minnesota. Adding "suspension and cancellation" gives staff authority whenever a taxicab driver does not driving privileges and is consistent with MCO 341.425 above. Secondly, we would like to update the blood alcohol level from .10 to .08 to be identical with the State of Minnesota.

Public Hearing notices were mailed and/or distributed electronically on May 7, 2010 to all the taxicabs service companies, business associations and the city's neighborhood groups. The notice is also posted on the City of Minneapolis' website.

**Staff recommendation**

Amend Chapter 341 to support business process improvements for the taxicab driver license procedures.