Passenger Transportation Board
MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

Meeting data requirements: Taxi meters, dispatch systems, and related technology

Taxi licensees may be aware that the Registrar of Passenger Transportation has been conducting compliance and enforcement activities by region over the past several months. The Board is committed to providing licensees with information and guidance to help support their adoption of modern technology solutions.

The Board continues to strongly encourage licensees to use taxi meters and other tools that better support compliance with data requirements. Licensees who are finding it difficult to achieve compliance may wish to explore taxi meters and other technological options that are capable of automating data collection and transmission. Dispatch systems or application software can be an integral part of taxi licensees' ability to collect, organize, and report trip data.

Taxi Meters

How can taxi meters help licensees achieve data compliance?

Taxi meters have a critical role to play in supporting ongoing data compliance. Modern meters with USB, Bluetooth, wireless, and other capabilities can collect, store, and transmit trip data required by the Board. Dispatch systems and application software on a smartphone, tablet, or computer can work with taxi meters to provide all the data required by the Board with minimal manual input.

What kind of taxi meters support data compliance?

Taxi licensees across B.C. use different combinations of taxi meters and other technologies to provide comprehensive, accurate data to the Vehicle Safety BC Portal (Trip Database). Most smart and soft taxi meters, which are defined in the Board's Rates Rules Manual, can collect and store trip data. Taxi businesses may prefer one type of meter over another based on various factors, many of which are detailed on the Board's Taxi meters web page.

My taxi meter meets the requirements in the Board's Taxi Meters Rule. Do I need to consider a new one?

Unfortunately, analogue (mechanical) and some early digital-electronic meters that may meet requirements in the Board's Rule may not support data compliance or meet data requirements because they were not designed to collect or transmit data. Switching to newer smart and soft meters will help to make data compliance easier and more efficient. If their current meters are not effectively supporting data compliance, licensees are advised to explore other meter options. The Board strongly encourages licensees to continuously modernize their vehicles and equipment, including taxi meters, to ensure that they are best positioned to meet regulatory requirements.

Dispatch Systems

What kinds of dispatch systems support data compliance?

Dispatch and software services work with taxi businesses to automate data requirements and assist with other types of tracking and reporting (e.g., ICBC reports, National Safety Code reports, business analytics, etc.). There are several companies operating in B.C. that provide data reporting services for taxi licensees. Large taxi businesses may have their own infrastructure to manage information technology needs, but this may not be practical for smaller taxi businesses. Companies that provide cloud-based meter, dispatch, and data reporting services can potentially be more practical and affordable for small taxi businesses. While most of these companies are currently working with licensees that have larger fleets, there are options for taxi licensees with smaller fleets.

What if a small taxi business doesn't use a dispatch system, or cannot afford to use one on their own?

Modern dispatch systems and software may present cost challenges for licensees with small fleets to afford on their own. This is why many dispatch companies offer centralized, cloud-based dispatch services for multiple taxi licensees to collaborate and reach a minimum vehicle threshold (or economy of scale) for value and affordability. In other words, small fleets can combine under a common dispatch service to reduce costs, while remaining independent in every other way. Taxi licensees do not need to be in the same region of B.C. to share a centralized dispatch service. If a minimum vehicle threshold can be met by one or more licensees, which varies by company, these services can cost as little as $1 per vehicle per month (note: this is a general estimate for illustration purposes; licensees must confirm pricing with dispatch system providers).

More information and assistance

Where can I find more information about taxi meter, dispatch, and other equipment options?

The Board does not formally authorize or offer accreditation to taxi service providers in B.C. However, there are taxi equipment and installation specialists in B.C. that can help licensees find the right type of meter, software, dispatch, and equipment combination based on their specific needs. West Coast Meter, based in Vancouver, is an established and experienced service provider that works with many B.C. taxi licensees, and may be able to put licensees in contact with other resources as well. Taxi associations such as the Vancouver Taxi Association and the B.C. Taxi Association may also be able to help.

Many taxi licensees in B.C. have upgraded or replaced their taxi meters and related technology in recent years. Various meter, equipment, dispatch, and software combinations have been tested by licensees in different regions of the province. Differences in geography, cellular network availability, and other conditions have factored into licensees' choice of equipment and technology. There is a

wealth of knowledge and experience among taxi businesses in B.C. that have already modernized their operations in these and other ways.

Is there funding available to help purchase new equipment and technology?

The Board is not in a position to provide funding or financial assistance to support the passenger transportation industry. Any requests for funding or financial assistance, including in regards to equipment and technology modernization, should be directed to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure through the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Program Office and the Registrar.

However, the Board's new taxi rate structures will provide additional flexibility for licensees to manage any cost pressures associated with adopting new technology and replacing obsolete equipment. The new taxi rates structures will be rolled out in 2025.

Why do taxi licensees have to provide data?

Licensees are required under section 28(5) and their terms and conditions of licence to provide any data required by the Board. This comes from the expectation that the Board be a data-driven, evidence-based decision-maker. This has been reiterated by three government committees in 2018 and 2019, and most recently by the Special Committee to Review Passenger Directed Vehicles. The Board must rely on data-driven evidence to properly regulate the passenger transportation industry and balance the different sectors of the industry in the public interest. Based on these expectations, the Board established Data Requirements (effective September 2019) for taxi and transportation network services (TNS) licensees in B.C. The required data fields must be submitted to the Trip Database by licensees across the province.

Can a taxi business be exempt from Board data requirements?

Taxi and TNS services operating in small communities with populations of fewer than 10,000 (as defined by Statistics Canada) have an implementation schedule in the Data Requirements to be determined (TBD) and are not yet required to comply with the Board's data requirements. Please note

the Board is required to implement the legislative requirements in the future. If a licensee believes they are serving an operating area of less than 10,000 population, they should check the Board's list. If they are not on this list, then the licensee should email the Board with a request that their business be evaluated for this delayed implementation list.