

# Overview

The City of Yellowknife is preparing to modernize Livery Licence By-law No. 4526. This is the bylaw that regulates taxi licensing and related matters. The City is seeking input from people directly impacted by the bylaw (e.g., taxi companies and drivers) as well as groups or members of the public who rely on taxis or have an interest in how they are regulated.

## What does the Livery Licence By-law cover?

The by-law covers issues related to how taxis and their drivers are licensed, regulated and supervised. This includes:

- Defining what important words like “permit,” “operator,” and “taxi stand” mean
- Specifying what is required to get a taxi licence and to keep it in good standing
- Explaining how to apply for, or transfer a taxi licence
- Setting general regulations for the taxi vehicle and the driver
- Regulating how fares are calculated and collected
- Describe how the regulations are enforced and what penalties can be applied

## Why does the By-law need to be updated?

Taxis in Yellowknife provide a vital service. As the regulator, the City must ensure safe, efficient, and reliable transportation services for residents and visitors. Taxi by-laws are for the benefit and protection of both users and operators.

The *Livery Licence Bylaw* was adopted in 2009 and has been updated a few times over the past several years to address changes in the industry and to update fares. This time, the City plans to do a comprehensive update to reflect the increased cost of operating taxis (i.e., fares), safety considerations (e.g., cameras) and other matters that have been raised by taxi operators and taxi users (e.g., accessible taxis).

## FAST FACTS

- The City of Yellowknife currently has **145 licensed taxis** and **197 Chauffeurs** (drivers).
- The Municipal Enforcement Division conducts approximately **199 taxi inspections per year**.
- The City of Yellowknife does not set or limit the number of taxi licences that may be issued.



## What changes are planned?

In addition to making some administrative changes (e.g., changing the name to “Taxi Licence By-law”) the City of Yellowknife is considering the following amendments.

### 1) Increasing taxi meter rates

**What is proposed:** Increasing meter rates by 25%, or \$.06 per 100/meters travelled.

*Why: The last fare increase to the taxi meter rates was over 5 years ago on July 1, 2019. Since that time, inflation has increased 18% in Yellowknife and the price of gasoline has increased 21%. The proposed increase would keep pace with inflation and assist with the increased costs associated with implementing required improvements such as security cameras and accessible vehicles across the system.*

### 2) Accessible vehicles

**What is proposed:** That each taxi company be required to have one accessible vehicle available 24 hours a day. This change is proposed to come into force on January 1, 2026 to give taxi companies time to buy or modify their vehicles.

*Why: Currently, residents who use wheelchairs or face other mobility challenges are often unable to hire an accessible taxi even with significant advance notice. This is an accessibility and human rights issue the City is committed to addressing. The proposed by-law change is in line with other cities like Calgary and Whitehorse.*

### 3) Security cameras

**What is proposed:** That all taxi must have security cameras installed. The cameras would capture audio and would be hardwired so they can't be turned off. It is recommended that the City or taxi company hold the footage with clear rules about when and why it could be used. It is proposed the owners of the taxis be responsible for the costs of installing the cameras and that the taxi companies be responsible for buying the software. The City would specify the camera models and software that must be used.

*Why: There have been safety concerns raised by both drivers and passengers of taxis in Yellowknife. In one extreme and tragic case, a Yellowknife taxi driver was killed by a customer in November 2018. The installation of cameras will enhance the safety and security of both passengers and drivers. They also provide a reliable source of evidence when necessary. The City would seek advice from other jurisdictions that already require cameras on how to best implement this change.*

### 4) Deposits

**What is proposed:** The City proposes to give drivers permission to ask for a deposit of up to \$30 from passengers. The City would still require the meter to be run but its goal would be to avoid situations where drivers are refunding small amounts.

*Why: Drivers have reported that people run out on fares. Allowing them to ask for a deposit would ensure they are fairly compensated for every trip. The exact method to be used is still being considered.*

## 5) Driver exams

**What is proposed:** The City recommends a \$50 fee to write the taxi driver's exam (it is currently free of charge), and imposing a delay period after failed attempt before a re-examination is permitted. The City also recommends that a person found to be cheating or lying at any point during the application or testing process may be subject to a one-year ban.

*Why: This change is to encourage studying prior to the exam and avoid wasting staff time.*

## 6) Return of items left behind

**What is proposed:** The City is considering different options to ensure drivers make reasonable efforts to return items left in taxis.

*Why: The City has received complaints about items left in vehicles not being returned or be made available for pick up at the dispatch office and would like to clarify what is expected.*

## 7) Maximum vehicle kilometers

**What is proposed:** The City is recommending that once a vehicle reaches 450,000 kilometers, it can no longer be used as a taxi.

*Why: Since the age limit of vehicles was increased to 15 years, the City has noted a number of taxis with significant kilometers on them during inspections, which has raised safety concerns.*

## 8) Standard for physical condition of taxi

**What is proposed:** The City proposes updating language in the by-law to be more specific about the condition of taxis (both exterior and interior) and to enforce this bylaw to a higher standard.

*Why: The City has noted issues with taxis that are not clean or operating with body damage and wants to ensure standards are clear and enforced.*

## 9) Driver conduct

**What is proposed:** The City is proposing to include a Driver's Code of Conduct in the by-law.

*Why: Expectations about how drivers conduct themselves appear in several places in the current bylaw. The City is proposing to update and bring all these sections together in one place.*

## 10) Information displayed in taxis

**What is proposed:** The City is recommending updating the information to be displayed in taxis to include a decal that states the current meter rates, gives notice a deposit may be requested, notifies passengers they are being recorded and provides a number to contact in case of questions or concerns.

*Why: To ensure passengers are aware of key information.*



### What research has the City done?

Most of the proposed changes are in response to issues that have been raised by taxi users or operators in Yellowknife. However, in developing the proposed changes, City Administration has based the revisions on recent updates to the taxi by-law in Whitehorse. It has also looked at taxi regulations in Edmonton and Calgary for comparison, though it is important to recognize that those markets are quite different than Yellowknife.

### How is the City getting input on these changes?

The City is now seeking feedback on the proposed changes through engagement meetings with taxi companies, taxi drivers, and stakeholder groups who have expressed a particular interest in taxi regulations.

It is also running a public survey on the PlaceSpeak platform that is open to all residents.

While the City is particularly interested in getting feedback on the proposed changes described in this factsheet, it is also open to hearing about other changes that may need to be considered.

#### Have questions or comments on the Livery Licence By-law update?

The current Livery Licence By-law (no. 4526) can be found on the City of Yellowknife [website](#). Please email [legal@yellowknife.ca](mailto:legal@yellowknife.ca) with any questions.