



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 14, 2012

CONTACT: Allan J. Fromberg
212-676-1013; allan.fromberg@tlc.nyc.gov

TLC Launches Accessible Dispatch Taxi Program in New York City

David Yassky
Commissioner

Office of Public
Affairs
33 Beaver Street
22nd Floor
New York, NY 10004

With Five Ways to Request Service, Wheelchair- Accessible Cabs Offer On-Demand Pick-up 24/7

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) today launches its new program providing wheelchair-accessible taxi dispatching services to New York City residents. TLC Commissioner David Yassky joined Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Commissioner Victor Calise, Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Terrance Holliday, and leaders from the taxicab and transportation industry to welcome this pioneering program.

Metro Taxi, a Connecticut company located in West Haven, CT, will dispatch 233 NYC accessible taxicabs to locations within Manhattan. Accessible Dispatch is a centralized service providing on-demand transportation 24/7, 365 days a year with no advance reservations necessary.

There are five ways to request a New York City wheelchair-accessible taxi:

- Call **311**
- Call the dispatch center directly: **(646) 599-9999**
- Text a request to: **(646) 400-0789**
- Use the mobile app "**Wheels on Wheels**" (WOW), powered by Taxi Magic and available free at the iTunes online app store
- Order online at www.nycaccessibledispatch.org

▪ *Key points of the service include:*

- Wheelchair-accessible taxis will respond to trips originating in Manhattan and ending anywhere in the five boroughs, Westchester and Nassau counties and the three regional airports.
- Passengers pay the normal metered taxi fare in New York City from the point of pick-up to destination. There are no extra costs to passengers.
- Accessible vehicles in the NYC fleet include rear and side entry minivans.
- When offered a trip, the taxi driver must accept it within two minutes and proceed directly to the pick-up location.
- Accessible Dispatch will pay drivers directly for the "deadhead," or travel time, portion of their trips en route to scheduled pick-ups. These costs



are funded through a fee paid by all New York City taxi medallion owners.

- All drivers who operate a wheelchair-accessible taxicab have been or will be trained in wheelchair assistance, boarding and de-boarding protocols, disability awareness and passenger sensitivity.

“The Bloomberg Administration is committed to ensuring that safe, reliable taxi service is available to all New Yorkers and the more than 50 million visitors who come here every year,” Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel said. “With this new Accessible Dispatch system we are making important progress toward that goal.”

“This is an entirely new kind of service,” said Taxi and Limousine Commissioner David Yassky, “and it is a real and tangible reflection of our dedication to making quality taxicab service available to all those who want it. We’ve chosen the very best and most experienced partner imaginable to oversee and manage the service, and it is ready and open for business.”

“Having alternatives to accessible public transportation is crucial for people with disabilities and senior residents and visitors who want to enjoy all that our City has to offer,” said MOPD Commissioner Calise. “We will continue to work with the TLC to explore further accessibility solutions in the taxi and livery fleets and expand on this significant step towards improving public transportation accessibility.”

Accessible Dispatch is operated by Metro Taxi, Connecticut’s largest taxi company, which has a successful record of providing wheelchair-accessible taxi service to its customers. Founded in 1987, the company was the first to bring wheelchair-accessible taxicabs to Connecticut.

“We’re very excited to provide this vital service to New York City passengers,” said William Scalzi, Founder and President of Metro Taxi, who serves on the Board of Directors for the Americans with Disabilities Act Coalition of Connecticut (ADACC). “For all of us at Metro Taxi, providing anyone using a wheelchair with the best possible transportation experience is our top priority. We’ve been a leader in wheelchair-accessible transportation in Connecticut and are greatly looking forward to bringing our best-practice to New York and collaborating closely with the disability community and other key stakeholders.”

Accessible Dispatch can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AccessibleDispatch and on Twitter at @NYCAccessible.

The TLC was created by New York City Charter mandate in 1971, and is the agency responsible for the regulation and licensing of almost 200,000 yellow medallion taxicabs and for-hire ground transportation vehicles, their drivers, and the businesses that operate and support their industries. It is recognized as the nation’s largest and most active taxi and limousine regulatory body.