

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1378
Economic Matters

(Delegate Schuh)

For-Hire Driving Services - Temporary For-Hire Driver's Licenses and
Operator's Dress Code

This bill requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) to issue an applicant for a “for-hire driver’s license” a temporary license immediately upon receipt of a completed license application under certain conditions. The bill also alters the period in which a temporary license expires and establishes a dress code for individuals who operate a motor vehicle under a for-hire driver’s license.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. PSC can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful benefit to certain for-hire driver’s license applicants.

Analysis

Bill Summary: PSC must immediately issue a temporary for-hire driver’s license to an applicant that submits a completed application; a certified driving record; and the application fee, so long as the application indicates the applicant has had no felony convictions within the last 10 years and no misdemeanor convictions within the last 3 years. A temporary for-hire driver’s license expires at the earlier of:

- 30 days if PSC has not received the criminal history records check required under current law;

- the date of issuance or denial of a for-hire driver's license; or
- 45 days.

An individual who operates a for-hire motor vehicle for hire or a taxicab under a license issued by PSC must comply with a dress code while operating a motor vehicle for-hire or a taxicab. Specifically, a driver must wear a shirt and pants or noncutoff shorts that are neat, clean, and in good condition.

Current Law: An applicant for a for-hire driver's license must submit to PSC a completed application; a certified copy of the applicant's driver's record issued by the Motor Vehicle Administration within the last 30 days; and a dated receipt from the Department of Public Safety and Correction Services Application for FBI and State Criminal History Records Checks. License applicants must also partake in a personal interview with PSC staff. PSC is directed to establish an application fee but does not currently charge such a fee.

PSC may issue a temporary license and, if applicable, a badge to an applicant for a for-hire driver's license for a period not exceeding 30 days. A "for-hire driver's license" includes a passenger-for-hire and a taxicab driver's license. PSC has licensing authority over for-hire driver licenses for use in any county or municipality that does not issue its own licenses. This includes (1) sedan licenses in all counties; and (2) taxicab driver's licenses in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Cumberland, and Hagerstown. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 20.90.01.09) specifies PSC may issue a temporary taxicab driver's license for a period not exceeding 15 days to license applicants in Baltimore City.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 20.90.02.18 and COMAR 20.90.03.16) requires taxicab drivers in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Cumberland, and Hagerstown to be clean and neatly dressed at all times while on duty. State law does not specify a dress code for sedan drivers.

Background: PSC enforces laws and regulations pertaining to safety, rates, and service of transportation companies operating in intrastate commerce in the State. PSC is responsible for licensing drivers of taxicabs in Baltimore City, Cumberland, and Hagerstown, and other passenger-for-hire vehicles that carry 15 or fewer passengers. In 2009 there were 1,595 licensed taxicab drivers and 6,005 licensed passenger-for-hire drivers.

Small Business Effect: Requiring PSC to issue a temporary for-hire driver's license and allowing that license to remain effective for up to 45 days may benefit license applicants who are allowed to operate under a temporary license immediately. Applicants that do

not receive an approval or denial of a license application within 30 days, and applicants for taxicab driver's licenses in Baltimore City, may have between 15 to 30 additional days to use a temporary license.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 676 (Senator McFadden) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Office of People's Counsel, Public Service Commission, Department of Legislative Services

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