

Memorandum



Date: September 25, 2015

To: Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor 

Subject: Report Regarding Passenger Motor Vehicles Inspection Process

On June 3, 2014, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Resolution No. R-534-14 directing the Mayor or Mayor's Designee to prepare a report evaluating ways in which to improve the effectiveness of the County's passenger motor vehicle inspection process. This report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-534-14.

Passenger Motor Vehicles are inspected to verify compliance with Article III of Chapter 31 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, which describes requirements for passenger motor carriers. Although this article has not had any significant revisions in approximately 15 years, the Board, on June 17, 2014, adopted on first reading an Ordinance (Legistar No. 142157) amending Article III of Chapter 31 relating to regulation of passenger motor carriers. These amendments include, but are not limited to the creation of vehicle standards applicable to passenger motor carrier vehicles. These standards, if adopted, would address safety, as well as cosmetic and aesthetic components, of the vehicle. Currently, there are no vehicle standards for passenger motor vehicles and the existing vehicle age requirement allows up to 15-year old vehicles. In the absence of prescribed standards for inspection, For-Hire Transportation staff from the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER) rely on vehicle standards contained in Articles II and VI of Chapter 31 of the Code, which apply to limousines and taxicabs.

Approximately 20,000 vehicle safety and cosmetic inspections are performed annually at RER's Vehicle Inspection Station. These inspections are the primary mechanism utilized by staff for ensuring that regulated for-hire vehicles are in compliance with County Code. In addition to the inspection facility, RER maintains a For-Hire Transportation Enforcement Unit responsible for ensuring compliance with the various for-hire ordinances. These officers conduct field inspections on all regulated for-hire vehicles including passenger motor carrier, jitney, special transportation service, private school bus and nonemergency medical transportation vehicles, as well as chauffeurs, for compliance with specific standards contained in the County Code. During a field inspection of a for-hire vehicle, an officer is required to verify the status of the driver's chauffeur registration and inspect for violations of chauffeur standards, inspect the vehicle to confirm that there are no deficiencies that create an unsafe condition, such as worn tires, cracked windshields and/or windows, inoperative headlights. Finally, the officer inspects the vehicle for cosmetic and aesthetic standards. All of this activity is expected to be conducted in a very short period of time to minimize the amount of time a passenger motor vehicle is prevented from providing for-hire transportation.

Vehicles found to be in nonconformance with vehicle standards are issued a Field Enforcement Report describing the deficiency and requiring the deficiency to be corrected within a specific time frame. In an effort to ensure that passenger motor vehicles are in conformance with cosmetic and aesthetic standards at all times, and to improve the overall condition of passenger motor vehicles, RER has implemented the following changes to the existing enforcement and inspection protocols as of April 2014:

1. RER has directed its Enforcement Unit to be more proactive in cosmetic inspections of for-hire vehicles during field inspections.

2. RER has adopted a policy that requires staff to conduct full cosmetic inspections of all vehicles issued a Field Enforcement Report in addition to the specific vehicle deficiencies identified in the report at the inspection station.

These inspections are being done at no additional charge to the drivers or vehicle owners. Vehicle Inspection Station procedures have been changed to require each vehicle inspector to enter the results of a vehicle inspection, including a description of any vehicle deficiency, into the division's shared license information database, which will provide real-time vehicle inspection data for management and enforcement personnel and provides the customer with concise details regarding any vehicle deficiencies noted during the inspection. RER staff has also been utilizing an updated vehicle inspection standards manual since July 2014 to establish specific inspection guidelines and standards for identifying vehicle deficiencies in an effort to provide a more uniform inspection process and address current concerns.

In addition, the RER has implemented enhanced quality control measures at the Vehicle Inspection Station. As a new quality control measure, the Vehicle Inspection Station Manager conducts spot checks of vehicles inspected by each Vehicle Inspector on a daily basis. The RER has also installed cameras in each of the inspection bays. These cameras will have the capability of being monitored by both station and division management, and will capture the activities of both staff and customers.

These changes are enhancing the effectiveness of the passenger motor vehicle inspection process with minimal fiscal impact, and encouraging a stronger level of compliance and accountability. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Joe Mora, Division Chief of the For-Hire Transportation, at (786) 469-2366, or me directly.

- c: Jack Osterholt, Deputy Mayor/Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
Lourdes M. Gomez, Deputy Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
Joe Mora, Division Chief, For-Hire Transportation, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources