

Dear Commissioners,

Classes should school new taxi drivers that they have been ambassadors to New York City. Taxis are part of New York, just like the Empire State Building, Grand Central, or Central Park.

Introductory classes should be unique for medallion drivers. Driving a medallion taxi is different from other kinds of driving. Many topics are unique to medallion taxis, and a separate class that explains the history and purpose of the medallion would give drivers a better perspective and increase pride in their profession.

The class should focus on preventing bad habits that hurt the industry. Things like driving around with the roof light on while there is a passenger in the back seat or having the roof light on and not stopping for a fare. Customers are frustrated by this behavior, and taxis get a bad reputation. These are things that can be corrected through education. In the class, drivers should be taught basic taxi values, that courtesy and service matter. In the class, drivers should be taught that helping passengers with luggage is part of professional service. If a driver sees luggage, it is time to help, whether or not the passenger asks.

Cleanliness should be emphasized in the class, especially in taxicabs with partitions, which are harder to keep clean. Customers notice this. The class should also address discrimination. Drivers need to understand that racism and refusals harm customers and harm the industry.

Classes should emphasize reliability; People use Uber and Lyft because they are reliable. Drivers need to understand the importance of accepting all e-hails and providing reliable service.

The class should also teach proper behavior at hotels, including lining up correctly, avoiding double parking, helping with luggage and understanding that black cars are supposed to park at their base, not in taxi lines.

A class can help medallion drivers understand how the service they provide plays an important role in attracting and keeping customers. A short, unique class for medallion drivers is an important role for the TLC to help brand the medallion taxi driver for self-respect as well as worldwide respect. This is where it starts.

Thank you.

Michael Simon