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# The Québec Taxi Driver's

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Ministère des Transports Centre de documentation 930, Chemin Ste-Foy 6e étage Québec (Québec)

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# FOREWORD

The ministère des Transports du Québec, in collaboration with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, has prepared the *Québec Taxi Driver's Handbook*.

The information in the handbook is provided for guidance only. It does not in any way constitute a legal interpretation of legislation and regulations, nor does it release taxi drivers from the obligation of knowing and applying standards governing transportation services by taxi.

The Act respecting transportation services by taxi (2001, c. 15) and the Taxi Transportation Regulation (O.C. 690-2002, 5 June 2002) are the main sources of the information presented in this handbook. Both texts are available from Les Publications du Québec. The handbook indicates the rules governing taxi drivers and may also be of use to future taxi drivers.

However, this handbook does not claim to be a complete guide to everything that Québec taxi drivers should know. It does not focus on essential knowledge of the *Highway Safety Code*, municipal traffic by-laws, the internal rules of taxi service associations, roads and key public places in taxi drivers' work territory.

The Québec government has established the rules indicated in this handbook. Since certain powers have been transferred to the City of Montréal, as stipulated in the *Act respecting transportation services by taxi*, some of the rules are not applicable in its territory.

# CHAPTER I

# PREREQUISITES FOR OBTAINING A TAXI DRIVER'S PERMIT

## A) Driver's license

In order to obtain a taxi driver's permit, which is required to operate a taxi, a person must hold a class 4C or higher (1, 2, 3, 4A or 4B) driver's licence.

To obtain a class 4C driver's license, the person must:

- have a minimum of one year of driving experience as the holder of a class 5 driver's license;
- comply with the standards governing the health of drivers:
- have the knowledge necessary to drive a taxi;
- pay \$14 for the issuing of a new driver's license.

#### State of health

The applicant's state of health is verified by means of:

- a visual test taken in a service centre of the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ);
- a checkup using the prescribed SAAQ form.

The applicant must submit as soon as possible to the SAAO the form completed by the physician.

# Knowledge necessary to drive a taxi

A theoretical examination is used to verify the knowledge necessary to drive a taxi. Applicants should make an appointment with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec and be sure to bring:

- their driver's license:
- if need be, the letter of authorization issued by the SAAQ concerning the evaluation of the applicant's state of health;
- \$10 to cover the examination fee.

The examination comprises 30 multiple-choice questions focusing on:

- road signs;
- the Highway Safety Code;
- the principles and techniques of driving a taxi.

The passing grade is 73%.

Applicants who fail the examination should make an appointment to repeat it. A \$10 fee applies. At least seven days must elapse between the date on which the examination was failed and the date on which it is repeated.

Applicants are encouraged to read carefully the *Driver's Handbook* and *Driving a Passenger Vehicle*, available from any good bookstore.

#### B) Training courses

Before they become taxi drivers in the territories of Québec City, Longueuil and Laval, candidates must take a training course lasting at least 30 hours, focusing on the transportation of the disabled, provisions in the Act respecting transportation services by taxi and the Taxi

*Transportation Regulation*, and other common knowledge pertaining to the skills, abilities and behaviour required to drive a taxi.

The course is offered by the:

- Centre de formation professionnelle pour l'industrie du Québec inc.;
- Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries;
- Commission scolaire de la Rivière-du-Nord.

Moreover, starting September 1, 2002, candidates in the territory of Québec City must also take a training course lasting at least 50 hours provided by the Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries dealing with the territory's toponymy and geography.

Candidates in the territory of the City of Montréal must take a training course lasting 150 hours, of which 90 hours are devoted to the territory's toponymy and geography.

# C) Taxi driver's permit

In order to work as a taxi driver, you must possess a taxi driver's permit.

To obtain the permit, the applicant must, in addition to complying with the conditions mentioned earlier:

- be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident within the meaning of the *Immigration Act*;
- be of full age;
- understand, speak an read French sufficiently to carry on the occupation;
- pass an examination of his knowledge of the Act respecting transportation services by taxi and the Taxi Transportation Regulation;

- pay a fee of \$25 (the cost of renewing the permit every two years is \$50 and the permit is renewed at the same time as the driver's license);
- not have had his taxi driver's permit suspended or revoked before three months have elapsed from the date of the end of the suspension or revocation, unless a restricted permit was issued;
- must not have been convicted, in the last five years, of a criminal offence or an indictable offence related to the operation of a service of transportation by taxi;
- must not have been convicted, in the last five years,
  of a criminal offence or an indictable offence related
  to the traffic of narcotics, their importation or
  exportation as well as poppy and cannabis production,
  and provided for as the case may be in the Controlled
  Drugs and Substances Act.

Throughout Québec, except in Montréal, candidates may take the examination to obtain a taxi driver's permit at the nearest SAAQ service centre that issues such permits. The examination fee is \$25. Candidates who fail the examination must wait one month before repeating it. The passing grade is 60%.

Candidates wishing to take the examination to obtain a taxi driver's permit valid in Montréal must make an appointment with the Bureau du taxi de la ville de Montréal at (514) 280-6600. The examination fee is \$60.

Taxi drivers have 30 days in which to notify the issuing authority of a change of name or address.

# CHAPTER 2

#### **EMPLOYER RELATIONS**

# A) Contract of employment or leasing contract

Before driving a taxi in service, unless he owns the taxi the driver must conclude with the holder of the taxi owner's permit a contract of employment stipulating remuneration by salary or commission or a taxi leasing contract. The holder of a taxi driver's permit must keep in the automobile of which he has custody or control a copy of the contract.

# B) Access to information

A taxi owner bound by such a contract to a taxi driver may have access at the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec to information on the actions for which the driver is blamed in a statement of offence or a conviction, provided that such actions arose in conjunction with driving a taxi. However, the communication must only reveal the driver's identity, the nature of the actions for which the driver was blamed, and the time at which they were committed.

# C) Notice to the taxi owner

A taxi driver must send by registered mail to each taxi owner for whom he works a copy of the document attesting the modification, suspension or revocation of his taxi driver's permit, his driver's license or the class of permit authorizing the operation of a taxi. He must do so as soon as he receives the notice from the appropriate authority.

# D) Prohibited practice

A driver is prohibited from transferring to a taxi owner the ownership of an automobile intended to be attached to the latter's permit and to conclude with this person a contract in which he becomes the operator. This practice constitutes the leasing of a permit alone and runs contrary to the public interest.

# CHAPTER 3

#### ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONNELLE DES CHAUFFEURS DE TAXI

#### A) Functions of the Association

The Association professionnelle des chauffeurs de taxi, established by the *Act respecting transportation services by taxi*, is responsible primarily for representing, collectively and individually, all the holders of a taxi driver's permit and for promoting their interests, in particular by:

- improving practices in the taxi industry as regards human resources;
- promoting services and employee benefits for taxi drivers;
- disseminating information and providing training relevant to their activities;
- promoting taxi service utilization.

# B) Mandate of the Association

Under its mandate, the Association professionnelle des chauffeurs de taxi is responsible for:

- developing and enforcing a code of ethics governing the actions and conduct of holders of a taxi driver's permit;
- setting up a discipline committee to examine complaints.

#### C) Powers of the discipline committee

The discipline committee of the Association professionnelle des chauffeurs de taxi has the power to:

- reprimand or impose a penalty for wrongful actions, omissions or wrongful conduct of a holder of a taxi driver's permit, whether or not the permit holder is a member of the Association:
- set time limits and conditions to remedy the situation;
- suspend the right of a person to carry on the occupation of taxi driver

The committee must give the person whose action, omission or conduct is to blame the right to present observations within reasonable time. If the holder of a taxi driver's permit is not satisfied with a decision of the discipline committee, the holder may apply in writing for arbitration within ten days of the decision.

# D) Participation and financing

Every holder of a taxi driver's permit is entitled to be a member of the Association and to take part in its activities, provided that he pays the \$10 membership fee.

For the financing of its activities, the Association may, by means of a by-law approved by a majority of the votes cast by all holders of a taxi driver's permit after the holding of a vote, establish an annual contribution. Every holder of a taxi driver's permit, whether or not the permit holder is a member of the Association, has the right to vote. To exercise the right to vote, permit members who are not members must register with the Association and establish their quality as holders of a taxi driver's permit.

Every holder of a taxi driver's permit, whether or not he is a member of the Association, must pay the annual contribution to avoid the suspension of his taxi driver's permit until proof of payment of the contribution is furnished.

#### **BEFORE SETTING OFF**

#### A) Necessary documents

Before setting off at the beginning of his work period, a taxi driver must ensure that the taxi owner's permit or a certificate in respect of this permit is in the glove compartment. The permit or certificate must be available when a client asks to consult it.

A taxi driver must also have in his possession his taxi driver's permit, which must be displayed in such a way that a client sitting in the back seat of the vehicle can read the information on it. A peace officer may ask to see the permit.

A taxi driver must also have in his possession a copy of the leasing contract or the contract of employment that binds him to the owner of the taxi that he is about to operate. A peace officer may also ask to see this document.

#### B) Pre-departure inspection

During the pre-departure inspection, the taxi driver must carry out a visual check, or as the case may be, an auditory check of the following:

- the brake fluid level, which should never be under the level indicated by the manufacturer or, if not indicated, any more than 10 mm under the filler neck opening;
- the parking brake, which must be activated a number of times in order to check whether its cables are operating freely, its compliance with regard to vehicle immobilization and the activation of a dashboard indicator that lights up or turns off depending on whether the brake is applied or released;

- the vehicle's headlights, lights and signals, including in particular low-beam headlights, turn-signal lights, emergency flashers and parking lights, which must be operational and securely fastened in the places provided for by the manufacturer, and their dashboard indicators, which must activate the electrical circuits enabling them to work at the intensity intended by the manufacturer;
- the tires, which must not show any wear, cracks, cuts or tears exposing the tire rib or the steel belt, have any bulges or abnormal deformities, or be affected by material or an object stuck in the tread or tire wall, which could cause a flat;
- the tire valves, which must not be worn, damaged, scraped or cut and the projecting part of which must be long enough to allow tires to be filled easily and tire pressure to be checked;
- the horn, which must work properly in keeping with the manufacturer's standards;
- the windshield wipers and windshield washer fluid, all
  of the components of which must be complete, properly
  adjusted and in good condition to ensure that they
  work effectively;
- the rearview mirror, which must be vertically and horizontally adjustable and remain in the desired position, be an adequate size and securely fastened and not have any sharp edges, the mirror of which should not be broken, cracked, tarnished or dull; and
- the domelight, which must be securely fastened and work properly.

#### C) Pre-departure inspection report

Before setting off, a taxi driver must prepare a predeparture inspection report that contains the following information:

- the date and time of the last pre-departure inspection;
- the license plate number of the vehicle inspected;
- a description of the defects noted during the last predeparture inspection and of any defects noted after departure; and
- the driver's name and taxi driver's permit number.

The taxi driver's permit holder must sign the report.

A taxi driver is prohibited from having in his possession more than one report pertaining to the same inspection. The pre-departure inspection report must be kept in the taxi along with all inspection reports for the current month.

# D) Observation of a defect

The taxi driver, when he is not the owner of the taxi that he is driving, must promptly inform the owner of any defect noted and submit to him a copy of the pre-departure inspection report concerned. The same is true of any defect noted after setting off.

When the defect noted is major, the taxi may not be used and the repair must be effected before the taxi may be put back into service.

#### CLIENT SERVICE

# A) Types of services

There are two types of transportation services by taxi, i.e. private and collective. Private transportation means that a trip is reserved solely for a client and the person that the client designates. A taxi owner's permit only authorizes private transportation, except when:

- the owner is bound by a contract with a municipal or supramunicipal authority;
- he is bound by contract with any other person authorized by decree;
- a by-law stipulates routes and services that affect the service territory of the owner's permit. The service must be provided in the places and according to the conditions stipulated.

# B) Rules of ethics and cleanness

The holder of a taxi driver's permit must:

- be properly dressed in clean clothing;
- afford clients the courtesy, comfort and safety required by their occupation;
- help a passenger get in or out of the automobile safely
  if he notes that the client obviously needs assistance
  because of age, apparent state of health or a handicap;
- ensure that the vehicle's body and passenger compartment are clean;
- ensure that equipment such as the taximeter and the domelight operate properly.

# C) Work territory

A taxi driver must engage in his occupation in the territory in respect of which the taxi owner's permit has been issued and is, therefore, authorized to undertake any trip starting in the territory covered by the taxi owner's permit or any territory not served by a taxi permit. A taxi driver is also authorized to make a trip that begins outside his territory and ends inside the territory, provided that the trip is made in response to a telephone call or in conjunction with a written contract.

# D) Rules governing the distribution of trips

When parking the taxi at a public taxi station, the holder of a taxi driver's permit must park in the first space available and must move up one space when the space ahead becomes free. Except in the exceptional circumstances mentioned below, a holder of a taxi driver's permit who does not occupy the first space in a public taxi station must turn down a client who asks for a ride and direct the client to the first taxi in the line-up. By the same token, a holder of a taxi driver's permit who is waiting at a public taxi station must turn down a trip his taxi transportation service intermediary calls in if a taxi with the same intermediary is ahead of him at the station. A taxi transportation service intermediary is an organization that provides taxi owners and taxi drivers with advertising, call dispatching or other similar services.

A taxi driver who does not occupy the first space at a public taxi station may, in exceptional circumstances, accept a trip requested by a client when he satisfies any of the following conditions:

 the client wishes to use a specific means of payment, e.g. a credit card or direct payment, and no other taxi driver ahead of the driver at the public taxi station accepts this type of payment; or

- the client needs special equipment, e.g. a car-top carrier, that no other taxi driver ahead of the driver at the public taxi station possesses; or
- the client requires a vehicle with wheelchair access.

These exceptions also apply when his taxi transportation service intermediary assigns the trip to the taxi driver when no taxi from the same association ahead of the taxi driver at the same public taxi station is able to satisfy this specific request. The same is true when the client requests at the time of his call to the association the services of a driver with special qualifications or a vehicle with a specific wheelbase.

Once the taxi driver has reached the first space at the public taxi station, he may not refuse to make a trip requested by a client unless the destination is over 50 km outside the boundaries of the authorized work territory or if one of the cases mentioned earlier applies.

Exclusivity of service is assured taxis occupying a public taxi station within a 60-m radius. A holder of a taxi driver's permit who is hailed by a client may not let the client get into the taxi if there is a public taxi station less than 60 m away and a taxi is parked there and available for service. However, this prohibition does not apply to if the client is a disabled person in a wheelchair and no suitable taxi is waiting at the public taxi station.

# E) Domelight

Except in cases such as marriages, baptisms and funerals, a taxi must be equipped with a domelight affixed to the front of the roof.

At night, a taxi driver available for service must turn on the domelight when driving in his work territory or when he is parked in the first space at a public taxi station.

#### F) Taxi trips

Unlike collective transportation, private transportation means that the client, whether alone or accompanied, need not travel with other passengers.

After finding out the destination from the client and ensuring that he may make the trip, the holder must:

- · turn off the domelight;
- start the taximeter, as the case may be;
- take the most direct route to the destination, unless the client indicates otherwise.

#### G) Rates

The Commission des transports du Québec fixes the rates for transportation services by taxi, which must be displayed inside the taxicab. Obviously, the taxi driver may only request a price in keeping with the rate structure and the rate applicable to the service provided. The rules below apply to rates and payment.

The taxi driver must start the taximeter at the beginning of the trip. A taxi trip begins when the client gets into the taxi or when the client explicitly asks the driver to wait for him.

Unless the client directs otherwise, the taxi driver must stop the taximeter as soon as the taxi arrives at the destination.

The foregoing rules do not apply when the use of the odometer is prescribed, since a holder of the taxi driver's permit only takes into account the pick-up charge and the distance covered with the client.

If the taximeter or the odometer becomes defective during a trip, the taxi driver's permit holder must agree with the client on the fare and this fare must correspond to that calculated by taximeter or odometer, as the case may be. The holder may not make any other trips until the taximeter or odometer has been repaired or replaced.

When a trip entails expenses for meals or accommodation for the holder of a taxi driver's permit, the reimbursement of those expenses by the client must be agreed upon with the client prior to departure. When a trip involves expenses for crossing a bridge or using a ferry, or highway toll expenses, the expenses are added to the amount for the trip.

When a trip requires the use, at the client's request, of special equipment, with the exception of equipment needed to compensate for a physical handicap, reimbursement of the related expenses by the client must be agreed upon with the client prior to departure.

The taxi driver must give the client the exact amount of change but does not have to accept payment for a trip with a bill that is over \$30 more than the fare. If the driver accepts the bill, however, he may charge the client for the cost of driving to a place where the exact change can be obtained.

The holder of a taxi driver's permit must give each client a receipt upon request that includes at least the following information:

- the name of the holder of a taxi owner's permit or of the taxi transportation service intermediary's permit;
- the name of the holder of the taxi driver's permit and his signature;
- the date:
- the amount of the fare.

#### H) Service contract

The holder of a taxi owner's permit, a taxi transportation service intermediary's permit or a taxi driver's permit may conclude a contract that allows the holder to agree upon the fare with the client when the fare differs from that fixed by the Commission des transports du Québec. The parties must agree freely to the contract and the client's consent must be entirely voluntary. The client must not be put in a position where he has no choice if he wishes to obtain transportation.

The contract must be written and indicate the following information:

- the names and signatures of the parties;
- identification of the persons or group of persons to be transported;
- the date and duration of the contract;
- the fare determined or the method to be used to calculate it;
- the starting point and destination.

Moreover, a copy of the contract must be kept in the automobile or at the principal establishment of the taxi owner or the taxi transportation service intermediary.

# TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

To obtain additional information on driver's licenses, taxi driver's permits or compensation in the event of traffic accidents, please contact the Société de l'assurance automobile du Ouébec:

Montréal: (514) 873-7620

Québec City: (418) 643-7620

• elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-7620 (toll free)

or consult the SAAQ Web site:

#### www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca

To obtain additional information concerning legal texts pertaining to transportation services by taxi, please contact the ministère des Transports du Québec:

- 700, boul. René-Lévesque Est, 27° étage Québec (Québec) G1R 5H1 (418) 643-6860
- 35, rue de Port-Royal Est, 4º étage Montréal (Québec)
   H3L 3T1 (514) 873-2605

To obtain information on the issuing of taxi driver's permits within the territory of the City of Montréal or rules governing taxi operations in the territory, please contact:

 Bureau du taxi de la ville de Montréal 4949, rue Molson Montréal (Québec) H1Y 3H6 (514) 280-6600

#### LES PUBLICATIONS DU QUÉBEC

To obtain a copy of the *Act respecting transportation* services by taxi or the *Taxi Transportation Regulation*, please contact Les Publications du Québec. Orders can be made by mail, telephone or fax. The legislation and regulation are also available from partner bookstores.

#### Mail orders

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Fax: (819) 763-3493

#### Direction du Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie Îles-de-la-Madeleine

92, 2° Rue Ouest, 1° étage Rimouski (Québec) G5L 8E6 Telephone: (418) 727-3674

Fax: (418) 727-3673

#### Direction de la Côte-Nord

625, boul. Laflèche, bureau 110 Baie-Comeau (Québec) G5C 1C5 Telephone: (418) 295-4765

Fax: (418) 295-4766

# Direction de la Chaudière-Appalaches

1156, boul. de la Rive-Sud Saint-Romuald (Québec) G6W 5M6

Telephone: (418) 839-5581 Fax: (418) 834-7338

Direction de l'Est-de-la-Montérégie

201, place Charles-Le Moyne, 5° étage Longueuil (Québec) J4K 2T5 Telephone: (450) 677-8974

Fax: (450) 442-1317

#### Direction de l'Estrie

200, rue Belvédère Nord, bureau 2.02 Sherbrooke (Québec) J1H 4A9

Telephone: (819) 820-3280

Fax: (819) 820-3118

#### Direction de l'Île-de-Montréal

440, boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest, 10° étage Montréal (Québec) H2Z 2A6 Telephone: (514) 873-7781

Fax: (514) 864-3867

# Direction des Laurentides-Lanaudière

85, rue de Martigny Ouest, 3º étage Saint-Jérôme (Québec) J7Y 3R8 Telephone: (450) 569-3057

Fax: (450) 569-3072

#### Direction de Laval-Mille-Îles

1725, boul. Le Corbusier Laval (Québec) H7S 2K7 Telephone: (450) 680-6330

Fax: (450) 973-4959

#### Direction de la Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec

100, rue Laviolette, 4° étage Trois-Rivières (Québec) G9A 5S9 Telephone: (819) 371-6896

Fax: (819) 371-6136

#### Direction de l'Ouest-de-la-Montérégie

245, boul. Saint-Jean-Baptiste Châteauguay (Québec) J6K 3C3 Telephone: (450) 698-3400

Fax: (450) 698-3452

#### Direction de l'Outaouais

170, rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, 5° étage

Hull (Québec) J8X 4C2

Telephone: (819) 772-3107

Fax: (819) 772-3338

#### Direction de Québec

Les Cours de l'Atrium 475, boulevard de l'Atrium, 4° étage Charlesbourg (Québec) G1H 7H9 Telephone: (418) 380-2003

Fax: (418) 646-0003

## Direction du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean-Chibougamau

3950, boul. Harvey, 1er étage Jonquière (Québec) G7X 8L6 Telephone: (4l8) 695-7916

Fax: (418) 695-7926

# **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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