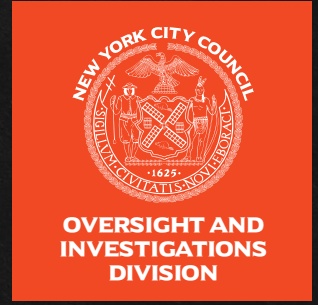
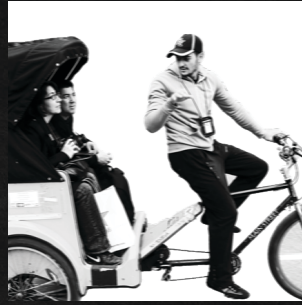


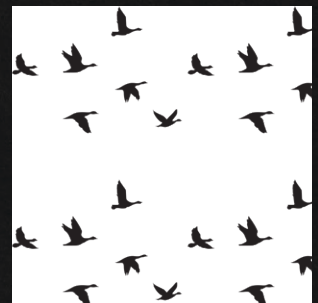
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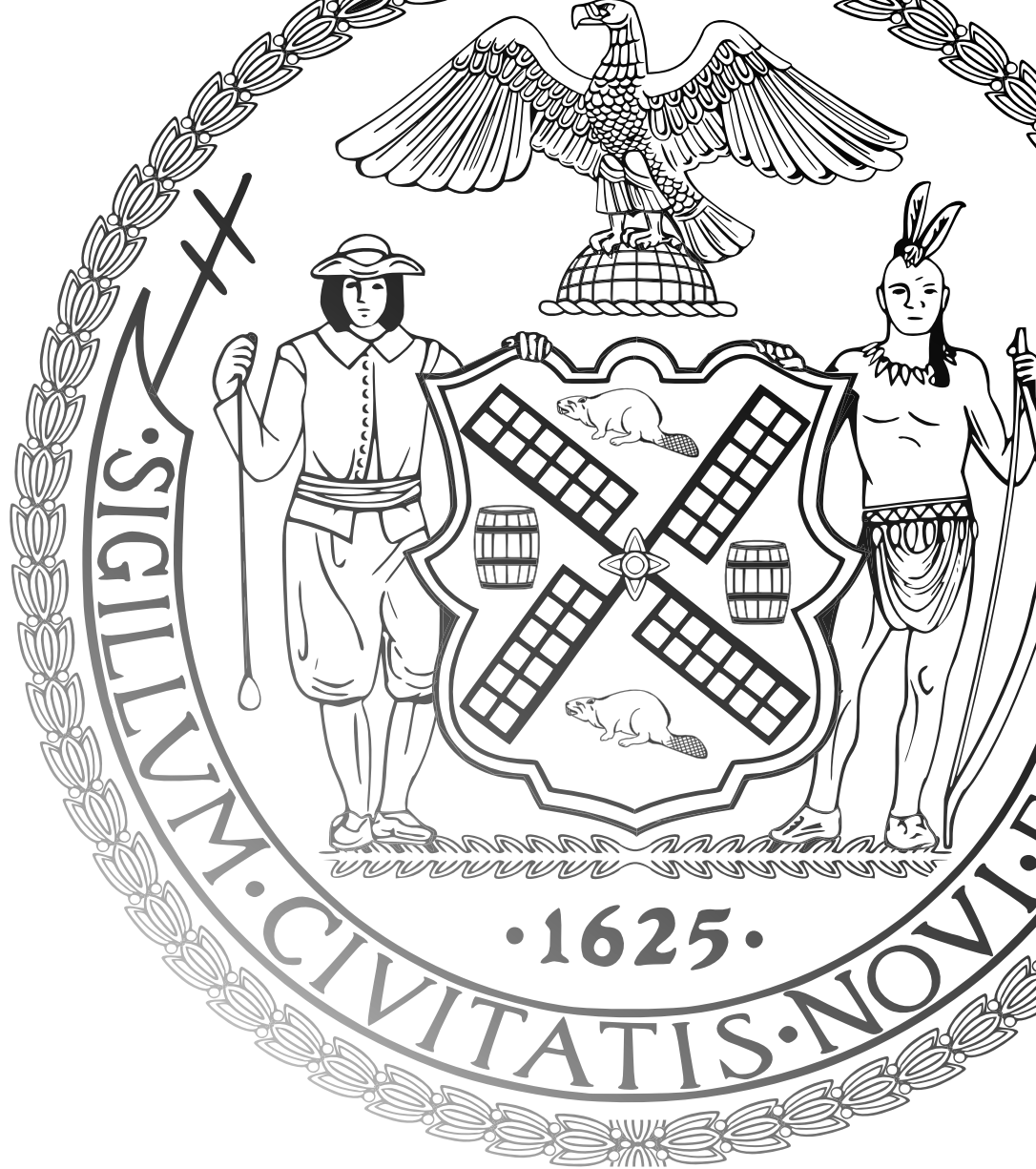


TAKEN FOR A RIDE



A NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL INVESTIGATION OF UNLICENSED TAXIS, PEDICABS, AND TICKET SELLERS





ABOUT THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The Oversight and Investigations Division (OID) is an interdisciplinary team of investigators, policy and data analysts, and attorneys dedicated to strengthening the City Council's oversight and legislative work. Through comprehensive, factbased investigations, OID brings clarity to matters of public significance by identifying issues, presenting findings, and improving transparency in City government.

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INTRODUCTION

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup approaches, over one million soccer fans are expected to travel to New York City,¹ including many visitors unfamiliar with the city's transportation options and tourist services. While this surge in visitors will generate increased economic activity as well as demand for transportation, entertainment, and tourist attractions,² it will also create opportunities for bad actors to target individuals with deceptive and dangerous practices.³

To assess how tourists may encounter misleading or unauthorized operators in New York City, investigators from the New York City Council's Oversight and Investigations Division (OID) conducted undercover fieldwork and observations, examining three industries that frequently target visitors: unlicensed taxis and rideshares,⁴ pedicab operators, and unauthorized ticket vendors.

KEY FINDINGS

Across dozens of interactions, investigators identified consistent patterns of deceptive activity targeting visitors.

1 Vendors and operators routinely misrepresented what was being sold. Vendors and operators often described one service and delivered another, often actively seeking to represent themselves as the legitimate service. For example:

- Battery Park ticket vendors selling Statue of Liberty tours often misled customers into believing that the tours included disembarkation at the Statue of Liberty, when in reality, the boats only circled Liberty Island.
- Non-Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) vehicles used signs claiming to be official rideshare vehicles when they were not registered with the TLC.⁵

2 Prices were often unclear or inflated. Investigators observed instances where quoted prices differed from final charges or were structured in ways that obscured the true cost, such as when:

- Pedicab drivers intentionally covered up the mandatory per-minute rate sign or stated that the ride was charged by time but failed to provide the rate.⁶
- Battery Park Statue of Liberty ticket vendors quoted one price but failed to state that there were additional charges for transportation to the pier where their tour boats launched.

3 Many operators presented themselves as legitimate while bypassing required licensing, registration, or safety standards. Investigators found that participants in each of the reviewed industries often falsely represented themselves as being licensed. Investigators observed that:

- Ticket vendors in Battery Park often wore clothing that gave the appearance of being official licensed ticket vendors, but many did not display the required license and were operating illegally.⁷
- Pedicab drivers solicited passengers and operated pedicabs without proper Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) licensure or a valid driver's license.⁸



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council has already taken an important step to address these fraudulent practices by passing Introduction 847-A, which requires DCWP to create and promote tourist-focused consumer protection materials addressing common deceptive trade practices.⁹ These educational initiatives for consumers, including placing clear, multilingual warnings in tourist-heavy areas and ensuring visitors know how to report deceptive conduct in real time, are vital to keeping tourists safe. Beyond consumer education, which is a central component of combatting these types of fraudulent practices, DCWP and TLC should also utilize each agency's unique authority to target bad actors during the World Cup and other popular tourist events by implementing the following enforcement-focused recommendations:

- **Increase targeted enforcement in high-traffic tourist areas**, particularly against unlicensed taxi and rideshare solicitation, misleading pedicab pricing, and unauthorized ticket vending.
- **Coordinate with relevant enforcement partners**, including the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, NYPD, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Department of Transportation (DOT), and other agencies, to create a unified enforcement strategy for areas where jurisdiction overlaps.
- **Track complaints and enforcement outcomes** during the World Cup period and other key tourist events to identify recurring locations, operators, and practices, and to assess whether additional enforcement or public education is needed.

These practices cheat tourists, erode public trust, undercut licensed businesses, and risk damaging the city's reputation as a world-renowned tourist destination. With awareness of the risks posed by these scams, tourists can protect themselves by using licensed services, verifying pricing before using a service, and avoiding individuals who attempt to pressure them into making fast and costly decisions.

UNLICENSED TAXIS AND RIDESHARES

FIGURE 1

Taxis and rideshares are regulated in New York City by the TLC.¹⁰ Unlike in some other jurisdictions where nearly anyone with a phone and a car can register as a rideshare driver and offer services through rideshare platforms,¹¹ New York City requires rideshare and taxi drivers to maintain specific licenses,¹² register their vehicles with official TLC plates,¹³ and follow rules specifying where they can pick up passengers.¹⁴

Figure 1 provides an overview of select applicable New York City rules and regulations. Even with these stringent regulations, unlicensed taxis and rideshares are a persistent problem in New York City, particularly where travelers are most vulnerable: near transit hubs such as airports and train stations, hotels, and popular tourist attractions.¹⁵ For those who do not know what to look out for, the cars appear safe and official, sometimes displaying rideshare decals or even resembling taxis.¹⁶



KEY TAXI AND RIDE-SHARE RULES TO KNOW

Only TLC-licensed drivers and vehicles may transport passengers for hire
N.Y.C. Admin. Code §§ 19-504, 19-505

Only taxi cabs can accept street hails
N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 19-504(a) (1)

Taxicabs must have TLC-required markings, including Medallion numbers, displayed on the vehicle
35 R.C.N.Y. § 58-31

Rideshares must have official TLC license plates
35 R.C.N.Y. § 59B-28(b) (3)

Vehicles must carry commercial insurance meeting TLC requirements
35 R.C.N.Y. §§ 58-13, 59A-12

Drivers must comply with fare rules (metered fares or app-based pricing only)
35 R.C.N.Y. §§ 58-26 (taxis), 59B-23 (FHVs)

HOW WE INVESTIGATED

Investigators conducted fieldwork at Penn Station, Coney Island-Stillwell Avenue, and the Javits Center.¹⁷ Posing as tourists outside of these locations, investigators were approached by individuals claiming to be rideshare drivers. In other instances, investigators approached vehicles displaying rideshare decals, where drivers subsequently offered them paid rides. Once it was confirmed that a driver was soliciting rides, investigators identified themselves and, when possible, asked the driver for their DMV license, vehicle registration, insurance, and inquired whether they had a TLC license.¹⁸

In addition, investigators conducted multiple rounds of observations at different times of day outside of Penn Station to document vehicles that appeared to be soliciting arriving travelers. Investigators also conducted observations outside Madison Square Garden at the end of a basketball game to document whether they observed any unlicensed vehicles soliciting street hails.

WHAT WE OBSERVED

Encounters revealed a range of deceptive tactics. OID investigators documented the following among the 12 drivers they engaged with:

- 1. Non-TLC-licensed vehicles:**
Four of the cars displayed Uber or Lyft decals despite not being registered with TLC, as seen in *Figure 2*.¹⁹



FIGURE 2:
Non-TLC Registered Vehicle Displaying Uber Logo

In addition to the 12 vehicles OID interacted with, while conducting observations outside of Moynihan Train Hall at Penn Station one evening, OID observed six vehicles parked behind the taxi stand line in a bus stop with signs or branding on their vehicles that read “Uber,” as pictured in *Figure 2*, but did not display TLC-required decals or TLC plates.²⁰

2. **Out-of-state passenger plates:** Three of their vehicles carried passenger plates issued outside of New York State.²¹
3. **Impersonation of licensed taxis:** One vehicle was painted to mimic a green NYC taxi but displayed regular passenger plates instead of TLC plates.²²
4. **Unlicensed drivers:** Three drivers admitted they did not have an active TLC license.²³ Of the remainder, four showed investigators their physical licenses; the rest either refused to answer or left prior to investigators questioning them about their license status. One of the drivers with an active TLC license stated that he had been suspended from Uber so he was giving unauthorized rides in his personal vehicle. He remained on site, continuing to solicit passengers.
5. **Insurance concerns:** One driver was unable to provide proof of insurance and suggested he was not currently covered.²⁴

Three drivers sped away when investigators approached and asked inspection questions.²⁵

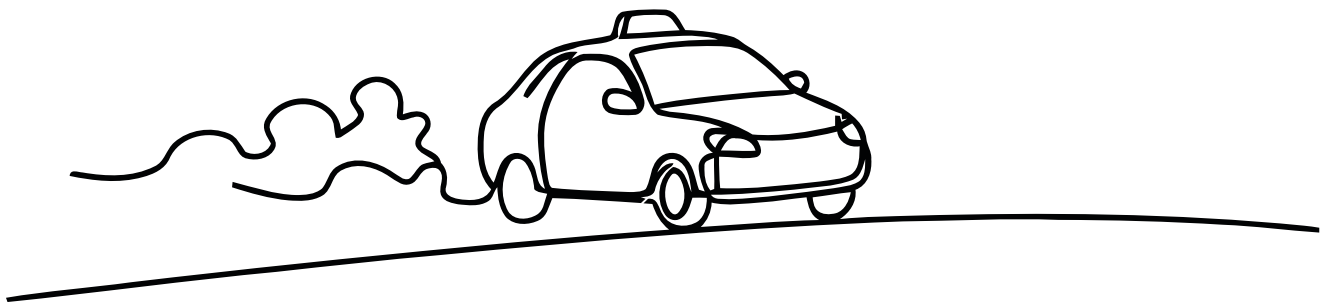


FIGURE 3

Non-TLC-Licensed Taxis and Rideshares

FINDINGS AT A GLANCE



UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES

4 vehicles displayed **Uber**
or **Lyft** decals but lacked
TLC registration



OUT OF STATE PLATES

3 vehicles had **out of**
state passenger plates



TAXI

IMPERSONATION

1 vehicle was **painted**
green to resemble an
NYC taxi



UNLICENSED DRIVERS

3 drivers did not have
TLC licenses



INSURANCE CONCERNS

1 driver did not have
proof of insurance

PEDICABS

FIGURE 4

Pedicabs can be seen driving all over Midtown Manhattan, in Central Park, and parked outside of Broadway shows, often blaring music.²⁶ They are marketed as a fun, convenient way for tourists to take in the city's sights.²⁷ In practice, some pedicab operators engage in aggressive solicitation, operate without required licenses, or charge exorbitant fares to customers.²⁸ While DCWP can only issue a maximum of 850 pedicab registrations, reports have estimated there are 1,200 to 1,500 pedicabs operating in the city.²⁹ Tourists have frequently reported being misled about the cost of rides.³⁰ For example, a driver may fail to quote a price before the ride or play loud music to make it difficult to communicate about costs.³¹ Riding in a properly-licensed pedicab can be a memorable and safe experience for tourists, as long as the costs associated are made clear up front.³²



KEY PEDICAB RULES TO KNOW

Pedicab must be human-powered only

N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-249

Driver must hold a valid DCWP pedicab license

N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-257(a)

Driver must have a valid DMV driver's license

N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-257(d) (2)

Pedicab must be registered and inspected by DCWP

N.Y.C. Admin. Code §§ 20-255

Pedicab must clearly post per-minute rates

N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-260

Pedicab must maintain required liability insurance

N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-253

HOW WE INVESTIGATED

To assess how pedicabs operate, OID investigators conducted fieldwork in Midtown Manhattan, posing as tourists to solicit rides and assess whether operators accurately disclosed their rates, while another team performed compliance inspections of the pedicabs and drivers. In other instances, investigators immediately disclosed their identities to the pedicab drivers and conducted assessments of their pedicabs. In total, OID interacted with 25 pedicab drivers.

In addition, to assess pedicab activity in one of the city's busiest tourist corridors, OID conducted field observations in Times Square near 7th Avenue and West 47th Street. Investigators selected multiple evening observation windows, including two separate periods on a Wednesday evening and one period on a Friday evening, to capture pedicab activity during high-traffic tourist hours. During each observation period, OID documented the number of pedicabs passing through the area and recorded whether each pedicab displayed visible per-minute rate signage for prospective riders.

WHAT WE OBSERVED

From the inspections of 25 pedicabs operating throughout Midtown Manhattan, OID investigators found the following:

- 1. Lack of DCWP licensing:** 12% of operators did not have the required DCWP pedicab license.³³
- 2. No driver's license:** 16% of operators lacked a valid DMV driver's license.³⁴
- 3. Unregistered pedicabs:** 24% of pedicabs were not registered with or inspected by DCWP.³⁵

4. Illegal motorization: 92% of pedicabs observed were equipped with motors, even though only human-powered pedicabs are permitted under current law.³⁶

5. Pricing concerns: While 84% of pedicabs displayed rate signs, investigators observed several instances where the rate signage wasn't clear or was partially obscured,³⁷ as seen in *Figure 5*. In some instances, drivers blurred the rules, quoting misleading “flat rate” prices, or failed to disclose the true cost of a ride.³⁸ For example, OID spoke to pedicab customers who said they were told that the ride’s price would be time-based, but were not told the actual rate.



FIGURE 5:
Obscured Pedicab Rate Sign

6. Road safety practices: Pedicab drivers are required to follow the Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL).³⁹ OID observed instances of pedicabs violating the VTL, including by running red lights, driving the wrong way down the road, blocking a bike lane, and failing to yield to pedestrians.

7. Previous violation history: In multiple instances, pedicabs bore stickers indicating they had previously been seized by the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

OID’s Times Square pedicab observations found the following, as outlined below:

Observation	Time	Observation Period	Total Pedicabs	With Visible Rate Signs	Without Visible Rate Signs	% Without Visible Rate Signs
Wednesday	5:30pm	20 minutes	15	12	3	20%
Wednesday	8:00pm	20 minutes	14	10	4	29%
Friday	9:00 pm	20 minutes	23	20	3	13%
Total		60 minutes	52	42	10	19%

FIGURE 6

Pedicabs

FINDINGS AT A GLANCE



LACK OF DCWP LICENSING

12% of operators did not have the required DCWP pedicab license



UNLICENSED DRIVERS

16% of operators lacked a valid DMV driver's license



UNREGISTERED VEHICLES

24% of pedicabs were not registered with or inspected by DCWP



ILLEGAL MOTORIZATION

92% of pedicabs observed were equipped with motors



PRICING CONCERNS

Drivers quoted misleading "flat rate" prices or failed to disclose the true cost



ROAD SAFETY PRACTICES

Drivers were observed committing traffic violations



VIOLATION HISTORY

Pedicabs bore stickers indicating they'd been seized by the NYPD

UNAUTHORIZED TICKET SELLERS

FIGURE 7

Battery Park, located at the southern tip of Manhattan, is a popular destination for tourists exploring the Financial District. It contains the Castle Clinton National Monument, the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and other tourist attractions such as the SeaGlass Carousel.⁴⁰ Importantly, it is the launch point for the official ferry to both the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, run by Statue City Cruises.⁴¹

For years, tourists visiting Battery Park have been targeted by ticket sellers advertising so-called “Statue of Liberty boat tours.”⁴² Although only Statue City Cruises is authorized to transport

visitors who disembark at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island,⁴³ unauthorized vendors often market tickets for third-party ferries that suggest they provide the same experience.⁴⁴ In reality, these tours never dock at either destination and instead merely circle the attractions.⁴⁵ In addition, unlike Statue City Cruises boats, which launch directly from Battery Park, the other companies’ boats do not.⁴⁶ After purchasing their tickets, customers are directed to take a bus or another form of transit to a different pier.⁴⁷

**KEY TICKET VENDOR
RULES TO KNOW**

- Must hold a valid DCWP individual ticket seller license**
N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-551
- Must conspicuously display their DCWP license**
N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-554
- Vending on Parks property requires authorization**
N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 556(g)
- Vendors may not engage in deceptive or misleading practices**
N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 20-556 (k)



FIGURE 8:
Non-Statue City Cruises Vendors in Battery Park

These practices have duped many sightseers, including a high-profile case where a celebrity and his family were deceived.⁴⁸ Tourists, particularly those with limited English proficiency, may be especially vulnerable to being misled into purchasing the unofficial tickets due to vendors' deceptive and aggressive selling tactics.⁴⁹

HOW WE INVESTIGATED

OID investigators posed as tourists and engaged directly with ticket vendors. Investigators also interviewed visitors disembarking from cruises to better understand what ticket sellers promised and what was delivered. Lastly, OID investigators attempted to question sellers about their license status and asked additional compliance-related questions, but faced challenges from ticket vendors who quickly became hostile.

WHAT WE OBSERVED

OID investigators documented the following key patterns during their fieldwork:

- 1. Large number of unauthorized ticket sellers:** On each of the days that investigators visited Battery Park, they observed more than 75 unauthorized ticket vendors selling tickets for boat tours that were not associated with Statue City Cruises. Vendors wore bright vests marked "authorized ticket agent," which gave them an appearance of legitimacy.⁵⁰

- 2. Licensing violations:** Most vendors did not display a DCWP license, and those who displayed a license were illegally vending on NYC Department of Parks and Recreation property.⁵¹
- 3. False claims of sold-out tickets:** Vendors frequently told customers that Statue City Cruises tickets were sold out, even when OID investigators had already confirmed that tickets were still available for that date and time.⁵²
- 4. Deceptive pricing:** Vendors often quoted one price but charged more per ticket than promised, as verified by receipts and credit card records displayed by customers to OID investigators after disembarking from the boat.⁵³
- 5. Misleading advertising:** Investigators overheard sellers using language that suggested to potential customers that they would stop at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, such as offering boat tours “to” the Statue of Liberty, when in fact the boats never docked on the island.⁵⁴
- 6. Aggressive tactics:** Vendors blocked park entrances, followed tourists aggressively to hawk tickets, and positioned themselves at subway exits, creating pressure and intimidation.⁵⁵

FIGURE 9

Ticket Vendors at Battery Park

FINDINGS AT A GLANCE



SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

75+ unauthorized vendors per day observed



LICENSING VIOLATIONS

Most vendors lacked or misused DCWP licenses



FALSE CLAIMS

Vendors said Statue City Cruises were sold out (not true)



DECEPTIVE PRICING

Quoted one price, charged more per ticket



MISLEADING SERVICES

Promised Statue / Ellis Island stops, but boats never docked



AGGRESSIVE TACTICS

Blocked entrances, followed tourists, pressured sales

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OID's investigation found that unlicensed taxis and rideshares, misleading pedicab operators, and unauthorized ticket vendors are already operating in some of New York City's busiest tourist areas. Many of these operators rely on aggressive tactics, confusing pricing, or claims of legitimacy that can make it difficult for consumers to distinguish between legitimate businesses and deceptive actors, particularly in crowded or unfamiliar environments.

As New York City prepares to welcome visitors for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and other high-profile events, increasing public awareness of these practices will be critical. Visitors who understand how these schemes operate, where they are most common, and what warning signs to look for are better positioned to avoid overcharges, scams, and unsafe services.

OID's findings demonstrate that consumer education and enforcement must work together. Introduction 847-A gives DCWP an important educational mandate to warn visitors about common deceptive practices, particularly in the high-traffic areas where OID observed unlicensed taxis and rideshares, misleading pedicab operators, and unauthorized ticket vendors. As New York City prepares for the World Cup and other major tourist events, DCWP should fulfill their new mandate by providing clear, multilingual warnings and real-time reporting guidance.

Beyond these key education initiatives, DCWP and TLC should also use their respective enforcement powers to target bad actors by implementing the following recommendations. →

- 1 Increase targeted enforcement in high-traffic tourist areas,** particularly against unlicensed taxi and rideshare solicitation, misleading pedicab pricing, and unauthorized ticket vending.
- 2 Coordinate with relevant enforcement partners,** including the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, NYPD, DPR, DOT, and other agencies, to create a unified enforcement strategy for areas where jurisdiction overlaps.
- 3 Track complaints and enforcement outcomes during the World Cup** period and other key tourist events to identify recurring locations, operators, and practices, and to assess whether additional enforcement or public education is needed.

By pairing clear consumer education with targeted enforcement, the City can better protect visitors, support legitimate businesses, and maintain confidence in New York City as a world-class tourist destination. ■

ENDNOTES

- 1 See Press Release, N.Y. N.J. 2026 World Cup Host Comm., FIFA World Cup 2026 New York New Jersey Host Committee Announces \$3.3 Billion in Economic Impact for the Region (Jul. 21, 2025), <https://nynjfwc26.com/press-releases/3-billion-in-economic-impact/>.
- 2 See *id.*
- 3 See, e.g., RONALD W. GLENSOR & KENNETH J. PEAK, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST., CRIMES AGAINST TOURISTS 2 (2004) <https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-p058-pub.pdf>.
- 4 Throughout this report, the term “rideshare” is used for a vehicle operated on behalf of a high-volume for-hire vehicle service (such as Uber or Lyft) as defined in N.Y.C. RULES, tit. 35 § 59D-03.
- 5 See N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 19-504 (stating for-hire vehicles may only operate after obtaining a license from TLC).
- 6 See N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-260 (regulating pedicab rates and requiring display of rate signs).
- 7 See N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-554 (requiring ticket sellers to conspicuously wear their license while vending);
- 8 See N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-257(a) (requiring a pedicab driver be licensed by DCWP) and N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-257(d)(2) (requiring a pedicab driver has a valid motor vehicle driver’s license to receive a pedicab driver license).
- 9 Intro. No. 847-A, N.Y.C. Council (2026).
- 10 N.Y.C. CHARTER §§ 2300, 2303.
- 11 See, e.g., *Requirements to Sign Up as a Driver*, UBER <https://help.uber.com/en/driving-and-delivering/article/requirements-to-sign-up-as-a-driver?nodeId=d4a4038b-2553-4917-af9c-132135feece7> (last visited May 14, 2026).
- 12 N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE §§ 19-504, 19-505.
- 13 N.Y.C. RULES, tit. 35 § 59B-28(b)(3); see also *Your Ride*, N.Y.C. TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMM. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/passengers/your-ride.page> (last visited May 14, 2026).
- 14 See, e.g., N.Y.C. RULES, tit. 35 § 80-19(a)(4).
- 15 See *Illegal Rides*, N.Y.C. TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMM., <https://www.nyc.gov/site/tlc/passengers/illegal-rides.page> (last visited May 4, 2026); Ramsey Khalifeh, *How to Tell a Legal Taxi from an Unlicensed Scam Cab in NYC*, GOTHAMIST (Jan. 28, 2026), <https://gothamist.com/news/how-to-tell-a-legal-taxi-from-an-unlicensed-scam-cab-in-nyc>.
- 16 See, e.g., *Illegal Rides*, *supra* note 14; Steven Petrol, *I got Taken for a Ride by a Fake Uber Driver. Don’t Become the Next Victim*, USA TODAY (Oct. 12, 2016 at 6:43 p.m.), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/columnist/stevenpetrow/2016/10/12/fake-uber-drivers-dont-become-next-victim/91903508/>.
- 17 While reporting on the issue of unlicensed rideshares and taxis has mainly focused on the prevalence of these vehicles at NYC airports, OID wanted to focus on additional areas where these vehicles may pose a risk to visitors. See, e.g., Ramsey Khalifeh, *JFK to Midtown for Only \$800: NYC Taxi Hustlers Running Wild at Airport Terminals*, GOTHAMIST (Jan. 28, 2026), <https://gothamist.com/news/jfk-to-midtown-for-only-800-nyc-taxi-hustlers-running-wild-at-airport-terminals>; Ramsey Khalifeh, *Port Authority Cops Lean on New Surveillance Centers to Catch Taxi Scammers*, GOTHAMIST (Apr. 21, 2026), <https://gothamist.com/news/port-authority-cops-lean-on-new-surveillance-center-to-catch-taxi-scammers>; Ramsey Khalifeh, *New Crackdown on Illegal Cabbies Coming to JFK Airport, New Port Authority Boss Says*, GOTHAMIST (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://gothamist.com/news/new-crackdown-on-illegal-cabbies-coming-to-jfk-airport-new-port-authority-boss-says>; CeFaan Kim, *Port Authority Cracking Down on Illegal Pickups at NYC Airports*, EYEWITNESS NEWS ABC7 (Jul. 19, 2018), <https://abc7ny.com/post/port-authority-cracking-down-on-illegal-pickups-at-nyc-airports/3789714/>.
- 18 In instances when investigators observed a potential customer being solicited by an unlicensed vehicle, they spoke with the individual to confirm that the ride had not been pre-arranged and advised them that the vehicle was not properly licensed by TLC.
- 19 See N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 19-504 (stating for-hire vehicles may only operate after obtaining a license from TLC).
- 20 New York City rules state that only taxis can be parked in taxi stands, except for expeditiously dropping off or picking up passengers. See N.Y.C. RULES, tit. 35 § 80-19 (regulating stops at Taxi Stands). The vehicles OID observed were in violation of that regulation.
- 21 See N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 19-504 (requiring a vehicle used as a taxi or for-hire vehicle be licensed by TLC).

- 22 *See id.*
- 23 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 19-505 (requiring that a taxi or for-hire driver be licensed by TLC).
- 24 *See* N.Y.C. RULES, tit. 35 §§ 58-13 (requiring taxis be insured), 59A-12 (requiring for-hire vehicles be insured).
- 25 Participation with OID’s inquiries was voluntary given that OID was not conducting enforcement operations.
- 26 *See* MIDTOWN COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER, *FIXING THE PEDICAB PROBLEM 4* (May 2026), https://www.innovatingjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/MCJC_AP-Guide-Pedicab-Reform_05042026.pdf.
- 27 *See, e.g.*, Alexandra Rivera, *Tourists Say These are the Best Things to Do in NYC This Summer*, LOHUD, <https://travel.yahoo.com/guides/articles/tourists-best-things-nyc-summer-083235159.html> (May 18, 2026).
- 28 *See* Alyssa Paolicelli, *NYPD Cracking Down on Pedicab Scams as Tourism Seasons Approaches*, SPECTRUM NEWS NY1 (Sep. 12, 2024 at 11:30 a.m.), <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2024/09/12/nypd-cracking-down-on-illegal-vendors-and-pedicabs>.
- 29 MIDTOWN COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER, *supra* note 25 at 7.
- 30 *See* *Pedicab Riders Shocked by Bills Topping \$200, \$400, even \$600*, EYEWITNESS NEWS ABC7 (Jan. 19, 2018), [https://abc7ny.com/post/pedicab-riders-shocked-by-bills-topping-\\$200-\\$400-even-\\$600/2968749/](https://abc7ny.com/post/pedicab-riders-shocked-by-bills-topping-$200-$400-even-$600/2968749/); Peter Senzamici, *Bottcher Takes Dead Aim at Loud, Scammy Pedicabs in Hell’s Kitchen*, PATCH (Nov. 29, 2023 at 8:30 p.m.), <https://patch.com/new-york/midtown-nyc/bottcher-takes-dead-aim-loud-scammy-pedicabs-hells-kitchen>; Gus Saltonstall, *Police Crack Down on Pedicabs; Dozens Seized and ‘Con’*, WEST SIDE RAG (Dec. 20, 2023 at 11:23 a.m.), <https://www.westsiderag.com/2023/12/20/police-crack-down-on-pedicabs-dozens-seized-and-con-revealed>; Charles Lane, *Advocates Push Overhaul for ‘Wild West’ NYC Pedicab Industry, Enforcement Shift from NYPD*, GOTHAMIST (May 6, 2026), <https://gothamist.com/news/advocates-push-overhaul-for-wild-west-nyc-pedicab-industry-enforcement-shift-from-nypd>.
- 31 *See, e.g.*, Saltonstall, *supra* note 30.
- 32 *See* MIDTOWN COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER, *supra* note 25 at 14.
- 33 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-257(a) (requiring a pedicab driver be licensed by DCWP).
- 34 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-257(d)(2) (requiring a pedicab driver has a valid motor vehicle driver’s license to receive a pedicab driver license).
- 35 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-255 (barring pedicabs from operating without DCWP inspection and registration).
- 36 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-249 (defining pedicabs as “solely propelled by human power”).
- 37 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-260 (requiring that rates be displayed on the exterior and the rear of a pedicab’s bike seat); N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-254 (requiring that rate signs be posted conspicuously).
- 38 *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-260 (requiring that pedicab rates be calculated per minute per ride).
- 39 N.Y. VEH. & TRAF. L. § 1231 (subjecting a person riding a bicycle to all duties applicable to a person driving a motor vehicle).
- 40 *See* *Visit the Battery*, THE BATTERY, <https://www.thebattery.org/visit-the-battery/> (last visited May 4, 2026); *Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust*, HUGH L. CAREY BATTERY PARK CITY AUTHORITY, <https://bpca.ny.gov/place/jewish-heritage-museum/> (last visited May 18, 2026).
- 41 THE BATTERY, *supra* note 40.
- 42 *See* Brian Berger, *Beware! Battery Park Tourist Scammers Persist Despite Years of Complaints & Warnings*, OUR TOWN (Mar. 28, 2025 at 5:06 a.m.) <https://www.ourtownny.com/news/beware-battery-park-tourist-scammers-persist-despite-years-of-complaints-warnings-BJ4391434>; *Crackdown on Street Vendors Selling Deceptive Tickets for Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island*, CBS NEWS (Aug. 21, 2019 at 3:25 p.m.), <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-waterway-cracking-down-on-vendors-who-sell-deceptive-tickets-for-statue-of-liberty-ellis-island/>; Ashley Southall, *21 Vendors Face Charges of Selling Fake Tickets to the Statue of Liberty*, N.Y. TIMES (May 18, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/19/nyregion/21-vendors-face-charges-of-selling-fake-tickets-to-the-statue-of-liberty.html>.
- 43 *Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island*, STATUE CITY CRUISES, <https://statuecitycruises.com/tickets> (last visited May 4, 2026).
- 44 *See* Eileen Lehpamer, *Tourists Fall Victim to Street Vendor Scams in the Battery*, PIX11 (Oct. 8, 2024 at 10:27 p.m.), <https://pix11.com/news/local-news/tourists-fall-victim-to-street-vendor-scams-in-the-battery/>.
- 45 *Id.*

- 46** *Id.*
- 47** *Id.*
- 48** *See, e.g., Alec Baldwin Says he was Duped by Statue of Liberty Scam*, EYEWITNESS NEWS ABC7 (Oct. 9, 2019), <https://abc7ny.com/post/alec-baldwin-says-he-was-duped-by-statue-of-liberty-scam/5602897/>.
- 49** *See Claire Lampen, Boat Operators Who Work with Scam Statue of Liberty Ticket Vendors No Longer Welcome at Pier 36*, GOTHAMIST (Aug. 21, 2019), <https://gothamist.com/news/boat-operators-who-work-with-scam-statue-of-liberty-ticket-vendors-no-longer-welcome-at-pier-36>.
- 50** Following OID’s observations in June and July of 2025, the NYPD increased enforcement in Battery Park, leading to a visible reduction in illegal vending later in the summer. In addition, DOT removed an authorized bus stop to prevent tour buses from stopping at the park and transporting ticket-purchasers from Battery Park to the pier where the boats launched. By late September 2025, vendor presence dropped from over 75 individuals to fewer than 15 after the crackdown. However, observations in April and May of 2026 found that the number of ticket sellers had returned to previous numbers.
- 51** *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-554 (requiring ticket sellers to conspicuously wear their license while vending); N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-566(g) (requiring ticket sellers to receive authorization from the Dept. of Parks and Recreation to sell on Dept. property).
- 52** *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-556(k) (barring ticket sellers from making “fraudulent, misrepresentative, or false statements”).
- 53** *See id.*
- 54** *See id.*
- 55** *See* N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE § 20-566(a) (barring ticket sellers from vending “in an aggressive manner”).

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TAXIS & RIDESHARES

- ★ For street hails, use NYC yellow or green taxis (hail one, find a taxi stand, or use the app)
- ★ For rideshares, book via a rideshare app (not a street solicitation)
- ★ Look out for official TLC plates and decals on vehicles

PEDICABS

- ★ Check the signage on the side of the pedicab - it must display the per-minute rate. Verbally confirm the rate with the driver before getting in.
- ★ Ask if the operator is licensed by DCWP. They should wear a city-issued ID and show it on request.
- ★ Request a receipt at the end of your ride - you are entitled to one by law.

STATUE OF LIBERTY TICKETS

- ★ There is only one authorized operator to disembark at the Statue of Liberty or Ellis Island (Statue City Cruises).
- ★ If you are told by a ticket vendor that tickets are sold out - verify. You can check availability at Castle Clinton in Battery Park.
- ★ If taking an alternative cruise, verify the price and what the service entails.

BOTTOM LINE

- ★ If you feel rushed, confused, or unsure about what you are being offered, that may be a sign to walk away.
- ★ Take a moment to verify price, terms, and licensing before purchasing anything or entering a vehicle.

If you believe you have been the victim of a scam or deceptive business practice, you can file a complaint by calling 311 or visiting NYC 311 Online. For crimes in progress, hazardous conditions, or fire, police, or medical emergencies, call 911 immediately.



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

CITY HALL, NY, NY

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