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Request for Input on Yellow Taxicab Roof Lights

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is interested in receiving input from the taxicab industry on the taxi roof light.

TODAY

Right now, taxicab roof lights have two separate lights: (1) the medallion number, and (2) the "off-duty" sign. Depending on the taxicab status, these lights are displayed in one of four combinations:

Message to Potential Passengers	Medallion Number	Off-Duty Light
On-duty and available	ON	OFF
On-duty but unavailable (already has passenger inside)	OFF	OFF
Off-duty and occupied by passenger (on a "going my way" trip)	OFF	ON
Off-duty but maybe can take you (available for "going my way" trip)	ON	ON

Although some passengers understand the lighting system, others (especially visitors) are confused by it. Some passengers mistakenly look for *any* illumination on the roof light and think this means the taxi is available. Especially from far away, some passengers think it is hard to see whether the taxi is off-duty or if it is available.

What results is that some passengers repeatedly try to hail off-duty taxis. Making it easy for all passengers to know when a taxi is available for a hail and when it is unavailable would improve customers' experience with taxis and could reduce misunderstandings between drivers and passengers.

Other Cities: The Single-Light System

Taxis in some other cities have slightly different roof light systems. In these systems, there is no off-duty light. When the light is on, the taxi is available for hail. When the light is off, the taxi already has a passenger *or* the driver is off-duty. The *reason* it is not available does not matter for the light. London taxis use a single-light system.



London Taxi Photo by Aimee Daniells

PROPOSAL:

If New York City were to pursue a single-light solution, it could design a light similar to that found in London except that the word "taxi" would, most likely, be replaced with the medallion number. There would no longer be an "off-duty" light. The proposed lighting system could be:

Message to Potential Passengers	Medallion Number Light Only
Available	ON
Unavailable	OFF

What Do You Think?

1. Do you think NYC taxis should move to the single-light system? Why or why not?
2. Do you have an idea for another option besides the proposal and the current light system?
3. How important is the "going my way" policy to you? If you are a taxi driver, what percentage of time do you pick up a passenger while you are off-duty at the end of your shift?
4. Is there any reason the off-duty light is important to you besides the "going my way policy?" What problems, if any, would occur without an off-duty light?
5. Besides the roof light, is there another method you can think of for letting passengers know you're available for a "going my way" trip?

Please submit your answers at www.surveymonkey.com/s/rooflight :

or

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Please submit all responses by November 11, 2011.

Thank you in advance for sharing your experiences and ideas with the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission. We look forward to reading your responses as we research this issue.