

**CITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER SERVICES**

**RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING  
TO TOUR BOATS AND WATER TAXIS**  
effective June 30, 1995

**City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley  
Mayor**

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Commissioner**

City of Chicago  
Department of Consumer Services

Rules and Regulations Pertaining to  
Water Taxis and Tour Boats

The following Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Water Taxis and Tour Boats are promulgated by the Commissioner of Consumer Services pursuant to authority under Section 2-24-041 of the Municipal Code of Chicago.

This compilation of the Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Water Taxis and Tour Boats includes Rule 7.1 (effective 6-30-95) as well as all previously promulgated rules which were contained in the last edition of these rules.

**Rule No. 1****Definitions**

- a. "Commissioner" shall refer to the Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Services of the City of Chicago.
- b. "Tour Boat" shall refer to any boat other than a water taxi that picks up and drops off passengers for a fee.
- c. "Water taxi" shall refer to any vessel for hire at pre-arranged rates of fare which is operated between a point of origin and a destination point different from the point of origin.

**Rule No. 2****Water Taxi and Tour Boat Registration and Routes**

All operators of water taxis and tour boats shall register with the Commissioner before commencing operations; provided, however that water taxi or tour boat businesses that are in operation on or before the effective date of these rules shall complete the required registration no later than ten days following the aforementioned date. The registration shall be on forms designated by the Commissioner of Consumer Services. Operators seeking to register with the Commissioner shall present, for each water taxi or tour boat, a copy of the following: documentation indicating that each vessel is in compliance with Coast Guard or other applicable federal agency requirements; documentation indicating that persons who will operate a tour boat or water taxi are properly licensed to operate such vessels; and documentation indicating that proper insurance has been obtained in accordance with applicable federal requirements.

Registered operators shall register with the Commissioner all established routes of service fifteen days prior to offering such service. The routes of service should include all embarkation and destination locations; days and hours of service, and frequency of service. Any amendments to the routes of service should be registered with the Commissioner fifteen days prior to offering such service. Routes of service may be changed for good cause,

including, but not limited to, instances in which there are operational difficulties caused by the weather.

A notice of existing routes of service and proposed routes of service or amendments to existing routes of service should be posted conspicuously on each water taxi and tour boat and, if possible, at each embarkation and destination location along the route. Operators with fixed offices may post rates and routes at their ticket offices and in brochures.

**Rule No. 3                      Annual Registration**

Tour boat and water taxi operators shall register with the Commissioner on or before April 1 of each year. Any new operator shall register prior to commencing operations.

**Rule No. 4                      Parking and Docking of Boats**

- A. All operators of water taxis and tour boats must maintain a legal location to park their boat(s).
  
- B. A water taxi or tour boat shall dock at or otherwise use city-owned property for the purpose of picking up or dropping off passengers only pursuant to a valid and current use and occupancy agreement between the operator and the City of Chicago.

**Rule No. 5                      Cancellation Policy**

Each water taxi and tour boat business shall adopt a policy or procedure relating to cancellation of a scheduled water taxi or tour boat excursion. Such policy or procedure shall be conspicuously posted at any fixed location where water taxi and tour boat tickets are regularly sold and shall be incorporated in the ticket or contract, or otherwise provided to the customer at the time a ticket is purchased or contract entered into. The cancellation policy or procedure shall be registered with the Commissioner at least fifteen days prior to its effective date.

**Rule No. 6**

**Rates of Fare for Scheduled Service**

All water taxi and tour boat operators providing service pursuant to a registered route schedule shall register the rates of fare applicable to their operations or amendments to those rates with the Commissioner at least fifteen days prior to the effective date thereof. All such water taxi or tour boat operators shall prominently display on the notifications of the routes of service required in rule 2 the applicable rates of fare.

If the water taxi or tour boat operator does not maintain a route of service, he shall prominently display on board the vessel the rates of fare.

Water taxi and tour boat operators may discount their rates of fare for scheduled service based on the age of the passengers or advanced payments of fares through coupons or passes. Such discounts must be included in the rates filed with the Commissioner and displayed on the notifications of the routes of service as required above.

Water taxi and tour boat operators shall post maximum fares. No water taxi or tour boat operator may charge for scheduled service a fare greater than a maximum fare that is clearly described.

**Rule No. 7**

No person shall solicit passengers for transportation by water taxi or tour boat on any public way or on any public property except pursuant to a use and occupancy agreement with the City of Chicago. Any solicitation for passengers for transportation must include any applicable registered route schedule (or indicate that there is none) and the registered rates of fare. Solicitors must also obtain any necessary city permits.

**Rule No. 7.1**

No water taxi or tour boat operator may permit a total of more than two persons to solicit passengers for transportation by a water taxi or tour boat owned by any person on the public way including and adjacent to both of the following streets:

Wacker Drive between State Street and Michigan Avenue;

Michigan Avenue west of the Water Tower (commonly known as "Little Michigan Avenue") between Pearson Street and Chicago Avenue;

Pearson Street between Michigan Avenue east of the Water Tower and Rush Street.

**Rule No. 8** Charter services are permitted. All water taxi and tour boat operators who offer charter services shall make available to customers and prospective customers a refund and cancellation policy. Such policy shall be filed with the Commissioner at least fifteen days prior to the date upon which it becomes effective or is amended. For purposes of this section "charter services" shall refer to the hiring of the boat for a specified period of time for an agreed price.

**Rule No. 9** Any water taxi and tour boat operator who enters into a use and occupancy agreement with the City of Chicago shall observe all conditions of such agreement. Such business shall also comply with all applicable City of Chicago ordinances.

**Rule No. 10** No water taxi or tour boat operator shall offer any food, beverages (alcoholic or non-alcoholic), or entertainment in conjunction with its operation without having first secured the applicable City of Chicago licenses required for such operations.

**Rule No. 11** All water taxi and tour boat operators are responsible for any noise disturbances or other nuisance complaints emanating from the vessel. In determining whether a vessel has created a noise disturbance or any other nuisance, the vessel will be held to the same standards as a land-based source of noise or other nuisance.

**Rule No. 12** All water taxi and tour boat operators shall comply with the provisions of Section 10-40-281 of the Municipal Code relating to advertising.

- Rule No. 13** No water taxi or tour boat operating pursuant to a registered route schedule of service shall refuse transportation to any passenger along that route unless that passenger cannot pay the scheduled fare or that the vessel is already at capacity as mandated by the United States Coast Guard or other authority. Service may be refused with respect to persons who are visibly inebriated.
- Rule No. 14** Every person, including the owner, employee, agent or any other person acting on behalf of a water taxi or tour boat shall be courteous to passengers, prospective passengers, and other persons at all times when performing any acts in conjunction with the operation of the water taxi or tour boat. No person involved with the operation of a water taxi or tour boat shall assault, threaten, abuse, insult, provoke, interfere with, or use profane language or obscene gestures around any passenger, prospective passenger or any other person.
- Rule No. 15** The operator of a water taxi or tour boat shall be responsible for the actions of all employees, officers and directors (if the operator is a corporation), agents, and any other persons when those persons are performing any acts in conjunction with the operation of the business of the water taxi or tour boat.
- Rule No. 16** **Penalties**
- Any operator found in violation of any rule set forth herein shall be fined no more than \$200 for a first offense, fined no more than \$300 for a second offense, and fined no more than \$500 for third and subsequent offenses. Each day that a violation continues shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.
- Rule No. 17** All water taxis and tour boats shall be capable of passing beneath movable bridges without requiring such bridges to be raised.
- Rule No. 18** All tour boats and water taxis shall display a certificate of registration issued by the Commissioner.

**Rule No. 19**

**Applicability**

These rules and regulations shall apply to all water taxi and tour boat operations, including those using public or private docks, in the City of Chicago.