

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY CODE PROVISIONS ON TAXICAB SURCHARGES IN SNOW EMERGENCIES

ISSUE: Consideration of an ordinance to amend the City Code to change how the City implements taxicab surcharges during snow emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council introduce the ordinance, pass it on first reading and schedule it for public hearing, second reading and final passage on Saturday, November 13 (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION: On June 22, City Council received the City Manager's after-action review of the 2009-10 snow emergencies. Also provided at the meeting was a proposed Snow Emergency Implementation Plan for Winter Preparedness, developed to address deficiencies identified in the after-action review. Council requested that staff docket for Council consideration those changes to City Code necessary to implement the revised plan.

The Snow Emergency Implementation Plan for Winter Preparedness proposes the implementation of a new snow emergency classification system that defines threat/emergency conditions for the public and guides the appropriate City response. Under this system, the City Manager or his designee may declare a snow emergency as Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 (Attachment 2).

City Code §9-12-132 states:

“Taximeter fares shall be increased by \$5 during any period in which a snow emergency plan is in effect in the City, as declared by the city manager or his authorized representative. In addition, taximeter fares shall be increased by \$5 in the event that the director of Transportation and Environmental Services determines that driving conditions in the City are, or are reasonably expected to become, unduly hazardous due to the accumulation of snow, sleet or ice on the streets. The Transportation division of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services will notify each taxicab company by telephone of the exact time any such taximeter fare increase is to go into effect and the exact time that such fare increase is terminated.”

Staff proposes an amendment to this Code section to provide better guidance to the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services on when taxicab surcharges should be levied or lifted. The T&ES Director would retain the right to impose a surcharge at his discretion during a Level 1 snow emergency. During a Level 2 or Level 3 event, the surcharge would be imposed automatically.

Staff reviewed the ordinance revision as an informational item with the Traffic and Parking Board on October 25.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Winter Weather Emergency System

Attachment 2: Proposed Ordinance

STAFF:

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Tom Gates, Assistant City Manager

Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED, AP Director, T&ES

Blaine Corle, Deputy Chief, Alexandria Police Department

Chris Spera, Deputy City Attorney

Yon Lambert, Deputy Director, T&ES

Bob Garbacz, Transportation Division Chief, T&ES

David Ray, Captain, Alexandria Police Department

WINTER WEATHER EMERGENCY SYSTEM

LEVEL	CONDITION	MESSAGE	GOAL/ACTION
Level 1	Up to 8 inches of snow (minor icing, etc...) that can be managed using existing City resources	Roads may be dangerous. Drivers are advised to exercise caution. City crews are working to make roads clear within three days, depending on conditions. Clearing snow from sidewalks within 24 hours is the responsibility of owners or occupants of the adjacent property. Taxi fares may be increased by \$5 at the discretion of the Director of T&ES during the period in which a Level 1 or higher snow emergency is in effect.	Roads, City-owned facilities and sidewalks passable for emergency vehicles, school access as soon as possible. All roads may not be completely clear for up to three (3) days. Taxicab surcharge may be in effect.
Level 2	More than 8 inches of snow, blizzard conditions, ice accumulation or other weather conditions that require extreme caution and attention to safety	Roadways are hazardous. Drivers are advised to limit their travel to emergency trips. Motorists and pedestrians should use extreme caution. City snow removal crews will work first to make roads passable for emergency and public utility vehicles. Crews will then return to clear and treat roads within five days following the storm; however, weather conditions may delay available resources and response times. Clearing snow from sidewalks within 48 hours is the responsibility of owners or occupants of the adjacent property. Taxi fares shall be increased by \$5 during the period in which a Level 2 or higher snow emergency is in effect.	Bring conditions to Level 1. Roadways, City-owned facilities and sidewalks passable for emergency vehicles and school access as soon as possible. All roads may not be completely clear for up to five (5) days. Taxicab surcharge in effect.
Level 3	Natural disaster conditions	All roadways are closed to non-emergency personnel. No one should be driving in these conditions. Residents are advised to stay off the roads and sidewalks so that snow removal crew may continue working to clear City roadways. Roads will be made passable for emergency and public utility vehicles first; snow removal will continue around the clock. Clearing snow from sidewalks within 72 hours is the responsibility of owners or occupants of the adjacent property. Taxi fares have already been increased by \$5 during the period in which a Level 2 or higher snow emergency is in effect. In a Level 3 event, roadways are closed to non-emergency personnel.	Bring conditions to Level 2. Roadways, City-owned facilities and sidewalks passable for emergency vehicles and school access as soon as possible. No estimate is available for roadway clearing. Taxicab surcharge in effect from Level 2 requirements.

Introduction and first reading: 11/9/10
Public hearing: 11/13/10
Second reading and enactment: 11/13/10

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Title

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Article A.1 (TAXICABS), Chapter 12 (TAXIS AND OTHER VEHICLES FOR HIRE), Title 9 (LICENSING AND REGULATION) of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

Summary

The proposed ordinance amends the City's taxi snow surcharge implementation methodology to be consistent with the amended snow and bad weather emergency plans.

Sponsor

N/A

Staff

- Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager
- Tom Gates, Assistant City Manager
- Richard J. Baier, P.E., LEED, AP Director, T&ES
- Blaine Corle, Deputy Chief, Alexandria Police Department
- Christopher P. Spera, Deputy City Attorney
- Yon Lambert, Deputy Director, T&ES
- Bob Garbacz, Transportation Division Chief, T&ES
- David Ray, Captain, Alexandria Police Department

Authority

§§2.02(a)(5)(6), §2.04(d), Alexandria City Charter

Estimated Costs of Implementation

None

Attachments in Addition to Proposed Ordinance and its Attachments (if any)

None

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Article A.1 (TAXICABS), Chapter 12 (TAXIS AND OTHER VEHICLES FOR HIRE), Title 9 (LICENSING AND REGULATION) of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That Article A.1, Chapter 12 of Title 9 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended, be, and the same hereby is, amended and reordained by the amendment of Sections 9-12-132 to read as follows:

(New language is underscored; deleted material is ~~stricken~~)

Sec. 9-12-132 Amount of fare to be charged.

(a) The rates to be charged to passengers in taxicabs shall be as follows. It shall be unlawful to make any greater or lesser charge:

(Intervening sections unchanged)

(10) Taximeter fares shall be increased by \$5 during any period in which a snow emergency plan is in effect in the city, as declared by the city manager or his authorized representative declaration of Level 2 or Level 3 has been made by the city manager or his designee. In addition, taximeter fares shall be increased by \$5 in the event that the director of transportation and environmental services determines that driving conditions in the city are, or are reasonably expected to become, unduly hazardous due to the accumulation of snow, sleet or ice on the streets, regardless of the declaration of a snow emergency or the level thereof. The transportation division of the department of transportation and environmental services will notify each taxicab company by telephone of the exact time any such taximeter fare increase is to go into effect and the exact time that such fare increase is terminated.

(Subsequent sections unchanged)

Section 2. That this ordinance shall become effective upon the date and at the time of its final passage.

WILLIAM D. EUILLE
Mayor

- 41 Introduction: 11/9/10
- 42 | First Reading: 11/9/10
- 43 Publication:
- 44 Public Hearing:
- 45 Second Reading:
- 46 Final Passage: