

TD to invite applications for Taxi Fleet Licence

The Transport Department (TD) today (April 10) announced that the department will invite interested parties to apply for the Taxi Fleet Licence from this Friday (April 12), with a deadline of noon on May 31. Having considered the response of the trade and balanced the need to ensure the quality of taxi fleets, no more than five taxi fleet licences are intended to be issued in this invitation.

The Government earlier launched a series of measures to enhance the overall quality of personalised point-to-point transport services, including the introduction of a taxi fleet regime. The relevant legislation has come into force since December 22 last year.

A Government spokesman said, "We hope that through the introduction of the taxi fleet regime, taxi fleets providing quality service will set a leading and exemplary role in the trade and foster healthy competition among different taxi fleets, as well as taxi fleets and non-fleet taxis, and gradually change the trade's ecology through market evolution. This will encourage the taxi trade to strive for excellence, and enhance the standard of services and the image of the trade for the benefit of passengers, drivers and society as a whole."

Under the taxi fleet regime, the TD will issue Taxi Fleet Licences and regulate the operation and management of taxi fleets through licensing conditions, including the requirements in relation to fleet size, age of vehicles and services to be provided by fleet licensees, such as the provision of online booking channels (including mobile applications and websites) and e-payment means, as well as the installation of CCTV systems and technological devices to enhance driving safety inside the compartments. The taxis must not be more than 3 years old when they join the fleets and must not be more than 10 years old throughout the license period. As regards the fleet size, a mixed or urban taxi fleet shall have 300 to 1 000 taxis, while a New Territories taxi fleet shall have 100 to 350 taxis.

The spokesman continued, "To encourage participation of the trade, the TD will implement a number of measures to facilitate the operation of taxi fleets. In terms of fares, taxi fleets are allowed to set their own fares for booked trips, which may be in the form of a pre-agreed booking fee on top of the metered fare, or a lump sum fare agreed with the passenger before the journey starts. Fleet licensees are also allowed to design the livery and marking of their fleet taxis (subject to the approval of the Commissioner for Transport). The Government will also publicise the licensed taxi fleets through its official channels and designate a few dozen fleet taxi stopping places at the airport, some of the boundary control points (including the Heung Yuen Wai Port, the Shenzhen Bay Port and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port), the West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, some of the Airport Express Stations, the Kai

Tak Cruise Terminal, the Hong Kong Disneyland, etc, to facilitate fleet taxis' picking up of passengers who have booked a journey. The TD will continue to identify suitable locations for setting up more designated stopping places for fleet taxis."

Also, the Government has identified two sites in Tsing Yi and Tai Po respectively and plans to grant the sites on a short-term basis for co-use by taxi fleet licensees for purposes such as parking and basic maintenance. This will help the fleet licensees provide better maintenance and management for their fleet taxis and enhance service quality.

Moreover, the Government will encourage the taxi fleets to conduct research and apply technology to enhance the safety and quality of taxi services through the Smart Traffic Fund. The Management Committee on Smart Traffic Fund has earlier agreed in principle to set up a new "Research and Application" project type under the fund for fleet licensees to apply for funding. Fleet licensees will be required to set out the research objectives of their project in the application for approval by the Management Committee, and undertake to use the funded equipment (e.g. fleet management systems and technological devices) to collect operational and driving safety data of their fleet taxis and conduct analysis, with a view to enhancing the quality of taxi services, improving driving safety of the drivers and enhancing operational efficiency of taxi services. The maximum amount of grant for each fleet licensee is \$10 million, with the maximum percentage of subsidy being 70 per cent of the estimated cost of the project. The duration of the funded project should normally not exceed two years. The details will be announced separately.

Application details and conditions for the taxi fleet licence are subject to the invitation documents. Interested parties can obtain the invitation documents from the office of Taxi Section of the Transport Department on 14/F South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon (Tel.: 3842 5820; Fax: 2824 2176) during office hours from 11am on April 12 (Friday), or download them from the TD website (www.td.gov.hk/en/transport_in_hong_kong/public_transport/taxi/index.html).

Applicants must complete and submit the form of application, service proposal and relevant supporting documents (one original and seven legible photocopies) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the invitation documents. The application should be submitted in a sealed envelope with "Application for Taxi Fleet Licence 2024" clearly marked on the envelope. Applications must be deposited in the Transport Department Tender Box situated at the reception counter of the Transport Department Headquarters on 10/F South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, before noon on May 31, 2024 (Friday). Late applications or applications not deposited in the Transport Department Tender Box will not be accepted.