

TO: MAJOR SAN FRANCISCO HOTELS
CC: SAN FRANCISCO TAXI COMMISSION
MAJOR LIMOUSINE/TOWN CAR COMPANIES
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
DEPT OF PARKING AND TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

FROM: SAN FRANCISCO TAXI ASSOCIATION
UNITED TAXICAB WORKERS
MEDALLION HOLDERS ASSOCIATION

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2006

In a world-class destination city like San Francisco, the taxi and hospitality industries are interdependent and essential for their mutual economic well-being. Because of this, we want to introduce ourselves and begin working cooperatively to ensure that transportation choices for San Francisco visitors are widely available and safe.

San Francisco taxicabs are tightly regulated, with drivers undergoing mandatory background checks and training, and vehicles regularly inspected and properly insured. Taxicab vehicles must prominently display drivers' identities and company information.

Hotel guests should always have choice, and they should be provided prompt and easy access to the transportation option of their choosing, be it limousine, town car, or taxi. Unfortunately, one of the alternatives, limousine or town car, is being promoted improperly by some hotel staff. The law requires that limousine rides must be prearranged, and guests must not be unduly pressured into using this choice. When limos are called in the same manner as taxis, then the law is violated.

This illegal activity harms both our affiliated industries in several key ways. Principally, visitors may be illegally solicited by limousines and are often overcharged for transportation services. In addition, passengers may not have the security of being able to identify the vehicle's driver or owner, or whether the vehicle is properly insured and the driver properly licensed. For hotels, this means increased liability, lack of accountability, and a reputation for overcharging their guests; for taxis, this means inconsistent and unreliable demand and souring of relationships with hotels.

Last year, the San Francisco taxi industry with the help of Assemblyman Mark Leno was able to pass a new state law giving local authorities more regulatory enforcement powers to oversee state-licensed limousines and town cars that operate in their jurisdictions. This year, the Board of Supervisors enacted into San Francisco law these new regulatory powers. Among the new rules is the requirement that limo drivers must be able to

demonstrate that rides were pre-arranged, and must maintain correct and current records of all fares. Shortly, you will begin to see increased enforcement by SFPD and DPT of these and other rules. This enforcement may have a direct effect on your staff, if they are found to be involved in the improper solicitation of passengers for limousines.

Taxis are a vital part of the transportation infrastructure and are especially necessary during busy times such as when large conventions are in town. Imagine a busy convention without taxis at your door. Yet, since taxis are not used on a consistent and everyday basis at many hotels, experienced taxi drivers choose not to serve hotels, even in times of real need.

Our organizations will be working closely with the San Francisco Taxicab Commission to enforce against illegal activity and to create additional enforcement measures and tools. We welcome your input, ask for your cooperation in this effort and invite you to work in partnership with us.

Please feel free to contact any one of our organizations or companies to discuss this opportunity to improve our industries further and in more detail.

Sincerely,



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*The San Francisco Taxi Association is the trade association of all major taxi-operating companies in San Francisco. Members include Yellow Cab, Luxor Cab, Desoto Cab, National Cab, Veterans Cab, Arrow Cab, Royal Taxi, Town Taxi, Big Dog City and City-Wide Dispatch.

** The Medallion Holders Association and United Taxicab Workers are the two main San Francisco taxi driver organizations, which represent up to 7000 drivers.