

# Party Bus – Limousine Licensing Requirements

## Estimates Note

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Date: April 16, 2015

### ISSUE

- Government has implemented enhanced regulation of the stretch SUV and limo-bus industry in response to calls for the further regulation of the “party bus” industry, following incidents of underage drinking before and/or during a charter.

### ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE

- All commercial passenger vehicles configured with primarily perimeter seating must operate under the authority of a special authorization licence, approved by the Passenger Transportation Board.
- The recent regulatory amendment creates a level playing field for all limousine services, increases safety by making operators more accountable, and enables government to better enforce the industry.
- It is illegal to consume alcohol in any public place, including a commercial charter vehicle, referred to by industry as a “party bus”.
- Police have ticketed and will continue to ticket those people who they catch breaking the law, including those consuming alcohol in an unlicensed public place.
- The Minister of Justice has been clear that government will not consider any changes to allow consumption of liquor in motor vehicles.

### BACKGROUND

- A regulatory amendment has been implemented to require a special authorization licence to operate any vehicle with primarily perimeter seating (such as a stretch SUV or limo-bus), resulting in the economic regulation of most “party bus” configurations.
- Approximately 200 vehicles were impacted by the new requirements. The regulation is in effect now for new applicants, and will be effective May 1, 2015 for licensees currently operating vehicles with primarily perimeter seating under the authority of a general authorization licence. The PT Branch and Board are on track to issue licenses by May 1 for all approved applications received by the application deadline.

Applications Received by PT Branch	69
Total PSB vehicles requested in applications	159
Applications in process with PT Branch	1
Applications in process with PT Board	43
Decisions published by PT Board	25
Licenses issued by PT Branch	11
Plates issued by PT Branch	27

\*as of April 16, 2015

- This change eliminated the competitive advantage that general authorization limousine licensees previously had over special authorization licensees, which included the ability to set rates, work anywhere in the province, and add vehicles to their fleet at any time, without seeking Passenger Transportation Board approval.
- The Registrar of Passenger Transportation has access to information on all vehicles operating limousine style services, and knows exactly where the vehicles are operating. This will assist with auditing and other enforcement measures.

- As of May 1, 2015, all limousines will be required to display a Passenger Transportation licence plate that is unique to the vehicle. The plates can be used by the public and enforcement officers to identify whether a vehicle is licensed and report and follow up on infractions. The fine for operating without a PT licence is \$1150 and operating without a plate is \$288.
- While the *Passenger Transportation Act* establishes the licensing framework for transportation services and regulates licensees, it does not regulate the conduct of passengers.
- Anyone hiring a charter bus service should ask the company:
  - Are there added safety provisions in the contract?
  - Is there a requirement for a chaperone for minors?
  - What steps does the company take to ensure that no alcohol is consumed in or around the vehicle?
  - Do they require that their drivers undergo a police record check?
- The Ministry will continue to promote awareness that it is illegal to consume liquor in any vehicle, and work with police and other enforcement agencies to support their efforts to curb the illegal consumption of liquor.
- Police are able to issue violation tickets to passengers, companies or drivers related to the possession or consumption of alcohol in a vehicle as well as possession or consumption by minors. Fines range from \$230- \$500.

#### **PROGRAM CONTACT**

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