Passenger Transportation Board
MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

Taxi meters

The *Passenger Transportation Act* (Act) authorizes the Passenger Transportation Board (Board) to set rules, policies, and licence terms and conditions for taxi meter use and standards. This page provides information about taxi meter types and use in B.C. and includes links to other taxi meter resources.

Taxi meters help to ensure transparency regarding rates, especially to passengers, and the Board's taxi meter requirements ensure that drivers and passengers are protected. The Board's Rule 5 – Taxi meter standards describes the requirements for use of taxi meters in B.C., including accuracy and testing standards.

How the Board regulates taxi meters

Most taxi rates in B.C. are metered rates, and these are calculated on a meter that can be calibrated and tested. Non-metered rates are less common and must be approved by the Board.

Taxi meter rates are based on a flag rate, a distance rate, and a time rate.

A flag rate is the rate at the start of the trip – it appears when the taxi meter is turned on.

- All taxi meters must meet the requirements set out in the Board's Rule 5 – Taxi meter standards.
- A distance rate is a per-kilometer rate.
- A time rate is estimated in seconds or minutes. If a taxi speed falls below a "crossover" speed, then the taxi meter applies the time rate rather than the distance rate.

As of May 1, 2026, analogue meters and some early digital-electronic meters that were not designed to collect data or connect with other devices or software via USB, Bluetooth, etc. are no longer permitted. See the “Definitions” section below for detailed descriptions of each type of meter.

The Board's regulation of taxi meters establishes requirements and standards related to meter technology, function, and use by taxi licensees. The Board does not prescribe specific brands of taxi meters, and it does not maintain a list of approved taxi meter manufacturers.

Taxi meters and trip data

In addition to fare transparency, taxi meters ensure comprehensive and accurate trip-level data is recorded and reported under the Board’s Data Requirements(495 KB). All taxi licensees must adhere to these requirements.

Modern taxi meters can automatically collect, organize, and transmit trip data as they communicate with dispatch services and other application software. Although the Board does not regulate dispatch or other application software under the Act, this page provides information on some of the options available to licensees in B.C.

Questions about taxi meters and the best technology to meet your data requirements? Read our information page on taxi meter technology.

Relevant legislation

- Section 7(1)(g) of the Act provides authority for the Board to make Rates Rules.
- Section 23(2)(a) of the Act says that a person cannot equip their motor vehicle with a meter, unless the Board authorizes it.

- Section 28(3)(a) of the Act says that the Board can establish terms and conditions of licence regarding “equipment or technology that must be installed or carried on or in motor vehicles operated under the authority of any licence issued in response to the application, and the inspection, testing, adjustments, display and use of that equipment or technology”.

Definitions

- A “taxi meter” calculates taxi fares based on a combination of flag, distance, and time rates.
- A taxi “analogue meter” is a mechanical taxi meter that functions independently from a dispatch system and lacks electronic capabilities.
- A taxi “smart meter” is a digital-electronic meter that has many programmable options and can connect with dispatch and other technologies via Bluetooth, USB, etc.
- A taxi “soft meter” is:
    - Any device used as a taxi meter that calculates distance travelled on the basis of Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and/or onboard diagnostics (OBD), or
    - Any smartphone or tablet (or a similar mobile device such as an Android or Apple iOS product) that is loaded with application software to be used as a taxi meter.
- A “fare” means the total transportation charges and taxes for a trip, including variable-pricing adjustment and excluding any gratuities.

Who can install, program, and adjust taxi meters in B.C.?

The Board recognizes that not all taxi licensees in B.C. have equal or reasonable access to an established taxi meter (and other equipment) business or specialist. Access to taxi meter services outside of Region 1 as defined in the Passenger Transportation Regions policy is particularly challenging for some licensees.

In February 2025, the Board implemented changes to the Controlling Members policy, which permit the following:

- Licensees in Region 1 must work with an established taxi meter service provider to install, program, adjust, or otherwise modify their taxi meters.
- The Board has authorized controlling members of taxi licensees operating outside of Region 1 to perform taxi meter-related tasks themselves, or to delegate these tasks to a qualified business or individual they trust, if they are unable to access an established taxi meter service provider.
    - A controlling member who delegates taxi meter-related tasks to a business or individual remains responsible and accountable for meters functioning properly and accurately according to Board standards and requirements.

Taxi businesses and associations across B.C. are aware of taxi meter service providers and experienced individuals that provide taxi meter and other equipment services. If licensees are unsure whether there are services available in their area, they should connect with their contacts in the taxi sector for assistance. The Board does not formally authorize or offer accreditation to taxi meter service providers in B.C.

Taxi meter types

There are three types of taxi meters that currently meet the Board's technology standards and other requirements.

- Analogue taxi meters
- Smart taxi meters
- Soft taxi meters

Smart and soft taxi meters have steadily become the industry standard in recent years, while analogue meters have grown less common as they lack the flexibility and advanced capabilities of smart and soft meters.

Using smart or soft taxi meters allows taxi businesses to take advantage of technological advances in meter programming, cloud-based dispatch systems, data collection and reporting software, and compatibility with other technologies. Such advances can improve business efficiency, customer service, and transparency for passengers. Modern meters can also help businesses reduce administrative, maintenance, and information technology costs over time.

The following table highlights some of the features, benefits, and limitations of analogue, smart, and soft taxi meters.

Meter Type	Features	Benefits	Limitations
Analogue meter (mechanical)	• No longer permitted for use in B.C. effective May 1, 2026.		

Smart meter	• Digital electronic with push buttons • Simple to program and calibrate • Multi-rate programming and fee options • Usually uses OBD to calculate fares • Supports data collection and analysis • USB and Bluetooth communication • Physical and electronic security sealing • Compatible with printers and point of sale machines	• Reliable, accurate, and transparent rates calculation • Can collect, store, and transmit data to a dispatch system or software application • Reliable in all geography and network service conditions • Connects easily with cameras, roof lights, and other vehicle equipment • Wireless programming and adjustment options are evolving	• Many cannot be programmed or adjusted remotely (wirelessly) • Adjustments and maintenance are typically done manually in a shop

Soft meter	• Software for smartphone, tablet, or other device • Numerous programmable options and integrated services • Soft meter companies can handle all software needs • Wireless, Bluetooth, USB communication options • Electronic security sealing with limited access • Uses OBD, GPS, or a combination to calculate fares	• Calculates distance and time accurately in some operating areas of B.C., but not all • Records and transmits trip data automatically • Fast, remote (wireless) programming that can save time and resources • Usually integrated with other services as needed • Flexibility and adaptability are built- in to meet various regulations • Drivers can transport their phones/tablets easily between	• May rely on a cellular network in addition to GPS for accuracy • May require hardware and adaptors to connect with other devices in the vehicle

Related topics:

- Rates rules manual
- Policy manual