Passenger Transportation Board
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Discount certificates

Context

Under the Act, operators of taxis, limousines, shuttles, and other passenger directed vehicles (PDVs) must charge rates set by the Board.

Sometimes operators will offer discount certificates (such as gift cards, coupons, or vouchers), which can be redeemed by customers to reduce the cost of the total fare paid on a trip. This policy clarifies when and how a licensee may distribute discount certificates for passenger transportation services in B.C.

Applicability

This policy applies to licensees with a passenger directed vehicle authorization (PDVA), including taxis, limousines, shuttles, and other PDVs.

Transportation network services (TNS) may use discount certificates in accordance with this policy and the Rates Rule- TNS Rates Rule.

Policy

For the purposes of this policy, “discount certificates” refers generally to gift certificates, gift cards, coupons, vouchers, and other printed or electronic ways of giving advance payment credit for passenger transportation trips.

The Board does not typically review the discount certificates being offered by licensees. However, the Board accepts the use of discount certificates, so long as they do not undermine or undercut Board

approved rates and adhere to this policy.

Discount certificates must not result in universal discounts to the public of Board approved rates. For example, a licensee may not offer discount certificates that offer passengers a universally lower meter rate than the meter rate set by the Board. Also, licensees cannot offer universal fixed fee rates at a lower rate than approved by the Board.

Discount certificates must have a stated dollar value. For example, a discount certificate sold for $25 would state the value of $25 on its face.

Discount certificates must be handled like cash by licensees and their drivers. For example, in cases where a trip costs less than the discount certificate amount, the passenger would receive change or credit for the unused part, and in cases where a trip costs more, the passenger would pay the difference.

Discount certificates may only be distributed in the following ways:

- Donated by a licensee to a registered non-profit or charity, or to the organizer of a public community event (such as a tourism promotion or festival), but not a bar or entertainment establishment;
- Given to an individual as a customer service response to a legitimate and specific customer complaint; or
- Sold to people for the stated value of the discount certificate. For example, a licensee must sell a $10 certificate for $10 dollars. There must not be “discounts” for bulk purchases.

Legislation

7 (1) Without limiting section 6(4), the Board may do any or all of the following: …

(f) approve, or set, for the purpose of establishing just and uniform charges, rates to be charged by a licensee in respect of passenger directed vehicles operated under a licence that includes a passenger directed vehicle authorization… and approve any rule, practice or tariff of the licensee relating to those rates

Related topics:

- Passenger Transportation Board rates rules manual
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