

OFFICE OF PUBLIC CARRIER

Spring/Summer Newsletter

2021

119 Lower Beech Street Office Re-Opens for In-Person Transactions



Office of Public Carrier is proud that we were able to remain “open” during the COVID-19 pandemic although the physical office was “closed.” We want to specifically thank all our carrier partners for understanding the business operation restrictions that the pandemic placed upon us and you.

Now that Delaware seems to be turning the corner on COVID-19 infection rates, the Office of Public Carrier’s 119 Lower Beech Street Wilmington office is now open. However, certain building restrictions regarding capacity and spacing will continue to be enforced. You will need to follow the following procedures to gain access to the 2nd Floor Office to conduct business in-person:

- 1) Make an appointment with the Office of Public Carrier to transact business in person.
- 2) Arrive a few minutes before your appointment time.
- 3) Announce your arrival to the building receptionist.
- 4) The receptionist will call the Office of Public to announce your arrival.
- 5) Someone from the Office of Public Carrier will escort you to the 2nd Floor Office.

Access to the Office of Public Carrier 2nd Floor Lobby is restricted to employees Only. The elevator will not work for non-employees. You must be escorted to the Office by an OPC Employee

A mask must always be worn while you are in the building.

Not following any of the above may result in your being escorted from the building. One of our primary goals is to keep you and our staff healthy and safe while addressing your needs. These new procedures will ensure that we will meet that goal and be able to service you for years to come.

We Thank You in Advance for complying with these new procedures.

International Association of Transportation Regulators Recent Rideshare Study Results



The President of the International Association of Transportation Regulators (“IATR”), Matt Daus, reported on May 12, 2021 that IATR’s “Transportation Practice Group” conducted a study in New York City that compared the current use of TNC’s and Taxis (See IATR “Daily COVID-19 News”, May 13, 2021). The study corroborated findings that public carriers are more cost-effective for city trips than TNCs while TNCs were cheaper for higher speed long trips. The study showed that public carriers have the most consistent fares throughout the day. The NYC study concluded that TNC prices fluctuate during the day which passengers may not know. When advertising for ridership you may want to consider the above because it appears to have wider application than just NYC.

Delaware’s Public Transportation Ridership Growth in 2021 Indicates a Brighter Future



COVID-19 had a devastating impact on public transportation across the country. In Delaware, train, bus, taxicab and TNC ridership numbers fell dramatically in 2020. However, it appears that public transportation use in Delaware has hit bottom and is starting to look up.

In 2021, Delaware has seen bus and train ridership grow modestly month after month. Ridership remains below pre-COVID 19 levels, but the signs of growth are encouraging. SEPTA has added cars to the trains running along the Wilmington/Newark Line to accommodate the growing ridership.

Public carriers seem to have been the most effected public transportation sector in Delaware due to the pandemic. 2020 Adjusted Gross Revenue (“AGR”) filings are lower than the last two (2) filing years. Additionally, a significant number of carriers suspended operations in 2020. Slowly, some of these carriers are starting to return to service. Business seems to be picking up across the state as the pace of restriction easing

increases. The OPC anticipates that the return of employees to offices, opening of restaurants, tourism and shopping will correspondingly increase ridership. Many businesses are anticipating a ramping up in-office employees and meetings beginning in June 2021.

Taking advantage of this anticipated growth not only requires that your vehicles are properly certified and inspected but that you also show your customers that you are still operating in accord with COVID-19 safety protocols. Riders want to see clean vehicles with hand sanitizer being available. Riders prefer to have their drivers wearing a mask and driving with windows open to promote air circulation. Doing the big and little things right will help with restoring business.

Did You Know? Delaware Launches “Be Alert and Arrive Alive” Campaign July 15, 2021 – August 19, 2021



The Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) is leveraging the momentum of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month (April) to launch the new “Be Alert and Arrive Alive” campaign focused on motivating Delawareans to stop activities behind the wheel that contribute to one of the leading causes of crashes in the state. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) most recent data, distracted driving resulted in 3,142 fatalities nationwide in 2019, a ten percent increase from 2018.

Distracted driving is reported as being more dangerous than drinking and driving. A NHTSA study found that texting while driving is six times more likely to cause a crash than driving under the influence. While the campaign aims to motivate safer behavior among all drivers, OHS is specifically targeting a significant population of distracted driving offenders: males ages 16 to 24 in urban and rural areas of the state. But make no mistake: It isn’t just young people who are driving distracted.

The OHS distracted driving campaign will be implemented by state and local law enforcement in 2021. OHS is collaborating with several businesses such as cellphone providers, mechanics and gas/convenience stores, and community partners to help deliver the distracted driving awareness message to the public and deliver key messaging directly to the targeted young-male audience.

Some preliminary 2020 Distracted Driving Delaware Statistics are as follows:

- 37% of drivers involved in distracted driving crashes were between the ages of 20 and 29, with 63% of those being males.
- 43% of distracted driving crashes resulted in injuries; 12 distracted-driving-related deaths occurred resulting in 11% of the overall fatalities for 2020.
- Distracted driving crashes occurred most often between the hours of 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. with Saturday having the highest number of crashes.
- It takes your brain 13 seconds before it refocuses on the road after looking at a cellphone.

- If a person takes their eyes off the road for just 5 seconds while driving at just 30 mph, the vehicle will travel approximately 75 yards in an unsafe “distracted” situation.

The Office of Public Carrier encourages public carriers support the campaign year-round by not:

- Texting or talking on a handheld phone (including speakerphone) or radio.
- Checking the GPS.
- Turning around to talk to passengers while moving.
- Watching a crash on the side of the road.
- Changing the radio or music selection.
- Reaching for an item that has fallen on the floor.

According to OHS, the best rule to follow is to prepare everything, from silencing your cellphone to adjusting temperature levels, seat position and mirrors before getting behind the wheel or starting the engine to prevent distracting temptations.

Did You Know Part 2? On Road OPC Safety Inspections Return



Beginning on May 24, 2021, the OPC will recommence random, on-road safety inspections. Frank DeSantis, OPC Lead Investigator, stated, “The pandemic should not have been a reason for carriers to relax their own vehicle maintenance and safety inspections.” Frank added that “Carriers and drivers should be doing pre and post vehicle inspections to make sure that window stickers are properly affixed; all lights are working; tires meet roadway specifications; the vehicle has passed DMV inspection and it meets all other safety requirements before it is put on the road each day.” The OPC will issue fines, and if necessary, remove a vehicle from operation, if it does not meet statutory safety requirements.

OPC Updates



- Starting **MAY 24, 2021** the OPC will begin to schedule safety inspection at carrier locations.
- Starting **July 1, 2021** OPC will **NO LONGER WAIVE** late fees on transactions.

- Using email and Fax to transact business remains the easiest and fastest way to stay compliant with the OPC. By transacting business electronically, you can eliminate that trip to Lower Beech Street. Email: OPC_PublicCarrier@delaware.gov. Fax: 302.577.1042.
 - DeIDOT's I-95 Viaduct Construction Project in Wilmington is fully underway. Traveling south and north on I-95 is reduced to one lane in each direction from the I-495/I-95 split south of Wilmington to Route 202 north of Wilmington. You can stay up to date on the project by visiting deldot.gov/projects.
 - The OPC continues to revise its website in response to public carrier requests.
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The OPC TEAM



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