



Choosing to Operate a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle – Things to Know Before You Convert[‡]

Are you the owner of a taxicab, for-hire or TNC-endorsed vehicle considering voluntary conversion? Here is what you need to know before you decide whether owning and operating a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) is right for you.

What is Voluntary Conversion?

The owner of a taxicab, for-hire or TNC-endorsed vehicle may voluntarily choose to operate a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). Unlike taxicabs that have a WAT medallion, voluntary conversions are not required to be wheelchair accessible as a condition of the vehicle's medallion or regulatory endorsement, and may revert to a non-accessible vehicle at any time.

What are the WAV Vehicle Requirements?

Your vehicle must meet certain requirements to operate as a WAV. Make sure you understand these requirements *before* you acquire a WAV or convert an existing vehicle.

- WAVs must conform to the vehicle accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), as established in [Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations Chapter 38, Subpart B](#).¹ See the [WAV inspection checklist](#)² for additional details.
- Taxis and for-hire vehicles possessing a City medallion (including those possessing a City medallion only and those possessing both a City medallion and a County medallion) and all TNC-endorsed vehicles (including those authorized to operate in the City, the County, or both) cannot exceed 10 years of age based on model year.
- Taxis and for-hire vehicles possessing a County medallion only that exceed 10 years of age based on model year are not eligible for the maintenance and equipment reimbursement.

What are the WAV Driver Requirements?

While operating a WAV, the driver must prioritize service to passengers in wheelchairs before any other passenger.

Additionally, any driver who operates a WAV must hold a current for-hire driver's license/permit with a valid WAT endorsement. To obtain a WAT endorsement, drivers must complete the training described in [SMC 6.310.414.E](#)³ and [KCC 6.64.570.D](#)⁴ and submit documentation to the King County Records and Licensing (RALS) Division – For-Hire Licensing Office.

¹ <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/49/part-38/subpart-B>

² <http://www.qa.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/FAS/BusinessLicenseTax/WAV-Inspection-Checklist-FINAL-3.26.20.pdf>

³ https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT6BURE_SUBTITLE_IVNELICO_CH6.310TAFREVE_IVFREDRLIRE_6.310.415FREDRTRPR

⁴ https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/council/clerk/code/09_Title_6.htm#_Toc28263365

Will I be Eligible for WAS Fund Reimbursements?

If you are interested in operating a WAV and accessing reimbursements from the Wheelchair Accessible Services (WAS) Fund:

- Before you begin the voluntary conversion process, confirm that your taxi association, for-hire vehicle company or TNC is willing to submit monthly dispatch records on your behalf to the Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS).
 - Taxi association, for-hire vehicle company and TNC obligations can be found in section III.A.3 of the joint City-County WAS Fund reimbursement rule ([FOR-HIRE-TRANSPORTATION-01-2020](#)⁵/ [FIN-10-3-1-PR](#)⁶).
 - If your dispatch agency is unfamiliar with the requirements or has questions about submitting monthly dispatch records, they can contact FAS for more information and assistance.
 - Ultimately, if your dispatch agency is not willing to submit monthly dispatch records on your behalf, you will not be eligible to receive WAS Fund reimbursements. You may want to consider switching to an association or company that is willing to submit monthly records on your behalf.
- To be eligible for reimbursement from the WAS Fund, you must apply for approval. For more information on how to apply, see the [How to Apply for WAS Fund Eligibility](#)⁷ fact sheet, available on the [WAV page of the FAS website](#).⁸
- Review the various eligibility requirements associated with each reimbursement type.
 - The driver and/or vehicle owner must meet additional eligibility requirements associated with each reimbursement type to receive payments from the WAS Fund.
 - For more information on the eligibility requirements for each reimbursement type, see Section III.B of the joint City-County WAS Fund reimbursement rule ([FOR-HIRE-TRANSPORTATION-01-2020](#)⁵/ [FIN-10-3-1-PR](#)⁶). A table summarizing the various reimbursement types and eligibility requirements can also be found [here](#).⁹

Questions? If you have any questions or would like more information about these requirements, please contact FAS via email at consumerprotection@seattle.gov or by phone at 206-386-1267.

*****Approval for the possibility of WAS Fund reimbursement does not guarantee payments from the WAS Fund. There are additional requirements that must be met before any reimbursement from the WAS Fund may happen.*****

⁵ <https://www.seattle.gov/finance-and-administrative-services/directors-rules#rules-taxi>

⁶ <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/records-licensing/licensing/taxi-for-hire-transportation-networks/notices-regulations.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.seattle.gov/business-regulations/taxis-for-hires-and-tncs/wheelchair-accessible-vehicles#consideringvoluntaryconversion>

⁸ <http://www.seattle.gov/business-regulations/taxis-for-hires-and-tncs/wheelchair-accessible-vehicles>

⁹ [http://www.qa.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/FAS/BusinessLicenseTax/WAS-Fund-Reimbursement-Summary-Table-FINAL-3.26.20\(0\).pdf](http://www.qa.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/FAS/BusinessLicenseTax/WAS-Fund-Reimbursement-Summary-Table-FINAL-3.26.20(0).pdf)