



# County of Fairfax, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 14, 2023

**TO:** Consumer Protection Commission

**FROM:** Rebecca L. Makely, Director *RLM*  
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

**SUBJECT:** Consumer Protection Commission Meeting for February 21, 2023

Please find attached the Consumer Protection Commission meeting packet. The next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 232** of the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia.

Please RSVP with your attendance to Susan Jones by COB on Monday, February 20, 2023, at [Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-5877.

Enclosures

cc: Ellicia Seard-McCormick, Deputy County Executive

Susan C. Jones, Consumer Specialist III  
Department of Cable and Consumer Services



**FAIRFAX COUNTY  
CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION  
February 21, 2023 AGENDA**

Call to Order by the Chairperson (7:30 PM)

Remote Participation Motions

Minutes

- Approval of the draft January 17, 2023 meeting minutes

Report of the Chairperson

Report of the Director

Commissioner Matters

Old Business

- 

New Business

- Resilient Fairfax and CECAP Presentation
- Election of Officers
- 2023 Items of Interest

General Interest

- Consumer Protection Commission Calendar
- Consumer Protection Commission Membership
- Consumer Affairs Statistics
- Community Outreach
- Consumer Resources

## **Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission**

January 17, 2023

7:30 PM  
Government Center  
12000 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, VA 22035  
Chairperson Fee, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Fee, Freedenthal, Hargraves,  
Kharat, Kratovil, Roark, Rosier, Springer, Svab

Absent:

Commissioners: Belkowitz, Gulakowski, Kirk,  
O'Savio

Staff:

Rebecca L. Makely, Director  
Cable and Consumer Services  
Susan C. Jones, Consumer Specialist III  
Consumer Affairs Branch  
Carl Newcomb, Consumer Specialist III  
Regulation and Licensing Branch  
John W. Burton, Assistant County Attorney  
Office of the County Attorney

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 PM by Chairperson Fee.

### **Minutes**

The minutes for the December 20, 2022, meetings were approved unanimously, 9-0-0.

### **Report of the Chairperson**

Chairperson Fee with Commissioner Gulakowski attended the virtual Howard County Consumer Protection Commission meeting. It is a newly created Commission and the Commission inquired about the responsibilities of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission (CPC).

### **Report of the Director**

Director Makely informed the Commission the 2023 General Assembly Legislation began on Friday, January 11, 2023.

Director Makely stated the County Executive will prepare the FY 2024 Budget to be presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on February 21, 2023. The BOS will host town meetings throughout the county. Budget hearings will be held in April along with a joint meeting with Fairfax County Public School Board. The budget will be approved May 9, 2023.

## Commissioner Matters

Commissioner Rosier inquired about a Tax Seminar by Fairfax County and notification being informed of upcoming events. Director Makely will provide links to the Fairfax County Public Meetings Calendar.

Commissioner Svab asked if the CPC meeting agendas were posted online. Director Makely stated each month the packet is posted seven days in advance on the CPC webpage. Commissioner Svab inquired if the meeting time could be changed to 5:00 p.m. and was informed a discussion and motion would be needed.

Commissioner Kratovil asked about the legislative bills reviewed.

Commissioner Springer mentioned several deaths on Blake Lane in the last four or five months. Commissioner Springer said after the accidents, there were lots of police presence and changes were made to signage, but no one has been around in quite a while. Also, he mentioned the lack of police accident reports which makes it difficult for insurance companies. Staff will provide resource information.

Commissioner Freedenthal mentioned that chronic wasting disease tested positive in adult male deer in Fairfax County. Fairfax County has tested over 750 deer since 2019 with just one positive result. Commissioner Freedenthal stated Supervisor Lusk was having a Franconia Open House at the Franconia Government Center on January 28, 2023, from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Commissioner Freedenthal said there is a new animal shelter in Lorton to be completed in September 2023.

Commissioner Kharat had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Roark had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Hargraves mentioned a Nike purchase made by a family member. Merchandise ended up being a replica and Commissioner Hargraves is seeking a refund.

Chairperson Fee mentioned a news article where Fairfax County Police arrested an acupuncturist for sexual assault.

## Old Business

- **Proposed changes to Chapter 28.1**

Chairperson Fee made the motion to amend Chapter 28.1. Commissioner Hargraves seconded the motion.

The following changes were made:

### **Section 28.1-1-3. Definitions.**

*Disqualifying offenses* means offenses which disqualify an applicant from obtaining a permit pursuant to this Chapter or, if the offender already holds a permit, ~~which may constitute grounds for mandate~~ revocation of the permit. Commissioner Hargraves made the motion to accept the change. Commissioner Rosier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

*Erogenous areas* means the genitals and the nipples and areolae. Commissioner Rosier made a motion to place a period after genitals and remove the remaining verbiage. Commissioner Hargraves seconded the motion. The motion failed, 1-8-0.

**Section 28.1-2-2. Permit application, duty to update.**

- (d) The names and addresses of all massage establishments where the applicant has been employed as a massage therapist within the past three years. Commissioner Rosier made the motion to change the past three years to one year. Commissioner Hargraves seconded the motion. The motion failed, 1-7-1.

**Section 28.1-3-2. Permit application, duty to update.**

- (b) *Streamlined application process.* If any individual required by Subsection (a) to disclose information holds a massage therapist permit issued under this Chapter, that individual may supply, in lieu of the information required by Subsections (a)(4), (a)(5) and (a)(6), ~~his or her applicant's~~ name and permit number and either a statement that no changes have occurred since ~~he or she the applicant~~ completed the application for the massage therapist permit or a list of any such changes. Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.

**Section 28.1-4-2. Requirements for massage establishments.**

- (b) Nondisposable tools of the trade shall be disinfected after use upon one (1) client. Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.

**Section 28.1-4-3. Cleanliness of therapists.**

Every massage therapist shall cleanse ~~his or her their~~ hands thoroughly with soap and hot running water immediately before administering each massage. (09-00-28.1) Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.

**Section 28.1-4-5. Massaging clients while ~~the~~ therapist is ill prohibited.** Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.

**Section 28.1-4-6. Massaging, touching, exposing erogenous areas.**

- (a) It is unlawful for any person, in a massage establishment or during the course of an out-call massage transaction, to touch, with any part of ~~his or her their~~ body or with any object, another person's clothed or unclothed erogenous area. Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.
- (b) It is unlawful for any person, in a massage establishment or during the course of an out-call massage transaction, to fail to conceal ~~his or her their~~ erogenous areas with a fully opaque covering while in the presence of others. Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.
- (c) It is unlawful for any person owning, operating, or managing a massage establishment or out-call massage business to knowingly cause or allow, in or about such massage establishment or as part of an out-call massage business, any agent, employee or any other person under ~~his their~~ control or supervision to perform any act prohibited by this section. (09-00-28.1) Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.

**Section 28.1-5-2. Right of entry to enforce Chapter.**

The Director, the Director of Health, the ~~e~~Chief of ~~p~~Police, the ~~z~~Zoning ~~a~~Administrator and the

**Building Official**, or their duly authorized agents, are hereby authorized to enter, examine and survey, during business hours, any premises in the County for which a massage establishment permit has been issued pursuant to this Chapter for the purpose of inspection and to enforce the provisions of this Chapter. The Director of Health shall inspect each massage establishment at least one (1) time per year to determine whether it is being operated in compliance with this Chapter. This section shall not restrict or limit the right of entry vested in any law enforcement agency. (09-00-28.1). Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendment without objection.

**Section 28.1-5-3. Revocation or suspension of permits.**

If the Director believes that grounds for revocation of a permit exist, the Director shall give the permittee written notice enumerating the grounds and declaring the Director's intent to hold a hearing at a specified date and time to determine whether revocation is warranted. The notice shall be mailed, by certified mail, to the permittee's last known address, at least ten (10) days prior to the date set for the hearing. At the hearing, the permittee may be represented by counsel, may cross-examine witnesses and may present evidence in **his their** favor. If the Director finds that any ground for revocation in fact exists, the Director shall revoke the permit. The Director shall issue a written notice of **his their** findings and decision within ten (10) work days of the hearing. The applicant may appeal the Director's decision as provided for in Article 6 of this Chapter. The Director's decision remains in effect during the pendency of the appeal. Commissioner Hargraves made the motion to replace his with their. Commissioner Freedenthal seconded the motion. The motion passed, 6-3-0.

**Section 28.1-6-1. Appeals from decisions of the Director; procedure.**

- (b) Any appeal will be filed with the Department by the appellant or by the legal representative of the appellant. Appeals will be in writing, and appeals will include a brief statement of the reasons thereof. Appeals must be filed within **forty-five (45)** calendar days of receipt of the notice of denial, suspension or revocation, and appeals will be signed by the appellant or the legal representative of the appellant.
- (c) Upon receipt of any notice of appeal, the Commission will set a time and place for such hearing and will give the appellant or legal representative and the Director reasonable notice thereof. All hearings on appeals will be scheduled and determined as promptly as practicable and in no event more than **sixty (60)** calendar days from the date the notice of appeal is filed. Chairperson Fee accepted the friendly amendments without objection.

Commissioner Freedenthal moved to accept all changes to Chapter 28.1. Commissioner Hargraves seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

**New Business**

**1. 2023 Items of Interest.** Commission did not discuss.

Chairperson Fee informed the Commission he submitted his resignation from the CPC, effective January 18, 2023, after serving 27 years.

Chairperson Fee made the motion to adjourn the meeting without objection. The meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

# CPC Calendar

**Consumer Protection Commission**  
2023 Planning Calendar  
February 21, 2023

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| January 17   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chapter 28.1</li><li>• 2023 Meeting Calendar</li><li>• 2023 Items of Interest</li></ul>                             |
| February 21  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resilient Fairfax and CECAP Presentations</li><li>• Election of Officers</li><li>• 2023 Items of Interest</li></ul> |
| March 21     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| April 18     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| May 16       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| June 20      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| July 18      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FY 2023 Annual Report</li></ul>   |
| August 15    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| September 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| October 17   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |
| November 21  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nomination of Officers</li></ul>  |
| December 19  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>   |



# CPC Membership

**Name****Staff**

Harold G. Belkowitz  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

VACANT (Chairperson)

Chester J. Freedenthal  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

Denis Gulakowski  
(Vice-Chairperson)  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

Dirck A. Hargraves  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2023*

Pratik J. Kharat  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

Dennis D. Kirk  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2025*

Jason J. Kratovil  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

Triston "Chase" O'Savio  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

Michael J. Roark  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2023*

Jacqueline Rosier (Secretary)  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2025*

Maurice B. Springer  
*Appt. Expires 07/31/2024*

Paul Svab  
*Appt. Expires 7/31/2024*

Rebecca L. Makely, Director  
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Susan Jones, Consumer Specialist III  
Consumer Affairs Branch  
703-324-5877  
[susan.jones@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:susan.jones@fairfaxcounty.gov)

Main number: 703-222-8435  
Fax number: 703-653-1310

# Community Outreach

## Outreach Event Calendar February 2023

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	# of Guests	Event Time	Staff
2/2/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Mount Vernon High School 8501 Old Mount Vernon Road Alexandria, VA		8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	MP SW
2/3/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Mount Vernon High School 8501 Old Mount Vernon Road Alexandria, VA		8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	LY CH
2/6/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Mount Vernon High School 8501 Old Mount Vernon Road Alexandria, VA		8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	MP AB
2/7/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Mount Vernon High School 8501 Old Mount Vernon Road Alexandria, VA		8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	MP CH
2/10/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Mount Vernon High School 8501 Old Mount Vernon Road Alexandria, VA		8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	LY CH
2/11/2023	Mount Vernon Town Meeting	Mount Vernon High School 8501 Old Mount Vernon Road Alexandria, VA		7:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	SCJ PNB
2/13/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Mount Vernon High School 8515 Old Mount Vernon Drive Alexandria, VA		1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	LY AB
2/17/2023	Lifesmart	Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond 701 Bryd Street Richmond, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	SCJ LY MP
2/27/2023	Consumer Connection National Consumer Protection Week	Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook		11:00 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.	SCJ
2/27/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Marshall High School 7731 Leesburg Pike Falls Church, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MPD LY
2/28/2023	Consumer Knowledge	Marshall High School 7731 Leesburg Pike Falls Church, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MPD CH

## **Outreach Event Calendar March 2023**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b># of Guests</b>	<b>Event Time</b>	<b>Staff</b>
3/6/2023	<b>Virginia Department of Treasury Unclaimed Property (Virtual)</b>	101 North 14th Street Richmond, VA		10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	
3/7/2023	<b>Funeral Planning (Zoom)</b>	Brain Injury Services 8136 Old Keene Mill Road Springfield, VA		10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	LY CH
3/9/2023	<b>Consumer Affairs Booth</b>	Fairfax County Government Center Fairfax, VA		8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	All Staff
3/9/2023	<b>Consumer Affairs Day Welcome and Consumer Affairs 101</b>	Fairfax County Board Auditorium Fairfax, VA		9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	RLM SCJ
3/9/2023	<b>Tenant and Landlord Rights and Responsibilities</b>	Fairfax County Board Auditorium Fairfax, VA		9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	MP SW
3/9/2023	<b>Funeral Planning</b>	Fairfax County Board Auditorium Fairfax, VA		10:30 a.m. - 11:15 p.m.	LY CH
3/9/2023	<b>Scams</b>	Fairfax County Board Auditorium Fairfax, VA		11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	PB AB
3/10/2023	<b>7th Slam the Scam Fraud Prevention &amp; Awareness Expo</b>	Greenspring 7430 Spring Village Drive Springfield, VA		11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	SCJ SW
3/20/2023	<b>Consumer Knowledge</b>	Annandale High School 4700 Medford Drive Annandale, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MP LY
3/21/2023	<b>Consumer Knowledge</b>	Annandale High School 4700 Medford Drive Annandale, VA		8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	MP CH

# Consumer Resources

## **Resource Items**

**Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services**

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer>

**Fairfax County Consumer Affairs**

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer>

**Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyconsumer/>

**Fairfax County Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates**

[Fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/)

**DCCS Operating Status**

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/status>

***Consumer Connection: Tax Scams and How to Protect Yourself (January 26, 2023)***

<https://fb.watch/ip2Shyf2ED/>

## **Information Items**

**Giving Glass Bottles and Jars a New Life ([more](#))**

**Don't Make This Major Privacy Mistake When Renting a Car ([more](#))**

**Fairfax County's Lone Remaining Taxi Operator Requests Easing of Rules that 'Aged Out' Vehicles ([more](#))**

## Giving Glass Bottles and Jars a New Life



A new purple bin arrives at the Mount Vernon Government Center

By **Glenda C. Booth**

[Thursday, January 12, 2023](#)

That wine bottle you toss into Fairfax County's purple recycling bin will likely get a new life and maybe several, thanks to the county's glass recycling system. As Fairfax County Board Chairman Jeff McKay puts it, "Your next bottle of juice could be Fairfax County vintage glass!"

The county has 18 purple collection bins in every magisterial district, where since 2019, people have shoved glass bottles and jars through the bins' windows day and night for recycling at the I-95 landfill complex. Alexandria and Loudoun County also take glass there. Fairfax County processed 7,240 tons of glass in 2021.

Before installing the purple bins, which county officials dub the "Purple Can Club," Fairfax County collected most glass containers in what officials call a "single stream system" from curbside, individual blue bins. But most glass went to landfills, because glass in the waste stream could create problems,



including damaging equipment and contaminating other recyclables, says McKay. Some jars and bottles went to a materials recovery facility where they were separated from other materials, ground up and used as landfill cover.

Today, glass containers deposited in purple bins take one of two paths. On the first path, haulers take the bottles in the purple bins to the I-95 landfill, dump them into a bunker and tractor trailer trucks from a Pennsylvania company called CAP Glass take them to their glass beneficiation plant to remove labels, separate them by color, remove plastics and metals and break them down into small pieces called “cullets.” CAP Glass sells the cullets to a glass manufacturing company, Owens-Illinois. Furnaces at Owens-Illinois’s two Virginia plants in Danville and Toano then melt the glass and the company makes new bottles. “Glass bottles and jars are 100 percent recyclable and can be recycled endlessly without any loss in purity or quality,” reports the CAP Glass website.

The other track is a “trip” through “Big Blue,” an Andela Products glass-crushing machine that pulverizes glass, pulls out any metals with magnets and spews out sand-like glass and glass pea “gravel.” Big Blue is the only glass crusher in Northern Virginia, say county officials. The glass “sand” is used as construction material, for example, as bedding material under pipes and fill material around pipes instead of the traditional crushed stone. “The glass aggregates processed by Big Blue are safe enough to walk on barefoot,” says Eric Forbes, Deputy Director of solid waste management. Glass put in regular trash cans is burned at the Lorton Covanta Waste-to-Energy Plant with all the other non-recyclables.

“The Purple Can Club is a system to collect glass separately and allows us to truly recycle glass, keeping it out of landfills, where it was lost forever,” says Forbes. “We recycled 100 percent of the glass collected in the Purple Can Club, which is 98 percent pure glass thanks to our residents who participate in the program.”

### Why Recycle Glass?

“There are remarkable environmental benefits including reducing the volume in our landfills and lowering carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases,” explains McKay. “There are also economic benefits as the County has to purchase fewer construction materials when it uses recycled glass. Glass-to-glass recycling even supports hundreds of jobs in the state. This

is a true win for everyone, and I hope all residents of Fairfax County and the region continue to support and participate in the Purple Can Club.” Tom Blackburn of McLean puts glass containers in the purple bins because, he says, “Recycling is good for the environment. It cuts down on waste in landfills and it reduces the amount of raw material needed to manufacture new bottles.”

“Recycled glass can be substituted for up to 95 percent of raw materials,” maintains the Glass Packaging Institute. Recycled container glass uses include tile, filtration, sandblasting, concrete pavement, and parking lots, says GPI.

Ann Allman, a Mount Vernon-Collingwood resident, offers, “I take my bottles to the purple bin because they’ll be recycled into something useful and to keep them out of landfills.”

Reston resident Joanne Bauer likes to recycle. “Initially, I worried that taking glass to the recycling bins and putting items in one at a time would be onerous. That turned out not to be true. Now it's just another task on the chore list and one I am happy to do for the environment," she says. Some may even find it fun, suggests McKay. “We regularly encourage residents to join the ‘Purple Can Club’ and bring their bottles, jars, and other household glass for easy disposal. It’s actually kind of fun, sending the bottles through and hearing a very satisfying crash and break at the bottom.”

Some bins fill up twice a week. Unscientific observations suggest that wine bottles top the list of glass container types left in the bins, says Forbes. “If you look at the piles of bottles at loading sites, it looks like there are a lot of parties going on,” he joked. “Glass recycling has been well received because people care about the environment. People want to do good.”

#### Glass Recycling Tips

- \* Rinse out glass containers to remove any food or beverage residue.
- \* Check all the purple bins’ windows. The bin at one window may make the bin appear to be full when it is not.
- \* Do not put dishes, windows, or other glass materials in the purple bins.
- \* Do not leave things behind like boxes, bags, or other trash. That may be illegal dumping.

\* If you observe broken glass at the bins, contact [trashmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:trashmail@fairfaxcounty.gov) -324-5230 to request a cleanup.

\* To determine how best to dispose of items, visit the county's waste wizard at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/residential-materials>

More Information: Fairfax County Glass Management, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/glass>

# Don't make this major privacy mistake when renting a car

Kim Komando

Special to USA TODAY



The holiday season is a time of togetherness. Here are a few pro tips to save time and money if you have a long drive ahead.

Are you staying in a hotel? Don't sign into your room TV to access the streaming services. Here are three hacks to help you get the most out of your temporary TV.

Going through a reputable agency is a safe bet if you plan to rent a car while you're away any time soon. But with the increased demand for rentals, scammers are pouncing.

And even if you don't fall for a scam, there's another way you might be putting your info at risk.

Start your day with a great tech tip

## **Scammers smell an opportunity**

Rental car companies offloaded inventory during the pandemic, and it can still be tough to find a rental in some places during popular travel times.

Cybercriminals can boost search term rankings to ensure that fake rental agencies appear high in search results. When an unsuspecting victim enquires about available rentals, the scam is set in motion.

A "customer service representative" will offer you a special deal in one popular variation of this scam. You'll get a steep discount if you pay by gift card or prepaid debit card.

You purchase the cards and share your PIN with the phony representative. The scammer then tells you that the money didn't transfer and that you'll need to buy another card.

Of course, the rental company is a fake and will make off with the untraceable money in a flash.

Never make payment for anything using a gift card or prepaid debit card. No genuine company will insist that you use that method of payment.

## **A simple mistake everyone makes with rental cars**

When you rent a car, you probably use Bluetooth or a charging cable to sync your smartphone with the vehicle. It makes sense so you can play music, get directions, or take a call while driving.

Here's what most people don't think about: The moment you sync your phone with a rental car, your contacts, locations, music subscriptions, social media, and text messages are transferred over to the car's onboard computer.

The next person who rents that car has access to all your data. Yikes. Rental companies routinely sell vehicles from their fleets, so you never know where your info will end up.

Before you return a rental car, remove your phone from the paired devices. Better yet, if there is a factory reset option, select that. It will erase any data stored on the car's computers.

## How to avoid rental car scams

Here are a few more tips to keep you (and your wallet) safe:

- **Use the contact information listed directly on a business's website** instead of relying on an internet search for customer support phone numbers.
- **Beware of sponsored links.** Fake websites sometimes pop up at the top of the search results. Be careful when clicking. Hover over the URL to check that it looks legitimate.
- **When in doubt, verify special deals directly with the company.** If you're unsure about a promotional offer, get the customer service number from the company's official website. Call them directly to make sure the deal is real.

# Fairfax County's lone remaining taxi operator requests easing of rules that 'age out' vehicles

[TysonsReporter.com](https://www.tysonsreporter.com) January 24, 2023 at 11:49am



Old Dominion Transportation Group is the only taxicab operator in Fairfax County (staff photo by David Taube)

With the rise of ride-hailing services, Fairfax County has seen its taxicab fleet whittled down to just one operator.

That operator, [Old Dominion Transportation Group](#) (ODTG), hopes to extend the life of its 130-vehicle fleet by asking the county to revise an [existing requirement](#) that phases out taxis once they reach 10 years of age or more than 500,000 miles traveled.

The company has requested that the model-year age be raised to 12 or 15 years and that the mileage limit be eliminated.

“ODTG cites the continued struggle with the effects of the pandemic as well as competition from the transportation network companies (TNCs),” county staff said [in a report](#) for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. “ODTG also references the different requirements of other surrounding jurisdictions. ODTG believes that it can continue to provide safe, comfortable transportation for their passengers if this request is approved.”

According to county staff, ODTG raised the request on Oct. 11, 2022 after its sole competitor — Alexandria-based [White Top Cab](#) — shut down its Fairfax County operations on Sept. 1, returning its 20 taxicab certificates.

ODTG reported that 25 of its vehicles were scheduled to “age out” on Dec. 31, 2022. While it has enough active vehicles to at least temporarily offset the losses, the company says replacing vehicles has become challenging, as the new and used car markets [grapple with](#) supply chain issues and [fluctuating prices](#).

Fairfax County and D.C. are the only jurisdictions in the region to impose mileage requirements on their taxi fleets, according to staff.

**Table 1: Comparison of Taxicab Vehicle Requirements in Local Jurisdictions**

Jurisdiction	Model-Year Age	Mileage
Fairfax County Current	10 years for all vehicles	Less than 500,000 miles
Fairfax County Proposal	<i>12 years for gasoline-only powered non-wheelchair accessible vehicles 15 years for hybrid, plug-in hybrid, electric, and wheelchair accessible vehicles</i>	<i>None None</i>
Arlington County	12 years for gas vehicles 15 years for WAC 15 years for alternate fuel vehicles	None None None
City of Alexandria	10 years for gas vehicles 12 years for hybrid/alternate fuel <i>Considering the following: 12 years for gas vehicles 15 years for hybrid/alternate fuel</i>	None None <i>None None</i>
Prince William County	None	None
Montgomery County, MD	10 years for all vehicles	None
Washington, DC	8 years for all vehicles (with option to extend to 10)	275,000
Uber	15 years for all vehicles (VA)	None
Lyft	2006 or newer (Fairfax County)	None



A comparison of taxi vehicle requirements in D.C. area localities (via Fairfax County)

Following a model already used in Alexandria City and Arlington County, county staff have proposed splitting the requirement into separate tiers for gas-powered and electric or hybrid vehicles:

The 10-year model-age requirement [should] be increased to 12 years for gasoline-only powered non-wheelchair accessible vehicles and 15 years for hybrid, plug-in hybrid, electric, and wheelchair accessible vehicles. This proposal provides an incentive for the operators to replace their fleet with non-gasoline powered vehicles. Staff also recommends that the mileage requirement for all vehicles be eliminated.

The report notes that taxis are required to under go state inspections annually during their first six years of operation. Once they hit seven years of age, they're also inspected every six months by the county's taxicab inspector.

“Staff believes these inspections are sufficient in lieu of maintaining a mileage requirement,” staff said.

The staff's recommended code amendment “balances the challenges of the taxicab operators, considers the practice of local jurisdictions, ensures the safety of the riding public, and helps the environment,” the report says.

The Board of Supervisors will hold [a public hearing](#) on the proposal around 3:30 p.m. today (Tuesday).