

Industry Information

The following data regarding the businesses licensed by the Region is provided for information purposes.

1. Taxi and TNC

- Number of Taxi Brokers 12
- Number of Taxi Drivers 284 to 375 (number has fluctuated due to COVID-19 impacts)
- Number of Taxi Plates 371 (347 main and 24 spare)
- Number of TNC Brokers 3
- Number of TNC Drivers 686 to 1200 (number has fluctuated due to COVID-19 impacts)
- Number of TNC Vehicles 686 to 1200 (number has fluctuated due to COVID-19 impacts)

2. Vehicles Used for Hire

- Number of Vehicle for Hire Businesses 85 (number may be reduced after July 2021 due to COVID-19 impacts and the delayed tourism season)
- Number of Vehicle for Hire Drivers 85 to 300 (number has fluctuated due to COVID-19 impacts)
- Number of Vehicle for Hire Plates 414 (number may be reduced after July 2021 due to COVID-19 impacts and the delayed tourism season)
- The number of business that have made it through the COVID-19 pandemic and remain operating will not be known until after July 2021. We expect anywhere from 30 to 40% will not be returning to provide any business operations. The majority of the operators have placed most of their fleets in non-use.

3. Salvage Yards

- Number of Salvage Yard Businesses 19
- Number of Salvage Shop Businesses 1
- Number of Auto Wrecking Yard Businesses 24
- Salvage Yards and Auto Wrecking Yards will be merged

4. Second Hand Shops

- Number of Second Hand Shop Businesses 53
- Number of Second Hand Dealer Businesses 15

5. Tow Trucks

- Number of Towing Businesses 44
- Number of Towing Drivers 170
- Number of Towing Plates 186
- Towing fee tariff has been created and is attached to this report as Appendix 8
- Strengthened Provincial Oversight of the Towing Sector:
 - During the course of the Region's internal review and stakeholder engagement, the Province was also doing their own review, resulting in the Moving Ontarians More Safely Act, 2021 (MOMS Act). The MOMS Act was introduced by the Ontario government to help strengthen Provincial oversight of various sectors, including the towing sector, and received Royal Assent on June 3, 2021. The MOMS Act entails the following legislative and regulatory changes, including the introduction of the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, 2021, (TSSEA):
 - requiring tow operators, tow truck drivers and vehicle storage operators to be certified under the TSSEA and meet prescribed requirements and standards;
 - set standards for customer protection and roadside behaviours, including penalties for non-compliance; and
 - establish a Director of Towing and Vehicle and Storage Standards to provide oversight.
 - Reference to the TSSEA provisions have been integrated into the Region's Tow Truck By-law, to ensure that Applicants and Licensees are aware of the new requirements.
 - The TSSEA is anticipated to come into force some time in 2022, on a date as prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor.

6. Adult Entertainment Sector to be reviewed in 2022

Governance and enforcement of the Adult Entertainment and Body Rub Parlour industries became the responsibility of Niagara Region as part of the transfer of business licensing from Niagara Regional Police.

Currently the governance and enforcement of Adult Entertainment and Body Rub Parlour industries is conducted in two ways:

- Delegated authority to the Region from the local area municipalities (St. Catharines, Thorold and Niagara Falls); or
- Directly through a Niagara Region by-law (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Fort Erie and Welland).

Staff intend to conduct a separate review of the existing adult entertainment licensing regime, including stakeholder and public engagement. The complexity of the 3 existing lower-tier by-laws; coupled with the desire to harmonize all the Adult Entertainment by-laws in the future was the key factor in that decision and a fulsome review will be undertaken Q3 2022.

Business Licensing Division Overview

The Business Licensing Division is comprised of the following staffing complement:

- 1 FTE – Manager Business Licensing/Licensing Officer
- 4 FTE – Licensing Enforcement Officer
- 1 TPT – Licensing Enforcement Officer
- 1 FTE – Licensing Enforcement Clerk

The Division's administrative hours are Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The Division's enforcement operations are 7 days a week (Monday to Friday, 7:30 am to 8:30 pm, inclusive of holidays; and 10:00 am to 8:30 pm on weekends).

Some of the primary administrative services provided by the division include:

- Processing licence applications;
- Approving, denying, revoking, suspending or placing conditions on licences;
- Processing payments;
- Maintaining the licensing database;
- Issuing licences;
- Coordinating court appearances, court documentation and evidence requirements.

The major operational services provided by the division include:

- Scheduled compliance inspections of licence holders;
- Random compliance inspections of licence holders;
- Complaint investigations pertaining to licence holders;

- Complaint investigations pertaining to unlicensed businesses;
- Deterring criminal impacts within the licensed industries and liaising with NRPS as necessary.

In the initial analysis of the transfer of business licensing responsibilities to Niagara Region from Niagara Regional Police, it was suggested that the division could operate on 100% cost recovery through licensing fees. This has not been the case since the transition of the responsibilities and has been further impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions on the businesses licensed by the division.

It is expected that full cost recovery from licensing fees will not be achieved but rather a percentage of the operations will be recoverable through the fees as is the case in many municipalities. Licensing fees continue to be reviewed and will be adjusted annually to offset expenses directly related to licensing including wage increases, cost of living and technology expenses.

It should be noted these operations have been maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures.