



For information, contact:

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CONSUMER ADVISORY

Columbia, S.C., June 24, 2014 –

Ridesharing smartphone apps are a new technology that sparks interest in South Carolina. Before you hit the road with a swipe of your finger, the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) advises you to be aware of potential safety and insurance issues that could affect both customers and drivers participating in ridesharing services.

The ORS recommends consumers and drivers carefully select transportation services that operate in compliance with South Carolina laws and thus have the proper safeguards in place such as commercial insurance, driver background checks, and vehicle safety inspections. Ridesharing service providers use smartphone apps to connect passengers with drivers who use their personal vehicles to transport passengers for a fee. Unless these drivers and ridesharing companies that employ them have gone through the required regulatory process mandated by state law, the proper authority, insurance, criminal background check, or vehicle safety inspection may not be in place. This situation can put both the passenger and driver at risk.

Specifically, South Carolina law pertaining to for-hire transportation of passengers requires individuals and corporations providing passenger transportation services for the public outside municipal limits to hold a certificate granted by the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC). This certificate indicates the individual or

corporation has met state-mandated standards for insurance and has been inspected by the ORS.

Using ridesharing companies or drivers who operate *without* a PSC certificate may leave customers and drivers vulnerable to potential gaps in insurance coverage. For example, insurance coverage for an accident may not exist because some personal auto insurance policies contain coverage exclusion when a driver uses a personal car for commercial business, such as charging a fee for ridesharing services using a smartphone app.

Careful selection of transportation services that operate in compliance with South Carolina laws will help keep both passengers and drivers safe.

If you have additional questions about ridesharing smartphone apps, how to find or identify authorized passenger carriers, and the South Carolina laws related to for-hire passenger transportation, call the ORS Consumer Services Division as listed below:

Consumer Services Division

S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff

1401 Main Street, Suite 900

Columbia, S.C. 29201

803-737-5230 (Columbia, S.C.)

1-800-922-1531 (toll-free complaint/inquiry line within South Carolina)

FAX: (803) 737- 4750

TTY: (803) 737-5175 (TTY in Columbia, S.C.)

1-800-334-2217 (TTY toll-free complaint/inquiry line within South Carolina)

Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except state holidays)

Customers may also contact the Consumer Services Division by going to the ORS web site at www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov and using the online consumer complaint/inquiry form.

The Office of Regulatory Staff is an agency of the State of South Carolina. Its mission is to represent the public interest in utility regulation by balancing the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and the economic development of South Carolina. For more information, please visit the ORS web site at <http://www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov/>.

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