

Chapter 278

(Senate Bill 473)

AN ACT concerning

**Public Utilities – For–Hire Drivers and Transportation Network Operators –
Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Training and Liability**

FOR the purpose of requiring an applicant for certain for–hire driver’s licenses ~~and transportation network operator’s licenses~~ to submit to the Public Service Commission documentation verifying that the applicant completed a certain human trafficking awareness training program; prohibiting licensed taxicab drivers, for–hire drivers, or transportation network operators and applicants for a transportation network operator’s license from being held civilly or criminally liable for reporting or responding to in good faith a suspected incident of human trafficking; prohibiting a transportation network company from allowing certain applicants for and holders of a transportation network operator’s license to provide transportation network services using a digital network application if the applicant or license holder has not completed a certain human trafficking awareness training program; and generally relating to for–hire drivers and transportation network operators.

BY renumbering

Article – Public Utilities

Section 10–404(g) and (h)

to be Section 10–404(h) and (i), respectively

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Public Utilities

Section 10–103(b), 10–104(a)(1), 10–104.1(b), and 10–106, ~~and 10–404(b) and (c)~~

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Public Utilities

Section 10–104.2 and 10–404(g)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That Section(s) 10–404(g) and (h) of Article – Public Utilities of the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 10–404(h) and (i), respectively.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

10–103.

(b) (1) A county or municipal corporation may license taxicab drivers who drive taxicabs that are based in that county or municipal corporation if, at a minimum, the county or municipal corporation:

(I) conducts a criminal record check [and] **OF EACH APPLICANT FOR A LICENSE;**

(II) **CONDUCTS A** driving record check of each applicant for a license;
AND

(III) **REQUIRES THAT EACH APPLICANT FOR A LICENSE INCLUDE IN THE APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10–104.2 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

(2) A taxicab driver licensed by a county or municipal corporation is not required to be licensed by the Commission.

10–104.

(a) (1) An applicant for a for–hire driver’s license shall:

(i) submit to the Commission a completed application on the form that the Commission provides;

(ii) state on the form that the applicant is applying for a passenger–for–hire driver’s license or a taxicab driver’s license;

(iii) pay to the Commission an application fee set by the Commission;

(iv) 1. if the applicant is a Maryland driver, allow the Commission access to the driver’s photograph through the Motor Vehicle Administration;
or

2. file with the application a recent photograph in a format that the Commission specifies; [and]

(v) **SUBMIT TO THE COMMISSION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10–104.2 OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND**

(VI) apply to the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for a State criminal history records check as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

10-104.1.

(b) The Commission may approve an applicant and issue a temporary driver's license to the applicant if:

(1) the applicant provides all information that the Commission requires for the application, including the information specified in item (2) of this subsection; [and]

(2) the Commission is satisfied with the successful submission of the applicant's:

(i) national criminal history records check:

1. conducted by a consumer reporting agency as defined under § 14-1201 of the Commercial Law Article or a comparable entity approved by the Commission; and

2. that includes:

A. a Multi-State Multi-Jurisdiction Criminal Records Database Search or a search of a similar nationwide database with validation;

B. a search of the Sex Offender Registry; and

C. a search of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public website; and

(ii) driving record check that includes a driving history research report; AND

(3) THE APPLICANT SUBMITS TO THE COMMISSION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10-104.2 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

10-104.2.

(A) AN APPLICANT FOR A LICENSE ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10-103(B) OF THIS SUBTITLE OR UNDER § 10-104, § 10-104.1, OR § 10-106 OF THIS SUBTITLE ~~OR § 10-404 OF THIS TITLE~~ SHALL INCLUDE IN THE APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED:

(1) ~~(H)~~ THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION’S LEADERS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING/COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE TRANSPORTATION AWARENESS TRAINING; OR

~~(H)~~ (2) ANY NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAM;~~AND.~~

~~(2)~~ (B) A HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES AWARENESS TRAINING THAT AN APPLICANT COMPLETES UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION ON HOW TO:

~~(H)~~ (1) RECOGNIZE POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING;

~~(H)~~ (2) RESPOND TO AN INDIVIDUAL WHO MAY BE OR IS A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING; AND

~~(H)~~ (3) CONNECT AN INDIVIDUAL WHO MAY BE OR IS A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH AVAILABLE RESOURCES REPORT SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

~~(B)~~ (C) A LICENSED TAXICAB DRIVER, OR FOR-HIRE DRIVER,~~OR TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR~~ MAY NOT BE HELD CIVILLY OR CRIMINALLY LIABLE FOR REPORTING OR RESPONDING IN GOOD FAITH TO A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

10-106.

(a) The term of a for-hire driver’s license is not less than 1 year and not more than 3 years, as the Commission sets.

(b) (1) An applicant for a renewal of a for-hire driver’s license shall:

(I) submit to the Commission an application on the form that the Commission provides; AND

(II) INCLUDE IN THE APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10-104.2 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

(2) The Commission may renew the for-hire driver’s license by appropriate endorsement on the license.

(c) The Commission shall keep on file with the original application of a driver a complete record of:

(1) each for-hire driver's license issued to the driver; and

(2) any renewal, suspension, and revocation of a for-hire driver's license issued to the driver.

10-404.

~~(b) The Commission may approve an applicant to be an operator and issue a temporary transportation network operator's license to the applicant if:~~

~~(1) the applicant provides all information that the Commission requires for the application, including the information specified in item (2) of this subsection; [and]~~

~~(2) the Commission is satisfied with the successful submission of the applicant's:~~

~~(i) national criminal history records check:~~

~~1. conducted by a consumer reporting agency as defined under § 14-1201 of the Commercial Law Article or a comparable entity approved by the Commission; and~~

~~2. that includes:~~

~~A. a Multi State Multi Jurisdiction Criminal Records Database Search or a search of a similar nationwide database with validation;~~

~~B. a search of the Sex Offender Registry; and~~

~~C. a search of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Website; and~~

~~(ii) driving record check that includes a driving history research report; AND~~

~~(3) THE APPLICANT SUBMITS TO THE COMMISSION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10-104.2 OF THIS TITLE.~~

~~(e) Subject to subsection (d) of this section, the Commission may issue a permanent transportation network operator's license to an applicant [upon] ON the submission of:~~

~~(1) a satisfactory supplemental criminal background check as set forth under § 10-104(b) of this title; AND~~

~~(2) DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10-104.2 OF THIS TITLE.~~

~~(C) AN APPLICANT FOR THE RENEWAL OF A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR'S LICENSE SHALL SUBMIT TO THE COMMISSION DOCUMENTATION VERIFYING THAT THE APPLICANT COMPLETED A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 10-104.2 OF THIS TITLE.~~

(G) (1) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

(I) SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION FOR A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR'S LICENSE ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 2026; AND

(II) COMPLETED, BETWEEN JUNE 1, 2025, AND NOVEMBER 30, 2026, A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARAGRAPHS (2) AND (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(2) A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANY MAY NOT ALLOW AN APPLICANT FOR A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR'S LICENSE OR THE HOLDER OF A TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR'S LICENSE TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK SERVICES USING A DIGITAL NETWORK APPLICATION UNLESS THE APPLICANT OR LICENSE HOLDER, WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE APPLICANT OR LICENSE HOLDER FIRST PROVIDES A PREARRANGED RIDE, HAS COMPLETED:

(I) THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S LEADERS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING/COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR AWARENESS TRAINING;

(II) ANY NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING PROGRAM; OR

(III) ANY DIGITAL TRAINING DEVELOPED BY A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANY IN CONSULTATION WITH A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION WITH EXPERTISE IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING.

(3) A HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS TRAINING THAT AN APPLICANT OR LICENSE HOLDER COMPLETES UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION ON HOW TO:

(I) RECOGNIZE POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING;

(II) RESPOND TO AN INDIVIDUAL WHO MAY BE OR IS A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING; AND

(III) REPORT SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

(4) AN APPLICANT FOR A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR'S LICENSE OR THE HOLDER OF A TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OPERATOR'S LICENSE MAY NOT BE HELD CIVILLY OR CRIMINALLY LIABLE FOR REPORTING OR RESPONDING IN GOOD FAITH TO A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, April 28, 2026.