

## **Cab company poll shows Calgarians happy with service**

By Tamara Gignac, Calgary Herald November 13, 2009

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/life/company+poll+shows+Calgarians+happy+with+service/2217014/story.html>

Calgarians who use taxis--even during busy times and in frigid weather--are happy with the service they receive, a new poll suggests.

A survey commissioned by the city's cab companies asked 300 people to rate their ability to hire a taxi. Most -- 71 per cent -- considered the response time either "good" or "very good." Of those who sought a cab after midnight or during holidays and in the winter, some 82 to 85 per cent reported a pleasant outcome.

The results "fly in the face" of recent reports, said independent pollster Bruce Cameron.

"People who have used the taxi service are positive about it. If you just went by what some of the other groups are saying, you would conclude the opposite is true," said Cameron, the founder of research consultancy Return on Insight.

The poll's findings differ wildly from a similar survey conducted last summer by Voters for Taxis, a local consumer advocacy group lobbying for changes to the city's taxi policies.

Many who responded to Voters for Taxis' online queries rated the availability of cabs as poor or fair.

Cameron said the earlier survey can't be considered scientifically valid because it doesn't reflect random public opinion. Disgruntled riders would deliberately seek out such a study, he noted.

Sandy Jenkins disagrees. The spokesman for Voters For Taxis argues Calgarians are so fed up with their inability to get a cab, many have given up completely and now seek alternative transportation.

He would like to see sweeping changes to Calgary's taxi regulations to improve wait times and allow more cabs on the road. The city is conducting a two-year review of its taxi bylaw, and Jenkins believes deregulation is the best way to bolster service.

"There are cars out there that aren't getting trips on a busy Friday or when it's cold, but when people phone, they can't get through. It's a real failure of the dispatch system, not taxi demand," said Jenkins.

But taxi companies say there are more than enough cabs to meet the needs of the city as the busy holiday season approaches.

Many big corporate clients are cancelling Christmas parties or opting for smaller, less-boozy affairs, said Len Bellingham, chairman of the Calgary Livery Association.

It comes at a time when there are 30 per cent more cars on the street than business often warrants between the hours of 11 p.m. and 3 a.m., he said.

"Instead of customers looking for cabs, it's cab drivers looking for customers."

The industry isn't perfect, Bellingham acknowledged.

The shortage of cabs for late-night revellers in the entertainment district is a problem, he said, one that taxi companies are trying to resolve by pushing for designated taxi stands in neighbourhoods populated with bars and nightclubs as well as outside sporting events.

The Return on Insight poll also asked people to rate the cleanliness of cabs and driver professionalism, with most respondents describing their experience as "good" or "very good."

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Comments (15)

Lid November 13, 2009 - 3:38 PM

I don't know a single person who considered the response time "good" or "very good." There are so many people driving home drunk because they can't even get through to cab dispatch.

Bill November 13, 2009 - 3:15 PM

Why can't you get a taxi downtown? Because they're all @ the airport waiting for big fares. The whole taxi system is corrupt. Mind you the Stampede Board has been greasing city hall for years.

James November 13, 2009 - 2:22 PM

It is about time an independant survey was done. The other surveys are all a crock. "Voters for Taxi" poll is so slanted the wrong way the there was only one result and that was negative. This survey was done by an independant group phoning people at random so it is the only true result.

Pal November 13, 2009 - 1:40 PM

No one does study on cab drivers safety, protection of their basic rights couple Taxi Plates Brokers walk over cab drivers basic rights & investment, ignore public issues even push around Livery Transport Administration through donations to civic politicians. Taxi Plates Brokers are second biggest donators from New Home Industry to city hall. Calgary is only city has Taxi Plates Brokers System worse city to get cab when needed most, never heard these kind donation to city hall in any other cities.

Kathy Strauss November 13, 2009 - 1:28 PM

This is so predictable. This survey has been done so that City Council doesn't have to listen to what customers have been saying. Finally customers get organized enough to speak out against Calgary's approach to taxis, and instead of listening to them, I bet certain Council members are going to repeat this propoganda at next week's Council meeting about taxis. So the industry can use its monopoly profits to hire a polling firm, but who funds the travelling public? How is the travelling public supposed to counter this? Watch the meeting next Wednesday, and you'll be able to tell which Aldermen are in cahoots with the brokers.

DG November 13, 2009 - 1:21 PM

Who did they poll the cab drivers? No way do I agree with this poll. Add me to the very disatisfied crowd. We need more cabs and less people controlling the license department. Somebody is getting paid off here!

Odiggity November 13, 2009 - 12:54 PM

Sure, the cabbies have all provided great service, but waiting on hold for hours and then being disconnected because the line is too busy is infuriating. Aside from cabs to the airport at 5am, I've never had reliable service. It's the city of Calgary's fault. They sold all the taxi licenses to one guy who now has a monopoly and won't issue any more so that the value stays up. It's ludicrous, and this Herald story is irresponsible insofar as it perpetuates this municipal corruption.

McFly November 13, 2009 - 12:07 PM

I think there is something VERY wrong with this poll.

Me November 13, 2009 - 10:59 AM

I'm guessing they only surveyed people who called cabs and got them right away. When it was very cold last winter I waited over 2 hours (I'm not exadurating) for a taxi. It was pathetic.

Ken November 13, 2009 - 10:38 AM

sorry, the survey is wrong - most of the taxi drivers that I have used did not know the city and have little consideration for the client.

Bill November 13, 2009 - 9:03 AM

Take 300 Cab drivers and ask them what they think of the service? 300 people serveyed with a overall population of over a million. Who are they guys try to kid? This survey is total BS. We need independant Gypsy cabs like they have in other large citys and watch the service come up and the prices go down.

Andy November 13, 2009 - 8:46 AM

a big lie. Whom did they poll...family and friends of all cab drivers..obvioulsy they will be happy for the free rides they get. Ask comon calgarian and the truth will be far from what the articles says....another instance of the self propaganda by the taxi lobby

RJ November 13, 2009 - 8:39 AM

It seems that anyone can pay this guy Bruce Cameron to conduct a poll and say pretty much anything. Calgary has the worst cab service in the world. These guys are nothing short of a mafia operation...don't count on a ride at 3am at -40 degrees.