

December 19, 2025

**OFFICE OF THE HEARING EXAMINER
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**
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REPORT AND DECISION

SUBJECT: King County For-Hire Licensing file no. 25777

PETER WU
For-Hire Driver Enforcement Appeal

For Hire no.: 120152

Appellant: **Peter Wu**
[REDACTED]
Lakewood, WA 98498
Telephone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

King County: King County For-Hire Licensing
represented by **Tyson Taylor**
King County For-Hire Licensing
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Overview

1. After hearing the witness testimony, studying the exhibits admitted into evidence, and considering the parties' arguments and the relevant law, Mr. Wu's appeal is granted in part and denied in part.

Procedural Background

2. On September 18, 2025, King County For-Hire Licensing (Licensing) issued a Notice of Complaint, #25-777 to Peter Wu for alleged violations on September 7, 2025.
3. On October 6, 2025, Licensing issued Mr. Wu a citation for Case #25-777. Ex. D2. Mr. Wu filed a timely appeal on October 8. Ex. D6.
4. We went to hearing on December 15. Participating in the hearing were: Tyson Taylor representing Licensing, and appellant Peter Wu.

Appeal Issues

Per the Notice of Hearing, the issues identified for consideration on appeal are as follows:

5. Whether the violation of KCC 6.65.160.I – failure to ensure the taximeter display is always visible to passengers, and the associated \$250 penalty are supported by a preponderance of the evidence and appropriate under the facts of this case.
6. Whether the violation of KCC 6.65.160.K – failure to provide passengers with professional and courteous service, and the associated \$250 penalty are supported by a preponderance of the evidence and appropriate under the facts of this case.
7. Whether the violation of KCC 6.65.160.M – failure to use the most direct route available, and the associated \$250 penalty are supported by a preponderance of the evidence and appropriate under the facts of this case.

Factual Findings

Weighing all the evidence, the hearing examiner finds the following facts by a preponderance of the evidence:

8. On September 18, 2025, Licensing issued a Notice of Complaint, identifying three potential violations as alleged by Mr. Wu's passenger on September 7, 2025. Ex. D3. The customer alleged that: (1) Mr. Wu's taximeter was not visible during the ride, (2) Mr. Wu did not take the most direct route, and (3) when making payment, Mr. Wu took the card reader and added his own tip. Ex. D3.
9. In the Notice of Complaint, Mr. Wu was given three different options for responding to the allegations against him: email, in writing, or over the phone. Ex. D3-003. Mr. Wu was given until October 3, 2025, to respond to the allegations. Ex. D3-003.
10. No evidence supports a conclusion that Mr. Wu timely responded to the Notice of Complaint. Mr. Wu's appeal statement asserts that he texted Inspector Stetson to explain the incident, and she responded via email that he should email his statement to

Licensing. There is no evidentiary record of this conversation and it is unclear whether, if the exchange took place, it happened before or after the October 3 deadline. Although Inspector Stetson was not available to participate in the hearing, I am relying on the October 6, 2025, Inspector's Report in finding that as of that date "Mr. Wu [had] not responded to the allegations of the complaint." Ex. D2-004.

11. Licensing's staff report indicates that Mr. Wu's failure to respond to the Notice of Complaint "resulted in the issuance of a citation on October 6, 2025, for violations of KCC 6.65.160.I – failure to ensure the taximeter display is always visible to passengers, KCC 6.65.160.K – failure to provide passengers with professional and courteous service, and KCC 6.65.160.M – failure to use the most direct route available."
12. Mr. Wu acknowledged that, during this customer trip, his taximeter was tilted upward to avoid the reflection and glare from the screen. Testimony of Wu. This supports the customer's complaint, and Licensing's conclusion, that Mr. Wu did not ensure the taximeter's display was visible to the passenger.
13. The customer complained that Mr. Wu did not take the most direct route. Ex. D5-003. Mr. Wu acknowledged that he took I-5 rather than 405, which was the longer route, but did so because of traffic. Testimony of Wu. Mr. Wu further defended his decision, stating that he was simply following the GPS route because the customer did not specify the route they wanted to take to get home. Testimony of Wu.
14. The customer stated that there was no traffic or other incidents that would have caused slowdowns on 405 or I-5. Ex. D5-003. The trip was taken on a Sunday evening at 6pm. Testimony of Taylor. Taking I-5 added several miles and a toll to the cost of the trip. Ex. D5-003.
15. The customer's third complaint was that Mr. Wu "seized the card reader" and "added his own tip" to the fare. Ex. D5-003. Mr. Wu flatly denies doing this but does acknowledge that the customer was very angry when they arrived at the passenger's home and accused Mr. Wu of trying to rip him off. Testimony of Wu; Ex. D6.
16. After the customer provided his statement to Licensing, Inspector Stenson asked them to provide the receipt from the ride. Ex. D5-002. The customer emailed the credit card charge for the trip with Mr. Wu, and noted "there is no tip included there." Ex. D5-002.

Conclusions of Law

17. The hearing examiner has jurisdiction pursuant to KCC 20.22.040.
18. Licensing bears the burden of proving by a preponderance of evidence both the violation and the appropriateness of the remedy it has imposed. KCC 20.22.080.G; .210.B. We do not grant substantial weight or otherwise accord deference to agency determinations. Exam. R. XV.F.3.

19. Under KCC 6.65.410.B, failure to timely respond to a Notice of Complaint is *prima facie* evidence that the allegations are valid. This means, essentially, that the burden of proof is shifted to the appellant to refute the facts alleged in the written complaint with contrary evidence.
20. Each of the three code violations alleged here are “Class B” violations that have \$250 civil penalties for a first offense. KCC 6.65.430.B.1. No evidence indicated that Mr. Wu has had any prior warnings or violations. Thus, if the department has met its burden to prove each of the violations, the \$250 civil penalty for each violation is appropriate.
21. Licensing has met its burden of proof to establish a violation of KCC 6.65.160.I, “failure to ensure the taximeter display is always visible to passengers.” Mr. Wu acknowledged directing the taximeter screen upwards to avoid glare. This would logically make it impossible for a passenger in the backseat to view the display. Avoiding glare is not an excuse for failure to comply with this code section. Mr. Wu should remount his taximeter in a way that ensures passengers can always view the screen.
22. Licensing has met its burden of proof to establish a violation of KCC 6.65.160.M, “failure to use the most direct route available.” Although there is no definitive evidence establishing whether there was traffic that would have justified taking I-5 rather than 405, the customer’s detailed statement indicating there was no traffic and the Sunday evening timing of the trip support a conclusion that traffic was not an obstacle that evening. Because KCC 6.65.410.B shifts the burden to Mr. Wu to provide contrary evidence, which he has not done apart from asserting generally that there was traffic, Licensing’s KCC 6.65.160.M violation and civil penalty are upheld.
23. Finally, Licensing has *not* met its burden to show a violation of KCC 6.65.160.K, “failure to provide passengers with professional and courteous service.” The primary fact Licensing points to in support of this violation is Mr. Wu’s addition of a tip to the fare without the passenger’s approval. But the email from the complainant indicates, upon review of his credit card receipt, that “there is no tip included.” Ex. D5-002.
24. It is evident that the customer was upset with Mr. Wu by the time they reached his home because of the route taken and additional cost. To the extent a “lack of professional service” would be supported by Mr. Wu’s choice of route, he is already being penalized for that by violating KCC 6.65.160.M.
25. Mr. Wu testified that the passenger was upset, denied adding any tip to the fare, and stated he offered to pay the toll before choosing to leave rather than argue with the customer. Other than the passenger’s statement, which is then contradicted by their credit card statement, there is inadequate evidence to sustain a violation and civil penalty for KCC 6.65.160.K.

DECISION:

1. As to the violation of KCC 6.65.160.K and the associated \$250 penalty, the appeal is GRANTED.
2. The remainder of Mr. Wu’s appeal is DENIED.

ORDERED December 19, 2025.



Devon Shannon
Hearing Examiner

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

King County Code 20.22.040 directs the Examiner to make the County’s final decision for this type of case. This decision shall be final and conclusive unless appealed to superior court in accordance with Ch. 7.16 RCW. It is the responsibility of the party seeking to appeal the examiner’s decision to determine and meet the legal requirements for filing an appeal.

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 15, 2025, HEARING IN THE APPEAL OF
PETER WU, KING COUNTY FOR-HIRE LICENSING FILE NO. 25777**

Devon Shannon was the Hearing Examiner in this matter. A verbatim recording of the hearing is available in the Hearing Examiner’s Office.

The following exhibits were offered by the department and entered into the record:

Exhibit no. D1	King County For-Hire Licensing staff report
Exhibit no. D2	Citation, issued October 6, 2025
Exhibit no. D3	Notice of Complaint
Exhibit no. D4	Notice of Complaint Served via Email
Exhibit no. D5	Complaint
Exhibit no. D6	Appeal, received October 8, 2025

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

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PETER WU
For-Hire Driver Enforcement Appeal

I, Lauren Olson, certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that I transmitted the **REPORT AND DECISION** to those listed on the attached page as follows:

- EMAILED to all County staff listed as parties/interested persons and parties with e-mail addresses on record.
- placed with the United States Postal Service, through Quadient-Impress, with sufficient postage, as FIRST CLASS MAIL in an envelope addressed to the non-County employee parties/interested persons to addresses on record.

DATED December 19, 2025.



Lauren Olson
Legislative Secretary

Bailey, Kendall

Finance and Admin Svcs, Consumer Protection Div

Cantu, Eddie

King County For-Hire Licensing

City of Seattle Hearing Examiner

Megow, John

Finance and Admin Svcs, Consumer Protection Div

Newhouse, Cregan

Finance and Admin Svcs, Consumer Protection Div

Stenson, Elizabeth

King County For-Hire Licensing

Taylor, Tyson

King County For-Hire Licensing

Wu, Peter

Hardcopy