

June 10, 2025

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

SUBJECT: King County For-Hire Licensing file no. **83649**

**GIRMA HAILE**

For-Hire Driver Enforcement Appeal

For Hire no.: 83649

Appellant: **Girma Haile**

[REDACTED]  
Seattle, WA 98125

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

King County: King County For-Hire Licensing  
*represented by* **Tyson Taylor**  
King County For-Hire Licensing  
201 S. Jackson Street Suite 206  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Telephone: (206) 263-1373  
Email: [ttaylor@kingcounty.gov](mailto:ttaylor@kingcounty.gov)

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Overview

1. This is a sad case. In November, 2021, Girma Haile (Appellant) was arrested for driving under the influence. He subsequently pled guilty to driving under the influence and reckless driving. King County For-Hire Licensing (Licensing) later denied his for-hire driver's license. Because Mr. Haile's conviction was for crime in the category where license denial is mandatory, the Examiner must **DENY** his appeal.
2. Mr. Haile asked why he was afforded the opportunity to appeal if the Examiner has no discretion to consider his personal circumstances. He raises a very good question. To

avoid what amounts to a fairly pointless appeal and hearing, Licensing may wish to provide some guidance to for-hire applicants subject to the mandatory denial standards or propose a code amendment.

### Background

3. On March 28, 2025, King County For-Hire Licensing (Licensing) received an application for a for-hire driver's license from Girma Haile. Ex. D1-001; testimony of Inspector Taylor.
4. Licensing's investigation into Mr. Haile's criminal and driving records revealed an arrest for Driving While Under the Influence (DUI) during the overnight hours of November 28-29, 2021. Results of a blood draw taken from Mr. Haile's arm subsequent to the arrest revealed a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.21, almost three times the legal limit. Ex. D1-001; Taylor testimony.
5. On November 6, 2023, Mr. Haile was charged with DUI in Seattle Municipal Court, case #676057. On December 9, 2024, he pled guilty to the amended charge of Reckless Driving in that same case. In his statement of facts, Mr. Haile stated "On 11/28/2021 in the City of Seattle King County Washington, I did drive my car in a reckless manner by striking a unoccupied vehicle after consuming alcohol. My actions demonstrated willful and wanton disregard for the safety of others property". Exs. Ex. D1-001, D2-005, D3, D4-006; Taylor testimony.
6. On April 2, 2025, Licensing issued Mr. Haile a Notice of License Action – Denial. Exs. Ex. D1-001, D6; Taylor testimony.
7. Mr. Haile filed a timely appeal April 9, 2025, explaining that he had completed an 8-hour Alcohol Drug Information School, had learned his lesson, and no longer drinks. He testified that without his for-hire job his family may become homeless and be split up. Exs. D1-001, D7; testimony of Girma Haile.
8. At the hearing, Appellant requested an interpreter. The Examiner's office provided an interpreter approximately 10 minutes after the request.

### Analysis

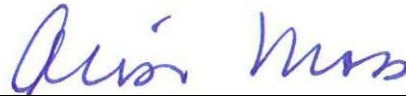
9. For those matters or issues raised in an appeal statement, Licensing bears "the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence both the violation and the appropriateness of the remedy it has imposed." KCC 20.22.210. Unless directed to by law—and no special directive applies here—the Examiner does not grant substantial weight or otherwise accord deference to agency determinations. Hearing Examiner Rules of Procedure and Mediation, Rule. XV.F.3.
10. Mr. Haile successfully completed Alcohol Drug Information School and discharged the obligations stemming from his conviction. Ex. D7; Haile testimony.

11. KCC 6.65.430 F.1 provides that the director **shall** deny any application where the applicant has been, within the last 5 years, convicted of reckless driving (KCC 6.65.090.H.1.b) and/or any alcohol- or drug-related driving crime (KCC 6.65.090.H.1.d). Mr. Haile was convicted of both. Ex. D4; Taylor testimony.
12. Mr. Haile struck the Examiner as a responsible, hard-working man unlikely to repeat his past mistake. That would be relevant if the Examiner were considering a Licensing appeal under one of the discretionary denial bases (“may deny”). In such scenarios, the Examiner balances various facts before arriving at a decision. However, our code (along with Seattle’s) is clear that for certain convictions denial is mandatory (“shall deny”) for a set number of years.
13. While Mr. Haile’s actions since his DUI arrest are commendable, because his conviction was for crime in the category where license denial is mandatory, the Examiner must deny the appeal.
14. Licensing has borne its burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence both the violation and the appropriateness of the remedy imposed.

DECISION:

1. The appeal is **DENIED**.

ORDERED June 10, 2025.



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Alison Moss  
Hearing Examiner pro tem

**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 by *July 10, 2025*. Either party may appeal this decision by applying for a writ of review in superior court in accordance with chapter 7.16 RCW.

**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2025, HEARING IN THE APPEAL OF GIRMA  
HAILE, KING COUNTY FOR-HIRE LICENSING FILE NO. 83649**

Alison Moss was the Hearing Examiner in this matter. Participating in the hearing were Tyson Taylor and Girma Haile. A verbatim recording of the hearing is available in the Hearing Examiner’s Office.

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

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Exhibit no. 1 | King County For-Hire Licensing staff report                                     |
| Exhibit no. 2 | Seattle Police Report – Case #676057  |
| Exhibit no. 3 | Complaint – Seattle Municipal Court Case #676057                                |
| Exhibit no. 4 | Statement of Defendant on Plea of Guilty – Seattle Municipal Court Case #676057 |
| Exhibit no. 5 | DUI Related Judgment and Sentence – Seattle Municipal Court Case #676057        |
| Exhibit no. 6 | Notice of License Action – Denial   |
| Exhibit no. 7 | Mr. Haile’s Statement of Appeal   |

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

SUBJECT: King County For-Hire Licensing file no. **83649**

**GIRMA HAILE**

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 June 10, 2025.



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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**

**Haile, Girma Mr.**

Hardcopy

**Megow, John**

Finance and Admin Svcs, Consumer Protection Div

**Newhouse, Cregan**

Finance and Admin Svcs, Consumer Protection Div

**Taylor, Tyson**

King County For-Hire Licensing