

# DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING UPDATE

## Licensing Requirements for Wine Tour Transportation Providers

Each year, thousands of residents and visitors enjoy Washington wines by visiting wineries on paid wine tours. Wine making and the popularity of paid tours to Washington wineries means safe transportation services are critical. To promote passenger safety, protect property, and ensure consistent service the state regulates and licenses paid tour operators and their vehicles. Please use this information to apply for the correct license to transport passengers in Washington State for winery tours.

### What license(s) do I need?

The kind of license you need depends primarily on the transportation services you provide, the vehicle you use and its markings, and how many passengers it carries. If you have vehicles of more than one type, you may need to license each vehicle type you offer.

### For Hire Licensing (including taxis)

If you offer paid wine tours in a taxi or other vehicle not licensed as a limousine or a charter party, shuttle or excursion carrier, you are operating a For Hire service. You need a For Hire license and a certificate for each vehicle.

For Hire trips may be locally regulated, do not require prearrangement, may use fare meters, do not drive fixed routes or rely on fixed starting and ending points. Check with your local city to see if you need to get a local license or information about local regulations.

Licensed For Hire vehicles may be marked and you may advertise For Hire winery tours. However, as a For Hire operator you cannot advertise the use of limousines for winery tours unless you are also licensed as a Limousine Carrier.

### Limousine Licensing

If you offer paid wine tours in a chauffeur-driven, unmetered and unmarked limousine, you need a Limousine Carrier license and vehicle certificate.

Unmarked stretch limousines and sport utility vehicles, classic cars, many models of large luxury sedans, sport utility vehicles, and vans can all be licensed as a limousine. The Department of Licensing and Department of Revenue websites describe the specific limousine types.

Limousine trips must be chauffeur-driven and prearranged, which includes telling the customer the fare before the trip begins. The chauffeur must be trained, qualified and on record with the Department of Licensing for the limousine carrier.

As a licensed limousine carrier you may advertise limousine winery tour services but you cannot advertise on the vehicle, or for hire services. All advertising must list your UBI number.

### Charter Party and Excursion Service Carrier Licensing

If you offer wine tours in a vehicle carrying seven or more passengers and are not licensed as a for hire or a limousine, you may need a Charter Party or Excursion Service Carrier certificate from the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC). These vehicles can include vans, shuttles, party buses, and buses.

## How do I get licensed?

### Limousines and For Hire Vehicles (including taxis)

You will need to apply for:

- a business license (if you don't already have one),
- the appropriate For Hire operator or limousine carrier license, and
- a certificate for each vehicle you operate.

Contact:

**Business Licensing Service** Department of Revenue.

Phone: 1-800-451-7985

Email: [BLS@dor.wa.gov](mailto:BLS@dor.wa.gov)

Website: [www.bls.dor.wa.gov](http://www.bls.dor.wa.gov)

You will apply for Limousine and For Hire licenses and certificates through the Department of Revenue, but the Department of Licensing regulates the industry and approves the licenses. You can find specific licensing requirements on the Business Licensing Service website.

### Charter Party and Excursion Service Carriers

In addition to applying for a business license (if you don't already have one), you will need to apply for:

- a charter or excursion certificate, and
- a USDOT number.

Contact:

**Utilities and Transportation Commission**

Phone: 360-664-1222 Website: [www.utc.wa.gov](http://www.utc.wa.gov)

### Where do I find DOL and UTC regulations?

Department of Licensing [www.dol.wa.gov/business](http://www.dol.wa.gov/business)

Department of Revenue [www.bls.dor.wa.gov](http://www.bls.dor.wa.gov)

Utilities and Transportation Commission [www.utc.wa.gov](http://www.utc.wa.gov)

### Are there consequences for not having the proper license(s)?

If you provide limousine, for hire, or charter and excursion services without a license, you could be fined up to \$1,000 for each violation (or each day of illegal operation).