

NEW YORK POST

'PEDI'-CURE PLAN

By ZOEY RUSSO and JENNIFER FERMINO

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Less than a week after a pedicab crash on the Williamsburg Bridge seriously injured two people, City Hall yesterday announced new regulations requiring the three-wheeled vehicles to be licensed, have insurance and provide seatbelts for passengers.

The new rules also resurrect a ban prohibiting pedicabs from using bridges, tunnels or bike lanes, and require them to be equipped with waterproof brakes and lights.

"We've been asking for it for years," said pedicab driver John Allen, 55.

He believes stricter rules will force unsafe drivers off the road and create more business for law-abiding pedal-pushers.

"We're incredibly enthusiastic about it," said Chad Marlow, lawyer for the NYC Pedicab Owners' Association.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn announced she'll quickly introduce the new legislation, and Mayor Bloomberg has pledged to sign it into law.

It's a marked change from 2007, when the mayor and the council squabbled over how many licenses to dole out to the growing industry.

Once the bill is passed, pedicab drivers will have two months to apply for licenses and pass a safety test. After that, the licensing process will be closed for 18 months.

Previously, the council voted to issue only 325 licenses. Bloomberg sided with the pedicab owners, who argued that it was an arbitrary number that would put people out of work.

When the council overrode Bloomberg's veto and enacted the regulations -- including the 325-license cap -- the pedicab owners sued the city.

The owners won their fight to have the caps removed in April, but during the prolonged legal battle, the other pedicab regulations were left in limbo.

A police source said that cops were told to "leave the pedicabs alone" while the litigation was hashed out in the courts.

"Not nearly as many summonses were given out as should have been," said the source.

Last Wednesday, a pedicab carrying three passengers crashed in Brooklyn right after it came off the Williamsburg Bridge.

Additional reporting by Larry Celona

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