

Waterloo Region Taxi Association calls for mandatory cameras

Calls come a week after sixth sexual assault charge in two years

By Nick Boisvert, [CBC News](#) Posted: Sep 04, 2014 5:34 PM ET Last Updated: Sep 04, 2014 5:36 PM ET



Waterloo Region Taxi Association President Peter Neufeld will meet with officials to discuss a mandatory camera bylaw. (Nick Boisvert/CBC News)

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The president of the Waterloo Region Taxi Association wants to see mandatory cameras in taxis across the region.

"I'm a firm believer in this, and I'm a proponent of getting them in every taxi," said Peter Neufeld, also the president of Waterloo Taxi. "This has been number one on our agenda for quite some time."

The association represents drivers and owners in Waterloo Region.

Neufeld made the call this week after police announced the [sixth sexual assault charge](#) against a cab driver since 2013.

"Knowing that cabs are equipped with cameras might actually be something that increases people's feelings of safety," said Sara Casselman of the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region.

Neufeld added that mandatory cameras will be useful as a crime deterrent, and could help police investigating allegations of sexual assault.

“Cameras will mitigate a lot of these issues,” he said. “Instead of this ‘he said, she said’ scenario, it’ll be in full colour to see for anyone investigating the situation.”

Other taxi companies are also joining in the calls for mandatory cameras.

“We feel that it should be mandatory.” said Barb Montgomery of City Cabs. “I honestly don’t know why we haven’t done it sooner.”

City Cabs estimates that 95 percent of its cabs already have cameras installed.

And though each of the region’s major carriers uses cameras, none have their entire fleet equipped.

Montgomery added that it’s not just passengers that will benefit from cameras, but drivers as well.

“You hear the stories of drivers getting hurt, drivers getting assaulted,” she said. “This way there’s surveillance to help.”

Toronto introduced mandatory taxi cameras in 2005. Crimes against taxi drivers dropped by 75 percent after the bylaw went into effect.

Waterloo Region officials say a new taxi bylaw will first have to be approved by the council’s licensing and retail mommittee.

If it passes there, it could go onto a vote at council.

“If the committee said it could be done, and it could be done appropriately, I’d support it,” said Councillor Tom Galloway.

The taxi association is scheduled to meet with regional officials on September 9. Taxi representatives say they’ll push for a quick process.

“We want to have it mandatory by January 1,” said Mircha Sima, president of United Taxi, another company that would like to see change.

With files from Jane van Koeverden