



All Waterloo Region taxi companies planning in-vehicle cameras

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Every cab company in Waterloo Region is moving toward installing cameras in its vehicles, says the head of the region's taxi licensing body.

"They are ... all doing it," said Angelo Apfelbaum, Waterloo Region's manager of licensing and enforcement.

Apfelbaum called the push for cameras a "wise" move from the industry, which decided to mandate the cameras on its own without waiting for orders from the region.

PHOTOS



Surveillance cameras are installed in a Waterloo Taxi vehicle on Monday, Jan. 26, 2015. (David Imrie / CTV Kitchener)

One of the region's largest cab companies began installing cameras in its 91-vehicle fleet Monday.

All Waterloo Taxi vehicles will be equipped with two cameras – one showing the interior of the cab, and one facing forward.

Peter Neufeld, the president of Waterloo Taxi, said the forward-facing cameras will be used to help determine the causes of crashes.

"Basically, it will give you an answer as to who did what," he said.

The in-cab cameras, Neufeld said, will help deal with situations like the sexual assault allegations made against a number of licensed taxi drivers in recent years.

“I think this will put an end to it, because we’ll have footage and audio,” he said.

“I think this is a very good thing to happen to the industry as a whole.”

Joshkun Izzettin, a driver for Waterloo Taxi for the past six years, agrees – saying both drivers and passengers may rethink their behaviour with the metaphorical tape rolling.

“We want to make sure the driver knows there’s a camera recording the way they treat the customer,” he said.

The recorded video files are of a high quality and will be encrypted, Neufeld said.

“Nobody will be able to download any funny videos from the cab and put them on Youtube,” he said.