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**TECHNICAL REPORT**

**FARE GAME, FARE COP**  
**Victimization of, and Policing by, Taxi Drivers**  
**in Three Canadian Cities**

**Report of a Preliminary Study**

**Dr. Philip C. Stenning**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto**

**1996**


**TR1996-18e**

**Canada** 

**Research, Statistics and Evaluation Directorate/  
Direction générale de la recherche,  
de la statistique et de l'évaluation**

**Policy Sector/  
Secteur des politiques**

**UNEDITED**

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*The present study was funded by the Research and Statistics Section,  
Department of Justice Canada. The views expressed herein are  
solely those of the author and do not necessarily  
represent the views of the Department of Justice Canada.*

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## PREFACE

This is the first study of its kind in Canada. The purpose of undertaking it was to obtain some preliminary information, through systematic research, into phenomena which are of considerable importance to the 32,000 or so men and women who make their living driving taxis in this country - namely, the extent to which taxi drivers experience criminal victimizations, the nature of such victimizations, the measures which are and could be taken to protect them against such victimizations, the extent to which taxi drivers witness crimes and emergency situations not directly involving them, the extent to which they engage in activities which may contribute to crime prevention, order maintenance, law enforcement or public safety, and their relations with the companies with which they work and with the police in their communities with respect to such matters.

Because the study is only a preliminary exploration of these matters, no attempt has been made, in this initial report, to develop policy recommendations from its findings. Rather, the intention is to disseminate these findings widely within the taxi industry and among other interested parties, so as to initiate some substantial consultations with respect to interpretation of the findings and their implications for policy and practice. A secondary, but also important objective, is to initiate discussions about what kinds of further research might be helpful in leading to better understanding of the problems, and possible policy responses to them, raised by the findings of this initial study.

Even a preliminary study such as this cannot be undertaken without an enormous amount of good will and co-operation from a lot of people. In undertaking this study, I have been very fortunate in this respect. As a result, I am indebted to a large number of people whose co-operation was critical to its eventual completion.

In the first place, I wish to express my great appreciation to the Department of Justice of Canada, and in particular to Dr. Scott Clark and Ms. Tracy Perry of its Research and Statistics Section, for the financial support which was provided for the study, and for the unfailing encouragement and patience which was shown to me throughout the execution of the study and the preparation of this report. Such support was generous to a fault, and much appreciated.

Secondly, I want to thank the Centre of Criminology, its Director, Professor Clifford Shearing, his Assistant, Ms. Rita Donelan, and its Financial Administrator, Ms. Gloria Cernivivo, for equal support, encouragement and patience, as well as providing the best environment and resources imaginable for undertaking such work.

Thirdly, much gratitude is owed to a team of research assistants and advisors who worked diligently and cheerfully under what were sometimes quite difficult conditions. Specific mention in this regard is owed to: Ms. Susan Chambers and Ms. Angela McEachern who interviewed taxi drivers in the Greater Vancouver area; Ms. Patrice McGrath who

provided invaluable advice during the early stages of the research, and who assisted in organizing the interviews, and conducted some of them, in the Vancouver area; Mr. Tim Robinson and Mr. Scott Tempest who conducted the interviews in Winnipeg; Ms. Shirley Comeau, Ms. Noreen Miller and Mr. Robert Roe, who conducted the interviews in Halifax; Ms. Sharon Lantz, who provided a great deal of valuable advice, helped publicize the study within the taxi industry in Halifax (see Appendix "C" to this report), helped organize the field work in the Halifax area, and provided helpful comments on early drafts of parts of the report; Mr. Phil Mun, Ms. Lindsay Hill and Mr. Tom Findlay, who provided assistance with literature searches to support the research and, in Ms. Hill's case, assisted in the drafting and pre-testing of the principal research instrument; Ms. Marnie Crouch who assumed principal responsibility for data processing, and Ms. Iris Tetford who provided much-needed and much-appreciated advice and assistance to her and to me on data processing matters; Professor Tony Doob who, once again, was a constant and always willingly available source of needed advice about data processing and analysis; Mr. Benedikt Fischer, who read for me, and provided a synopsis in English of Brandau's (1986) German study of taxi driver victimizations; and Ms. Fiorella Tozzo who provided secretarial assistance during the later stages of the project.

Also to be thanked are: Professors Neil Boyd and Margaret Jackson of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University; Professor Rick Linden at the Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba; Professor Christopher Murphy of the Atlantic Institute of Criminology at Dalhousie University; and Professor David Perrier of the Department of Sociology at St. Mary's University in Halifax. Each of these individuals provided invaluable assistance in the recruitment of interviewers for the study and in facilitating local arrangements for its successful execution and communications between me and the interviewers.

During the latter stages of the research, I was on sabbatical at the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University in Canberra. I wish to thank Professor (now Mr. Justice) Paul Finn, Head of the Law Program there, and his colleagues Professor John Braithwaite, Ms. Mary Hapel and Mrs. Anne Robinson, for all their help in providing me with a congenial and stimulating environment in which to write a major part of this report. Mr. John Myrtle and his staff at the library of the Australian Institute of Criminology also provided much appreciated bibliographical assistance. While in Australia, I also received very helpful advice and co-operation from: Ms. Fiona Haines, of the Department of Criminology, University of Melbourne; Mr. David Indermaur, of the Crime Research Centre at the University of Western Australia; Mr. Len Hitchen, Chairman of the Western Australian Taxi Industry Board, and his fellow Board members and staff; Mr. Neil Sach, Chief Executive of the Victorian Taxi Association Inc. in Melbourne; and Mr. Terry O'Keefe, Director of the Victorian Taxi Directorate, and his staff.

Special thanks are also due to Mr. Terry Smythe, former Chief Administrator of the Manitoba Taxicab Board, who was instrumental in originally emphasizing the potential importance of this research and encouraging me to undertake it, and who has remained a constant source of information, advice and encouragement since. I have also received very helpful information via e-mail from Ms. Lee Bellamy, of Boise, Idaho, although I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting her in person. Helpful advice and information have also been

received from: M. Richard Boyer, Directeur, Bureau du taxi, Communaute Urbaine de Montreal; Dr. Dan Hara and Dr. Gary MacDonald of Hara Associates in Ottawa; Mr. John Duffy, editor of *Taxi News* in Toronto; Ms. Carol Ruddell-Foster, General Manager of the Metropolitan Toronto Licensing Commission; Ms. Mary Susan Cardill, of the Ontario Taxi Union; Mr. Charles Rathbone, of San Francisco, California; Mr. James Szekeley, Director of the International Taxi Drivers' Safety Council; Mr. Orest Fedorowycz, Senior Analyst at the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics in Ottawa; Professor Tina Loo of the Department of History at Simon Fraser University; and Ms. Julie Holston, of West Boylston, Massachusetts. To all of these people, I wish to express my thanks for their assistance.

Throughout this research I have received a great deal of valuable advice, critique, comments, suggestions and encouragement from Dr. Carol LaPrairie, of the Department of Justice of Canada, for which I am especially grateful.

Finally, but by no means least of course, I wish to express my most sincere thanks to all of my "key informants" (whose names are listed in Appendix "D" to this report) who gave so generously of their time and expertise, and to the 150 anonymous taxi drivers in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Halifax who shared their time and experience, thereby making the whole research endeavour both possible and valuable. The fact that all of these participants contributed to the research without compensation of any sort merely adds to my indebtedness and gratitude to them. I hope that some of them, and their fellow workers in the taxi industry in Canada, may one day derive some benefit from this research.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is a report of the principal findings of a study which was conceived as a preliminary exploration of some key issues concerning criminal victimization of taxi drivers, measures which are or may be taken to protect them, and the role they do or could play in policing, crime prevention, law enforcement and public safety, within the context of a number of Canadian urban centres.

The study was conducted in three Canadian metropolitan areas - the Greater Vancouver Region in British Columbia, the Greater Winnipeg area in Manitoba, and the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area in Nova Scotia (most of the interviewing in this area, however, was conducted in the city of Halifax).

Fifty active taxi drivers, along with a number of other "key informants", were interviewed at length in each of the three cities. In addition, relevant local documentation, as well as the modest international literature in this area, were reviewed.

The study was funded jointly by the Department of Justice of Canada and the University of Toronto.

The study focused on four main areas of inquiry: (A) criminal and other victimizations of taxi drivers; (B) measures which taxi drivers take, and measures which they think may be useful, to protect themselves against such victimizations; (C) the extent to which taxi drivers witness criminal and emergency incidents, and can and do participate in activities which contribute to crime prevention, law enforcement and/or public safety; and (D) relations between taxi drivers and the police.

The principal findings of the study with respect to these four areas of inquiry may be summarized as follows:

### Victimization of taxi drivers

- Taxi drivers are a highly victimized occupational group in Canada. Overall, their victimization while at work may be as high as twenty times that of Canadians generally.
- "Fare-jumping", vandalism and minor assaults are the forms of victimization most commonly experienced.
- Almost all taxi drivers experience "fare-jumping". Sixty-one percent of respondents reported having experienced such victimization more than twice during the twelve month period preceding interviews with them.
- Eighty-five percent of respondents reported having experienced some form of criminal victimization other than "fare-jumping" at least once during their taxi-driving careers, and 60 percent reported having experienced such victimization at least once during the twelve

months preceding the interview.

- Just over one-third (36 percent) of respondents reported having been robbed at least once during their taxi-driving careers, and one-third of these reported that this had happened to them during the preceding twelve months.
- Most victimizations which taxi drivers experience are relatively minor in nature, in the sense that they involve little or no personal injury to the driver or anyone else, and relatively minor (less than \$40) economic loss. A small proportion of victimizations, however, result in personal injury and/or substantial economic loss.
- According to respondents' accounts, perpetrators of these victimizations are injured as often, and often more seriously, than are the driver victims.
- A significant proportion (15 percent) of respondents reported having had a weapon used against them in the course of a victimization during the preceding twelve months. Weapons were involved in about ten percent of the victimizations described in detail by respondents. Knives were the weapons most commonly reported. Much less commonly reported were bottles, rocks and guns.
- Notwithstanding the relatively minor nature of most victimizations of taxi drivers, as a group they face a disturbingly high rate of occupational homicide, according to official homicide data released by Statistics Canada for the early years of this decade. This rate may be as much as four or five times as high as that faced by police officers while on duty; precise calculations have not been made, however, due to inadequate information about the numbers of active taxi drivers at risk.
- While drivers with longer driving experience were more likely to report ever having been victimized during their driving careers, they were not significantly more or less likely to report victimizations during the twelve months preceding the interviews than were less experienced drivers.
- Those respondents who indicated that they had received formal training in driver safety/risk awareness did not report having been victimized during the twelve months preceding the interviews less frequently than drivers who indicated that they had not received such training.
- No significant correlations were found between reported experiences of victimization and whether respondents identified themselves as "white" or as "non-white", whether they indicated they had been born in Canada or not, or whether they indicated that English was or was not their first language.
- Most victimizations of taxi drivers are not reported to the authorities, and do not result in any criminal proceedings or compensation for the driver victims. The reasons for not reporting are primarily that: (i) victimizations are not considered by the victims to be serious enough to warrant being reported; (ii) in many cases drivers do not believe that

police, if called, would be able to do anything very useful in response; and (iii) drivers are concerned that the length of time involved in co-operating with a police response will cause them further loss of business without commensurate benefits.

- As a result, police statistics on victimizations of taxi drivers - to the extent that they are available at all, which is not the case in many jurisdictions - do not currently constitute a reliable measure of the extent of these phenomena, or an adequate basis for devising effective policy responses to them.

### Measures to Protect Taxi Drivers Against Victimization and Their Consequences

- Most respondents had driven taxis during the preceding year which were equipped with one or more devices designed to protect them against victimizations and/or make it easier for assistance to reach them in the event that such victimizations occurred. Most commonly reported were: two-way radios; in-cab control of trunk locks; driver control of locks on cab doors; “panic buttons” to connect driver to the dispatcher; computerized dispatch/communications system terminal; access to customer or address “blacklists”; and possession of a weapon (mostly tire irons) in the cab.
- In-cab safety shields, screens or cages, training and education, emergency flashing rooflights, increased police co-operation, and screening passengers before accepting them, were the measures most commonly cited by our respondents as being potentially helpful to protect them against victimizations and their effects.
- A substantial majority of respondents identified protective measures which they thought might be helpful or very helpful to protect taxi drivers against victimizations or their consequences, but which are not used because of what they thought were understandable reasons. Most commonly cited in this regard were: safety shields/screens, Mace or pepper spray, flashing dome lights and vehicle location systems. Excessive costs, legal restrictions, inconvenience for passengers and/or drivers, apathy and inability to achieve universal application were the most commonly cited reasons for such non-use.
- Most respondents indicated that they routinely carry \$100 or less in cash while driving their cabs. The data suggest that most respondents do not make more than one cash drop-off per shift, and that many do not make any. Only two of the 150 respondents reported having driven a cab equipped with a lockable money safe during the year preceding the interviews.
- Although almost all respondents indicated that they were able to accept taxi chits or credit cards in payment of fares, their responses indicated that the overwhelming majority of their fares are paid in cash.
- More than one-half (55 percent) of respondents indicated that they did not think that the companies with which they worked took seriously enough the risks of criminal victimization which they face as taxi drivers. A wide range of suggestions were made as to what

companies ought to be doing in this regard which they are not currently doing.

- Data from “key informants”, as well as from the driver interviews, make it clear that the structure of the taxi industry (especially the predominance of owner-operators and “independent contractors”, and what is perceived to be an over-supply of taxis and drivers in some markets), tight economic conditions, and doubts about the effectiveness and/or suitability of many suggested protective devices, combine to constitute the main obstacles to greater use of protective technologies within the taxi industry.
- Systematic evaluative research on the effectiveness of protective technologies for taxi drivers is largely inconclusive or non-existent. Such research as does exist refers largely to urban environments in the United States and is doubtfully applicable in the Canadian context.
- Only just over one-third (37 percent) of respondents recalled having received any formal training concerning taxi driver safety and/or risk awareness, and nearly one-half (44 percent) of these said that they did not think it had been adequate. The most common complaints in this regard were that trainers themselves did not have enough experience of victimizations, and that training was too abstract, not focussing enough on specific types of situations and how to handle them. Many respondents expressed variants of the view that these are not matters which can be adequately learned in a classroom.
- Formal training of taxi drivers on matters of driver safety and risk awareness tend to emphasize individualistic behavioural characteristics of taxi drivers as both the generating source of, and the key to effective prevention of and response to, victimizations. Broader structural explanations for such victimizations, as well as the potential of technology and design and structural changes within the taxi industry as a whole as means of responding to such problems, often tend to be downplayed in such presentations. What little systematic research has so far been published on the victimization of taxi drivers (Brandau, 1986; Holston, 1994; and Stone *et al.*, 1995) does not provide strong support for such an approach.

## Crime Prevention, Law Enforcement and Public Safety Contributions of Taxi Drivers

- Most respondents indicated that they had witnessed various kinds of offences and public safety hazards both inside and outside their cabs while working. The most commonly mentioned incidents in this regard were drug offences, liquor offences, traffic offences, assaults, impaired driving and prostitution-related offences.
- While most respondents reported witnessing such events rarely, a significant minority of drivers reported witnessing them frequently.
- Most respondents who reported having witnessed such events indicated that they rarely or never reported them to the police. The main reasons given for such non-reporting were: that the problem was not serious enough to be reported, or had already been resolved; that reporting would take up too much of the driver's time, thereby costing him or her money; that the driver did not feel it was his or her business or did not want to get involved; that the matter had already been reported, or should have been reported, by someone else; and that the police would not do anything about it, or would be too slow to respond.
- Almost one-half (47 percent) of respondents recalled having been asked for assistance by police officers while at work during the twelve months preceding interviews with them. While most reported that this was not a common occurrence, a significant minority (13 percent) reported that this had occurred once or twice a month or more frequently. Almost all of the requests described concerned efforts to locate missing persons or suspects, or stolen vehicles.
- Almost one-third (30 percent) of the respondents reported that they had reported bad or dangerous driving by other drivers to the police within the preceding twelve months.
- Two-thirds of respondents identified other things which taxi drivers do which, in their view, contribute to crime prevention, law enforcement or public safety. Most of these involved reporting various things to the authorities, or deterring various anti-social acts by their visible presence on the streets.
- More than one-half (54 percent) of respondents thought that with appropriate encouragement and support, taxi drivers could and would do more to contribute to crime prevention, law enforcement or public safety in their communities. On the other hand, the same proportion thought that there were reasons why taxi drivers should not be involved in such activities.
- Formal programs to involve taxi drivers in crime prevention, law enforcement or public safety (such as "Taxis on Patrol") had not been successfully established and maintained in any of the three cities in which the study was undertaken, and in two of them attempts to do so had met with some quite vocal opposition from some taxi drivers. Experience with such programs in Canadian cities has not been very encouraging; driver participation in them has tended to be very low, and in many cases such programs have simply "fizzled out" after a short time. Poor economic conditions, inadequate relations between taxi drivers and the police, misunderstandings and suspicions about the purposes and sponsorship of such

programs, and fears that participation in them will be “bad for business” because drivers will be perceived as informants for the police, have all been cited as possible explanations for program failures. Only seven percent of the drivers interviewed reported having driven a cab displaying a sticker indicating participation in such a program during the preceding twelve months.

- Only one-half (51 percent) of respondents thought that the companies they work with would be willing to support or encourage greater driver participation in crime prevention, order maintenance or law enforcement-related activities. Costs, lack of interest and lack of influence over owner-drivers under the current industry structure were primarily cited as explanations for companies’ reluctance to support such activities. By contrast, two-thirds of respondents thought that the police would be supportive of greater driver participation in such matters.

### Relations Between Taxi Drivers and the Police

The study did not explore this matter in great depth. In addition to those findings related to it which have already been mentioned, the following findings are worthy of note:

- A majority of respondents rated relations between taxi drivers generally and the police in their communities as mediocre, bad or very bad. Only 28 percent rated them as good or very good.
- A majority of respondents (55 percent), however, rated their own personal relationships with the police in their communities as good or very good. Only 18 percent rated them as bad or very bad.

This has been a preliminary study of matters which have hitherto been the subject of little or no systematic empirical research in Canada. Results must therefore be treated with caution, recognizing the limitations of the study. Most important of these were that: (1) only three cities were involved; (2) neither of the two largest metropolitan areas in Canada was included; (3) “non-White” drivers, born outside Canada, whose first language was not English were almost certainly under-represented in the study sample (and especially in the Halifax sample); (4) data collected include only limited information about the specific details of incidents reported by respondents; and (5) such details as were captured refer only to incidents occurring within the twelve-month period preceding the interviews. Some implications of these limitations for possible future research in this area are discussed in the report.

Despite these limitations, the data obtained through the study provide some important new information concerning the matters studied, as well as providing some more systematic empirical evidence about matters which have hitherto only been the subject of anecdotal and more impressionistic knowledge within the taxi industry. As such, it will provide an important

benchmark of information against which future studies in this area in Canada can be undertaken.

What, in general terms, the findings of this study point to is that taxi driver safety is a serious and important problem which can only be properly understood and responded to within the wider context of community safety more generally. The idea - which implicitly or explicitly suffuses so much of the current training materials on this issue - that the key to addressing this problem lies in self-improvement and self-regulation of his or her conduct by the taxi driver him- or herself, may be quite misleading and is certainly questionable. For while there are probably things that taxi drivers can do to reduce their risks of being victimized, the truth unfortunately seems to be that society still does not know much about what is both effective and realistic in this regard, and it seems likely that much victimization of taxi drivers lies outside the capacity of taxi drivers themselves, or of the taxi industry as it is currently structured, to effectively control or prevent. Ways undoubtedly need to be found to encourage the taxi industry as a whole to take greater collective responsibility for addressing this problem, and for developing the kinds of partnerships with other community participants (including, but certainly not limited to, the police) which will be essential to addressing it successfully. In doing so, the industry may well find that its own role in contributing to the safety and security of others in the community can also be significantly enhanced.

This, of course, is not a novel proposition, or one which is in any sense peculiar to the taxi industry (although this industry does seem to face a particular challenge in finding a collective voice about almost anything which affects it). Rather, the notion that safety and security can most effectively be achieved through collective community action and partnerships is one which has gradually been becoming the accepted wisdom during the last decades of this century, in North America and elsewhere.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Importance of the Taxi Industry**

The taxi industry has been described as a vital element in the urban infrastructure, for a variety of reasons (Papillon, 1982; Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1990a: Ch.5; Hinder, 1994; European Conference of Ministers of Transport, 1981). In the first place, taxis are typically the only form of urban public transport which is accessible 24 hours a day, every day of the year; as such they provide a service to the public which is not otherwise available. Secondly, because they can be called (or hailed from a curbside) when required by the customer, they are able to provide a customized service usually not provided by other forms of public transport. The service they provide is customized in another sense, namely that the customer is able to choose both the precise point of departure and the point of destination of the journey; again, this is a service which is not able to be provided by most other forms of public transport. In many instances, of course, neither point is actually directly serviced by other public transport facilities. Thirdly, taxis are able to provide services to elderly and handicapped customers who often cannot (or cannot easily) use other forms of public transport (European Conference of Ministers of Transport, 1992). Fourthly, as has often been pointed out, taxis frequently provide the first and last public service used by visitors to a city and thus may have a strong formative influence over the impressions of a city which tourists and other visitors take away with them (Halifax Taxi Commission, 1993: 50-51). For this reason, taxi drivers are often thought of as significant "ambassadors" for the cities in which they work (*TaxiWest*, 1994a; Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, 1993: iv). And finally, it is often suggested that taxis, simply by being a readily accessible and roughly equivalent substitute for driving one's own car, contribute significantly to the reduction of problems which might otherwise arise from impaired driving and driver fatigue and inattention.

For all of these reasons, encouraging and maintaining a taxi industry which can provide an accessible, efficient, reasonably priced, pleasant and safe service to residents and visitors alike is seen - in their rhetoric at least - as a high priority by policy makers and planners in the areas of urban transportation and tourism. In the absence of such a service, it is argued, not only will the mobility required to sustain economic activity be adversely affected, but also individual freedom and public safety will be diminished. Economic advantages to be derived from tourism will also be reduced.

### **1.2 A "High-Risk" Occupation**

Meeting these laudable objectives, however, has proven to be an elusive achievement, in North America and elsewhere. For in addition to being a vital urban service, urban taxi driving has also been found to be a rather hazardous occupation. Apart from the obvious hazards faced by anyone whose work requires them to drive

around in urban traffic for long hours at a time, studies have suggested that taxi drivers face substantial risks of criminal victimization through assault, vandalism, robbery, theft, fraud and even abduction and homicide. In September 1993, for instance, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (an affiliate of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH]) in the United States published research findings indicating "taxicab establishments" as having the highest rates of occupational homicide (26.9 per 100,000 workers per year) of all workplaces in that country. "Taxicab establishments," according to the authors of this report, "had the highest rate of occupational homicide - nearly 40 times the national average and more than three times the rate of liquor stores, which had the next highest rate" (Centre for Disease Control, 1993: 3).

Other studies of workplaces in California (Kraus, 1987), Texas (Davis, 1987) and Maryland (Baker *et al.*, 1982) have similarly pointed to taxi drivers as facing unusually high risks of workplace homicide (Dietz & Baker, 1987). Not all such studies, however, have fully supported such claims (Hales *et al.*, 1988).

The validity of such claims depends to some extent on how "workplaces" and "occupations" are defined as well as on how denominators (the total number of workers at risk) are calculated. There are at least some grounds for suspicion, for instance, that sex trade workers - who are typically not included in such formal studies of occupational safety and health (Bell, 1991) - may face even higher risks of homicide than taxi drivers (Heyl, 1979). The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, in its recent review of homicide statistics for 1994, noted that: "Other victims of homicide in the course of their work included 16 known prostitutes (compared to nine in 1993 and eight in 1992) and four taxi drivers (compared to seven in 1993 and three in 1992)" (Fedorowycz, 1995: 16). One police officer was murdered on duty in Canada in 1994 (compared to two in 1993 and one in 1992) (*Ibid.*). When such matters as average numbers of hours worked per week - notoriously high for many taxi drivers - and the proportion of the workforce who are part-time rather than full-time, or who have more than one job, are factored into the calculation of exposure to risk, however, it may well transpire that the estimated risk of homicide faced by taxi drivers is on the conservative side.

Whatever may be the validity and appropriate interpretation of such occupational safety "league tables" in the United States, there appears to be almost universal consensus that taxi drivers, particularly in large urban areas, face substantial risks of criminal victimization, often of a serious nature, which involves threats to personal safety as well as security of property (Block *et al.*, 1985; Vidich, 1976). Research studies and inquiries of various sorts in many countries have contributed to this belief (Brandau, 1986; Barham & Oxley, 1990; Swanton & Scandia, 1990; Eastal & Wilson, 1991; Barham, 1991; Parliament of Victoria, 1993; Holston, 1994; Pais & Santino, 1994; Stone *et al.*, 1995).

In Canada, however, despite its proximity to the United States, there has been a

relative dearth of such studies and inquiries (Marshall, 1989; Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1992; Boyd, 1993) and, as will be noted in more detail later in this report, few reliable statistics on victimizations of taxi drivers exist. In Montreal, however, where the police have been monitoring reports to them of such victimizations, it has been claimed that the number of taxi drivers assaulted rose by 60 percent (from 117 to 187) between 1986 and 1990 (Trudel, 1991: 3). As will be noted further below, there is every reason to believe that victimizations reported to the police represent only a small proportion of all victimizations experienced by taxi drivers.

A report released by Charles Rathbone, from San Francisco, in 1994 lists taxi drivers murdered on duty in North America since 1980 (Rathbone, 1994). The report, which lists 606 drivers in all, includes the names of 25 drivers murdered in Canada during this period; 7 each in Edmonton and Toronto, 3 in Winnipeg, 2 in Montreal, and 1 each in Vancouver, Sidney (B.C.), Banff (Alberta), Creighton (Saskatchewan), Orleans (Ontario), and St-Emile (Quebec). Of these 25 drivers, 12 (48 percent) were shot to death, 9 (36 percent) died of stab wounds, 2 (8 percent) were beaten to death, and in the remaining two cases the cause of death was not reported. Almost all of these had been driving at night when killed.

The Rathbone report expressly disavows any claim to complete comprehensiveness with respect to deaths of Canadian taxi drivers (Rathbone, 1994: 4), and data recently supplied to the author by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) indicate clearly that Rathbone's figures seriously understate the magnitude of the problem. According to CCJS, 24 taxi drivers were murdered while on duty in Canada during the four-year period from 1991 to 1995 (Fedorowycz, 1995: 16; Fedorowycz, 1996: 10). Six of these homicides occurred in Montreal, 3 in Toronto, 3 in Edmonton, 2 each in Vancouver and Quebec City, and 1 each in the Ottawa-Hull metropolitan area, Halifax and Thunder Bay. The remaining five cases occurred in places outside the 25 major metropolitan areas in Canada. Half (12) of these twenty-four driver victims were stabbed to death (all with knives), 11 were shot to death (9 with handguns, 1 with a sawed-off long gun and 1 with a fully automatic weapon), and one was beaten to death.

During the same period (1991-1995 inclusive), 10 police officers were murdered on duty in Canada (8 were shot, 1 knifed and 1 apparently deliberately run over with a vehicle). We do not presently know how many active taxi drivers there were in Canada during this period, compared with the number of serving police officers (just under 56,000 in 1994 (Statistics Canada, 1996: 18 [Table 7]), so a precise comparison of rates of on-duty homicide between these two occupational groups is not possible. According to data from the most recent Canadian Census, however, there were just over 32,000 "taxi drivers and chauffeurs" in Canada in 1991 (Statistics Canada, 1993b: 24 [Occupational code 9173]).

A study of occupational homicides in Ontario between 1975 and 1985 placed taxi drivers and chauffeurs within the top three occupations (with gas station attendants

and police officers) at risk of workplace homicide (Liss & Craig, 1990). Since no chauffeurs were murdered during this period, however, the average annual on-duty homicide rate for taxi drivers was undoubtedly somewhat higher than the rate reported for "taxi drivers and chauffeurs" (5.3 per 100,000 workers).

If these estimates of the dangers of taxi driving are valid, of course, they have significant implications, not only for those who work in this industry but for the wider public which it seeks to serve. From the point of view of taxi drivers, there are obvious and understandable concerns to reduce, to the extent compatible with legitimate occupational and economic imperatives, exposure to unnecessary risks - concerns which are compounded, as will be discussed further below, by the very limited opportunities available to taxi drivers to obtain adequate redress and compensation after victimizations have occurred. There are also concerns that a negative safety image for the industry will be bad for business and will gradually erode public confidence in the service it seeks to provide, to the point that potential customers will be dissuaded from becoming actual customers. As will be explained below, most taxi drivers seem to feel that the economic downturn of recent years has already had a significantly negative impact on the taxi industry without the added worry that this will be compounded by consumer concerns about safety.

From the point of view of the consuming public, evidence that taxi driving is a "high risk" occupation can easily translate into a belief that taking a ride in a taxi as a passenger is a high risk activity, even though, as the evidence from this and other studies shows, the threat of criminal victimization which taxi drivers face comes mainly from passengers and potential passengers themselves and rarely involves danger to "innocent" passengers (Vidich, 1976: 135-6). Related to public concerns about the risks of taxi travel, of course, are fears that the taxi driver may be the perpetrator rather than the victim of crime. Remarkably, however, there seem to have been almost no studies of taxi users which seek to distinguish their beliefs about the safety of taxi travel in these terms. One of the reasons for this appears to be that systematic and reliable information about criminal victimization *by* taxi drivers seems to be about as unavailable in most jurisdictions as systematic and reliable information about criminal victimization *of* taxi drivers. Some of the reasons for this lack of good information are discussed below. It is sufficient to point out here, however, that it represents a major obstacle to gaining a fuller understanding of the implications of criminal victimization of taxi drivers for public confidence in the safety of taxi travel.

### **1.3 Taxi Drivers as a Policing, Crime Prevention and Public Safety Resource**

The nature of taxi drivers' work places them in a very advantageous position to undertake three of the fundamental tasks of effective policing and crime prevention - surveillance, intelligence gathering, and reporting of breaches and anticipated breaches of order ("suspicious circumstances"). This potential derives from three aspects of the taxi driver's occupation- its physical and temporal setting, the nature of its clientele,

and its ready and continuous access to efficient distance communication technology.

Like most public police officers, only perhaps even more so (since they generally do not have as much paperwork to do (Ericson, 1994)), taxi drivers spend most of their working hours driving around the public streets of the communities in which they work. Even for the busiest drivers, a considerable amount of this time is spent looking for (or waiting for) fares, rather than actually transporting them (Hara Associates, 1994: 31-32). As a result, taxi drivers have a great deal of opportunity to observe and take in what is going on in the public spaces of the communities in which they work. Since they are frequently on the lookout for potential curbside passengers, careful attention to their surroundings is a necessary and desirable aspect of their work. Furthermore, intimate and detailed knowledge of the streets on which they work (made famous as "the knowledge" for London cabbies) is universally regarded as a valuable asset for the successful taxi driver, just as it is for the successful police officer. Within a given community, the taxi industry as a whole (as well as most individual competing taxi companies) seeks to extend this community "coverage" as widely as possible, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Maximizing the opportunities for surveillance of the community is thus an incidental, albeit not the primary, objective of the taxi industry as a whole.

Even though their individual preferences might lead them to be somewhat discriminating in terms of whom they pick up as fare-paying passengers (Henslin, 1968; Trojan, 1976), the modern economic realities of the taxi business (as well sometimes as company rules or licensing conditions) frequently place substantial limitations on this as a practical option. Subsection 27(2) of the Halifax City taxi ordinance (Ordinance 116), for instance, specifies the following not untypical rules in this regard:

- "(2) No taxi or limousine driver shall refuse to serve the first person requesting service except where the passenger;
- (a) is indebted for a previous fare or service;
- (b) has an excessive number of items that will not fit within the vehicle;
- (c) refuses to disclose his destination immediately after entering the vehicle;
- (d) asks to be driven to any place or under any condition that the driver reasonably considers to be unsafe;
- (e) is in possession of an animal other than a seeing eye dog;

- (f) is obnoxious or abusive, or acts or uses language in a manner which reasonably leaves [sic.] the driver to anticipate such behaviour, or refusal to pay part or all of the fare, or physical injury to himself or to the vehicle."

Even allowing for the discretion permitted by such rules, modern economic realities of the industry ensure that most taxi drivers are exposed to an extremely broad cross-section of both the resident members of the community and visitors to it during their working hours. Unlike the bus or subway train driver who is frequently physically segregated from his or her passengers, most taxi drivers share a relatively small enclosed space with their passengers, in which the opportunity to overhear conversations is virtually inescapable. In addition, in the interests of promoting a friendly and accessible image for the industry or the company for which they work, taxi drivers are often encouraged to engage their passengers in conversation during the trip, or at least to be responsive to passengers who wish to have conversation with them (for an example, see the training video transcript in Appendix D). The popular image which the taxi driver shares with the telephone switchboard operator of days gone by, as the repository of a vast fund of local gossip and information, who can (and will, sometimes without prompting) express an opinion on almost any imaginable topic, is thus not coincidental; it is an essential by-product, and perhaps even facilitator, of the business (Halifax Taxi Commission, 1993: 50-51). At least some of this information to which the typical taxi driver routinely becomes privy as a result of his or her work, is likely to be relevant to issues of policing, crime, public order and public safety.

Efficient and effective distance communication technology is becoming more and more critical in an increasingly competitive taxi industry confronting dwindling markets caused by economic hard times. While taxi drivers still rely on everything from cellular telephones to the most sophisticated computerized dispatch systems in order to try and maximize their share of the available market, a driver who does not have at least some in-car technology which allows for continuous communication with the outside world is unlikely to stay in business for long, let alone be successful. As a result, virtually every taxi driver has routine access to the means (although perhaps not the inclination) to report important information to others as it is observed or obtained.

In highlighting these particular features of the work environment of taxi drivers, it is not intended to suggest either that they typically do a lot of policing, crime prevention or public safety work, or that they are particularly inclined to do so - merely that they are particularly well placed to do so. In some instances, initiatives have been undertaken - primarily by police, but sometimes at the instance of taxi companies or associations - to take advantage of such opportunities (Zurcher & Blackwell, 1976; Michigan State University, n.d.; Smith, 1992). Such programs have tended to be of two kinds - programs which are specific to the taxi industry (typically with such names as "Taxis On Patrol" or "Cabbies on Patrol" or, in Quebec, "Taxis Secours" (Trudel, 1991; Boyer, 1995), and programs which are more general in scope (sometimes called "Eyes and Ears" programs) in which taxi drivers and companies

participate. In either case, such programs typically involve the establishment of more or less formal links between taxi drivers and local police, through which taxi drivers are able to provide assistance and information to the police which is relevant to policing, crime prevention, law enforcement or other aspects of public safety in the community. Programs are usually publicly advertised (in the belief that this in itself will contribute to the achievement of program goals), with participating drivers displaying decals prominently on their cabs.

Even in the absence of such formal programs, however, many police forces in North America have instituted some kind of program of awards or other forms of public recognition for taxi drivers who have been particularly helpful to the police, either in policing or crime prevention generally, or in the resolution of particular crimes or incidents. In Toronto, for instance, the "TOPS" (Taxis On Patrol) program organizes an annual "Driver Appreciation Night" - "a lively celebration and awards ceremony in which the Driver of the Year and Dispatcher of the Year are presented with awards and prizes" (Smith, 1992: 269; Smith, 1994).

No formal or systematic evaluations of the effectiveness or impact of such programs have been discovered. There is some evidence that they are designed as much to boost the public image of the taxi industry as to achieve measurable improvements in policing, crime prevention or public safety. Furthermore, they are by no means universally supported by participants in the taxi industry, and in some jurisdictions their establishment has been actively resisted by industry representatives, chiefly on the grounds that they present taxi drivers as "squealers" or "police informers", and that this will discourage some business (Delorme, 1993) or that they will expose taxi drivers to increased risks from criminals (Hlady, 1993). The extent of support for, and opposition to, such programs within the Canadian taxi industry remains largely unknown at present, but further evidence on this matter is presented in the summary of the principal findings of the present study, below.

In an era in which "partnerships" between community members and groups and the public police are increasingly being advocated as the most desirable means of developing effective "community policing" (Normandeau & Leighton, 1990; Crawford, 1994), it seems likely that interest in such programs will grow rather than diminish in coming years. It is for this reason that it was decided to explore their potential further through the present study.



## **2.0 NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The present study was designed to explore some of these issues within the Canadian context. As noted earlier, the great majority of extant research on criminal victimization of taxi drivers has been carried out in the United States. There have been few Canadian studies in this area. The ones which have been undertaken have been quite narrow in scope and have either focused on a single location (e.g., Manitoba Taxicab Board (1992), which primarily focused on the City of Winnipeg) or have been more broadly focused, but were not limited to the taxi industry (e.g., Boyd, 1993). With respect to the role (or potential role) of taxi drivers as a policing, crime prevention or public safety resource, there appears to have been no significant research so far in Canada.

There is good reason to think that, while inherently interesting, the findings of research on these topics carried out in the United States may be of limited relevance for Canada, given differences between the two countries not only in terms of the social composition of their urban environments, but also in terms of the social problems which they manifest (especially with respect to weapons and violence) and the different political structures within which such problems must be addressed. Whether such distinctions can be sustained or not, however, it seems to the present researcher that it is inherently preferable that policy with respect to such matters as crime, policing, crime prevention and public safety in Canada should be grounded in research findings derived from Canadian contexts, rather than from findings based on research conducted elsewhere, however independently useful the latter may be.

The study was conceived as a preliminary exploration of some of the key issues concerning criminal victimization of taxi drivers, measures which are or may be taken to protect them, and the role they do or could play in policing, crime prevention, law enforcement and public safety, within the context of a number of Canadian urban centres. The intent has been that given the limited scope of this initial study, consideration might be given to more extensive research in these areas if the findings of this initial study are thought to justify it.

### **2.1 The Research Sites**

The study was conducted in three Canadian metropolitan areas - the Greater Vancouver Region in British Columbia, the Greater Winnipeg area in Manitoba, and the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area in Nova Scotia (most of the interviewing in this area, however, was conducted in the city of Halifax).

Winnipeg and Halifax are the capital cities of their respective provinces, as well as being their provinces' largest cities. Vancouver is the largest city in British Columbia, but not the provincial capital. The populations of these three metropolitan areas, according to the 1991 Canadian Census, were: Vancouver 1,602,502; Winnipeg 652,354; Halifax-Dartmouth 320,501. While Vancouver and Halifax-Dartmouth are both ocean ports, Winnipeg, being located roughly in the centre of the

Canadian land mass, is not. Thus, while downtown Vancouver and Halifax experience almost continuous transient visits from the crews of ships which are visiting these ports, this is not the case for Winnipeg.

Each of the three cities has an ethnically mixed population:

**Table 1 Ethnic Origins of the Populations of the Three Study Sites**

	<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>Halifax</b>
% of population not born in Canada	30.1	17.5	6.5
% non-permanent residents	1.4	0.5	0.3
% of population born in:			
Canada	68.5	82.0	93.1
United States	1.4	0.8	1.1
Central or South America	0.8	1.1	0.1
Caribbean or Bermuda	0.3	0.6	0.2
United Kingdom	5.3	2.4	1.9
Other European country	6.9	7.0	1.6
Africa	1.0	0.3	0.2
India	2.3	0.6	0.3
Other Asian country	11.0	4.7	1.0
Oceania and other	1.1	0.1	0.1
Ethnic Origins - % of population			
British	23.1	16.2	40.7
French	1.8	5.3	5.2
German	3.9	7.0	2.1
Canadian	1.5	1.3	1.0
Italian	1.9	1.2	0.4
Chinese	10.6	1.6	0.4
Aboriginal	0.8	3.3	0.3
Other single origins	21.0	25.0	7.1
Multiple origins	35.4	39.1	42.8
% of population who speak neither English nor French	3.4	1.3	0.2

Source: Statistics Canada, 1993c: 18, 128 & 178

In 1991, the officially recorded unemployment rate was 9.2 percent in Vancouver and Halifax, and 8.6 percent in Winnipeg.

**Table 2**      **Age Profiles of Populations of the Three Study Sites**

	<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>Halifax</b>
	%	%	%
0 - 14 years	18.6	20.2	19.9
15 - 24 years	13.7	14.7	15.4
25 - 39 years	27.4	26.3	29.4
40 - 59 years	23.9	21.8	22.3
60+ years	16.4	17.0	12.9

Source: Statistics Canada, 1992: 14, 80 & 110

The structure and profiles of the taxi industries in the three cities are described in a later section of this report.

## 2.2 The Research Strategy

### 2.2.1 Interviews with Taxi Drivers

The main strategy for the study involved conducting structured interviews with 50 active taxi drivers in each of the three cities. The interview schedule (reproduced in Appendix A to this report) involved a detailed set of questions dealing with all aspects which were to be explored by the study. A major concern in designing this instrument (which went through several versions and pre-tests before it was finalized) was to ensure that interviews would not be so long that drivers would not be willing to do them.

The nature of the taxi business made it impossible to randomly select interviewees; in fact, achieving 50 such interviews in each of the three cities turned out to be the major challenge which the researchers faced. This was not because taxi drivers were particularly hostile to the research (although some hostility was experienced by some interviewers), but mainly because for predominantly economic reasons, many taxi drivers who were approached were reluctant or completely unwilling to give up the time required (in most cases between 30 minutes to an hour, but sometimes considerably longer) to complete the rather detailed interviews. The fact that the interviewing process began in earnest in the pre-Christmas period (which is a busy time for the taxi business) added to the difficulties experienced in this regard.

In some cases, concerns were expressed (which were often difficult to allay) that the research was being conducted either on behalf of the taxi companies for which drivers worked, or for the police or licensing authorities. In either case, drivers were

worried that participation in the study (particularly if they were candid in answering the questions) could have negative consequences for them. Assurances that this would not be the case were frequently insufficient to achieve drivers' participation in the study.

The conditions under which taxi drivers work required the researchers to be imaginative and flexible in devising ways to achieve their participation in the study. In those cases where drivers worked for a company which had substantial premises with sufficient room to allow interviews to be conducted there, seeking out interviews at the company depot around the time that drivers changed shifts sometimes proved fruitful. Even then, some inducement (in the form of offering free donuts or buying interviewees coffee) was often necessary to achieve participation. No interviewees, however, were paid directly for agreeing to do interviews.

In most cases, however, the luxury of having access to a depot in which to conduct interviews was not available. Indeed many "depots" are in fact no more than a tiny office from which one or more dispatchers operate, and are rarely even visited by the drivers. Interviews, therefore, were frequently arranged by contacting drivers directly while they were waiting at taxi ranks or garages, or were taking a lunch or coffee break in a popular restaurant. A "snowballing" technique was used by many of the interviewers, whereby a driver who had agreed to an interview was asked to suggest the names of other drivers who might be willing to do interviews, and assist in persuading them to do so. The study was also extremely fortunate to have the assistance of consultants in Vancouver and Halifax who were intimately involved in the taxi business and were able to help the interviewers to gain access to drivers willing to do interviews. Without the assistance of these two individuals, it is doubtful whether sufficient interviews would have been achieved in these two cities.

In some cases, taxi company managers were very co-operative in assisting the researchers to obtain interviews. A notice was provided (see Appendix B) which was posted on company premises, advising drivers of the nature and purposes of the study, and indicating a number which they could call to arrange an interview. In general, however, despite the willing co-operation of many taxi company managers, this was not as successful a strategy as was hoped.

In Halifax, a short article about the study, in which drivers were urged to participate, was published in the local industry broadsheet (see Appendix C).

In several cases, interviews were interrupted when drivers were called away to pick up a fare, and in some of these subsequent completion of the interview proved impossible. In other cases, attempts to interview drivers were thwarted by language barriers; for many taxi drivers in these three cities, English was not their first language, and in some cases their poor command of it got in the way either of their ability to understand the questions which were being asked, or of the interviewers' ability to understand their answers. In such cases, attempts to conduct interviews unfortunately had to be abandoned.

Within these not insubstantial constraints, however, the researchers endeavoured to interview as broad a range of taxi drivers as possible, in terms of their work experience, ethnic background, gender, what shifts they most commonly worked, and what areas of their cities they predominantly worked in. Conditions for achieving participation were certainly not ideal from a research perspective, however, and in particular it seems likely that the study findings will not adequately reflect the experiences and views of taxi drivers belonging to ethnic minority groups who do not have a good command of English. This is a not inconsequential limitation of the research since, as will be described further below, the taxi business in some urban areas is dominated by members of such groups - a fact which in turn is thought by many to have significant implications for criminal victimization of taxi drivers and preventive measures to reduce it.

### 2.2.2 Interviews with "Key Informants"

In addition to the detailed structured interviews with active drivers, less structured interviews were conducted with a small number of key informants in each of the three cities. The principal researcher undertook all of these interviews. Key informants were chosen for their intimate knowledge of the taxi business in general, and of issues regarding taxi driver safety in particular. They were drawn from the following groups:

- a) Owners and managers of taxi companies
- b) Officers of taxi company and driver associations and other industry representatives and spokespeople
- c) Editors and publishers of broadsheets, newsletters, magazines, etc., directed to the taxi industry
- d) Persons involved in the regulation of the taxi industry
- e) Persons involved in training taxi drivers and/or developing training materials for the taxi industry
- f) Local police representatives having special responsibility for licensing and/or liaising with the taxi industry; and
- g) Consultants and researchers who have been involved in research relating to the taxi industry

Interviews with these key informants were loosely structured and wide-ranging in order to ensure that maximum advantage could be derived from the particular experience and expertise which each of the interviewees possessed. In all, 20 such interviews were conducted in the three cities as well as in some other locations, providing the principal researcher with a broad perspective on the principal issues and concerns around taxi driver safety which have been raised in each of the cities, as well as information about the various initiatives which have been taken or discussed to improve it and to build or

improve communication and co-operation between the taxi industry and public police. A full list of these key informants will be found in Appendix D to this report.

### 2.2.3 Review of Relevant Local Documentation

In each city, the principal researcher collected and reviewed as much local documentation to which access could be gained and which was of relevance to the issues being studied. This included relevant legislation, regulatory policies, studies, reports of (and briefs to) public inquiries, newspaper and magazine articles, training materials (including videos), conference proceedings and, to the very limited extent to which they were available statistics relating to the taxi industry in general, and the main areas of study in particular. Together with the "key informant" interviews, this assorted material provided invaluable background and historical information which has informed this report and facilitated the interpretation of data generated through the detailed interviews with the taxi drivers themselves.

### 2.2.4 Review of Relevant International Literature

A search of the major bibliographical databases was undertaken to seek out literature from other countries relevant to the study topics. Not a great deal of such literature was found, confirming that this is not an especially well researched area of study. Relevant studies were found from a number of other countries, however, and these have been reviewed with a view to identifying new approaches to issues which appear to share common features in many parts of the world. Most are listed in the bibliographical references at the end of this report. Many of the studies which have been done, however, have not been published or written up in established journals and were brought to the principal researcher's attention by the key informants rather than through the formal international literature search.

The fact that there is so much information available on issues of taxi driver safety around the world which is not widely disseminated and shared because of its character and sponsorship is particularly unfortunate as it means that maximum advantage is not derived from the collectivity of experience, ideas, innovations and experimentation in this area.

### 3.0 THE TAXI INDUSTRIES IN THE THREE CITIES

#### 3.1 Vancouver

The Greater Vancouver Area is made up of seven separate municipalities (Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, North Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey and Vancouver). Regular taxi service (i.e., not including services which specialize in the transportation of disabled passengers etc.) in these municipalities is provided by a total of 17 separate taxi companies (2 in Burnaby, 1 in Coquitlam, 1 in New Westminster, 2 in North Vancouver, 1 in Richmond, 5 in Surrey, and 5 in Vancouver), which collectively control just under 1100 taxi licenses. About 40 percent of these are held by the five Vancouver companies.

Taxi licences are issued by the individual municipality and permit the licensee to operate only in that municipality; that is, passengers may generally only be solicited or picked up within the boundaries of the municipality for which the license is issued (although the journey's destination may be in another municipality). An exception is that a passenger may be picked up in another municipality if the pick-up has been pre-arranged and the destination of the journey is within the boundaries of the municipality for which the taxi is licensed (Subsection 6(6) of the City of Vancouver *Vehicles For Hire By-Law*, No. 6066). Municipal by-laws regulating the taxi business are generally administered on a day-to-day basis by the police forces serving each municipality. In order to operate at the international airport, taxis must obtain a separate license, issued by the airport authorities. Regulation of the taxi industry in the Greater Vancouver Area is thus decentralized and generally not subject to common standards - a fact which presents a serious obstacle to any attempts to achieve concerted industry-wide initiatives with respect to taxi driver safety and protection.

Moves to "regionalize" the taxi industry and its regulation within the Greater Vancouver Area have apparently been successfully resisted by the five Vancouver companies, primarily on grounds of economic self-interest. Regionalization, however, has also been opposed on the ground that the outlying municipalities would be likely to suffer a reduction in service as the Vancouver downtown core - the most lucrative market for taxis - "sucked in" more and more of the business. Because the number of taxi licenses which can be extant at any given time is controlled by the municipal regulators, such licenses (particularly those for the city of Vancouver) have substantial market value (Swan, 1983).

As elsewhere, there are many more licensed taxi drivers in the Greater Vancouver Area than there are licensed taxis. This is because to be profitable, a taxi must be driven twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Although precise figures for the number of licensed taxi drivers in the Greater Vancouver Area were unobtainable, informed sources suggested an average of 3-5 licensed drivers per

licensed taxi, leading to an estimate of somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 licensed drivers throughout the region. Not all licensed drivers are necessarily active drivers, however, and many only drive part-time. At any given time, therefore, there may be around 800 or 900 drivers "on the road" in the region (some cabs will always be off the road, for repairs, maintenance etc.).

It is important for an understanding of the taxi industry, to understand the position and role of "taxi companies". This varies from one jurisdiction to another, and from one company to another. In most cases, "taxi companies" are little more than organizations which provide services (which may include dispatch, deployment, accounting, purchasing and equipment, garage and maintenance services, etc.) to independent taxicab owners and drivers who drive under their "rooflight". In such cases, the cab owners are the shareholders of the taxi companies, and appoint the directors and managers. Under these circumstances, the taxi companies cannot, of course, regulate the conduct, etc., of their drivers more than their shareholder taxicab owners allow (Smythe, 1992: 281).

In other instances, taxi companies act as "brokers", which lease taxicabs to drivers (who remain independent contractors), and provide services to them. The leasing arrangement allows for a greater degree of control by the company over its drivers, through the terms of the lease.

Thirdly, some taxi companies actually own fleets of taxis and hire drivers to drive them. In this case, the drivers are full- or part-time employees of the company, which of course permits the greatest degree of company control over the conduct and working conditions of the drivers.

In the Greater Vancouver Area examples of all of these variants of taxi companies are to be found. Most, however, are cab-owner-controlled companies or brokerages, and this, of course, like other aspects of the structure of the industry, has important implications for the possibilities of concerted industry-wide initiatives and programs with respect to issues of taxi driver safety and protection. As Smythe (1992: 281) comments:

"The organizational difficulties of the current industry is a phenomena [sic.] that most regulatory authorities are unable to deal with, as it is outside their jurisdiction. This situation is further aggravated by the industry' s hesitation in many jurisdictions to organize a single certified "voice" for itself. In these jurisdictions, the authorities have no option but to deal as best they can with limited resources with the huge array of independent owner-operators (owners), and independent contractors (drivers).

This focus on "independence" has emerged over the years in response to economic pressures provoking the industry to find creative means to cut costs and increase revenues and margins. "Employees" are subject to legislation requiring overhead expenditures related to pensions, income taxes, health insurance, sick pay, vacation pay, etc. "Independent contractors" are considered to be a self-employed business and consequently exempt these expenditures. The critical ingredient is the amount of control exercised over the drivers by the company. So long as control is minimal, their independent status is preserved. The "independence" issue is critical to driver safety."

In order to drive a taxi legally, a driver must have a valid driver's licence (issued by the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Highways) and a chauffeur's permit (issued by the municipality). In Vancouver, the issuance of chauffeurs' permits is administered by the city police force, and they must be renewed each year, giving the authorities an opportunity each year to "weed out" problem drivers by denying renewal. It was indicated that in practice, renewals may be denied as a result of criminal convictions or other "serious driving problems". Such decisions require the approval of the Chief of Police, however, and are subject to an appeal to the City Council, and so are not undertaken lightly. The informant in the Vancouver City police force estimated that between 20 and 30 permits are withdrawn in this way each year, most commonly as a result of the driver having been found to have driven while under suspension, or because of "inappropriate behaviour towards women". There are about 2,500 licensed taxi drivers in the City of Vancouver itself.

During the short period of the study researchers were not able to obtain and review the relevant licensing by-laws for each of the seven separate municipalities which together make up the Greater Vancouver Area. The City of Vancouver by-law (*Vehicles for Hire By-Law*, No.6066), however, currently contains no specific standards for the issuance of a chauffeur's permit (see Section 5 of the by-law), and in particular no formal training of any kind is required. Most of the larger taxi companies, however, do have driver training programs in place and most of these do include a segment in which issues of driver safety and protection are discussed.

Taxicab owners must obtain a separate license. In the City of Vancouver, the license Inspector is required to refuse to issue such a license if the applicant has been convicted of an offence during the preceding five years and the Inspector is "of the belief that the nature of the offence relates to the business, trade, profession or other occupation for which the application has been made" (Subsection 6(3)). Other requirements are that the applicant "is 19 years of age or older; can speak and write the English language; possesses an intimate knowledge of the City and its traffic regulations and of the By-Law; and is willing and able to maintain a continuous and satisfactory service to the public during the currency of the license" (Subsection 6(3)(a)).

The overwhelming majority of taxi drivers in the Greater Vancouver Area are men, women probably comprising not more than 2 percent of this workforce. It was suggested that "cultural factors" may underlie this gender imbalance. Although precise figures are not available, an official of the Vancouver Taxi Owners Association estimated that probably as many as half of the licensed taxi drivers in the region are East Indians, and that this ethnic group has a strong hold over the industry there. It was estimated that the remaining 50 percent of the workforce is comprised of more or less equal numbers of "white", "African" and "Middle Eastern" drivers. The suggestion, therefore, was that the majority of men who dominate the taxi industry in this area may not, for cultural reasons, regard driving a taxi as suitable work for women.

It has been suggested (in other cities as well as in Vancouver) that there is a direct relationship between the ethnic background of the owners of the taxi companies and the ethnic make-up of the managerial and driver workforce. If true, this would, it seems, go a long way to explaining the apparently negligible representation of Chinese men and women in both of these categories, despite the fact, noted above, that at least 11 percent of Vancouver's population characterize themselves as ethnically Chinese. The explanation which was suggested for this imbalance was that Chinese business people do not regard the taxi industry as a good business investment, and that their absence from the ranks of cab company owners leads naturally to the under-representation of Chinese people within the ranks of company managers and drivers.

While detailed statistics to support these general observations about the composition of the taxi-driver workforce in the Greater Vancouver Area were unattainable, they did seem to be the subject of a high degree of consensus among the key informants interviewed in this jurisdiction. If true, they indicate that the composition of the taxi driver workforce in this region is quite different from the composition of the general population of the region, from whom the great majority of the industry's customers are drawn. As will be discussed further in a later part of this report, this has potentially significant implications for the main issues which are the subject of this study.

The decentralized character of the Greater Vancouver taxi industry and its regulation means, among other things, that there is no single authority responsible for receiving and responding to public complaints against taxi drivers or taxi companies. One result of this is that most people do not know whom to call if they have such a complaint, and that in fact most complaints against drivers which are made, are made to the taxi companies whose roof sign they are driving under, rather than to the licensing authorities. There is no requirement that taxi companies report such complaints (or statistics relating to them) to licensing authorities. As a result, statistics concerning complaints against drivers in this jurisdiction are generally not available.

Related to this is the fact that not all the municipalities in the region require

drivers to display identification documents in the cab while on duty. A plan to introduce such a requirement in the city of Vancouver was under consideration while this study was underway, but had not come to fruition, and was apparently being actively resisted by some elements within the industry (*TaxiWest*, 1994b).

Despite (or perhaps because of) this absence of reliable data, the Vancouver City Police Force submitted a report on complaints against the industry to the City Council in March 1994, which the industry apparently interpreted as making it "look good". According to this report, 62 complaints against the industry had been registered with the police during the preceding six months, 55 of which involved one of the five Vancouver taxi companies. Four of the 62 complaints involved some allegation of sexual impropriety on the part of drivers, but only one of these was found to be substantiated by the police; in the other three, the veracity of complainants was described as "very much in doubt". The largest category of complaints involved allegations of bad driving (23 complaints). Eight complaints related to alleged assaults by taxi drivers, and 15 related to other kinds of inappropriate driver conduct. With respect to the four allegations of sexual misconduct, the Vancouver Taxi Owners' Association pointed out that it is estimated that "more than a million customers are in cabs each month and half of them are women so in the six month period about 3 million women rode in Vancouver taxis" (*TaxiWest*, 1994c).

Key informants suggested that there is great variation among taxi companies in the region with respect to how "strict" they are in regulating the conduct of their drivers, and how conscientious they are in responding to public complaints against them. Indeed, it was suggested by one interviewee that the great "oversupply" of taxi driver labour in the region, and the highly competitive nature of the industry in a relatively poor market, constitute strong disincentives, especially for the smaller companies, to invest any time, energy or money in any kind of driver improvement or discipline. Regulatory officials also suggested that the current high turnovers of both drivers and taxi company managers militate against both effective driver improvement and the establishment of effective systems and procedures for dealing with public complaints.

There are certainly some voices, both within and outside the industry, however, who are arguing that improving the quality of service within the industry (including the handling of public complaints and issues of driver safety) is a necessary precondition for improvement of its profitability. In 1991, Vancouver City Council established a "Safer City Task Force" with a mandate to address issues of personal and public safety in the city. The Task Force received submissions concerning taxi driver safety (including a proposal to establish a "Taxi Emergency Network"). While there was evidently some support for addressing these concerns, the issue of taxi driver safety appears to have been largely overshadowed by other more general public safety concerns which commanded the Task Force's attention.

A further initiative in 1994 involved the establishment, under the sponsorship of

the Pacific Rim Institute of Tourism, of a "Taxi 2000 Task Force", which was getting underway as the present study was being conducted. This initiative, however, appears to be primarily concerned with taxi driver training with respect to quality of service, hospitality and the public image which the industry projects of itself and of the city in which it operates; issues of driver safety, to the extent that they are on the agenda at all (and it seems likely that they will be), appear to be secondary concerns. The manager of the Vancouver Taxi Owners Association is a co-chair of this task force which, at the time of this study, was evidently experiencing some funding difficulties.

Discussions, involving the Vancouver Taxi Owners Association and a commercial distributor, were also ongoing at the time of writing concerning the adoption by some of the larger taxi companies in Vancouver of the "Global Positioning System" (GPS) (Smythe, 1992), which is a satellite-based system for tracking the movements and precise location of vehicles. This system, which at present involves quite high installation costs, nevertheless has attractions for some taxi company owners primarily because of its potential to enhance the efficiency of fleet management and productivity. Its promoters, however, argue that it also has significant potential for enhancing taxi driver safety by making it easier to locate and deliver assistance to drivers who may be in trouble. Reactions by taxi drivers and owners have been mixed, however, some evidently being concerned about the greatly increased surveillance over driver conduct and movement which the system would facilitate.

In 1992, Professor Neil Boyd, of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University, conducted a study of violence in the workplace in British Columbia (Boyd, 1993) which included the taxi industry. The study was based on claims filed with the Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia. Taxi drivers were found to have the third highest rate of claims for violence at work of all occupations between 1982 and 1991 (approximately 70 claims per 100,000 workers - a rate much lower than those for police officers and nurses aides (*Ibid.*: 8) - with an average of 25-30 claims a year during the 10-year period (*Ibid.*: 26)), such claims involving an average time loss per claim of just under 4 weeks (*Ibid.*: 18). Boyd recognized the limitations of this method of attempting to ascertain levels of violence within an industry, however (*Ibid.*: 7); not only are many incidents of violence at work not reported to public authorities or employers for a whole host of reasons, but many taxi drivers, being owner-operators of the vehicles they drive, do not qualify as employees for the purposes of Workers' Compensation schemes, and could therefore not make claims anyway.

In 1993, the British Columbia Workers' Compensation Board promulgated regulations requiring employers to conduct risk assessments "in any place of employment in which a risk of injury to workers from violence arising out of their employment may be present" (B.C. WCB Regulation 8.90, enacted November 1, 1993). In the event that such an assessment reveals such a risk, employers are required to:

- "(a) establish procedures, policies and work environment arrangements to eliminate the risk to workers from violence;
- (b) where elimination of the risk to workers is not possible, establish procedures, policies and work environment arrangements to minimize the risk to workers; and
- (c) establish procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidents of violence in accordance with the requirements of Section 6" (Regulation 8.92).

During the brief period of this study, the author was not able to ascertain the extent to which these new regulations had in fact been generally implemented or enforced within the taxi industry in the Greater Vancouver Area, or with what impact. One of the community colleges in the area is now running one-day courses to assist company managers with their implementation, but it was unascertainable to what extent, if at all, taxi industry managers have taken advantage of such courses so far.

Log books in which "incidents" had been recorded by dispatchers were shown to the researcher by one company, and the Vancouver Taxi Owners' Association had begun to compile quarterly data on such recorded incidents. According to these data, 79 assaults, 25 robberies and 5 instances of taxis being stolen had been recorded by taxi companies in the city of Vancouver during 1993. To what extent such statistics may come close to representing the true incidence of such events within the industry remains very much a matter of speculation at present.

Another matter which has been thought by some to be germane to the issue of criminal victimization of taxi drivers, is the physical condition of taxis themselves. The thinking here is that dirty or otherwise unsanitary taxis "encourage" crime and vandalism against the taxi and the driver, and that conversely, clean, sanitary vehicles discourage such behaviours. A variant on this theme is that vehicles in unsafe condition, apart from being inherently undesirable because of the safety hazards they pose, are more likely to break down, causing inconvenience and irritation for passengers which, in turn, may lead to violent disputes between taxi drivers and their passengers. In most jurisdictions, therefore, licensed taxis are subject to regular inspections as a condition of maintaining a license. The Greater Vancouver Area is no exception in this regard. Motor vehicle safety inspections are primarily the responsibility of the Motor Vehicle Branch of the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Highways. Provincial motor vehicle regulations require that taxis be in safe running order and condition at all times while being operated in the course of business, and cab owners are required to obtain an inspection certificate from an approved mechanic every six months, certifying that the vehicle meets this requirement. In practice, the enforcement of these regulations is undertaken through spot checks by police and provincial ministry inspectors. As noted above, however, other matters of regulation of the taxi industry are the responsibility of municipal regulators (usually

local police).

While taxi licenses can be pulled for failures to meet minimum vehicle safety requirements, enforcing standards of cleanliness and comfort is more problematic, since municipal licensing by-laws in this jurisdiction do not typically include clear standards with respect to such matters, as a requirement for obtaining or maintaining a license. The relevant City of Vancouver by-law, for instance, merely states that before issuing a taxi operator' s license, the licensing Inspector must be satisfied that "the vehicle with respect to the operation of which a license has been applied for is *suitable for the use intended* , is equipped as required by this By-law, and complies in all respects with applicable provisions of the Motor Vehicle Act and the Highway Act" (City of Vancouver *Vehicles For Hire By-Law*, No. 6066, Section 5(3)(c) - emphasis added).

On a related note, however, authorities at the international airport have now promulgated minimum dress standards for taxi drivers wishing to operate at the airport (*TaxiWest*, 1994a). Although crime prevention and taxi driver safety experts have also argued that a taxi driver' s personal appearance and hygiene are related to risks of criminal victimization (Workman & Johnson, 1989; Barton, 1995), it seems likely that the airport' s regulations in this regard are motivated more by a desire to improve the public image of taxis and their drivers (and, by extension, of the city) than by any expectations of reducing the incidence of criminal victimizations of drivers.

### 3.2 Winnipeg

The taxi industry in Winnipeg is dominated by four companies which between them control 400 licensed "standard" taxis - an upper limit which was set by regulation in 1947 and has remained fixed ever since. There are also some special wheelchair-accessible cabs, "handi-cab" vans, and a small number of "luxury" cabs, making for a total of about 560 licensed vehicles in all. These are owned by approximately 550 separate owners, and are driven by almost 2,000 licensed drivers. Until the 1960' s, taxis in Winnipeg were owned by the taxi companies, which employed drivers to drive them. Since then, however, the industry, largely in response to economic pressures, has "migrated" into "a fragmented owner-operator organizational structure", in which the taxi companies "tend now to be only dispatch centers selling their services to hundreds of small independent owner-operators, most owning only a single vehicle" (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1992: 4). Three of the four taxi companies are now owner-operator shareholder-controlled companies, and two of these control over 400 of the licensed vehicles. The fourth company (a small company controlling 21 licences) is organized along "traditional corporate lines" (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1992: 5) - the company owns the taxis and employs drivers to drive them. Service at the international airport is limited to the largest taxicab company perceived to have sufficient taxicabs to satisfy requirements.

Since 1935, the taxi industry in Winnipeg has been regulated by the Manitoba Taxicab Board, established under the provincial *Taxicab Act* (Ch. T10 of the Continuing Consolidation of the statutes of Manitoba). The five member Board is administratively located within the provincial Ministry of Highways and Transportation. Its membership includes a member of the Winnipeg City Council, a police officer designated by the Chief Constable of the city, and three members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The *Taxicab Act*, and the Taxicab Regulation promulgated pursuant to it, contain detailed provisions respecting the conduct of the industry, including provisions relating to taxi driver safety. Among these are minimum requirements for license applicants (including successful completion of a mandatory four day training course for all new drivers); requirements for drivers to "present a clean, neat and well groomed appearance" and to "wear clothes that are clean, neat and appropriate for public service" (Reg. 26); a requirement that "a driver shall be civil and courteous to a passenger and to a prospective passenger" (Reg. 30) and other requirements concerning driver conduct (Regs. 22-34); a requirement that taxis be maintained in "good working order and safe condition", as well as "cleanliness and cosmetic requirements" for taxis (Reg. 15). Following the recommendation of a Task Force report on taxi driver safety in 1987, the Board now requires all taxis in the city to be equipped with a flashing roof-top light which can be activated from inside the cab in the event of an emergency situation involving risk of bodily harm to the driver.

Day-to-day enforcement of these provisions of the *Taxicab Act* and regulations is the responsibility of inspectors appointed pursuant to the Act. At present, there are only two of these, who operate two shifts between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays. Some key informants in Winnipeg expressed concerns that this represents inadequate resources for effective enforcement - a view which was endorsed by a 1990 Taxicab Board report (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1990a: 89-90). As that report pointed out, part of the problem in this regard derives from the change in the structure of the industry described above. Since then, the Board has taken the view that it does not have any regulatory jurisdiction over the dispatch companies, since it is the individual owner-operators and drivers who hold the licenses which are within the Board's jurisdiction. As a result, the Board cannot effectively institute a system of industry self-regulation under Board supervision which, it claimed, would be a more realistic and effective alternative to substantially increasing the Board's own enforcement resources. The Board's 1990 recommendations for changes in the law to facilitate such a system (*Ibid.*: 88-89) have never been implemented. A Bill (Bill 24) which was introduced in 1993 as an amendment to the *Taxicab Act*, and which would have introduced provisions designed to achieve a measure of cost recovery for enforcement of the Act, was not passed, largely as a result of effective lobbying by elements of the taxi industry itself.

The 1990 Taxicab Board *Report and Recommendations on Winnipeg Taxicab Service and Regulations* argued that the original rationale for provincial regulation of the Winnipeg taxi industry (that several municipalities were involved) was no longer valid since the amalgamation of Metropolitan Winnipeg into "Unicity" in 1972, and

accordingly recommended that this regulatory function be devolved to the City of Winnipeg (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1990a: 95-97). This recommendation has not been implemented, however. Key informants stated that City politicians, supported by elements within the taxi industry, have been quite strongly opposed to such regulatory "devolution", largely on grounds of the anticipated high costs involved for the city. Part of the opposition to Bill 24 apparently sprang from the fact that it was viewed by some as a first step towards implementing such devolution.

Like the industry in Vancouver, the great majority (more than 90 percent) of taxi drivers in Winnipeg are men. Although no detailed statistics on the matter were obtained, there was general consensus among key informants that East Indians make up a substantial proportion (close to one-half) of these drivers, and that the industry in Winnipeg is dominated by this ethnic group. As in Vancouver, some informants suggested that these two characteristics of the industry may be related and have important implications with respect to issues of taxi driver safety.

One of the problems which many key informants mentioned as arising from the fragmentary character of the taxi industry in Winnipeg was the absence of any single "voice" which reflects industry views. Two organizations which have experienced some longevity, but somewhat fluctuating support within the industry, are the Manitoba Taxi Drivers' Association (which also has membership from outside Winnipeg) and the Winnipeg Alliance for Taxicab Services and Operations Inc. While both of these organizations claim taxicab owners and some drivers among their membership, neither has a membership large enough to be able to represent the industry as a whole. When pressure from industry representatives effectively halted passage of Bill 24, the government indicated that it would only proceed with the legislation if the taxi industry as a whole constituted an advisory group to advise the Taxicab Board. Apparently, however, this has not been achieved.

There have been two taxi-industry-directed publications in Winnipeg in recent years - *Hard Copy - Transportation News*, which published about six times a year but ceased publication when its editor-publisher moved away from Manitoba in 1994, and *Taxi Observer* which still publishes about six times a year.

There has been much concern over safety issues in Winnipeg during recent years. In 1986, a Winnipeg taxi driver was murdered while on duty. A Committee on Taxi Driver Safety and Health was appointed shortly thereafter by the Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health to examine the situation and make recommendations to improve the workplace safety of drivers. While the committee was still deliberating, a second driver was murdered on duty in January 1987. The committee submitted a report at the end of February 1987 (referred to hereafter as the "Fox-Decent Report" (Committee on Taxi Driver Safety and Health, 1987)), which contained a series of recommendations. In general, the Committee concluded that:

"...the occupation of taxi driver in Winnipeg has a substantial degree of risk resulting from fare disputes, threats, traffic accidents and situations involving physical and psychological stress. Risks to taxi drivers resulting from robbery and assault, while less prevalent overall, are serious risks and are in immediate need of reduction through the implementation of both prevention/reduction and emergency assistance measures" (*Ibid.*: iii).

The Fox-Decent Report recommended mandatory implementation of: (1) a training program for all new drivers and dispatchers; (2) posting of notices in taxis advising passengers of legal requirements, rights and responsibilities of drivers and passengers, and safety measures which are in effect; (3) installation of safety shields in all taxis; and (4) installation of driver-activated roof-top emergency flashing lights on all taxis. In addition, the report recommended "voluntary action" within the industry with respect to: (5) the more effective resolution of fare disputes (in co-operation with city police); (6) use at all times of seatbelts by drivers (they are currently exempted from such use while transporting a passenger, by the provincial *Highway Traffic Act*); (7) improvements in company policies concerning emergency use of radio communication systems in taxis, and improved and ongoing driver and dispatcher training with respect to this (in co-operation with city police); (8) establishment of "appropriate and effective company-wide policies of cash control involving periodic cash drops and other procedures aimed at limiting the amount of cash in the taxicab" (*Ibid.*: 28); (9) establishment of an industry-wide safety and health committee, under the aegis of the Taxicab Board; and (10) equipment of taxis with driver-controlled trunk locks activated from within the vehicle.

Many of these recommendations have since been implemented. In particular, three of the four recommendations for mandatory measures are now partially or fully in effect; the exceptions are the recommendation concerning safety shields, and the fact that dispatchers are not included in mandatory training requirements (not falling within the jurisdiction of the Taxicab Board). The proposal for mandatory installation of safety shields was strongly opposed by substantial numbers of people within the taxi industry and was initially not implemented for this reason. Opposition was based primarily on grounds that shields were too expensive, and that they would create discomfort and hazards for both drivers and passengers, which would discourage business.

In September of 1989, however, another Winnipeg taxi driver was murdered on duty, and this resulted in a revival of the call within the industry for mandatory installation of safety shields. A 20-member Taxicab Safety Review Committee was formed, consisting of representatives from drivers, owners, regulators and other government representatives, police and other interest groups. The Committee established two task forces, one to review the issue of safety shields, the other to address other safety issues. The reports of these two task forces were submitted in

February 1990 and January 1992 respectively (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1990b & 1992).

The first of these two reports examined the issue of safety shields in great detail, exploring and weighing all the arguments for and against such shields, and recommended that they be made mandatory for all taxis in Winnipeg. A draft regulation to effect this recommendation was included in the report. The Taxicab Board responded by enacting a regulation requiring installation of such shields, but this requirement was not to take effect until a suitable shield design had been presented to the Board by the industry and approved by the Board. This regulation is still in effect, but no such design has yet been presented or approved.

Evidently, a significant number of taxi owners voluntarily installed safety shields in their vehicles during the latter half of the 1980's, and in 1986 one of the two larger taxi companies ordered its drivers to install them (*Winnipeg Sun*, 1986). But almost all have since abandoned them as impractical and "bad for business". One key informant stated that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPIC, the provincial auto insurance agency) had refused to provide insurance for taxis with safety shields installed in them, on the ground that such shields posed significant risks of injury to rear-seat passengers in the event of a taxi having to brake suddenly (the Fox-Decent report had anticipated this concern in recommending that passengers in taxis be required to wear seat belts at all times). During the course of the present study, however, the author was not able to verify this claim, or ascertain what the current position of MPIC (AutoPac) is on this matter.

At present, the matter of safety shields seems to be regarded largely as a dead issue in Winnipeg as a result of very substantial opposition to them within the industry itself. In 1991, the Taxicab Board conducted a survey of all Winnipeg taxi drivers on matters of taxi driver safety. The results of this survey, to which 323 drivers responded (out of 1,100 polled), indicated that:

"... 19 percent of the respondents had been robbed, 39 percent had been assaulted, and 40 percent believed a safety shield would have helped. However, 58 percent believed a safety shield would be bad for business, 59 percent did not want a safety shield installed, and 63 percent felt that the Taxicab Board should not be required to mandate safety shields" (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1992: 2).

A brief second report of the Manitoba Taxicab Board on *Taxi Driver Safety* was prepared in 1992 (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1992). This report acknowledged that a mandatory requirement for safety shields would not be acceptable within the taxi industry in Winnipeg, and was consequently not realistic. Instead, it recommended that the driver training program (which had been implemented following the Fox-Decent

report' s recommendations) be further developed and improved, and that "a review of leading edge technology continue with particular emphasis on the identification of low-cost GPS [Global Positioning System] equipment" (*Ibid.*: 14). The body of the report also advocated a greater emphasis on the development of technology and business practices within the industry which would result in less cash being carried in taxis, suggesting that "[T]he ultimate objective is the elusive cashless taxicab, and public awareness of this achievement". The report, however, acknowledged that this "may not be totally achievable, but absolute minimum cash with a companion awareness program, should be their target" (*Ibid.*: 14). One key informant in Winnipeg estimated that up to 40 percent of taxi fares in that city may now be credit transactions of one kind or another (credit cards or taxi "chits") rather than cash transactions. As will be noted below, however, data obtained from interviews with Winnipeg taxi drivers did not support this estimate. Specifically, 70 percent of the drivers interviewed in that city estimated that ten percent or less of their passengers pay with a credit card or taxi chit, and a further 26 percent estimated that only 11-25 percent of their passengers pay in this way. Only one of the fifty drivers interviewed indicated a proportion of more than 25 percent, and none indicated a proportion more than 50 percent. Such a discrepancy illustrates the risks which may be involved in basing policies on the estimates of even apparently well-informed industry representatives, rather than on more systematically obtained evidence.

The mandatory training program for new taxi drivers which was introduced following the recommendations of the Fox-Decent report, is now a four-day course run by a Winnipeg police officer, under the auspices of the Taxicab Board. The morning of the fourth day is specifically devoted to taxi driver safety issues - such issues are incidentally addressed in other segments of the course, however - during which a combination of lecture and videos are used. This training (including the videos) strongly emphasizes the responsibility and possibility for drivers themselves to reduce the risks of victimization (by dressing smartly, keeping their cabs clean and neat, being courteous and helpful to passengers, recognizing common signs of trouble and typical trouble-makers, and following basic precautionary, evasive and de-escalation techniques, etc.). The risks in confronting aggressors or "fare-jumpers" (those who seek to leave a taxi without paying the fare) are emphasized, as is the need for recently immigrated drivers who may have come from societies with different social norms in this regard, to accept and adapt to "Canadian expectations" with respect to such matters. Structural aspects of the industry which may be related to issues of taxi driver safety are apparently not emphasized, presumably on the assumption that individual drivers can do little about these. Two key informants criticized the driver training program on this ground, arguing that, intentionally or otherwise, it conveys a "blame the victim" message.

It was mentioned that a move was afoot to transfer responsibility for the driver training program from the Taxicab Board to the Manitoba Tourism Education Council - a move which reflects a shift in emphasis from driver competence and safety to hospitality and public image. A taxi driver accreditation program was also in

development, but neither of these has yet come to fruition.

Following concerns about taxi drivers in Winnipeg carrying various weapons in their vehicles to defend themselves against possible attacks, and an event which resulted in a Winnipeg taxi driver being charged with murdering a passenger as a result of a fare dispute, the Taxicab Board issued a "Weapons Advisory" to all taxi drivers in the Winnipeg area in 1992. After reminding taxi drivers of *Criminal Code* provisions concerning prohibited, restricted, dangerous and concealed weapons, and of penalties and other consequences of violating these provisions, the Advisory stated that:

"It is also in the best interests of your personal safety, that you not have any weapons, as the possibility of the weapon being taken away from, and used against you, is extremely high (Approximately 9 out of ten times.) You may inadvertently provide your assailant with a weapon that can be turned against you, whereas there may not have been a weapon involved in the first place."

Elements within the taxi industry in Winnipeg, however, have recently campaigned not only for more aggressive and effective enforcement of laws against "fare-jumping", but also for the right of taxi drivers to arm themselves with "pepper spray" as a defensive weapon against assaultive passengers (*Hard Copy - Transportation News*, 1994a & b). In the former instance, the campaign has met with some success. In 1993, in response to concerns expressed by industry representatives, the *Taxicab Act* was amended to increase the penalties for fare-jumping (from a maximum \$20 fine, to a maximum \$250 fine for a first offence and a maximum \$500 fine for a second or subsequent offence). The following year, after further representations from the industry, the Winnipeg Chief of Police issued a directive to members of the Winnipeg Police Department advising them of the new law and setting out new policies designed to make it more effectively enforceable (through a provincial offence notice issued on the scene).

The campaign to allow taxi drivers to carry "pepper spray" (which is currently a prohibited weapon under *Criminal Code* regulations) in their vehicles, has not been successful. Following the murder in March 1994 of a Flin Flon (Manitoba) on-duty taxi driver, an appeal was made to the federal Minister of Justice to promulgate an exemption for taxi drivers. In his response rejecting this request, the Minister of Justice argued that allowing "pepper spray" to be possessed by any class of private citizens would risk making them more easily available to "those who would obtain and use them for criminal purposes". The Minister also argued that such products are "particularly unsuited for use in confined spaces such as the inside of an automobile, where they are likely to disable everyone in close proximity, including the user." The Minister concluded with the general observation that "weapons are seldom useful in risk situations, and in many such cases, can actually increase the danger to everyone

involved" (letter from Allan Rock to Patrice McGrath, dated June 1st, 1994 - copy kindly provided to the author by the recipient).

Obtaining reliable statistics on various kinds of criminal victimizations and other hazards faced by taxi drivers has remained an elusive goal in Winnipeg as elsewhere. Assaults against taxi drivers, to the extent that they are reported to the police at all, are recorded by the police in a fashion which does not allow them to be identified from among the more general statistics on assault, and attempts to achieve a system which would allow for this have so far been unsuccessful. The city police, however, were able to provide some data concerning robberies of taxi drivers during the first six months of 1994. These data indicated that 13 such robberies, one of which involved theft of the taxi itself, had been reported to the police during this six-month period (a 14th reported occurrence appeared to be a case of "fare-jumping" rather than a robbery). These victimizations were spread roughly proportionately between drivers from the four taxi companies, half of them occurring during the months of May and June. Handguns had been used in three of these robberies, and knives in seven of them. Two had involved no weapon, and in the remaining case the police report did not indicate if a weapon had been involved. In most of the robberies, the driver had been robbed of \$50 or less, the smallest reported amount being \$20 and the largest being \$200. The police representative interviewed (who was also the Chief of Police's designate on the Taxicab Board) indicated a belief that such incidents have been increasing in recent years, but acknowledged that this belief could not be supported with hard statistics.

Although relations between the police and taxi drivers in Winnipeg were described as generally good by the police spokesperson interviewed, it was acknowledged that tensions do arise over the enforcement of parking and moving traffic violations. Attempts to establish a "Taxis On Patrol" program in Winnipeg in recent years have been unsuccessful, despite some initial support within the industry. Some influential voices within the industry strongly opposed the idea, largely on grounds that it would be bad for business and would expose drivers to risks of retaliation from criminals whom they had reported to the police. Attempts by the Taxicab Board to argue that such reservations were either inappropriate or ill-founded were to no avail.

Taxi drivers who have assisted police or citizens in distress have, on occasion, been honoured by the Winnipeg City Council in Citizen Appreciation ceremonies. These, however, have not been directed specifically towards the taxi industry.

### **3.3 Halifax/Dartmouth**

Although some taxi driver interviews were undertaken in the Dartmouth area, most of the more general information obtained during the study relates exclusively to the city of Halifax. The taxi industry is organized separately in the two cities, despite the fact that they are geographically contiguous and taxis frequently carry passengers

between one and the other. The recent decision to establish a regional government structure in this area is likely to have a very significant impact on the taxi industry and on the institutions through which it is regulated, but it was clear from interviews with key informants in Halifax that few of these issues have yet been fully thought through, let alone resolved.

In Halifax, the taxi industry is highly fragmented and, as one interviewee expressed it, "has grown like topsy" over the years. Over the last ten years, however, the numbers both of taxicabs and of drivers have dropped, partly as a result of the introduction of more stringent training standards, and partly as a result of other regulatory controls described below. At present, there are approximately 760 licensed taxi drivers in the city, and about 675 vehicle permits have been issued for taxis. A number of key informants expressed concern about these figures, suggesting that they indicate more taxis and more drivers than the local industry can sustain. Such concerns have evidently reached the licensing authorities, since a one-year moratorium on the issuance of additional taxi drivers' licences and taxi vehicle permits was imposed in September 1993, which has since been extended (following receipt of a consultants' report) to 1997. A recent discussion paper on this issue published by the licensing authority indicated that "local taxi operators have been petitioning for license limitation since 1960" (Halifax Tax Commission, 1994: 1).

The great majority of taxi drivers in Halifax are owner/operators. There were apparently 34 separate taxi "companies" in the city at the end of 1994; many of these are one-person operations, however, involving no more than a single owner/operator driving a single vehicle with the aid of a cellular telephone, answering service or pager. There are two large taxi brokerages, which provide dispatcher services to owner/operators, and between them manage almost 500 of the 675 licensed taxis. A smaller brokerage manages a further 15 cabs, and one company actually owns 55-60 taxis, employing drivers to drive some of them, while leasing others to drivers in several brokerages. Key informants stated that driver, owner and company turnovers have been very high in Halifax in recent years. In Dartmouth, which has a population of about 68,000, the number of licensed taxis is limited to 200, and there are approximately 140 licensed drivers.

The situation in Halifax was said by many key informants to have potentially negative implications for taxi driver safety. Such a low ratio of drivers to vehicles, combined with such a relatively large number of licensed vehicles (approximately one taxi for every 170 members of the population, compared for instance with a ratio in Metropolitan Toronto of 1:735), means that drivers must drive very long hours in order to get enough business to make a reasonable living (*Halifax Mail-Star*, 1994). The intense struggle for business, together with the very long hours, is considered by many to be a recipe for tensions, risk-taking and disputes with a potential for violence and injury.

Beyond the fact that over 90 percent of the taxi drivers in Halifax are men, and

that a substantial proportion of them are immigrants from Vietnam and the Indian sub-continent, the author was unable to obtain any detailed statistics concerning the demographic composition of the driver labour pool. Many key informants suggested, however, that the ascendancy of these ethnic immigrant groups within the industry in recent years has been the source of tensions within the industry, as well as between taxi drivers and their passengers, in a city which has only in recent years experienced significant immigration from these parts of the world and has had high rates of unemployment. Indeed, racism was a subject which was frequently mentioned in interviews. This important issue will be discussed further in a later section of this report.

There are two industry organizations in Halifax - the United Cab Drivers Association of Halifax and the Halifax Taxi Bureau Society, the memberships of which consist primarily of owner/operators and drivers. Although the Association and the Society, through their presidents, have been quite active in representing an industry position in many important debates (Halifax Taxi Commission, 1994; Lantz, 1994), many key informants suggested that the membership of both organizations is really too small for either to be considered truly representative of the industry as a whole.

Industry views are also canvassed in a newsletter-format publication, *The Rooflight*, which is published bi-monthly and is the official publication of the Halifax Taxi Bureau Society.

In Halifax, the taxi industry is regulated by the Halifax Taxi Commission, which is an instrumentality of the city government established pursuant to a city ordinance (Ordinance No. 116 respecting the Regulation of Vehicles Transporting Passengers For Hire). Day-to-day administration of the licensing system is the responsibility of an Inspector of Licenses, who is a city police officer appointed for this purpose by the Chief of Police.

The ordinance contains provisions concerning qualifications for license applicants as well as specifications for licensed vehicles, and the conduct of business by taxicab owners and drivers. The latter include requirements that a driver's clothing be "in a neat and tidy condition at all times", and that "every taxi...shall be kept clean, sanitary and in good repair at all times" (subsections 25 (1) and (7)). Another subsection stipulates that:

"A taxi...driver shall at all times in a public place conduct himself in an orderly manner, and he shall not be noisy. He shall govern himself by regulations made by the Chief of Police from time to time concerning the conduct of drivers and the manner in which they shall ply their calling at public places." (subsection 25(3))

The author was not shown any such regulations made by the Chief of Police; the

reference to regulations was apparently included as a proviso to cover any unforeseen situations not already covered in the Ordinance. A document issued by the Taxi Commission in May 1993, entitled "Guidelines - Licensing Standards", sets out general principles and a series of suspension tariffs to guide the Chief of Police, the Inspector of Licenses and the Taxi Commission itself, in exercising their authority with respect to the refusal, suspension or cancellation of licenses. All such decisions made by the Inspector or the Chief of Police are appealable to the Taxi Commission.

Resources for enforcement of the ordinance are considered quite inadequate (Halifax Taxi Commission, 1994: 6-7) - a view which was endorsed by a consultants' report on the industry in Halifax/Dartmouth in 1994 (Hara Associates, 1994: 12-19). Currently, one police sergeant (the Inspector of Licenses) supervises three officers in charge of enforcing by-laws of the City of Halifax, of which Ordinance 116 is only one. The enforcement officers are not themselves police officers, but members of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires. The Inspector and his staff apparently spend between 50 percent and 75 percent of their time between early March and the end of April each year enforcing the taxi by-law (*Ibid.*: 12). Each taxi is required to be inspected at least once a year. Other inspections and investigations are undertaken in response to complaints against taxi drivers, but these officers work only a day shift on weekdays, and random "spot checks" are typically undertaken only when time and resources allow. The police apparently hope that with regionalization, regulation of the taxi industry will pass from them to a civilian agency.

As in other jurisdictions already described, the taxi brokerages are not within the regulatory jurisdiction of the Taxi Commission or the Inspector of Licenses as such, since they are not technically in the business of providing taxi service (i.e., they do not operate taxis), but merely provide dispatch services. The 1994 consultants' report recommended that the brokerages be brought within the Taxi Commission's regulatory jurisdiction (*Ibid.*: 45-46), but this recommendation has not so far been adopted or implemented. Taxi brokerages do, however, have their own "rules and regulations" with which those who drive under their roof light are required to comply. For the most part, such rules are concerned with the technicalities of the orderly booking of fares, payments of fees, and relations between drivers and dispatchers, etc., and do not directly address issues of taxi driver safety and protection. Some, however, are undoubtedly relevant to such issues (i.e., a rule in one brokerage that drivers must report to the dispatcher when going on out-of-town calls).

The 13-member Halifax Taxi Commission is comprised of one city alderman (who serves as chair), two taxi drivers, two owners or managers of taxi brokerages, one limousine driver, one owner of a limousine rental agency, and six "citizens-at-large". The "citizens-at-large" must be people who have not been involved in the taxi or limousine industries within the preceding five years.

To obtain a taxi driver's licence new applicants have been required (since 1986) to pass a 24-hour driver education course (taught over 3 evenings), which was

apparently originally inspired by a course developed in Toronto, but was adapted specifically to suit conditions in Halifax. The course is taught by people active in the taxi industry, and I was told that approximately one to two hours of it are devoted specifically to issues of driver safety and risk awareness. A handbook which is used by those taking the course, however, indicates that issues of driver safety are addressed at several points in the material that is taught (Halifax Taxi Commission, 1993: 38-39, 42-44 and 65-66). Applicants for taxi driver licenses are also required to have completed a defensive driving course, and to have obtained a St. John's Ambulance First Aid Certificate (including C.P.R.).

In 1992, the Taxi Commission set up a subcommittee to review and upgrade the driver education course, but the work of this subcommittee (and the course itself) has been put on hold following the imposition of a moratorium on the issuance of new taxi driver licenses (Halifax Taxi Commission, 1994: 9-11). A new format for the training course has apparently been completed, however, and is ready to be implemented as soon as the moratorium is lifted. The new course will be approximately 80 hours long, and will cost prospective drivers approximately \$500, with limited seating.

As in other jurisdictions, there have been moves in Halifax to develop accreditation as well as enhanced training of taxi drivers. Recently, the impetus for such changes has come primarily from government tourism departments, rather than taxi licensing authorities, and the emphasis has been primarily on hospitality and public image rather than issues of safety or driver protection as such. Promoters of such standards, however, argue strongly that the two areas are directly related (i.e., that improvements in quality of service will lead directly to improvements in driver safety and protection). The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) participated with representatives of the taxi industry and of the Taxi Commission in a subcommittee of Tourism Halifax (a city government agency) in developing such minimum standards for the accreditation of taxi drivers. This initiative was undertaken in collaboration with comparable organizations in the Prairie provinces, and is part of a national network being developed under the auspices of the Canadian Tourism and Human Resource Council. Currently five Canadian provinces have adopted this program; when two more sign up, the program will be recognized as a Canada-wide standard.

In 1993, TIANS published "Occupational Standards" for taxi drivers in Nova Scotia (Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, 1993), which include standards relating to "Professionalism", "Customer Service" (including handling "difficult situations"), "Communication", "Safety" and "Monetary Transactions". These standards, however, have not yet been implemented in any substantive way (i.e., through a certification or accreditation program) in Halifax.

In April 1986, a taxi driver was stabbed to death while on duty in the Spryfield area of Halifax (*Chronicle-Herald*, 1986). The murder, which was thought to have involved a robbery of the driver, has remained unsolved. This was the only on-duty

homicide of a taxi driver in the region that any informants could recall. While the writing of this report was in progress, however, a taxi driver was severely beaten and stabbed to death during the early hours of a Sunday morning in a quiet residential area of Dartmouth. A seventeen-year-old male turned himself in to police on the following day and is now awaiting trial on a charge of murder. The president of the Dartmouth Taxi Association was quoted in the press saying that this was the only murder of a Dartmouth cab driver while on duty that he could recall (*Chronicle-Herald*, 1995). The motive for this crime remains unclear, as the victim's money was apparently not taken.

Key informants suggested that while driver safety and protection issues have frequently been the subject of discussions, and occasionally of particular initiatives, in Halifax, they have not had the same profile there as in some other jurisdictions such as Winnipeg. Most of these informants expressed some concern that assaults and robberies of taxi drivers (particularly those associated with the illegal drug trade) have increased in recent years but, as in other jurisdictions, none were able to cite any "hard evidence" of this. The police do not maintain statistics in a form which would allow such matters to be monitored in any systematic way, although they too shared the view that such incidents may have been increasing in recent years.

One of the more experienced informants suggested that although they occur throughout the year, crimes against taxi drivers in the Halifax-Dartmouth Region tend to be cyclical, with a particularly high prevalence in the early spring months of March and April, and that such outbreaks tend to occur in different parts of the region in different years.

Following the murder in 1986, the police and the taxi industry (through the Halifax Taxi Commission) set up a "Code 1" response system to be used when a taxi driver was under attack, if he or she could communicate with the dispatch office. As one informant described it, however, this system simply "fizzled out over time". Budget cuts to the police department, as well as a restructuring of police zones, during the latter years of the 1980's are said to have reduced the ability of the police to respond quickly to taxi driver emergencies. Compounding this situation was the fact that more and more drivers left the brokerages at this time to work independently. Many of these independent operators do not have in-car radios, so must rely on their own "street smarts" or on cellular phones to protect themselves.

In June 1986, the Halifax Taxi Commission endorsed the installation of flashing green emergency roof lights as a prudent safety measure. Apparently, few owner-operators took up this recommendation. An alternative proposal, put forward on several occasions by the Halifax Taxi Bureau Society, envisaged an emergency system similar to that used on ambulances, whereby the headlights, taillights and rooflight would flash, and the horn sound, when activated by a switch inside the vehicle. The system would only have been able to be deactivated by another switch located under the engine hood. This proposal was not endorsed, however.

The matter came to the fore again in 1991 when an Ontario-based company sought to market a "red alert" system, which involved an in-car button which caused the brake lights on the vehicle to flash alternately. There was quite a bit of interest in this system, but it was discovered that the provincial *Motor Vehicle Act* permitted installation of any system of flashing lights only on certain designated emergency vehicles such as ambulances, police cars, fire trucks and road maintenance vehicles. In December 1991 the Halifax City Council petitioned to have the legislation amended to allow such lights to be installed on taxis. This request was finally turned down by provincial authorities in April of 1993. Apparently the main reason given for such opposition was a concern that the lights would be abused by taxi drivers and used in circumstances (such as non-violent "fare-jumping") which were not real "emergencies".

A series of rather brutal attacks on drivers in the Halifax/Dartmouth area in March 1993 (all apparently motivated by robbery) , as well as the provincial government' s rejection of flashing lights for taxis, led the Taxi Commission to establish a sub-committee in August 1993 to consider alternative ways of enhancing taxi driver safety. By the end of 1994, however, this subcommittee had apparently not met.

Key informants stated that although the issue of safety shields had occasionally come up in Halifax, drivers there were generally "very opposed" to them, largely on the same grounds on which they have been opposed by drivers in other jurisdictions. It was suggested, however, that even without such opposition, the highly fragmented and competitive character of the industry in Halifax, combined with poor economic conditions, would ensure that substantial adoption of almost any safety device or measure which involves any significant expense would not be likely to occur unless it was made mandatory for all taxis.

In 1989, a "Taxis On Patrol" program was established in Halifax, which remained in effect for a brief period and had the support of at least one of the two largest taxi brokerages. It apparently rather quickly "fizzled out", however, as a result of a combination of lack of interest/participation and actual opposition from taxi drivers. Opposition was based on arguments similar to those put forward by opponents of the program in Winnipeg, as well as some personality conflicts and disagreements over "ownership" and emphasis of the program. Despite the fact that the program had been conceived as much as a means of improving responses to accidents and other emergencies, as a crime prevention or law enforcement initiative, it was, according to one informant, seen by some drivers as casting them in the role of being the "eyes and ears of the police". Those who promoted the program had intended that it include an awards program and ceremony for drivers and dispatchers who had made especially significant contributions to crime prevention or public safety. Attempts to revive the program in 1993 were apparently not successful, as most of the earlier disagreements and conflicts remained unresolved.

#### 4.0 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TAXI DRIVER SAMPLE

During the course of the study, 50 active drivers were interviewed at some length in each of the three cities. The interview schedule is reproduced as Appendix A to this report.

Since it was virtually impossible to obtain a random sample of taxi drivers for interview, interviewers were asked to select as wide a range of drivers (in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and driving experience) as possible.

**Table 3**      **Age Profiles of Drivers Interviewed (n= 150)**

18 - 29 years	12.7%
30 - 39 years	26.0%
40 - 49 years	37.3%
50 - 59 years	18.7%
60+ years	4.0%
Unspecified	1.3%

There is no way of knowing how accurately this age distribution matches the present age distribution of active taxi drivers generally in the three cities, as such data are not readily available. Data from the 1986 Canadian Census, however, indicate that of persons employed as “taxi drivers and chauffeurs” that year, 38 percent were between the ages of 15 and 34 years, 44 percent were between the ages of 35 and 54 years, and 18 percent were 55 years of age or older (Statistics Canada, 1989: 385) - an age profile which suggests a somewhat older workforce than the drivers we sampled. Unfortunately, comparable data from the 1991 Census have not been published, so we do not know whether the age profile of the general taxi driver workforce has been changing in any significant way during the last ten years.

For 83.3 percent (125) of the 150 drivers interviewed, driving a taxi was a full-time occupation. According to 1991 Census data, only 51 percent of “taxi drivers and chauffeurs” in Canada worked full-time during the full year in 1990 (Statistics Canada, 1993a: 34). For British Columbia this figure was 45 percent, for Manitoba it was 51 percent, and for Nova Scotia it was 55 percent (*Ibid.*: 270, 194 and 86 respectively). It seems likely, therefore, that part-time drivers were somewhat under-represented in our sample.

**Table 4**      **Length of Time Driving Taxis**

Length of Time Driving Taxis	%
6 months or less	6.7
6 months - 1 year	4.7
1 - 5 years	22.0
5 - 10 years	17.3
More than 10 years	49.3

In considering the incidences of criminal victimization reported by the driver respondents, therefore, it is important to bear in mind that many of the respondents had had quite lengthy careers as taxi drivers. In a survey of taxi drivers conducted in Metropolitan Toronto in 1989, 45 percent of respondents reported having been driving taxis for six years or more (Marshall, 1989). A survey of Winnipeg taxi drivers conducted in 1991 indicated that the average number of years driving of respondents was 12 years; only 29 percent of those surveyed responded to the questionnaire, however (Manitoba Taxicab Board, 1992).

Only 5.3 percent of the drivers who were interviewed were women - a proportion which key informants suggested is roughly comparable to the proportion of taxi drivers generally in the three cities who are women. Data from the 1991 Census, however, indicate that 93 percent of "taxi drivers and chauffeurs" in Canada in 1990 were males (Statistics Canada, 1993a: 34-35). In British Columbia this figure was 93 percent, in Manitoba it was 91.5 percent, and in Nova Scotia it was 95 percent (*Ibid.*: 270-271, 194-195, and 86-87 respectively). It is possible, therefore, that women drivers were slightly under-represented in this sample. On the other hand, there may be proportionately fewer women taxi drivers in large cities (i.e., because women may fear driving in such environments more than in centres with smaller populations or in rural areas).

One third (32.7 percent) of the respondent drivers had been born outside of Canada. One-half of these had been born in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh. No other area of the world was so substantially represented among those born outside of Canada, the remainder being more or less evenly divided between Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific and Far East, and Africa.

Of the 45 drivers who had immigrated to Canada and for whom this information was received, almost one-quarter (10) had come to Canada within the last five years, and a further one-third (15) had arrived here during the 1980s.

Sixty-eight percent (102) of the 150 driver respondents described themselves as "White". Almost one-fifth of the respondents (19.3 percent) described themselves as "South Asian" (i.e., from the Indian subcontinent). Five (3.3 percent) described themselves as "Black", and 5 as "East Asian". The remaining eight respondents who answered this question described themselves respectively as "Middle Eastern" (3), "Metis" (3), "African" (1) and

"Hungarian" (1). One respondent did not answer this question.

The 150 respondents to the driver interviews, therefore, represent a broad cross-section of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, from almost all the major regions of the world. It seems very likely, however, that "non-White" immigrant drivers are substantially under-represented in the sample. This was especially true of the Halifax sample, of which only 12 percent of respondents (compared with 42 percent in Winnipeg and in Vancouver) described themselves as being other than "White". Key informants in Halifax indicated that a significant (but unspecified) proportion of taxi drivers in that city are of Vietnamese origin, and interviewers there experienced considerable difficulties persuading Vietnamese drivers to participate in the study. Interviewers explained these difficulties as reflecting partly language and comprehension difficulties (on the part of interviewees and interviewers), and partly expressed fears or suspicions on the part of Vietnamese drivers who were approached to participate in the study. Future studies in this area, therefore, will have to address this issue better than this study was able, if genuinely representative samples of taxi drivers are to be achieved.

Two-thirds (67.3 percent) of respondents indicated English as their first language. Twenty-two (49 percent) of the 45 drivers who indicated that English was not their first language, identified Punjabi as their first language. Nineteen other languages were identified as the first languages of the remaining 23 drivers whose first language was not English. Data from the 1986 Census indicated that only 54 percent of "taxi drivers and chauffeurs" reported English as their "mother tongue" (Statistics Canada, 1989: 385). Unfortunately, comparable data from the 1991 Census have not been published. It seems very likely, however, that drivers whose first language is not English are substantially under-represented in this sample. As was explained previously, this resulted in part from the difficulties which were experienced in conducting interviews with some drivers whose first language was not English.

Drivers were asked a number of questions about other aspects of their work experience. The overwhelming majority of respondents (92 percent) had driven taxis only in the cities in which they were now working. Of the dozen drivers who had experience as taxi drivers elsewhere, all but two had only driven in other Canadian cities. One had been a taxi driver in New York City before coming to Vancouver, and another had driven taxis in Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Los Angeles, Florida and Hawaii before coming to Vancouver.

It was of interest to know if drivers tended to drive throughout the cities in which they worked, or whether some only plied their trade in particular areas of these metropolitan centres. As expected, given the current economic realities of the taxi business, all but 13 (8.7 percent) of the 150 drivers indicated that they drove in all parts of the cities in which they worked. As noted above, however, the structure of the industry in the Greater Vancouver Area (under which drivers are licensed for particular municipalities only), meant that many of the drivers there worked primarily in a single municipality, in terms of picking up fares. Only 6 of the 150 respondents (4 percent) cited danger, crime or concerns about personal safety as reasons for not driving in particular areas of the cities in which they worked.

Two-thirds of the respondents, however, indicated that there were areas of their cities

which they would prefer not to work in if they had the choice, and one-half of these (i.e., one-third of the total sample) cited concerns about crime, violence, danger or personal safety as reasons for this preference. One-quarter (17 percent of the total sample) cited concerns that fares would not be paid, or that they would be "ripped off" by customers. One-fifth cited concerns about drug dealing. The other main reasons cited were that drivers did not like the clientele in certain areas, or thought that certain areas generated less business.

Almost two-thirds of the drivers (64 percent) indicated that there are certain shifts which they do not work. Almost one-third (30 percent) indicated that they did not work day shifts (between 5 a.m and 4 p.m.), while 22 percent only worked this shift. About one-quarter (24 percent) indicated that they did not work evening shifts (4 p.m. to Midnight), while only one respondent said that he only worked this shift. Thirty-nine percent said they never worked the "graveyard" shift (Midnight to 5 a.m.), and none indicated that they only worked this shift. These data are consistent with information received from key informants suggesting that many drivers tend to be either "day drivers" or "night drivers". The main reasons given for not working particular shifts were economic (i.e., better business on evening shifts, or taxis not available to them during evenings) and lifestyle compatibility reasons, rather than any concerns about crime, personal safety, etc.

**Table 5      Distribution of Working Time Between Three Shifts**

Shift	Proportion of Working Time						
	%	None	1 - 25%	26 - 50%	51 - 75%	76 - 100%	No Answer
Day	%	30.0	13.3	8.7	5.3	28.0	4.7
Evening	%	24.0	8.0	40.7	21.3	2.0	4.7
Graveyard	%	38.7	22.0	32.7	2.0		4.7

Apart from their actual working patterns, two-thirds (68 percent) of respondents indicated that there are shifts they would prefer not to work, given the choice, and more than one-half of these indicated evening or night shifts in this connection. The main reasons cited for such preferences were concerns about crime and personal safety, and the belief that certain shifts generate more income.

Responses from the drivers confirmed what key industry informants had said about the long hours which taxi drivers work. Only 17 percent of the respondents indicated that they typically worked 40 hours or less per week. Fifty-two percent said that they typically worked more than 60 hours a week, and almost one-fifth (18.7 percent) said that they usually worked more than 80 hours a week.



## 5.0 EXPERIENCES OF CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION

The purpose of asking taxi drivers about their experiences of criminal victimization while on duty was to learn not only whether drivers had experienced various kinds of victimization, but also how frequent such experiences were. Recognizing that memory becomes less reliable as time passes, even after a traumatic event, drivers were first asked whether or not they had experienced various forms of criminal victimization *during the year preceding the interview*, and only if they answered “no” to this question were they asked whether they had ever experienced such victimizations prior to that (see Q. 10 in the Interview Schedule). The data obtained thus do not include all criminal victimizations ever experienced by the interviewees, but they do indicate what proportions of interviewees had experienced different forms of criminal victimization, and of these, what proportions had had such experiences during the twelve months preceding the interview.

As can be seen in the data summarized in the following table, “fare-jumping”, assaults and vandalism were the types of criminal victimization most commonly reported by respondents. Respondents were asked to give details of incidents occurring during the twelve months prior to the interview. These were recorded on separate “Incident Sheets” for each incident (see Appendix A). Time constraints allowed the interviewers to fill out not more than four interview sheets for each respondent, so not all of these incidents which were reported were recorded in detail. Of the 125 respondents for whom such sheets were filled out, 43 percent filled out one incident sheet, 22 percent filled out two, 19 percent filled out three, and 15 percent filled out four. These proportions did not vary significantly between the respondents in the three research sites. In all, therefore, the 150 respondents provided some details of 258 victimization incidents which had occurred within the twelve months preceding the interviews.

Almost all respondents (97 percent) reported have been victims of fare-jumping at some time during their taxi-driving careers, and 83 percent of them reported having been victimized in this way at least once during the last year. A majority (61 percent) reported having experienced such victimization more than twice during the last year.

While “fare-jumping” may be annoying and economically harmful for taxi drivers, the more physical hazards of taxi driving are indicated by the fact that 71 percent of respondents reported having been assaulted during their careers, and 20 percent reported that this had occurred more than twice during the preceding twelve months. Also, just over one-third of respondents (36 percent) reported having been robbed during their taxi-driving careers, and one-third of these reported that this had occurred during the last twelve months. The majority of those who reported ever having been assaulted reported that this had occurred more than once, while the majority of those who reported ever having been robbed reported that that had occurred only once.

**Table 6 Percentages of Taxi Drivers Reporting Having Experienced Various Forms of Criminal Victimization<sup>1</sup>**

Type of Victimization	Victimized during last 12 months		Victimized, but not during last twelve months
	Once or twice	More than once or twice	
	%	%	%
Robbery	10.0	2.0	24.0
Other theft	15.3	4.7	18.7
Theft of taxi	4.0		12.0
Assault	20.7	20.0	30.7
Vandalism	23.3	10.0	24.0
Fare-jumping	22.0	60.7	14.0
Hi-jacking	4.0		6.0
Other crime(s)	2.7	5.3	4.7

Overall, 98 percent of respondents reported having experienced some kind of criminal victimization at least once during their taxi-driving careers, and 90 percent reported having experienced at least one such victimization during the 12 months preceding the interview. If “fare-jumping” (which was experienced by 97 percent of respondents) is excluded from these figures, the study data reveal that 85 percent of respondents reported having experienced some form of criminal victimization other than “fare-jumping” at least once during their taxi-driving careers, and 60 percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced such victimization at least once during the preceding 12 months.

To place these data in context, it is worth comparing them with victimization data reported from the 1993 Canadian household victimization survey. In that survey, respondents (drawn at random from Canadian households) reported the following rates of personal victimization per 1,000 members of the population during the preceding twelve months: nine for robbery, 67 for assaults (not including sexual assaults), and 51 for theft of personal property (Gartner & Doob, 1994: 6 [Table 2]). Given that these are rates of victimizations rather than rates of persons victimized, and allowing for at least some cases of multiple victimizations of the same respondents, it will be evident that the rates of persons victimized per 1,000 members of the population would be somewhat lower than these figures.

<sup>1</sup> Notes: “Robbery” involves theft from the taxi driver’s person; “other theft” involves theft from the taxi, but not from the taxi driver’s person. “Assault” includes a physical attack, or threatened physical attack, against the taxi driver. “Vandalism” involves malicious damage to the taxi or its contents. “Fare-jumping” involves leaving a taxi without paying a fare which is owed. “Hi-jacking” involves forcing a taxi driver to drive somewhere against his or her will. Interviewees were asked not to include any single incident under more than one category. So an incident involving, for instance, a robbery, assault, and fare-jumping, would be recorded only under the most serious offence category (robbery). Researchers cannot be absolutely sure, however, that all of the interviewees scrupulously complied with this request. “Other crimes” which were reported included primarily various kinds of fraud (bad credit cards, n.s.f. cheques, etc.).

Translating this study's data into rates of taxi drivers victimized per 1,000 taxi drivers during the previous twelve months, would generate the following rates: 120 for robbery, 407 for assaults, and 200 for "other thefts". Overall, the 1993 Canadian household victimization survey suggested that 24 percent of respondents indicated that either they or a member of their household had experienced some kind of criminal victimization during the 12 months preceding the survey (*Ibid.*: 5 [Table 1]). Only 3.3 percent of respondents reported that they or a member of their household had experienced some kind of criminal victimization at work in the preceding 12 months (data provided by Statistics Canada from the General Social Survey #8 (1993)). By comparison, 60 percent of the respondents for this study indicated that they had personally experienced at least one criminal victimization other than "fare-jumping", *while working*, during the 12 months preceding our interviews with them. Clearly, then, the taxi drivers interviewed experienced very much higher rates of victimization than did members of the general public in Canada, since there is no reason to think that their households are not also included in the more general victimization rates revealed by the 1993 General Social Survey.

The incident sheets make it clear that the great majority of the victimization incidents reported by respondents as having occurred during the preceding twelve months were relatively minor in nature, the most common being "fare-jumping" incidents involving no injury to the driver and an income loss of less than \$40. Also common were petty thefts of personal effects of the drivers or equipment from the taxi (ashtrays, cigarette lighters, wallets, jackets, etc.) of relatively small value, and relatively minor assaults (scuffles, punches, threatening behaviour, etc.).

Twenty-three (15 percent) respondents reported an incident of victimization during the preceding twelve months in which a weapon had been used against them. Of the 258 victimizations during the preceding twelve months of which details were given, 27 (10.5 percent) were reported as having involved a weapon of some kind. In 3 of these incidents, the driver reported having been threatened with a gun; in 13, a knife was involved; in 4, drivers were attacked with bottles; in 3, with rocks; in 2, with baseball bats; in 1, with an ice pick; and in 1, with an hypodermic needle.

Seventeen percent of all respondents (20.5 percent of those for whom at least one incident sheet was filled out) reported at least one incident involving some personal injury to some person during the twelve months preceding the interview. Overall, 12 of the 150 drivers interviewed (8 percent) reported that they had experienced at least one incident during the preceding twelve months in which they personally had suffered some personal injury. The same number reported having experienced at least one incident during the preceding twelve months in which the person who had victimized them had suffered some kind of personal injury. Of the twelve drivers who reported having personally been injured as a result of a victimization during the preceding twelve months, 10 (83 percent) described their injuries as "minor" (i.e., cuts and bruises, etc.), and only one (8 percent) described his injuries as "major" (i.e., requiring hospital treatment). One of these drivers did not specify how serious his injury had been.

In fact, according to respondents, the alleged perpetrators in these violent incidents

seem to have come off rather worse than the victim drivers; respondents reported that 42 percent (5 out of 12) of the perpetrators who had suffered injuries during the course of these incidents, had suffered “major” injuries.

Economically more serious for the drivers were the frequently reported incidents involving vandalism to the taxi itself. Typically, these involved damage to doors, door handles, windows, rooflights, radiator grills, fenders, side panels, or seats of vehicles, and were inflicted by angry and/or intoxicated passengers or would-be passengers. The costs of such vandalism to the drivers, of course, would often arise not only from the direct costs of repairs or replacements, but also from potential business which would be lost while the taxi was out of commission being repaired. Such costs could thus easily run into the hundreds of dollars in some cases. In addition to these cases, several drivers reported damage to their cabs occurring as a result of objects (rocks, stones, bottles and in one case a bicycle) being thrown at their cabs, often by “kids”.

Reported victimization rates and patterns during the twelve months preceding the interviews varied significantly between the three cities in which interviews were carried out, with 82 percent of Halifax respondents reporting at least one such victimization, compared with 90 percent of respondents in Greater Vancouver and 98 percent in Greater Winnipeg. “Fare-jumping” incidents accounted for almost all of this variation, however.

Reported victimization did not vary significantly according to the length of time respondents had been working as taxi drivers. As might be expected, however, respondents who had been driving for longer periods were more likely to report ever having experienced some victimization other than “fare-jumping”; 53 percent of drivers who had been driving for one year or less reported such victimizations, compared with 79 percent of drivers with 1-5 years of experience, and 92 percent of drivers with more than five years’ experience.

Neither respondents who identified themselves as “non-white”, nor those who indicated that they had not been born in Canada, were significantly more likely than “white” respondents or respondents born in Canada to report having been victimized during the twelve months preceding the interview. This remained the case when “farejumping” was excluded from the analysis. Nor did the data reveal any significant correlations between reported victimization (including or excluding “fare-jumping”) and whether or not respondents indicated that English was their first language.

Of the 127 respondents with respect to whom incident sheets (relating to reported victimizations during the preceding twelve months) were filled out, only one-third (34 percent) indicated that they had ever reported any of such incidents to the police. This is consistent with what key informants repeatedly told the researcher, and of course points to the difficulty of obtaining any reliable data on the prevalence of victimizations of taxi drivers other than through research of this kind, and the inadequacies of police statistics (where they are available at all) in this regard.



## 6.0 MEASURES TAKEN TO PROTECT AGAINST CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION

Respondents were asked what protective devices their taxis were equipped with. The table on the following page indicates what percentages of the 150 respondents indicated that they had driven a cab during the preceding twelve months which was equipped with the listed devices:

**Table 7 Proportion of Respondents Driving Cabs Equipped with Various Protective Devices**

PROTECTIVE DEVICE	%
Two-way radio	96.7
Computerized dispatch/communications system terminal	44.7
Open microphone system on radio or terminal	20.0
Cellular phone	36.0
“Panic button” (to dispatcher)	47.3
Emergency flashing roof sign	34.0
Other emergency flashing light on cab roof	
Emergency flashing head and/or tail lights	5.3
Any other kind of alarm or siren in or on cab	4.0
Safety shield/screen between front and rear compartments of cab	0.7
Driver control of locks on all doors of cab	76.0
In-cab control of trunk lock	82.7
Lockable floor safe in cab	1.3
Advertisement/sticker indicating that limited amount of cash is carried in cab	20.0
Advertisement/sticker indicating participation in some kind of crime prevention program (e.g. Taxis on Patrol)	6.7
Driver carries weapon(s) in cab	31.3
Hand-held spray	10.7
Knife or sharp instrument*	7.3
Blunt instrument**	19.3
Martial arts weapon	--
Gun***	2.0
Other weapon	2.7
Emergency vehicle location system	0.7
Access to customer or address “blacklist”	44.7

\* Knives were most commonly specified in this category

\*\* Tire irons were most commonly specified in this category

\*\*\* Only hand guns were specified in this category

Respondents were given the opportunity to identify any other protective devices which cabs they had driven within the last twelve months might have been equipped with, but none did so.

Undoubtedly most noteworthy on this list is the fact that only one of the 150 cab drivers interviewed had driven a cab with any kind of safety shield or screen in it. This finding assumes even greater significance in light of the answers of respondents to another question (Q.11), which asked them to identify up to five “things, measures or strategies” which they thought might be most helpful in protecting cab drivers from becoming victims of crimes. It should be mentioned that respondents were asked this question *before* they were asked the question detailing specific protective devices just discussed; by doing so, we sought to ensure that their answers to the open-ended question would not be influenced by the content of the more specific one.

A wide range of “things, measures or strategies” were mentioned by respondents in response to this open-ended question. Thirteen percent of respondents mentioned only one; 21 percent mentioned two; 16 percent, three; 24 percent, four; and 20 percent, five. The remaining eight respondents (5.3 percent) either felt that they were unable to answer the question, or did not answer it for some other reason. As the following table indicates, however, the item mentioned by far the most commonly as helpful to protect drivers against criminal victimization was a safety shield, screen or cage in the cab.

**Table 8      Proportions of Respondents Mentioning Items as “Most Helpful” in Protecting Cab Drivers from Criminal Victimization**

	%
In-cab safety shields/screens/cages	34.7
Training/education	21.3
Emergency flashing roof light	21.3
More police co-operation	19.3
Screening passengers before accepting them	15.3
Communication skills	14.7
Common sense	14.0
Requiring passengers to pay before the ride	12.7
Pepper spray or “mace”	12.7
Emergency vehicle locating system	11.3
Code words for use in emergency communication	10.0

What this list seems to suggest is that, with the exception of safety shields and emergency flashing roof lights, respondents had little faith in hardware and technology as able to provide the best protection against criminal victimization. Rather, their priorities appear to have been to equip drivers themselves with various skills and “smarts”, to assist them to avoid or manage

threatening situations. As shall be noted below, this approach is consistent with much of the training taxi drivers currently receive with respect to driver safety. Whether it merely reflects, or in some way “validates”, such training is a difficult question to answer. It is discussed further in the conclusions to this report.

Four out of five (83 percent) respondents indicated that they thought that at least one protective device which would be helpful or very helpful, is nevertheless not currently used because of some understandable reasons. Just over one quarter (27 percent) of our respondents mentioned three such measures. While many different protective measures were referred to by respondents in this regard, only four were mentioned by more than 10 percent of respondents. These were: safety shields/screens (mentioned by 31 percent of respondents), Mace or pepper spray (mentioned by 25 percent), flashing dome lights (20 percent), and vehicle location systems (19 percent).

The reasons which were cited as to why these protective measures, despite their potential usefulness, are not used, are listed on Table 9.

Driver safety training constantly reiterates that drivers should not accumulate large amounts of cash in their cabs while working, and should keep what cash they do have out of plain view as much as possible. Respondents were asked how much cash they typically carry while working, and what would be the most amount of cash they would ever be likely to have in their cab. Twenty-eight percent said that they typically carry \$50 or less, 49 percent indicated more than \$50 but not more than \$100, 14 percent indicated more than \$100 but not more than \$200, and six respondents (4 percent) indicated amounts higher than \$200. Thirty-five percent indicated that they would never carry more than \$100 in the cab, 32 percent said they would never carry more than \$200, 15 percent said not more than \$300, and 7 percent said not more than \$500. Six respondents (4 percent) cited amounts ranging from \$600 to \$5,000. Asked how much cash they would usually accumulate in their cabs before making a cash drop-off, 41 percent of respondents indicated amounts of \$100 or less, and 26 percent indicated amounts of more than \$100 but not more than \$200.

Since it is estimated that taxi drivers typically earn between \$100 and \$200 per shift (Trudel, 1988), our data suggest that most drivers do not make more than one cash drop-off during a shift, and that many do not make any. Furthermore, the fact that only 2 (1.3 percent) respondents reported having driven a vehicle equipped with a lockable floor safe during the preceding twelve months, suggests that the cash that drivers do carry in the cab is typically relatively unprotected throughout their shift.

Almost all (97 percent) respondents indicated that they are able to accept taxi checks or credit cards in payment of fares. Almost one-half (49 percent), however, indicated that 10 percent or fewer of their customers pay in this way, and a further 30 percent indicated that about 25 percent of their customers do. Eleven percent said that 50 percent of their customers pay this way, and only 5 percent said that more than 50 percent do. Clearly, then, the overwhelming majority of the fares paid to respondents were paid in cash.

Respondents were asked whether they thought that the companies they work with took seriously enough the risks of criminal victimization which they face as taxi drivers. More than one-half of respondents (55 percent) said that they did not think their companies took such matters seriously enough, and only 29 percent said that they thought they did (13 percent said they did not know, and 3 percent did not respond to this question). Negative respondents were asked what they thought their companies should be doing that they are not currently doing. Some respondents did not feel able to make positive suggestions in response to this question. Many did, however, and the most commonly voiced suggestions were:

- Offer, and insist on, more or better training for drivers *and* dispatchers;
- Be more selective in whom they take on as drivers;
- Take responsibility for installing various safety devices in all their taxis (most commonly suggested were “panic buttons”, safety shields, vehicle location systems, better radio equipment, and open microphone systems), and either pay for these or offer to cost-share with drivers;
- Allow drivers to have cellular phones in their vehicles;
- Set up and maintain an effective system of code words for drivers to use in communicating with dispatchers in emergency situations;
- Develop and maintain better, more co-operative relationships with local police;
- Ensure that drivers are given better information about potentially hazardous customers, locations - maintain “blacklists” and make these readily accessible to drivers;
- Take more seriously drivers’ reports of problem driver, locations - pay more attention to drivers’ complaints;
- Be generally more supportive (“caring”) of drivers, particularly when they are in disputes with customers - insist that customers observe minimum standards of reasonable conduct;
- Be more “people-oriented” than just “profit-oriented” (as one driver succinctly put it: “All they want is money. They should care more about taxi drivers.”).

**Table 9 Reasons Cited why Potentially Useful Protective Measures are Not Used**

	Safety Shields %	Mace/Pepper Spray %	Flashing Dome Lights %	Vehicle Location Systems %
Legal Restrictions	1.4	70.5		
Not permitted by licensing body	1.4	15.9		
Not permitted by company/owner		2.3		
Too expensive	28.8	2.3	16.7	86.2
Bad for business	1.4			
Inconvenient for driver	24.7	4.5	2.8	
Inconvenient for passengers	26.0			
Everyone would have to do it and this can't be achieved	1.4		22.2	
Company would not pay for it	1.4		5.6	3.4
Lack of government support			5.6	
No completely suitable product				
Effectiveness uncertain	1.4	2.3	8.3	
Insufficient need	1.4			
Insurance problems	1.4			
"Politics" - would create bad image for the city	2.7			
Danger of misuse		2.3		
Apathy	1.4		25.0	
Other reasons	1.4		11.1	
n(100%) = <sup>2</sup>	73	44	36	29

<sup>2</sup> Percentages are percentages of all responses with respect to each measure.



## 7.0 DRIVER SAFETY/RISK AWARENESS TRAINING

Fifty-five percent of respondents said that they had had some formal taxi-driver training, but only two-thirds of these (37 percent of the total sample) recalled that such training had included anything about driver safety (from crime, etc.) or risk awareness. Of these, about one-third said that one or two hours of their formal training had been devoted to driver safety, 44 percent indicated longer periods (ranging from 3 to 50 hours!), and the remaining 25 percent could not remember.

Those respondents who said they could remember the content of this safety/risk awareness training - and several said they could not - mostly gave very similar accounts of it. From these accounts, it is clear that the most common themes of such training (or at least those most remembered by respondents) were: use common sense, intuition (“Trust your instincts”); stay alert; be careful whom you pick up, and where; don’t accept vague destinations; don’t display money or valuables or disclose that you have had a “good” (profitable) shift; don’t carry a lot of cash in your vehicle; communicate with, and be polite and respectful to your passengers, and make a mental note of salient details about them if you become suspicious; be wary of driving to poorly lit or deserted locations; try to keep calm if victimized; don’t try to resist attackers (“Don’t risk your life for a few dollars”); and report incidents to, and co-operate with, police. In fact, respondents’ answers to this question about the content of safety/risk awareness training they had received made it clear that a video on the subject recently prepared by the Montreal Urban Community’s Bureau du taxi very closely reflects the current typical content of such training. By way of illustration, therefore, a transcript of the script of this video is reproduced in Appendix E to this report.

Almost one-half (44 percent) of those who had received some formal driver safety and/or risk awareness training said that they did not think that this component of their training had been adequate. The two most common themes in response to a question about how such training might be improved, however, were to the effect that driver safety cannot be effectively taught in the classroom but can only be learned through experience on the job, and that active taxi drivers (rather than police or taxi regulators) - and preferably those who have actually experienced victimizations - should be more involved in such training. Another theme was that such training should emphasize actual specific situations and how to handle them, rather than more general, abstract principles of prevention and protection. Several respondents advocated a greater use of videos, and many emphasized that training of dispatchers is just as important for improving the safety of drivers as training of drivers themselves.

Three-quarters of the respondents thought that *all* taxi drivers should receive such safety/risk awareness training. Ten percent felt that only new drivers should receive it. Those who reported having received such training, however, were not significantly less likely to report having been victimized at least once during the preceding twelve months than those who did not report having received such training. This remained true even when victimization through “fare-jumping” (which almost all respondents had experienced) was excluded.



## **8.0 EXPERIENCES OF WITNESSING AND RESPONDING TO CRIME AGAINST (OR INVOLVING) OTHERS**

Sixty-one percent of respondents reported having witnessed offences committed inside their cabs, or involving their passengers, other than crimes against the drivers themselves or their cabs. Most commonly mentioned in this regard were drug offences (49 percent), liquor violations (42 percent), assaults (36 percent) and soliciting or prostitution (17 percent). Possession of stolen property was also mentioned (5 percent). Only one driver mentioned weapons offences.

Four out of five respondents (79 percent) said that they had witnessed offences being committed outside their cabs, not directly related to them or their cabs. Most commonly mentioned in this connection were assaults of various kinds (59 percent), drug offences (37 percent), traffic offences (28 percent), liquor offences (22 percent), impaired driving (19 percent) and soliciting or prostitution (13 percent).

A question about how frequently such events had been witnessed during the twelve month period preceding the interview elicited the responses recorded on Table 10. These responses suggest that most of these events are rarely or never witnessed by most taxi drivers, but that a significant minority of drivers witness some of them quite frequently. Those drivers who said they had witnessed such events were asked if they ever reported them to the police. Responses to this question are recorded on Table 11. That table, however, includes only the responses of those who said that they had witnessed such events during the last twelve months, and who also responded to this question. The numbers of respondents who fulfilled these criteria (and the proportion they represent of all respondents) are indicated on the table in brackets for each of the separate categories of events.

These responses indicate clearly that most respondents who witnessed such events either rarely or never reported them to the police. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that only one-half of those respondents who had witnessed an attack or robbery and answered this question, indicated that they usually or always reported it to the police, and that less than ten percent of those who witnessed crimes occurring in their cabs said that they usually or always reported them. Even attacks or threatened attacks on other cab drivers (witnessed by more than one-half of the respondents) were usually not reported to the police by the cab drivers who witnessed them.

A variety of reasons was given by respondents as to why such matters are not always reported to the police, some of which were quite specific to the type of event witnessed. The main reasons mentioned are summarized in Table 12.

**Table 10**      **Frequency with which Selected Events Witnessed by Taxi Drivers During Previous Twelve Months**

	FREQUENCY							
	Never	Once or twice	3 - 5 times	5 - 10 times	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day/night	Several times a day/night
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A crime occurring in your cab (other than a crime against you or your cab)	46.0	14.7	7.3	8.0	6.7	10.7	2.7	1.3
Been asked by someone you thought was a criminal to drive him or her somewhere	42.7	15.3	5.3	4.0	8.0	10.7	8.7	1.3
Seen someone suspicious who you thought might be about to commit a crime	46.7	18.7	6.0	3.3	7.3	5.3	8.0	1.3
Seen, or been asked to assist someone being attacked or robbed or fleeing from an attack or robbery	70.7	22.0	4.0	0.7	1.3			
Seen, or been asked to assist a police officer being attacked or about to be attacked	92.0	5.3	1.3					
Seen, or been asked to assist another taxi driver who was being, or was about to be, attacked or robbed	42.0	23.3	10.7	6.7	4.7	6.0	5.3	
Witnessed any other crime in progress	69.3	12.7	2.7	2.7	3.3	3.3	2.7	1.3
Been asked for assistance by any member of the public who has been the victim of a crime	62.7	26.0	2.7	0.7	4.7	0.7		
Been asked for assistance by a child, senior citizen or disabled person who was lost or in distress	62.0	24.7	3.3	4.0	1.3	2.0		

**Table 11**      **Frequency with Which Selected Events Witnessed by Taxi Drivers Were Reported by Them to the Police**

	Never	Not Ususally	Usually	Always
	%	%	%	%
A crime occurring in your cab (other than a crime against you or your cab) (74 - 49%)	77.0	13.5	4.1	5.4
Been asked by someone you thought was a criminal to drive him or her somewhere (69 - 46%)	87.0	10.1	1.4	1.4
Seen someone suspicious who you thought might be about to commit a crime (66 - 44%)	66.7	9.1	13.6	10.6
Seen, or been asked to assist someone being attacked or robbed or fleeing from an attack or robbery (42 - 28%)	35.7	14.3	19.0	31.0
Seen, or been asked to assist a police officer being attacked or about to be attacked (13 - 9%)	46.2	7.7	23.1	23.1
Seen, or been asked to assist another taxi driver who was being, or was about to be, attacked or robbed (80 - 53%)	41.3	28.8	11.3	18.8
Witnessed any other crime in progress (43 - 29%)	48.8	14.0	18.6	18.6
Been asked for assistance by any member of the public who has been the victim of a crime (47 - 31%)	40.4	25.5	23.4	10.6
Been asked for assistance by a child, senior citizen or disabled person who was lost or in distress (48 - 32%)	37.5	20.8	25.0	16.7

**Table 12 Reasons Given for Not Reporting Matters to the Police**

<b>Type of Event Witnessed</b>	<b>Reasons Most Frequently Given for Not Reporting</b>
A crime occurring in your cab (other than a crime against you or your cab)	Not my business/don't want to get involved Police won't do anything about it/too slow to respond Would cost me too much time/money Concern for personal safety/fear of revenge No need to report/problem already solved/not serious enough
Been asked by someone you thought was a criminal to drive him or her somewhere	Won't report on basis of mere suspicion Not my business/don't want to get involved Concern for personal safety/fear of revenge
Seen someone suspicious who you thought might be about to commit a crime	Won't report on basis of mere suspicion
Seen, or been asked to assist someone being attacked or robbed or fleeing from an attack or robbery	Already reported, or should be reported, by someone else No need to report/problem already solved/not serious enough
Seen, or been asked to assist a police officer being attacked or about to be attacked	No need to report/problem already solved/not serious enough Police too slow to respond Costs too much time/money Already reported, or should be reported, by someone else Only report if asked to/depends on the situation
Seen, or been asked to assist another taxi driver who was being, or was about to be, attacked or robbed	Other cab drivers already assisting Report to dispatcher rather than police Already reported, or should be reported, by someone else No need to report/problem already solved/not serious enough
Witnessed any other crime in progress	Not my business/don't want to get involved Police won't do anything about it/too slow to respond
Been asked for assistance by any member of the public who has been the victim of a crime	Only report if asked to/depends on the situation Already reported, or should be reported, by someone else No need to report/problem already solved/not serious enough
Been asked for assistance by a child, senior citizen or disabled person who was lost or in distress	No need to report/problem already solved/not serious enough

## 9.0 CONTRIBUTIONS TO CRIME PREVENTION, MAINTENANCE OF ORDER AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Respondents were asked a number of questions to try to ascertain to what extent, if at all, they may have contributed to crime prevention, order maintenance or law enforcement during their working hours.

Seventy-one (47 percent) respondents recalled having been asked for assistance by police officers while at work during the twelve months preceding the interview. One-half of these had only had this experience once or twice during this period. A significant minority of respondents (13 percent), however, reported this as quite a common experience (once or twice a month, or more frequently). Those who had experience of this were asked to describe the last such request they had received. Almost all of the requests described concerned efforts to locate missing persons or suspects, or stolen vehicles.

Forty-five (30 percent) respondents stated that they had, during the last twelve months, while working, reported to the police the license plate number or description of a motor vehicle which they had seen being driven dangerously or illegally. Most (53 percent) of these had only done so once or twice during this period.

Less than one-half (40 percent) of the respondents reported having called for the police or other emergency services to respond to a road accident in which they had not been involved, while working during the preceding twelve months. Most (85 percent) of these had done so five times or fewer during that period, and more than one-half (58 percent) of them had done so only once or twice.

Two-thirds of respondents said that there are other things that taxi drivers do which contribute to crime prevention, maintenance of order or law enforcement, and 84 percent of these respondents said that they themselves do such things. Most commonly cited in this regard were: reporting things they see (drunk, dangerous and hit-and-run drivers, suspicious persons/incidents, fires, accidents, actual and potential break-ins, etc.) to the police; and sitting/parking their cabs near convenience stores (which drivers feel acts as a deterrent against robberies, "trouble from youths", etc.). Many drivers, in fact, suggested that the mere presence and visibility of taxis on the streets serves as a deterrent against criminal and other anti-social activity. There is some inconsistency in the responses given to this question and those given to questions discussed earlier, however, since it will be recalled that most respondents reported either never or rarely having witnessed such things during the preceding twelve months, and most of those who had witnessed them indicated that for various reasons they had not reported them to the police.

More than one-half (54 percent) of the respondents said that they thought that there are other things which would contribute to crime prevention, order maintenance or law enforcement, that taxi drivers in their city do *not* do while on duty, but which they might be willing and able to do if given appropriate encouragement and support. More than three-quarters (76 percent) of the respondents who thought this said that they would be willing to do such things. Most commonly cited in this regard were: reporting more of what they see to

police and other authorities; and not allowing their cabs to be used for the purposes of criminal or prostitution-related transactions. Those respondents who said that they would not be willing to do such things mostly cited fear of retaliation/victimization and possible loss of business as reasons for such reluctance.

In fact, when specifically asked, just over one-half (54 percent) of respondents said that they thought that there were reasons why taxi drivers should not be involved in such activities. The overwhelming majority of respondents who thought this cited fears about personal safety/reprisals and/or possible loss of business (because of time “wasted” and/or mistrust by potential clients) as the reasons for their views. Several respondents also expressed the view that taxi drivers are not adequately trained to engage in such (risky) activities (“We’d get ourselves into trouble”), and/or that it is “not our job” to do such things.

## 10.0 RELATIONSHIPS WITH TAXI COMPANIES AND POLICE WITH RESPECT TO MATTERS OF CRIME AND PERSONAL SAFETY

Many respondents expressed opinions which suggested that they did not have a very high regard for the companies with which they worked when it came to matters of crime and personal safety. As already noted, more than one-half (55 percent) of the respondents felt that their companies do not take seriously enough the risks of criminal victimization which they face in their day-to-day work.

Only one-half (51 percent) of respondents thought that the companies with which they work would be willing to support or encourage greater driver participation in crime prevention, order maintenance or law enforcement-related activities. The main reasons cited for companies' reluctance to support such participation were that "they don't really care", "time is money", "they're running a business, not the police station", and that the structure of the industry leaves companies with little opportunity to influence (independent owner) drivers in such matters. Two-thirds (67 percent) of the respondents, however, thought that their local police would be willing to support or encourage greater taxi driver participation in such activities.

When respondents were questioned about relations between taxi drivers and the police, the responses received suggested that their views of these relations may be influenced more by industry "folklore" than by personal experience. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being "very bad" and 5 being "very good"), just over one-third (37 percent) rated relations between taxi drivers generally and the police in their city as mediocre (i.e., in the middle of the scale). A further 23 percent rated them as "bad", and 9 percent as "very bad". Only 28 percent rated them as "good" (18 percent) or "very good" (10 percent).

When respondents were asked to rate *their own personal* relations with the police in their city, however, their ratings were much more positive; more than one-half (55 percent) rated them as "good" (28 percent) or "very good" (27 percent). One-quarter (25 percent) rated their own relations with police as mediocre, while only 11 percent rated them as "bad" and 7 percent as "very bad".

Such apparently contradictory findings are not uncommon in social science research (LaPrairie, 1994: 68-70, concerning inner city Natives' views of police), and have been explained as examples of how cultures are "constructed" out of tropes, or "war stories", rather than on the basis of personal experiences (Shearing & Ericson, 1991). An understanding of this process has important implications for policy (i.e., for strategies to improve police/taxi driver relations), which will be discussed further in the concluding section of this report.

Those respondents who characterized taxi driver/police relations as bad or very bad mostly attributed this to what they characterized as over-zealous or insensitive traffic enforcement against taxi drivers by police, and/or to the fact that problems (including victimizations) which taxi drivers face are not priorities for police unless they are very serious or a weapon is involved. Many respondents expressed the view that police are too slow in

responding to calls for assistance by taxi drivers, and/or do not take their victimizations (especially “fare-jumping”) seriously enough. Other respondents, however, while acknowledging the validity of such concerns, were more willing to excuse the police on the ground (as they saw it) that they are overworked, under-resourced and overwhelmed by “more serious” demands for their services, making it unrealistic to expect them to be able to give priority to “relatively minor” victimizations of taxi drivers, about which they can often not do very much anyway.

Another view which was expressed by several respondents was that police do not respect taxi drivers, considering them to be “lowlife” (a view similar to that which emerged from research on police attitudes towards private security guards in Canada (Shearing *et al.*, 1985)). Interestingly, several respondents expressed the view that relations with younger, less experienced police officers were often more of a problem for taxi drivers than relations with more seasoned officers. This is a view which has been reported in other recent Canadian research on public attitudes towards the police (LaPrairie, 1994: 66).

## 11.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This has been a preliminary study of matters which have hitherto been the subject of little or no systematic empirical research in Canada. Results must therefore be treated with caution, recognizing the limitations of the study. Most important of these were that: (1) only three cities were involved; (2) neither of the two largest metropolitan areas in Canada was included; (3) “non-White” drivers, born outside Canada, whose first language was not English were almost certainly under-represented in the study sample (and especially in the Halifax sample); (4) data collected include only limited information about the specific details of incidents reported by respondents; and (5) such details as were captured refer only to incidents occurring within the twelve-month period preceding the interviews. Some implications of these limitations for possible future research in this area are discussed later in this section of the report.

Despite these limitations, the data obtained through the study provide some important new information concerning the matters studied, as well as providing some more systematic empirical evidence about matters which have hitherto only been the subject of anecdotal and more impressionistic knowledge within the taxi industry. As such, it will provide an important benchmark of information against which future studies in this area in Canada can be undertaken.

The study focused on four main areas of inquiry: (A) criminal and other victimizations of taxi drivers; (B) measures which taxi drivers take, and measures which they think may be useful, to protect themselves against such victimizations; (C) the extent to which taxi drivers witness criminal and emergency incidents, and can and do participate in activities which contribute to crime prevention, law enforcement and/or public safety; and (D) relations between taxi drivers and the police.

The principal findings of the study with respect to these four areas of inquiry are summarized below.

### 11.1 Victimization of Taxi Drivers

- Taxi drivers are a highly victimized occupational group in Canada. Overall, their victimization while at work may be as high as twenty times that of Canadians generally.
- “Fare-jumping”, vandalism and minor assaults are the forms of victimization most commonly experienced.
- Almost all taxi drivers experience “fare-jumping”. Sixty-one percent of respondents reported having experienced such victimization more than twice during the twelve month period preceding interviews with them.

- Eighty-five percent of respondents reported having experienced some form of criminal victimization other than “fare-jumping” at least once during their taxi-driving careers, and 60 percent reported having experienced such victimization at least once during the twelve months preceding the interview.
- Just over one-third (36 percent) of respondents reported having been robbed at least once during their taxi-driving careers, and one-third of these reported that this had happened to them during the preceding twelve months.
- Most victimizations which taxi drivers experience are relatively minor in nature, in the sense that they involve little or no personal injury to the driver or anyone else, and relatively minor (less than \$40) economic loss. A small proportion of victimizations, however, result in personal injury and/or substantial economic loss.
- According to respondents’ accounts, perpetrators of these victimizations are injured as often, and often more seriously, than are the driver victims.
- A significant proportion (15 percent) of respondents reported having had a weapon used against them in the course of a victimization during the preceding twelve months. Weapons were involved in about ten percent of the victimizations described in detail by respondents. Knives were the weapons most commonly reported. Much less commonly reported were bottles, rocks and guns.
- Notwithstanding the relatively minor nature of most victimizations of taxi drivers, as a group they face a disturbingly high rate of occupational homicide, according to official homicide data released by Statistics Canada for the early years of this decade. This rate may be as much as four or five times as high as that faced by police officers while on duty; precise calculations have not been made, however, due to inadequate information about the numbers of active taxi drivers at risk.
- While drivers with longer driving experience were more likely to report ever having been victimized during their driving careers, they were not significantly more or less likely to report victimizations during the twelve months preceding the interviews than were less experienced drivers.
- Those respondents who indicated that they had received formal training in driver safety/risk awareness did not report having been victimized during the twelve months preceding the interviews less frequently than drivers who indicated that they had not received such training.
- No significant correlations were found between reported experiences of victimization and whether respondents identified themselves as “white” or as “non-white”, whether they indicated they had been born in Canada or not, or whether they indicated that English was or was not their first language.
- Most victimizations of taxi drivers are not reported to the authorities, and do not result in any criminal proceedings or compensation for the driver victims. The

reasons for not reporting are primarily that: (i) victimizations are not considered by the victims to be serious enough to warrant being reported; (ii) in many cases drivers do not believe that police, if called, would be able to do anything very useful in response; and (iii) drivers are concerned that the length of time involved in cooperating with a police response will cause them further loss of business without commensurate benefits.

- As a result, police statistics on victimizations of taxi drivers - to the extent that they are available at all, which is not the case in many jurisdictions - do not currently constitute a reliable measure of the extent of these phenomena, or an adequate basis for devising effective policy responses to them.

## **11.2 Measures to Protect Taxi Drivers Against Victimizations and Their Consequences**

- Most respondents had driven taxis during the preceding year which were equipped with one or more devices designed to protect them against victimizations and/or make it easier for assistance to reach them in the event that such victimizations occurred. Most commonly reported were: two-way radios; in-cab control of trunk locks; driver control of locks on cab doors; “panic buttons” to connect driver to the dispatcher; computerized dispatch/communications system terminal; access to customer or address “blacklists”; and possession of a weapon (mostly tire irons) in the cab.
- In-cab safety shields, screens or cages, training and education, emergency flashing rooflights, increased police co-operation, and screening passengers before accepting them, were the measures most commonly cited by our respondents as being potentially helpful to protect them against victimizations and their effects.
- A substantial majority of respondents identified protective measures which they thought might be helpful or very helpful to protect taxi drivers against victimizations or their consequences, but which are not used because of what they thought were understandable reasons. Most commonly cited in this regard were: safety shields/screens, Mace or pepper spray, flashing dome lights and vehicle location systems. Excessive costs, legal restrictions, inconvenience for passengers and/or drivers, apathy and inability to achieve universal application were the most commonly cited reasons for such non-use.
- Most respondents indicated that they routinely carry \$100 or less in cash while driving their cabs. The data suggest that most respondents do not make more than one cash drop-off per shift, and that many do not make any. Only two of the 150 respondents reported having driven a cab equipped with a lockable money safe during the year preceding the interviews.
- Although almost all respondents indicated that they were able to accept taxi chits or credit cards in payment of fares, their responses indicated that the overwhelming

majority of their fares are paid in cash.

- More than one-half (55 percent) of respondents indicated that they did not think that the companies with which they worked took seriously enough the risks of criminal victimization which they face as taxi drivers. A wide range of suggestions were made as to what companies ought to be doing in this regard which they are not currently doing.
- Data from “key informants”, as well as from the driver interviews, make it clear that the structure of the taxi industry (especially the predominance of owner-operators and “independent contractors”, and what is perceived to be an over-supply of taxis and drivers in some markets), tight economic conditions, and doubts about the effectiveness and/or suitability of many suggested protective devices, combine to constitute the main obstacles to greater use of protective technologies within the taxi industry.
- Systematic evaluative research on the effectiveness of protective technologies for taxi drivers is largely inconclusive or non-existent. Such research as does exist refers largely to urban environments in the United States and is doubtfully applicable in the Canadian context.
- Only just over one-third (37 percent) of respondents recalled having received any formal training concerning taxi driver safety and/or risk awareness, and nearly one-half (44 percent) of these said that they did not think it had been adequate. The most common complaints in this regard were that trainers themselves did not have enough experience of victimizations, and that training was too abstract, not focussing enough on specific types of situations and how to handle them. Many respondents expressed variants of the view that these are not matters which can be adequately learned in a classroom.
- Formal training of taxi drivers on matters of driver safety and risk awareness tend to emphasize individualistic behavioural characteristics of taxi drivers as both the generating source of, and the key to effective prevention of and response to, victimizations. Broader structural explanations for such victimizations, as well as the potential of technology and design and structural changes within the taxi industry as a whole as means of responding to such problems, often tend to be downplayed in such presentations. What little systematic research has so far been published on the victimization of taxi drivers (Brandau, 1986; Holston, 1994; and Stone *et al.*, 1995) does not provide strong support for such an approach.

### **11.3 Crime Prevention, Law Enforcement and Public Safety Contributions of Taxi Drivers**

- Most respondents indicated that they had witnessed various kinds of offences and public safety hazards both inside and outside their cabs while working. The most

commonly mentioned incidents in this regard were drug offences, liquor offences, traffic offences, assaults, impaired driving and prostitution-related offences.

- While most respondents reported witnessing such events rarely, a significant minority of drivers reported witnessing them frequently.
- Most respondents who reported having witnessed such events indicated that they rarely or never reported them to the police. The main reasons given for such non-reporting were: that the problem was not serious enough to be reported, or had already been resolved; that reporting would take up too much of the driver's time, thereby costing him or her money; that the driver did not feel it was his or her business or did not want to get involved; that the matter had already been reported, or should have been reported, by someone else; and that the police would not do anything about it, or would be too slow to respond.
- Almost one-half (47 percent) of respondents recalled having been asked for assistance by police officers while at work during the twelve months preceding interviews with them. While most reported that this was not a common occurrence, a significant minority (13 percent) reported that this had occurred once or twice a month or more frequently. Almost all of the requests described concerned efforts to locate missing persons or suspects, or stolen vehicles.
- Almost one-third (30 percent) of the respondents reported that they had reported bad or dangerous driving by other drivers to the police within the preceding twelve months.
- Two-thirds of respondents identified other things which taxi drivers do which, in their view, contribute to crime prevention, law enforcement or public safety. Most of these involved reporting various things to the authorities, or deterring various anti-social acts by their visible presence on the streets.
- More than one-half (54 percent) of respondents thought that with appropriate encouragement and support, taxi drivers could and would do more to contribute to crime prevention, law enforcement or public safety in their communities. On the other hand, the same proportion thought that there were reasons why taxi drivers should not be involved in such activities.
- Formal programs to involve taxi drivers in crime prevention, law enforcement or public safety (such as "Taxis on Patrol") had not been successfully established and maintained in any of the three cities in which the study was undertaken, and in two of them attempts to do so had met with some quite vocal opposition from some taxi drivers. Experience with such programs in Canadian cities has not been very encouraging; driver participation in them has tended to be very low, and in many cases such programs have simply "fizzled out" after a short time. Poor economic conditions, inadequate relations between taxi drivers and the police, misunderstandings and suspicions about the purposes and sponsorship of such programs, and fears that participation in them will be "bad for business" because

drivers will be perceived as informants for the police, have all been cited as possible explanations for program failures. Only seven percent of the drivers interviewed indicated that they had driven a cab displaying a sticker indicating participation in such a program during the preceding twelve months.

- Only one-half (51 percent) of respondents thought that the companies they work with would be willing to support or encourage greater driver participation in crime prevention, order maintenance or law enforcement-related activities. Costs, lack of interest and lack of influence over owner-drivers under the current industry structure were primarily cited as explanations for companies' reluctance to support such activities. By contrast, two-thirds of respondents thought that the police would be supportive of greater driver participation in such matters.

#### **11.4 Relations Between Taxi Drivers and the Police**

The study did not explore this matter in great depth. In addition to those findings related to it which have already been mentioned, the following findings are worthy of note:

- A majority of respondents rated relations between taxi drivers generally and the police in their communities as mediocre, bad or very bad. Only 28 percent rated them as good or very good.
- A majority of respondents (55 percent), however, rated their own personal relationships with the police in their communities as good or very good. Only 18 percent rated them as bad or very bad.
- The principal reasons cited for bad relations between taxi drivers and the police were: over-zealous or insensitive traffic enforcement against taxi drivers by police; the belief among taxi drivers that problems (including victimizations) which taxi drivers face are not priorities for police unless very serious or a weapon is involved; and the view that police are too slow in responding to calls for assistance by taxi drivers and/or do not take their victimizations seriously enough. A lack of respect for taxi drivers on the part of police officers was also mentioned by several respondents, many of whom indicated this as a particular problem with younger officers.

#### **11.5 Conclusions**

The high rates of victimization of taxi drivers indicated by the findings of this study certainly call for some further exploration. As noted at the outset of this report, these findings are consistent with research findings from many other countries. A wide variety of explanations have been offered to account for these high rates of victimization. Most common are those which emphasize that taxi drivers are "easy

targets” who are required, both by law and by the economic pressures of the taxi business, to work in high risk areas and with some high risk clientele. In this sense, the occupation of taxi driver bears some resemblance to that of police officer, although of course the legal obligation of the latter to have dealings with high risk individuals is even greater.

Other more structural explanations focus on general characteristics of the taxi driver labour pool. Thus, it has been suggested that the high proportion of relatively new immigrants, often coming from societies with very different cultural traditions concerning personal interactions etc., most of whom are members of visible minority groups, and many of whom have a relatively poor command of the English language and inadequate knowledge of the geography of the areas in which they work, constitutes a potent recipe for conflict leading to victimizations. While such explanations have been popular within the taxi industry, however, and are frequently emphasized in taxi driver training curricula, they have so far been subjected to little systematic research as to their validity. Clearly, the present preliminary investigation does not go far enough in testing the validity of such explanations. It is noteworthy, however, that despite its limitations - in particular the fact that drivers whose first language was not English were almost certainly under-represented in the sample - the study findings do not lend much support to such explanations. Specifically, no significant correlations could be found between reported victimization and whether respondents were “white” or “non-white”, whether they were born in Canada or not, or whether English was their first language. It is possible, of course, that a study which more effectively tapped into the experiences of non-English-speaking, visible minority immigrant drivers might come up with different results.

Many explanations for high victimization among taxi drivers, and many instructions to taxi drivers as to how to avoid victimizations, however, focus more on individual behavioural characteristics of the drivers themselves. In this connection, discussion of characteristics such as personal appearance, manner, demeanor, “attitude”, attire, personal hygiene and cleanliness, self-control, and the ability to “stay alert”, use “common sense” and “trust one’s instincts” constitute the standard content of much taxi driver safety training. Related to these is a whole range of recommended business practices (such as limiting the amount of cash carried in the cab, not accepting vague destinations, asking for payment up-front, reporting in before going on out-of-town trips, avoiding poorly lit streets, backing into cul-de-sacs, etc.). The implication, of course, is that if drivers behave in the appropriate manner, project the right image and follow the recommended procedures, they will reduce their risks of victimization. Again, however, while such beliefs are undoubtedly a widely accepted part of the folk wisdom within the taxi industry, they have been subjected to little systematic examination as to their validity. The present study, being a very general preliminary survey, adds little in this regard, and a much more focussed observational study would be required to adequately test the validity of such propositions. It must be noted, however, that the only published study in which such systematic research was attempted (Brandau, 1986) failed to find evidence confirming these kinds of explanations.

What is very clear, especially from interviews with “key informants”, however, is that even if these propositions are valid, promotion and implementation of the recommended behaviours through “professionalization” of the taxi industry faces very substantial structural obstacles. Chief among these are the current economic climate within which the industry operates and, related to this, the structure of the industry itself. Specifically, the reality of the current economic situation requires drivers to work extremely long hours in order to make a relatively poor income. This was confirmed, it will be recalled, by the data from the taxi driver interviews, according to which only 17 percent of respondents indicated that they typically worked 40 hours or less a week, 52 percent said that they worked more than 60 hours a week and 18 percent said that they usually worked more than 80 hours a week. While drivers were not asked what their average income was, data from the 1991 Canadian Census lend confirmation to the conclusion that the material rewards of taxi driving are not enviable. These data indicate that the average annual income of “taxi drivers and chauffeurs” in 1990 was just under \$18,000, and that the average annual income of those who worked full-time for the full year was only just over \$22,000. While taxi drivers in British Columbia earned incomes which were close to this national average, incomes of drivers in Manitoba and Nova Scotia were considerably below it (Manitoba: average for all drivers = \$14,516, average for full-time drivers = \$18,300; Nova Scotia: average for all drivers = \$14,693, average for full-time drivers = \$18,465) (Statistics Canada, 1993a: 34, 270, 194 & 86, respectively). There is no reason to think that this situation has improved significantly for taxi drivers since 1990. It must be recognized, of course, that these figures may not accurately reflect additional income taxi drivers obtain as a result of tips.

This reality frustrates efforts to “professionalize” the industry in a number of ways. In the first place, prospects for recruiting persons with a motivation to be “professional” to an industry which offers such small material rewards for such long hours of work, would not seem to be very good. Secondly, the tight economic situation creates a business environment which encourages risk-taking and “cutting corners”; when faced with taking on board a “risky” fare, or not having a fare at all, it is hardly surprising to find that many taxi drivers are prepared to assume the risk in such an economic climate. Thirdly, the economic environment engenders a cut-throat competitiveness within the industry in which many owners and managers are unlikely to feel much incentive or pay-off in promoting “professionalism” or devoting significant resources to it. In an industry where there is an over-supply of labour and diminishing demand for services, the kinds of conditions which facilitate “professionalization” (commitment to the job, loyalty to the company, commitment to employee welfare, and a well-organized workforce) are not easy to maintain. Rather than providing support for improved industry regulation, and the promulgation and enforcement of higher standards, the current economic climate seems to favour de-regulation, and existing regulatory bodies find themselves with diminishing resources with which to implement such regulations as do exist. According to many of this study’s “key informants”, taxi company owners in some jurisdictions have successfully lobbied politicians to resist or block proposals for more stringent industry regulation.

If such structural factors have frustrated efforts to improve industry standards and “professionalize” the taxi driver workforce, they have also constituted major obstacles to the implementation of protective measures for taxi drivers, and of measures to better assist them when victimizations occur. Data from the present study make it clear that the main reasons why taxi drivers do not use various protective devices or strategies are not because they do not feel that they could be helpful, but because they do not see them as economically viable options (they would be too expensive or “bad for business”) and/or because they see them as too difficult to implement within the current structural constraints of the industry (companies will not cost-share, universality is too difficult to achieve under tight economic conditions in a highly competitive, fragmented industry, etc.). The ongoing debate over in-cab shields and screens provides a clear illustration of this dilemma, and it is no coincidence that enthusiasm for change tends to surge immediately after some highly-publicized catastrophic victimization, only to die down again shortly thereafter.

Acknowledging these industry realities, and applying principles of risk analysis and hazard management developed in the fields of environment and public health (Hohenemser *et al.*, 1985; Haddon, 1980), Holston (1994: 79) has recently argued that “the most effective [protective measures for taxi drivers] are those that are made in the public or private institutional structures, that require limited or no effort by the individual” driver. Echoing the insights of advocates of “situational crime prevention” and rational choice models (Clarke, 1983 & 1992; Jeffrey & Zalm, 1993), she also argued that preventive “upstream” interventions are likely to be more effective than the more reactive “downstream” ones (Holston, 1994: 79). Stone *et al.* (1995) reached similar conclusions.

Plausible as they are, however, the persuasiveness of such conclusions is diminished by the fact that they are derived from quite inadequate empirical evidence (which these authors acknowledge), and by the fact that the issue of how to remove the structural obstacles to implementation is rarely adequately addressed. Thus, despite ongoing debate about a whole range of protective devices for taxis which spans at least three decades, evidence of progress towards safer working conditions for taxi drivers, or of the actual effectiveness of such devices in reducing victimizations of, or injury to, taxi drivers, remains hard to find, and when found is largely inconclusive (Stone *et al.*, 1995: 23-27). The fact that so much of this evidence is derived from the situation in large cities in the United States, raises questions about its applicability to Canadian urban environments.

On the other side of the coin, it is clear from the study findings that there is considerable ambivalence within the taxi industry in the three cities with respect to any potential role in achieving community safety, and in particular towards the public police. On the one hand, it is clear that some drivers are quite active in responding to crime and other public safety situations, and reporting them to the authorities, and many drivers clearly see the potential contribution which such civic-minded activities can make to public safety and security. Many seem to feel that with greater support and encouragement, such contributions by the taxi industry could be greatly enhanced

with substantial public benefits. On the other hand, many drivers and taxi companies express substantial reservations about such activities, for a variety of often quite understandable reasons, and such attempts as there have been to institutionalize them (through such programs as "Taxis On Patrol") have not so far been particularly successful, have frequently not survived as viable programs for long, and have not shown very impressive results. None has been adequately evaluated.

Again, the structural features of a fragmented and highly competitive (but in many cases not terribly profitable) industry would seem to constitute substantial obstacles to developing this potential public safety role for taxi drivers, despite the apparent willingness of many drivers to play a greater part. A key to transcending such structural obstacles, however, will be improving relationships between taxi drivers and the police.

Although there seems to be quite a high degree of ambivalence towards police on the part of taxi drivers (which is probably mutual), the fact that most respondents rated their own personal relationships with the police as good or very good, is an encouraging sign, and suggests that improving relationships between the two groups may not be very difficult. It seems likely that much of the ambivalence in these relationships derives from misunderstandings, which in turn arise from lack of adequate knowledge about each other's roles, responsibilities and working conditions. Even encouraging taxi drivers and police officers to spend a few hours in each other's company on a shift during their off-duty hours or as part of their professional training, might prove to be a feasible and inexpensive way to increase mutual understanding, trust, respect, co-operation and support between the two groups (a similar recommendation was made by the Lewis Task Force on Police Race Relations in 1989 - see Ontario, Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989: 106). There could undoubtedly be benefits not only for taxi drivers and police from such improved relationships, but also for the communities in which both groups work.

A factor in this relationship which was not explicitly explored in the present study, however, will need to be looked at more closely in the future. Some of the drivers interviewed, as well as some of the police officers to whom researchers spoke, expressed concerns about the involvement of some taxi drivers in, or their facilitation of, illegal activities such as bootlegging, drug dealing, fencing stolen goods and prostitution-related activities. Concerns were also expressed by some police officers about what they perceived to be a problem of assaults and sexual assaults by taxi drivers against passengers or potential passengers. As was noted in the section of this report dealing with Vancouver, taxi owners there have argued strenuously that such concerns are largely without foundation and greatly exaggerated. The fact that they persist in many jurisdictions, however, obviously does not have positive implications for relations between police and the taxi industry, and suggests that both groups may need to address such concerns more openly and adequately if such relations are to be improved. It also suggests, of course, that ways of improving relations between taxi drivers and the communities they serve may also need to be addressed.

What, in general terms, the findings of this study point to is that taxi driver safety is a serious and important problem which can only be properly understood and responded to within the wider context of community safety more generally. The idea - which implicitly or explicitly suffuses so much of the current training materials on this issue - that the key to addressing this problem lies in self-improvement and self-regulation of his or her conduct by the taxi driver him- or herself, may be quite misleading and is certainly questionable. For while there are probably things that taxi drivers can do to reduce their risks of being victimized, the truth unfortunately seems to be that society still does not know much about what is both effective and realistic in this regard, and it seems likely that much victimization of taxi drivers lies outside the capacity of taxi drivers themselves, or of the taxi industry as it is currently structured, to effectively control or prevent. Ways undoubtedly need to be found to encourage the taxi industry as a whole to take greater collective responsibility for addressing this problem, and for developing the kinds of partnerships with other community participants (including, but certainly not limited to, the police) which will be essential to addressing it successfully. In doing so, the industry may well find that its own role in contributing to the safety and security of others in the community can also be significantly enhanced.

This, of course, is not a novel proposition, or one which is in any sense peculiar to the taxi industry (although this industry does seem to face a particular challenge in finding a collective voice about almost anything which affects it). Rather, the notion that safety and security can most effectively be achieved through collective community action and partnerships is one which has gradually been becoming the accepted wisdom during the last decades of this Century, in North America and elsewhere (Normandeau & Leighton, 1990).



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## **APPENDIX A**

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### **TAXI DRIVER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

#### **INTRODUCTION{ PRIVATE }**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a student at \_\_\_\_\_, and I am involved in a study of taxi-drivers in four large Canadian cities.

The study is looking at two things: (1) we want to know how often taxi-drivers, while they are working, become victims of crime (robbery, theft, assault etc.); and (2) we want to know to what extent taxi-drivers ever do, or could, play a role in crime prevention and assisting in law enforcement.

I would like to ask you some questions about your own experiences of these things. If you agree to participate in this study, but do not feel comfortable with any particular question I might ask, you do not have to answer it. However, it's important that we get as much information as you can give us. It will take me about 30-45 minutes to ask you the questions.

We will be interviewing about 200 cab-drivers in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto and Halifax, and are interested in what all these drivers tell us as a group, so the answers which any particular driver (like yourself) gives us will not be connected to you personally in any report of the study we prepare. In fact, I don't need to know your name, and will not record it if you agree to participate in the study. So the answers you give me will be kept completely confidential, and will not be divulged to anyone else.

The findings of the research will be written up in a report, which will be available to the public. We hope, too, to publish an article about it in The Rooflight, if they will accept it.

Do you have any questions about the study?

Are you willing to participate?

**TAXI-DRIVER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE{ PRIVATE }**

**INTERVIEW #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **LOCATION: HALIFAX** **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME INTERVIEW STARTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TAXI COMPANY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A. DRIVING EXPERIENCE**

1. How long have you been driving cabs? \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Months

2. All in the HALIFAX/DARTMOUTH AREA? YES \_\_\_\_\_  
NO \_\_\_\_\_

If NO, where else? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is cab-driving a FULL-TIME job for you, or do you have any other job(s) as well?

FULL TIME \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER JOB(S) \_\_\_\_\_

If OTHER JOB(S), please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE NOTE, ALL THE REMAINING QUESTIONS I SHALL BE ASKING YOU REFER ONLY TO YOUR WORK AS A TAXI-DRIVER**

4. As a taxi-driver, do you work all over the HALIFAX/DARTMOUTH area, or only in certain parts of it?  
WHOLE HALIFAX\ Dartmouth AREA \_\_\_\_\_

ONLY CERTAIN PARTS \_\_\_\_\_

If ONLY CERTAIN PARTS, which parts do you NOT work in?

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there any particular reason why you do not work in these areas?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there any parts of the HALIFAX\ Dartmouth AREA that you would PREFER not to work in?

NO \_\_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_\_ please specify \_\_\_\_\_

If YES, why? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What shift(s) do you USUALLY work? \_\_\_\_\_ { PRIVATE }

7(a). Are there shifts that you DO NOT work?

NO \_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_ WHICH SHIFT(S)? \_\_\_\_\_

WHY? \_\_\_\_\_

(b). Are there shifts that you would PREFER not to work?

NO \_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_ WHICH SHIFT(S)? \_\_\_\_\_

WHY? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Roughly how many hours do you work (as a taxi-driver) in a week? \_\_\_\_\_

[# of hrs.]

9. Roughly how many **of those hours** would usually be

- between 5:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.? # of hrs. \_\_\_\_ ( % approx.)

- between 4:00 p.m. - Midnight? # of hrs. \_\_\_\_ ( % approx.)

- between Midnight - 5:00 a.m.? # of hrs. \_\_\_\_ ( % approx.)

**B. CRIMES AGAINST YOU OR YOUR CAB, WHILE YOU WERE WORKING**

10.(a) **DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS, WHILE WORKING in or near your cab,**  
have **YOU** been a victim of any of the following?:

**[SEE GRID - NEXT PAGE - check closest applicable answer]**

**[If answer is anything other than NEVER, use INCIDENT SHEET to  
record details of LAST INCIDENT]**

**ASK (b) ONLY if answer to (a) is "NEVER" and interviewee has been driving  
for more than one year**

(b) Has this **EVER** happened to you while working in or near your cab?

C. PROTECTIVE MEASURES

11. Please can you tell me what **YOU** think might be the **FIVE MOST HELPFUL** things, measures or strategies to **PROTECT CAB-DRIVERS FROM BECOMING VICTIMS OF SUCH CRIMES:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

12. **IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS**, have you driven a cab with any of the following features?:

- |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| (1) a two-way radio   | Y | N | DK |
| (2) computerized dispatch/communications system terminal  | Y | N | DK |
| (3) an open microphone system on your radio or terminal   | Y | N | DK |
| (4) a cellular phone in your cab  | Y | N | DK |
| (5) a "panic button" (to your dispatcher)   | Y | N | DK |
| (6) emergency flashing (a) roof sign<br>or (b) other light on cab roof<br>or (c) head/tail lights                                   | Y | N | DK |
| (7) any other kind of alarm or siren in or on your cab  | Y | N | DK |
| (8) a safety shield/screen (protective screen between the front and rear compartments of your cab)                                  | Y | N | DK |
| (9) driver control of locks on all the doors of your cab  | Y | N | DK |
| (10) in-car control of trunk lock   | Y | N | DK |
| (11) a lockable floor safe in your cab  | Y | N | DK |
| (12) any kind of advertisement (e.g. sticker) that you only carry limited amounts of cash in your cab                               | Y | N | DK |
| (13) any kind of advertisement (e.g. sticker) that you participate in some kind of crime prevention program such as Taxis On Patrol | Y | N | DK |

**[N.B. I'm not asking if you actually participate in such a program]**

(14) do you carry any kind of weapon(s)  
in your cab? Y N DK

**[Remind re confidentiality if necessary]**

If YES, what?

some kind of hand-held spray Y N DK  
 knife or other sharp instrument Y N DK  
 (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 blunt instrument (e.g. tire iron) Y N DK  
 (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 martial arts-type weapon (e.g. nun-chuck sticks)  
 (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
 gun (Specify type: \_\_\_\_\_) Y N DK  
 other (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_) Y N DK

(15) an emergency vehicle location system Y N DK

(16) access (e.g through dispatchers) to any kind of Y N DK  
location/passenger "blacklist(s)"

(17) other protective device Y N DK  
(Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

(18) other protective device Y N DK  
(Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

**[Add others on back of this page if necessary]**

13. Are there any **FORMS OF PROTECTION FOR TAXI-DRIVERS** which **YOU** think **WOULD** be **HELPFUL OR VERY HELPFUL**, but which are **NOT CURRENTLY USED** for various understandable reasons?

NO \_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_

If YES, please specify:

FORM OF PROTECTION                      REASON(S) NOT USED  
(check all applicable reasons)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by law)  
       \_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by licensing body)  
       \_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by company/owner)  
       \_\_\_\_ Too expensive  
       \_\_\_\_ Inconvenient for driver  
       \_\_\_\_ Inconvenient for passengers  
       \_\_\_\_ Other reason(s)  
       (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by law)  
       \_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by licensing body)  
       \_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by company/owner)  
       \_\_\_\_ Too expensive  
       \_\_\_\_ Inconvenient for driver  
       \_\_\_\_ Inconvenient for passengers  
       \_\_\_\_ Other reason(s)  
       (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by law)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by licensing body)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Not permitted (by company/owner)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Too expensive  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Inconvenient for driver  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Inconvenient for passengers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other reason(s)  
 (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

**[If others, continue on back of this page]**

14. Approximately how much cash do you **USUALLY** have in your cab at any given time while working?

Approx. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

15. What approximately is the **MOST** amount of cash that you would **EVER** carry in your cab **at any one time** while working?

Approx. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

16. Approximately how much cash do you **USUALLY** accumulate in your cab before making a cash drop-off somewhere?

Approx. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

17. Do you accept **CREDIT CARDS** or **TAXI CHITS** in payment of fares?

NO \_\_\_\_\_  
 YES \_\_\_\_\_

If YES, approximately what proportion (%) of your passengers pay with a credit card or taxi chit, rather than in cash? (Circle closest %)

10% 25% 50% 75% 100%

18. Have you ever received any **FORMAL TAXI-DRIVER TRAINING**?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ **[If NO, Go to Q. 19]**  
 YES \_\_\_\_\_ **[If YES, cont' d. on next page]**

If YES, was there anything about **DRIVER SAFETY** (from crime etc.) or **RISK AWARENESS** in it?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ **[If NO, Go to Q. 19]** YES \_\_\_\_\_  
 DON' T REMEMBER \_\_\_\_\_ **[Go to Q. 19]**

If YES, **HOW MANY HOURS** were spent on **THAT**?

\_\_\_\_ HOURS \_\_\_\_\_ DON' T REMEMBER

Please describe briefly, what was taught about driver-safety/risk-awareness:

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Was it **ADEQUATE**, in your view? YES \_\_\_\_ [**Go to Q. 19**]

NO \_\_\_\_

DON' T REMEMBER \_\_\_\_ [**Go to Q. 19**]

If NO, how might it have been improved?

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19. Do you think that **ALL** taxi-drivers **SHOULD** receive such driver safety/risk awareness training?

YES, ALL DRIVERS \_\_\_\_

ONLY NEW DRIVERS \_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_

DON' T KNOW/NO OPINION \_\_\_\_

20. Do you think that the company you work for takes seriously enough the risks of criminal victimization which its drivers face?

NO \_\_\_\_ [**Go to Q. 21**]

YES \_\_\_\_

NOT SURE \_\_\_\_ [**Go to Q. 21**]

If NO, what should it do that it currently does not do?

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#### D. WITNESSING/RESPONDING TO CRIMES ETC. INVOLVING **OTHERS**

21. Apart from those we have already talked about (crimes etc. occurring against you or your cab), have you witnessed ANY OTHER CRIMES **BEING COMMITTED IN YOUR CAB** by, or against, or involving **ANY OF YOUR PASSENGERS**, while driving your cab?

NO \_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_

If YES, what **TYPES OF CRIMES** have you **MOST OFTEN WITNESSED occurring IN YOUR CAB** (other than crimes against yourself or your cab)?:

[**ONLY if necessary, prompt with e.g.' s- drug offences, assaults, liquor violations etc.**]

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

22. Apart from the crimes we have already talked about (crimes involving you, your cab or your passengers), have you witnessed ANY OTHER CRIMES NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOU OR YOUR CAB and BEING COMMITTED OUTSIDE YOUR CAB (e.g. on the street, or at pick-up or destination points), while driving your cab?

NO \_\_\_  
YES \_\_\_

If YES, what TYPES OF CRIMES have you MOST OFTEN WITNESSED while driving your cab (other than those in or in relation to your cab)?:

[ONLY if necessary, prompt with e.g.' s- drug offences, traffic offences, domestic disputes, liquor violations etc.]

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

23.(a) Now I want to ask you about HOW OFTEN you may have witnessed various kinds of events DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS WHILE WORKING. Roughly how often, if at all, have you had any of the following experiences:

[SEE GRID - NEXT PAGE - Check closest applicable answer]

(b) If ONCE OR MORE, do you always report such incidents to the police, or only sometimes, or never?

[Check closest applicable answer]

(c) If NOT ALWAYS, for what kinds of reasons would you not report such an incident to the police?

E. CONTRIBUTIONS TO CRIME PREVENTION/MAINTENANCE OF ORDER/LAW ENFORCEMENT

24. DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS, WHILE WORKING, have the police asked you for help with the investigation of a crime or to locate a missing person?

- DON' T REMEMBER \_\_\_
- NEVER \_\_\_ ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH \_\_\_
- ONCE OR TWICE \_\_\_ ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK \_\_\_
- 3 - 5 TIMES \_\_\_ ALMOST EVERY DAY /NIGHT \_\_\_
- 5 - 10 TIMES \_\_\_ SEVERAL TIMES A DAY /NIGHT \_\_\_

If ONCE OR MORE, please describe briefly the LAST SUCH REQUEST which you can recall:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25. DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS, WHILE WORKING, have you ever reported to the police the license number or description of a motor vehicle which you have seen being driven dangerously or illegally?

- DON' T REMEMBER \_\_\_
- NEVER \_\_\_ ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH \_\_\_
- ONCE OR TWICE \_\_\_ ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK \_\_\_
- 3 - 5 TIMES \_\_\_ ALMOST EVERY DAY /NIGHT \_\_\_
- 5 - 10 TIMES \_\_\_ SEVERAL TIMES A DAY /NIGHT \_\_\_

26. DURING THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS, WHILE WORKING, have you ever called for the police or other emergency services to respond to a **ROAD ACCIDENT** that you have witnessed but were not personally involved in?

DON' T REMEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NEVER \_\_\_\_\_

ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH \_\_\_\_\_

ONCE OR TWICE \_\_\_\_\_

ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK \_\_\_\_\_

3 - 5 TIMES \_\_\_\_\_

ALMOST EVERY DAY /NIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

5 - 10 TIMES \_\_\_\_\_

SEVERAL TIMES A DAY /NIGHT \_\_\_\_\_

27. (a) Apart from the things we have already discussed, are there are **other things** that taxi-drivers in this city **DO while on duty** which contribute to the **prevention of crime**, the **maintenance of order** or the **enforcement of the law** in some way?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

DON' T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

If YES, do **YOU** do such things? NO\* \_\_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_\_ Which one(s)? [**Circle them**

DON' T KNOW

\_\_\_\_\_ **above]**

\*If NO, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

27. (b) Are there are **other things** that taxi-drivers in this city **DO NOT DO while on duty** which would contribute to the **prevention of crime**, the **maintenance of order** or the **enforcement of the law** in some way, but which they might be willing and able to do **given appropriate encouragement and support?**

NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

DON' T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

If YES, would **YOU** do such things? NO\* \_\_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_\_ Which one(s)? [**Circle them**

DON' T KNOW

\_\_\_\_\_ **above]**

\*If NO, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

28. Do you think that **the company you work for** would be willing to support/encourage greater participation of its drivers in such activities?

NO \_\_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_\_

DON' T KNOW /NOT SURE \_\_\_\_\_

If NO, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Do you think that **the police in this area** would be willing to support/encourage greater participation of taxi drivers in such activities?

NO \_\_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_\_

DON' T KNOW/NOT SURE \_\_\_\_

If NO, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you think there are any reasons why taxi-drivers should **NOT** be involved in such activities?

NO \_\_\_\_

YES \_\_\_\_

DON' T KNOW/NOT SURE \_\_\_\_

If YES, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

31. RELATIONS GENERALLY BETWEEN TAXI DRIVERS AND THE POLICE IN THIS CITY:  
On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very bad, 5 = very good) how would you rate them?

VERY BAD 1 2 3 4 5 VERY GOOD

Please explain a bit: \_\_\_\_\_

32. RELATIONS GENERALLY BETWEEN **YOU** AND THE POLICE IN THIS CITY:  
On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = very bad, 5 = very good) how would you rate them?

VERY BAD 1 2 3 4 5 VERY GOOD

Please explain a bit: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
THOSE ARE ALL THE QUESTIONS I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT DRIVER SAFETY AND RELATIONS WITH POLICE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER THEM FOR ME. I JUST NEED SOME DETAILS ABOUT YOU SO THAT I CAN COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS WITH THOSE OF OTHER DRIVERS WE ARE INTERVIEWING:

33. Your age group? 18-29 yrs \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Gender: M \_\_\_\_\_  
30-39 yrs \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_  
40-49 yrs \_\_\_\_\_  
50-59 yrs \_\_\_\_\_  
60+ yrs \_\_\_\_\_

35. Were you born in Canada? YES \_\_\_\_\_  
NO\* \_\_\_\_\_ WHERE? \_\_\_\_\_  
\*If NO, when did you come to Canada? YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

36. Do you consider yourself to be: WHITE \_\_\_\_\_  
BLACK \_\_\_\_\_  
SOUTH ASIAN \_\_\_\_\_ (Indian sub-continent)  
EAST ASIAN \_\_\_\_\_ (Oriental)  
FIRST NATION \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_

37. Is English your first language? YES \_\_\_\_\_  
NO \_\_\_\_\_

If NO, what is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

THANKS, THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ON THE ISSUES I HAVE BEEN ASKING ABOUT TODAY, OR ANY RELATED MATTERS? **[Write on back if necessary]**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO THIS INTERVIEW FOR US

INITIALS OF INTERVIEWER: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME INTERVIEW ENDED: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTICE OF STUDY SENT TO TAXI COMPANIES  
(SAMPLE)**

APPENDIX "B"

**W A N T E D**

**TAXI-DRIVERS WHO ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE  
IN A STUDY OF TAXI DRIVER SAFETY AND  
RELATED MATTERS**

THE CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO IS CONDUCTING A STUDY OF THE INCIDENCE OF CRIMES AGAINST TAXI DRIVERS, THE MEASURES THEY TAKE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST SUCH INCIDENTS, AND RELATIONS GENERALLY BETWEEN TAXI-DRIVERS AND THE POLICE, IN THE GREATER VANCOUVER, GREATER WINNIPEG, METROPOLITAN TORONTO AND HALIFAX/DARTMOUTH AREAS. THE STUDY IS FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE OF CANADA, AS PART OF ITS INTEREST IN PROMOTING CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES AND ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF CRIMES.

THE CENTRE WISHES TO INTERVIEW ABOUT 50 DRIVERS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR AREAS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AND/OR VIEWS ON THESE MATTERS. INTERVIEWS WILL TAKE ABOUT 30 - 45 MINUTES AND CAN BE SCHEDULED SO AS NOT TO INTERRUPT THE WORK TIME OF THOSE AGREEING TO DO THE INTERVIEWS. INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED UNDER CONDITIONS OF STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY.

IF YOU ARE AN ACTIVE DRIVER AND WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT **PHILIP STENNING** AT **(416) 978-3451** AND LEAVE A MESSAGE INDICATING YOUR NAME, THE NAME OF THE TAXI COMPANY WITH WHICH YOU WORK, AND HOW YOU MAY MOST EASILY BE CONTACTED (A TELEPHONE NUMBER, IF POSSIBLE) TO ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW.

THE CENTRE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY CO-OPERATION FROM MEMBERS OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY IN THIS IMPORTANT STUDY, WHICH IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN CANADA.

THE REPORT OF THE STUDY WILL BE GIVEN WIDE DISTRIBUTION WITHIN THE TAXI INDUSTRY.

CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
(416) 978-3451

**APPENDIX C**

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**ARTICLE ABOUT THE STUDY PUBLISHED  
IN "ROOFLIGHT" MAGAZINE**

## **APPENDIX D**

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### **LIST OF “KEY INFORMANTS” INTERVIEWED FOR THE STUDY**

APPENDIX "D"

KEY INFORMANTS

Vancouver area

Constable Rudolf  
Taxi Squad,  
Vancouver Police Department

Mr. George Railton  
Editor, Western Fleet News

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## APPENDIX E

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### TRANSCRIPT OF SCRIPT OF TRAINING VIDEO “PREVENTING THEFTS AND ATTACKS YES, IT’S POSSIBLE”

#### APPENDIX “E”

Transcript of video

#### “Preventing Thefts and Attacks.... Yes, it's possible”{PRIVATE }

[Video begins with close-up of handgun being fired, followed by scene of police and ambulance crews responding to a situation in which a taxi driver has been shot in his cab.]

[Dialogue:]

Police officer to ambulance attendant: “Blesse par bal....[inaudible]”

[Commentary:]

Every year, in large cities like ours, dozens of taxi drivers are attacked, mainly at night. Most of the time, the victim is a little shaken up, and loses a few dollars. But sometimes it's worse, much worse.

However, by adopting certain habits and methods of working, many of these thefts and attacks many be prevented.

[Title displayed: "Preventing Thefts and Attacks.... Yes, it's possible!"]

Prevention is first and foremost a question of attitude, common sense and good judgement.

[Scenario starts: two male passengers climb into taxi which has stopped for them, one in front, one in back.]

Let's take a look.

[Dialogue:]

Passenger in back: "We're going towards the er...Olympic Stadium"

Taxi Driver: "O.K." [sighs]

Passenger in front: "How' s it going, man?"

Taxi Driver: "Oh, it' s been...it's been quite a day"

Passenger in front: "Yeah?"

Taxi Driver: "Yep"

Passenger in front: "Been working hard, huh?"

Taxi Driver: "Oh I' ve been at it all day. I can't te...I, I' ve never stopped all day"

[Camera focuses on Taxi Driver' s watch]

"You guys are goin' to be my last clients, I' ll tell ya that"

Passenger in back: "Here, turn right here.

Taxi Driver: "O.K."

Passenger in back: "Tell ya it' s a, it' s a short cut"

Taxi Driver: "Uh-huh"

Passenger in back: "Yeah"

Taxi Driver: "Yeah"

Passenger in back: "Turn left at the next one"

Taxi Driver: "'O.K." [Passenger in back looking around outside]

Passenger in back: "Yeah.....and er, right" [Passenger in front turns round to passenger in back. Passenger in back nods to him]

Taxi Driver: "Ya sure ya know where ya goin?"

Passenger in back: "Yeah"

Taxi Driver: "Fine... Oh look, there' s a bright light straight ahead"  
[Taxi enters a dark alley]

Passenger in front: "O.K., yeah, stop here.... pull in over here, this is fine"

Taxi Driver: "There you go" [stops taxi, puts into park]

Passenger in back: [presenting gun to back of driver's head]  
"O.K., move.... and you' re dead!.....Gimme ya money!"

Passenger in front: "Speed it up!"

Passenger in back: "C' mon, give it fast!"

[Taxi driver reaches into shirt breast pocket, takes out money and hands it to passenger in front]

Passenger in front: [leaning over and searching driver's sun visor]  
"There' s more, I know it"

Taxi Driver: "There' s no more... I, I gave you all of it, I swear"

Passenger in back: [threatening with gun] "Shuddup! C' mon, let' s go."

Passenger in front: "I' m coming, but first... [takes keys out of ignition].... gimme ya wristwatch!"

Passenger in back: "Hurry it up, man!"

Passenger in front: "Gimme ya watch!"

[Passengers run out of cab. Passenger in front throws keys on ground as he runs off]

[Commentary:]

What could the driver have done to help prevent this incident? Or, to discourage his attackers?

[Replay of scenario begins]

Let' s review the scene. The night was long, but profitable. Was he being cautious when he took out a large wad of cash?

Prevention begins before you embark any passenger. First, always stay alert. Think about your money. Do not tempt fate.

[Dialogue:]

Passenger in back: "Er, we' re going towards the Olympic Stadium"

[Commentary:]

Don' t leave your money in plain view, and don' t keep large sums of money on you directly. Keep only your strict minimum - enough to make change for a twenty dollar bill. Hide the rest of your money in the trunk of your car, or in some place that' s hard to access. If you' re attacked, you can then give away all the money that' s with you, without losing everything.

Even better, get into the habit of making regular deposits at the automatic teller machine.

[Dialogue:]

Passenger in front: "Workin' hard?"

[Commentary:]

If someone asks you how business is going, say it's going badly, or that you've just started your shift. Never boast about making good money.

Also, avoid putting your prosperity on display. Don't wear any flashy jewellery.

[Camera pans to driver's wrist - no watch is showing]

When you pick up passengers, never act as if they're not even there. Establish visual contact with your clients. Have a conversation. And if you have the slightest doubt, trust your instincts. Make a conscious effort to memorize their description. Take note of any distinguishing physical characteristics or clothing.

[Dialogue:]

Passenger in back: "Er, we're going towards the Olympic Stadium"

[Commentary:]

Don't accept vague descriptions.

[Dialogue:]

Taxi Driver: "Yeah, what's the exact address?"

Passenger in back: "Er it's, it's, it's right near there. It's er...a street called Darling. Um...  
I'll know wh..when we get there."

[Commentary:]

Once again, trust your instincts. Try to take busy roads as much as possible, especially at night.

If you have the slightest doubt, write down the address, or even find a reason to refuse the customer. For example, say that you're out of gas.

[New scenario: Woman alone hails taxi from curb]

Be careful if someone hails your taxi and then some other people join him.

[As taxi slows down, two men come running up out of the shadows.  
Taxi driver drives away without fully stopping]

Better to lose one customer than to be attacked.

Even when it' s late, or if your day' s becoming long , don' t sink deep into a routine. [Scene of taxi driver snoozing in cab] Stay alert, and always use your common sense.

If you have already picked up your clients and then you begin to feel in danger, stop at any busy area [taxi pulls into a gas station], such as a gas station or a convenience store. [Taxi driver gets out of cab] Pretend you have to buy something urgently, or you badly need gas. If you see that the client has not left the vehicle, call the police.

[Return to original robbery scenario]

[Dialogue:]

Passenger in back: [presenting gun to back of driver's head] "Move...and you' re dead!"

[Commentary:]

And, if despite all your precautions, you' re still the victim of an attack, stay calm. Remember that the thieves are just as nervous as you are. Don' t stall, and don' t resist. Don' t risk your life for a few dollars.

If you are able to, give the pre-determined distress call to your dispatcher.

Don' t take any unnecessary risks. Remember that the longer the incident takes, the more danger increases.

[Passengers run out of cab.]

Once you' re alone, catch your breath, collect yourself, and immediately write down all the details that you can remember. What race was the attacker? His or her age, approximate weight, height, eye colour, hair colour, language spoken, type of weapon, the direction he fled in and type of transportation used.

The more details you give, the better chance the police have of recovering the attacker.

If your radio is still working, ask your dispatcher to advise the police. Wait for the patrol car, without touching anything in your vehicle.

If your radio doesn' t work, go to the police station, or the first telephone you see. After giving the information to the investigators, stay available - it's important.

Co-operating with the police is the best way to make sure that the attackers will eventually be stopped from hurting other people.

Filing a report also contributes to making your work more secure and, in the end, more profitable.

[Camera shows leaflets showing security equipment]

There is a wide variety of security equipment available on the market today, ranging in price from tens to thousands of dollars. There are: distress signals, bullet proof partitions, and even computerized tracking systems. To find out more, contact your local police department.

No method is one hundred percent guaranteed. Nonetheless, if you rely on your experience, trust your instincts, and adopt the simple methods we've mentioned, you can reduce your risks.

This being said, don't become paranoid. Not all customers are troublemakers and certainly many drivers have never been attacked throughout their entire careers.

But at any rate, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Filename: TAXIRPTCOV  
Directory: C:\WINDOWS\Desktop  
Template: C:\WINDOWS\Application  
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot  
Title:  
Subject:  
Author: Charles Rathbone  
Keywords:  
Comments:  
Creation Date: 12/19/2004 12:00 PM  
Change Number: 1  
Last Saved On:  
Last Saved By:  
Total Editing Time: 10 Minutes  
Last Printed On: 12/19/2004 12:20 PM  
As of Last Complete Printing  
Number of Pages: 119  
Number of Words: 38,754 (approx.)  
Number of Characters: 220,899 (approx.)