

\$13 taxi flagfall as fares overtake inflation

URBAN TAXI FARE INCREASES

	OLD	NEW
Flag fall	\$ 11.5	\$ 13
per 200 m	\$ 1	\$ 1.1
Waiting per minute	\$ 1	\$ 1.1
Baggage per article	\$ 5	\$ 5
Radio bookings	\$ 5	\$ 5

NEW TERRITORIES TAXI FARE INCREASES

	OLD	NEW
Flag fall	\$ 10	\$ 11
per 200 m	90¢	\$ 1
Waiting per minute	90¢	\$ 1
Baggage per article	\$ 4	\$ 4
Radio bookings	\$ 4	\$ 4

SCMP graphic

By STEVE BALL

TAXI fares are set to go up faster than inflation in January, raising an urban taxi's flagfall to \$13.

The fare for each subsequent 200 metres, or one minute waiting time, may rise by 10 cents to \$1.10.

But taxi drivers who cheat and break the rules face stiffer penalties, with fines doubling to \$10,000.

Drivers who refuse fares or put up their "Out of Service" sign while bargaining with passengers face fixed penalty fines of \$450.

The proposed fare increase was backed by the Transport Advisory Committee yesterday, and is expected to get formal approval

from the Executive Council before the end of the year.

The date for the rise is not settled, but it will be a Sunday in January. The increase in penalties will have to be agreed by the Legislative Council.

While urban taxi fares rise by an average 11.27 per cent for short trips, the overall increase is more than 13 per cent. Inflation since the last increase in November has been about 8.5 per cent.

New Territories fares go up by less, but still above inflation. The flagfall will be \$11, plus \$1 per 200 metres or minute waiting.

TAC chairman Professor Leung Chi-keung said from now on he wanted to see fares put up

every year to avoid large rises.

Mr Leung said the increase was justified. "It is not way above inflation, just a little bit above. Transport is a very labour-intensive operation and staff cost is very much an important element.

"We have to make sure that it is not only keeping up with inflation but if possible to have a little bit more to improve."

The Taxi Associations' Federation gave an unequivocal welcome to the fare increase.

"It is exactly what we had been asking for and we are very pleased," said spokesman Ng Kwok-hung. "Annual increases are also something we have been advocating."

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST
19 OCT 1994