

April 5, 2002

DOT Inspections Find 15 Newsstands Impede Pedestrian Traffic on Dangerously Overcrowded Streets; 13 New Locations Receive DOT Approval. Commissioner Dykstra Announces 60-day Citywide Review of All Newsstand Licenses

New York City Consumer Affairs Commissioner (DCA) Gretchen Dykstra and Transportation Commissioner (DOT) Iris Weinshall today announced that 15 newsstands in Manhattan have been notified that they no longer comply with safety regulations and their licenses will not be renewed. However, these newsstands will be allowed to continue operating pending a comprehensive 60-day review of newsstand licensing by City Hall, DCA and DOT to ensure that the City's policies are fair to all newsstand operators and the City. In addition, DOT found that 13 new locations meet the Administrative Code's placement guidelines and will proceed to the Art Commission for approval, after which DCA will grant their licenses.

"The Department of Transportation performs surveys as required by guidelines for new newsstands as well as those up for renewal," said Commissioner Weinshall. "Sometimes, locations that were once within the safety standards laid out in the statute have now become a dangerous obstacle to pedestrian traffic. At some intersections pedestrians are forced to step into the street to avoid the gridlock caused by too many people crammed into too tight a space. This is an accident waiting to happen."

"Newsstands are a wonderful part of our City, but public safety must come first," said Commissioner Dykstra. "DCA has notified these newsstands that their licenses will not be renewed, but they have been given a 60-day grace period to prepare for the closing of their locations. Additionally, DCA and DOT have assured these operators that should they choose to file an application for a new location, we shall expedite the review of their applications," said Commissioner Dykstra. "New locations are always possible."

By law, DOT must inspect each newsstand in the City every two years before DCA can renew the license. There are currently more than 300 newsstands. Should a location fail to meet the requirements as mandated by the New York City code, DOT is required to notify DCA, which denies the license renewal.

In order for a newsstand to obtain a license, the applicant must first file an application with DCA. The DOT inspection includes measurements to ensure that the stand is no bigger than the 72 square feet allowed by law and that it is the proper distance from corners, building entrances and fire hydrants. DOT also measures the flow of pedestrian traffic during peak hours to ensure that there is



no dangerous congestion or overcrowding. Once all the necessary approvals are granted, DCA issues the license. The DCA license may be renewed every two years provided the stand location still passes the requisite DOT inspection. Newsstand operators licensed by DCA pay a biennial fee of \$1,076.00

For information regarding this, or any other matter regarding Consumer Affairs, please write to:

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