

# Man Claims Uber Driver Promised Him A Low Fare, Then Charged Him \$814

YOUR PICK UP REQUEST WAS  
CANCELED

When a trip is canceled more than five minutes after a driver accepts, or if the driver has to cancel after waiting more than five minutes at the pickup location, a \$10.00 cancellation fee is charged.

If you think this was a mistake, please contact us and we'll make it right.

Base Fare	8.00
Distance	83.31
Time	12.51
Cancellation Fee	10.00

<b>Normal Fare</b>	<b>\$113.82</b>
Surge x7.75	700.78

<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$814.60</b>
Rounding Down	-0.60

CHARGED



**\$814.00**

Rumuel's Uber receipt showing the final bill of \$814. (Image courtesy of Alan Dumpit)

A man says that Uber charged his group a whopping \$814 for a ride from El Monte to Culver City even though his driver promised it wouldn't be much more than \$150.

Alan Dumpit tells LAist that he and his friends took one of the most expensive Uber rides we've ever heard of on August 3. The nearly 25-mile ride to El Monte had cost them \$45, but thanks to surge pricing, they were charged \$814 on the way back. He says the driver hasn't answered any of their calls and the Uber customer service has been of little help to them.

He told his story to LAist after he heard about a woman who had to pay \$357 for a ride from West L.A. to Hollywood back in December, and wasn't aware of the surge pricing until she received her receipt.

According to Uber's website, surge pricing occurs when there's a spike in demand, and the rideshare app lets passengers know about the increased fares. If the rates are really high (like five times the standard fare), riders will have to type in the surge rate in a box on the app before accepting the bill so there won't be any mistakes—especially during a drunken moment. They call this their "surge sobriety test." Prices surge around closing time, but also during snowstorms in NYC and for Outside Lands in San Francisco.

However, Dumpit says what happened that night was more than just the group misunderstanding that there was surge pricing going on, and that they were grossly misled. Dumpit's friend, Rumuel (who asked that we only use his first name) was the one who had the hefty fare charged to his credit card, and was the one who contacted Uber's

customer service via email to ask for help. He wrote, "Your help is appreciated as now my rent is overdue due [to] this very high charge."

In a series of email exchanges that Dumpit sent us, Rumuel wrote to Uber telling them his side of the story—that they found out there was surge pricing at the time when they needed a lift, which was around 12:14 a.m. However, the driver, whose name is Artur, told them that he could make the ride about \$150 to \$200 (for the ride that would have normally cost \$113.82, according to the receipt), he claims. He says they agreed to this pricing, and the driver told them to cancel their original ride. Rumuel said that Artur then took his phone and canceled the ride for him and said he would reorder the ride and make some changes so they wouldn't be charged more than the price he quoted them. When Rumuel emailed customer service, a representative wrote to him: "Sorry about the price catching you off guard! It looks like your trip was taken at a time when due to high demand for rides, our fares were increased x to ensure we had rides available for those who needed them. I looked into your trip, and i see that at first you requested an SUV trip with Artur at 9x surge. He then cancelled the trip and allowed you to request him on black car (lower rate and at a lower surge of 7.75x)."

And the 7.75x charge was what led to the \$814 payment. Rumuel reiterated on the email chain that it wasn't him but the driver who took his phone and accepted those charges. But, the representative seemed to gloss over that and wrote a similar response: "Thanks for the additional information and clarification. The original trip that you accepted with Artur was an SUV request at a higher surge rate. You did confirm and accept this Surge on your own, which would have been significantly higher than this second trip."

They've been trying to find a customer service number so they can speak to a live person about their problem, but haven't had any luck. Even though they asked on their email exchange with Uber for someone to call them, nobody did. When we asked Uber for a customer service number, their representative didn't give us one, either.

An Uber representative responded to LAist with the following statement:

Uber was founded with the goal of ensuring a reliable ride, wherever and whenever. During times of peak demand - when there are not enough drivers on the system - fares increase so as to incentivize more drivers to come onto the platform.

Ultimately, we think it's better for a user to open the app, see dynamic pricing in place and have a choice about whether to proceed than to open the app and see that there are no cars available. Dynamic pricing helps ensure that reliability of choice.

**UPDATE 8/22, 5:05 p.m.:** Dumpit told LAist that Uber finally called his friend back and refunded the premium charges they were billed.

Contact the [author](#) of this article or email [tips@laist.com](mailto:tips@laist.com) with further questions, comments or tips

*The views expressed on this blog may not be those of any trade Org or Union.*  
Saturday, March 22, 2014

## **Uber, Tfl and a Child's Death**

Sofia Liu, 6, was was struck and killed by a car in San Francisco on New Year's Eve. Christopher Dolan, a lawyer for the Liu family who provided the image, is expected to file suit against the driver of the vehicle and Uber.



Taxes and regulation are the two big issues. The question of how much Uber should be regulated and by whom is under discussion in all sorts of ways, as my article on Monday in The Times indicates. But the fate of its first wrongful-death lawsuit might be central.

The suit, set to be filed on Monday, seeks damages against Uber in the death of Sofia Liu, 6, on New Year's Eve in San Francisco. Sofia was hit by an Uber driver who was waiting for a fare. Her mother and brother were injured.

Uber asserts that Uber drivers without fares are not Uber cars. The suit, filed by Chris Dolan, a San Francisco lawyer, directly challenges this effort by the company to detach itself from its own users. It says Uber needs the vehicles to be logged into the Uber app — that's the only way potential riders know there is a car in the vicinity. So even when there is no fare in the car, the drivers are in essence on the clock, working for Uber.

When drivers accept a call, furthermore, they need to interface with the app. The suit goes on to note that under California law, it is illegal to use a “wireless telephone” while driving unless it is specifically configured to be hands-free — which the app is not. In essence, the suit argues that Uber was negligent in the “development, implementation and use of the app” so as to cause the driver to be distracted and inattentive.

Mr. Kalanick (Uber's founder), in an interview, refused to discuss the case or even to confirm that the driver, Syed Muzaffar, had been carrying passengers earlier that evening. Mr. Muzaffar, who cooperated with the police after the accident, had been driving for Uber about a month, his lawyer said. It was a full-time job, using his own car, to support four kids. In the new sharing economy, he takes the fall.

Mr. Dolan, according to his website, has a fistful of awards: Statewide Trial Lawyer of the Year by the Consumer Attorneys of California, Trial Lawyer of the Year by the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association and California Lawyer Attorney of the Year award.

“Uber’s claims that they are not responsible for injuries caused by Uber drivers who are logged on to the system but not carrying a fare flies in the face of hundreds of years of law,” he said:

**“New technology does not eliminate well-established legal principles.”**

Source: New York Times.

Taxi leaks would like to extend our sincere condolences to the family of Sophie Liu.

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7-11-14

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2-20-2013

## The Hazards of Catching a Lyft: Ride-Sharing in San Francisco

Cassie Heuckroth  
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## The Hazards of Catching a Lyft: Ride-Sharing in San Francisco

FEBRUARY 20, 2013 BY CASSIHEUCKROTH 1 COMMENT

Catching a cab in San Francisco has never been easier. Services like Lyft, SideCar, and Uber allow passengers to access drivers through an application on their smartphone, bypassing the need for going outside to hail a cab. But the convenience may come with a price.

All three services maintain that their "ride-sharing" services do not own the cars or employ the drivers, but merely connect drivers with passengers. Lyft's co-founder, John Zimmer, expressed that his service is "not a charter-party carrier", but instead a "peer-to-peer carrier." (In fact, Lyft's tagline is "Your friend with a car"). Sunil Paul, SideCar's CEO, maintains that SideCar is "not a transportation company, it's a communications platform." Both services claim that the donations are entirely optional, and that their only involvement in the "ride-sharing" is connecting the driver to the passenger.

Apart from requesting "donations" from passengers instead of demanding payment and using the driver's personal vehicle for transportation in lieu of a commercial taxicab, the services provided by these companies are virtually indistinguishable from traditional taxicab services. Opponents of these "ride-sharing" services charge that they are nothing more than illegal taxi companies.

The California Public Utilities Commission ("CPUC") has recently charged that Lyft, SideCar, and Uber have all been operating illegally, and issued each of them \$20,000 in citations. The violations cited were: operating as passenger carriers without evidence of public liability and property damage insurance coverage; engaging employee-drivers without evidence of workers' compensation insurance; failing to enroll drivers in the Department of Motor Vehicles Employer Pull Notice Program; and failing to pre-employment test and enroll drivers in the Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing Certification Program. All of these ride-sharing companies have been issued cease and desist orders, but Lyft has been the only company to settle; Lyft is excused from the fine, but has agreed to abide by a "set of new regulations."

But the problems for these companies don't end there. San Francisco taxi drivers have filed a class action suit against Uber. The suit alleges that the company is creating unfair business competition by violating city and state regulations.

Taxi drivers in San Francisco have to jump through numerous hoops. Notably, those seeking to become taxi drivers must have no prior convictions that would put public safety at risk, attend training at a taxi training school, attain a sensitivity training certificate and obtain a fingerprint and background check. Drivers for Lyft and SideCar are not subject to a background check.

Although drivers are not fingerprinted, they are subjected to important, probing questions such as "Where is your favorite place to hang out?" and "If you were to be a car, what kind of car would it be?" during interviews. If ex-convicts are driving for SideCar, at least the passengers can be assured that they are "cool" ex-convicts.

Trevor Johnson, a licensed cab driver, expresses concern about the safety of the general public with these "ride-sharing" services. Earlier this month, a Lyft driver hit a motorcyclist while there was a passenger in the car, prompting questions about whether insurance would cover persons struck by ride-sharing drivers.

Lyft's terms of service advertise that Lyft "procures insurance that provides Drivers with excess automobile liability insurance up to \$1,000,000 per occurrence." This coverage, however, is "limited to liability only and does not provide coverage for collision." Additionally, the terms of services expressly note that the provisions contained therein are "an unofficial summary." SideCar's terms of service note that no insurance is provided by SideCar. When asked about

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Insurance, both SideCar and Lyft tell their drivers that their cars do not need to be covered by commercial liability insurance.

Questions arise as to the safety of others on the road. If SideCar doesn't insure their drivers, will their personal insurance cover an accident when the car was being driven for a commercial purpose? In the interim, San Franciscans seem all too willing to sacrifice safety for convenience.

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# Woman Says Uber Charged \$357 For Ride From West L.A. To Hollywood

Fare Breakdown		Trip Statistics	
Base Fare	\$15.00	14.18 miles	
Distance	\$58.50		
Time	\$21.72	49 minutes, 13 seconds	
Surge x3.75	\$261.86		
Charge subtotal	\$357.08	17.28 mph	
Rounding Down	(\$0.08)		
Discount subtotal	(\$0.08)		
<b>Total Fare</b>	<b>\$357.00</b>		
Amount Charged	(\$357.00)		
Outstanding Balance	\$0.00		

$\$357.00 \div 14.18 \text{ miles} = \$25.18 \text{ per mile}$   
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Receipt via [ValleyWag](#)

Snowed-under [New Yorkers](#) may not be the only ones getting gouged by Uber's surge pricing. A woman here in sunny California says she got stuck with a \$357 Uber bill that she didn't see coming.

The woman said that she called a car around 7 p.m. this Saturday night on a trip from West Los Angeles to Hollywood. She wrote into [ValleyWag](#) to tell her tale of apparent price-gouging:

While many people's counter-arguments focused on ill weather and the fact you can take the NY subway for \$2.50, I live Southern California where neither of these factors were an issue. This past Saturday, I booked Uber (with no clear warning that surge pricing was in effect until I received the receipt) to take us just 14 miles (it's actually 12 miles, but our driver took us the long way, of course). The trip cost an outrageous \$357.

It wasn't snowing; it wasn't raining; it wasn't New Year's Eve. It just happened to be 7pm—not 9pm where most people are prime to go out nor 2am when bars are closing. There was absolutely no excuse whatsoever to be charged the surge price—not even their "supply and demand" cop-out justification, which falls short in this instance. On a clear night with near-perfect weather and at least 10 Uber vehicles within my proximity at the time of the reservation, there was plenty of "supply."

I e-mailed Uber support 4 times and still haven't received a response. Then I went on Uber support and noticed they marked my case as "solved," even though nobody had gotten in touch with me.

We reached out to Uber for a comment about the woman's story. (Update: Uber [told the LA Weekly](#) that they have gotten in touch with this woman and dispute her claim that she wasn't warned about surge pricing.) On its blog, [Uber has written](#) that its policy is to clearly and concisely notify customers when a price-surge is in effect, whether that's on [New Year's Eve](#), Halloween or during a blizzard. (We don't even want to think about prices when the San Andreas starts quaking.)

The [ValleyWag](#) commenter isn't the only one who complained about being gouged this weekend. Two women who took an Uber ride this weekend complained that they were also overcharged and haven't received any help from the company:

# Los Angeles deals setback to Uber, other ride-sharing apps with cease and desist order

- *By* Chris Welch
- on June 25, 2013 03:01 pm
- *Email*
- *@chriswelch*
- 

## DON'T MISS STORIES FOLLOW THE VERGE

For every step of progress made by the ride-sharing industry in metropolitan havens like New York City, companies like Uber, Lyft, and SideCar continue to meet stiff resistance elsewhere. Take the city of Los Angeles for example, which just sided with traditional taxi operators by delivering sharply worded cease and desist letters to all three startups. The orders — signed by LA taxicab administrator Thomas M. Drischler — warn each company that their respective business is "operating an unlicensed commercial transportation service" within city limits. Uber, Lyft, and SideCar are each ordered to suspend all passenger pickups and any dispatches requested through their associated smartphone apps until they can obtain the requisite permits from California's Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

## ANOTHER VICTORY FOR THE TAXI INDUSTRY

Aside from the ride-sharing companies themselves, the stern warning also extends to drivers. "We suggest that you inform all Uber drivers operating in Los Angeles that they are subject to misdemeanor arrest and the impoundment of their vehicles for up to 30 days," reads the letter addressed to Uber's Travis Kalanick. (Similar wording appears in the other documents.)

Each service allows consumers to circumvent the usual methods of hailing a cab or black car by simply arranging pickup through a mobile app. Critics of ride-sharing have routinely based their arguments around public safety concerns and worry over riders potentially being overcharged. In Washington, DC, the FTC recently made its stance known, warning that overreaching transportation regulations could risk stifling innovation in the space. Even as Uber plots out an ambitious international expansion, it's still very much entrenched in a battle here at home.

*Thanks, Vallsurf!*

**Update:** Uber has gotten in touch to highlight that the California Public Utilities Commission has already granted the company permission to operate throughout the entire state. Further, Uber contends that Los Angeles Municipal Code Sec. 71.00 — which the LA Department of Transportation cites in its cease and desist letter — clearly grants the state PUC jurisdiction when it comes to regulating Uber and its drivers.

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