

Ride-share operator Lyft's New York launch hit snag

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A customer gets into a Lyft car in San Francisco, California on January 21, 2014

Ride-share operator Lyft was forced Friday to postpone its planned launch in New York after a court intervened over demands that it satisfy local safety and licensing requirements.

New York state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and financial services superintendent Benjamin Lawsky said they sought a temporary restraining order after talks broke down with Lyft.

The move came hours ahead of the planned release of Lyft, a ride-sharing service that operates in 60 US cities and competes with the likes of Uber.

"As a result of that action, the court has granted the state a temporary restraining order preventing Lyft from launching this evening in New York City," Lawsky and Schneiderman said in a statement.

A spokeswoman for Lyft denied that the court had granted a temporary [restraining order](#) but told AFP that the company had agreed to hold its launch.

"There was no TRO granted today—the judge adjourned to Monday and we agreed to hold our launch," she said.

Schneiderman and Lawsky said they had gone to [court](#) "only after repeatedly offering to work with Lyft in order to ensure that its business practices complied with the law."

"We are pro-innovation and pro-competition, but allowing Lyft to flout dozens of different laws would, in addition to putting the safety of New Yorkers at risk, put law-abiding competitors at a substantial disadvantage," they added.

Lyft said this week it had recruited 500 drivers in the Big Apple and that 75,000 New Yorkers had downloaded its mobile application ahead of the launch.

The San Francisco-based firm contends the service, which uses a smartphone app and geolocation, is needed and saves money for consumers.

But the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission quickly sought to put the brakes on the new service.

The municipal agency said Lyft "is unauthorized in New York City" and has failed to comply with safety and licensing requirements.

The squabble over Lyft is the latest in a simmering war that has played out in cities around the world, where new car-dispatching apps have been challenging regulated taxi services.

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