

Sharjah taxi drivers protest salary deduction

Taxi drivers complain that decision to deduct 52 fils per kilometre from their monthly revenue is unreasonable

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Sharjah: More than 100 taxi drivers gathered on Wednesday morning outside the Ministry of Labour in protest against the decision to deduct 52 fils per kilometre from their monthly revenue.

Since the rule was implemented on November 1, taxi drivers from all five franchise companies complained that the decision was unreasonable since it leaves them with less than half of their previous monthly revenue.

Although many drivers resumed work within the first week of November, dozens still refuse.

"This is my last chance. If this rule cannot change then I am leaving and will go back home. If I want to make the same commission as before [30 per cent] I need to work double. But customers are much less because they find taxis expensive," said a taxi driver.

'Working for free'

"A ministry official told us that we have no other choice but to abide to our contracts. I would rather leave get my end of service benefits, instead of working for free and leaving my family back home with debt," said another driver.

In response to the protest, Sharjah Transport released a statement yesterday saying: "The working relationship between the driver and the franchise company operating the service of taxis in the emirate is ruled by the Labour Code, and the law guarantees all of their rights. The rules are legally binding and were agreed upon by both parties, [the company and its employees]. If the employees disagree with the contract, then they have every right to hand in their resignation at the Ministry of Labour in Sharjah."