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The ensuing years have seen a gradual change in the market. The move away from open drive fleet policies to named driver policies helped to shift insurers view on the market. More competition, in the form of insurers that know and understand the intricacies of the Irish insurance market, such as FBD Insurance, also helped. And of course, new personal injury guidelines are also starting to have an impact - back in April of this year, the Central Bank reported that claims settled under these guidelines saw a cost reduction of 47%.

So, what's changed? Quite simply, inflation. This is impacting the cost of vehicle repairs and therefore, claims payment levels for motor damage claims, which are made far more frequently than injury claims.

The impact of this is being seen very strongly in the UK where in October 2023, the UK Insurance regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority has confirmed that they are 'monitoring motor insurance premiums'. This is fresh off an announcement by Vitality in the UK, who withdrew from offering motor insurance in September 2023, citing that 'over recent months the car insurance market has experienced unprecedented claims inflation, leading to significant price increases'.

Whilst we have not seen the same impact in

Ireland as the UK have experienced yet (where some premiums are up 40% on last year according to confused.com), we are starting to see a hardening of insurance rates locally. Some insurers have already increased rates by as much as 20%, whilst others are starting to talk up potential premium increases.

In the current market, if you have a full SPSV no claims discount entitlement and your price hasn't increased at your next renewal, that is a good result.

If you are a less experienced driver building a no claims discount entitlement, you should still expect price reduction with your added no claims discount, but these may not reduce as much as before.

Ultimately, as an SPSV operator, there isn't anything that you can do individually about macroeconomic factors such as inflation. What you can control however, is who you choose to purchase your insurance from.

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EDITOR LETTER

Thank you very much for picking up the latest edition of Tacsai magazine.

In this instalment we have a palate cleanser after the late and ongoing attacks on taxi drivers to give you the history of cabs in Ireland.

The NTA has a lot to say in this edition with their latest report and also have a number of great tips for drivers; not the least of which is how to keep your car clean!!!

Tony Roe; Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC) and Spokesman on taxis has a number of ideas to improve the taxi industry in Ireland based on European practices.

Also; the Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society continues to thrive . Anyone in need of help or who wishes to volunteer can contact Tony directly or through the NTAC.

The TTNH has been battling the Dublin

Airport Authority for several years now and a ballot was recently taken by drivers.

If you have a story, don't hesitate to contact Tacsai magazine and have your say .

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01. Skan Taxi centre, Tolka Valley Business Park.
02. Emo Station (Mount Brown), Kilmainham.
03. Discount Till Rolls
04. TTNH Offices, Santry Hall Ind. Est.
05. Fonthill Motor Factors.
06. Harbour Radiators.
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THE SAGA CONTINUES

Tony Roe Chairperson of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC) and Spokesperson on Taxis calls for changes that are badly needed and will enhance the taxi industry to up standards and quality.

This can be done by the Minister for Transport (Eamonn Ryan). This can be in conjunction with the National Transport Authority who seem to see taxis as the proverbial 'Cash Cow' and we would like to see further developments in the industry in terms of standard and quality for all involved.

Next is the grant to upgrade to an E-Vehicle. Some taxi drivers have remortgaged their homes to add to the grant. Make no mistake; taxi drivers are the only public transport vehicle available to you twenty four hours a day, seven days a week to bring you to go, when you need to get there.

The grant for public service vehicles to be upgraded to electric vehicles should be extended; the hybrid vehicles. As a gesture of goodwill to further promote the taxi industry for the common good. Most European countries that we have been on to have a system where the taxi is to be used is given the taxi driver, it is renewable with the vehicle registration tax and also the value added tax. Surely if other European countries can do this, "why cant we do this in Ireland here?" This would benefit everyone, because hard pressed taxi drivers are on the front line, they're acting as ambulances, doing life saving jobs. Everybody is aware of this; the birds in the sky are aware of this. Yet, they don't seem to get the credit and be treated like other European that looks after public service vehicles; that's taxi drivers.

Now we also have situations here where we are sick of highlighting the issues here which have gone from chronic, to acute which is assaults on drivers.

"Concerning the current issues that we have; we find an awful

lot of taxi drivers are talking to us about arguments they are having, about assaults. We found out that most of the problems encountered, and most of these assaults are done mainly in the early hours of the morning. Drivers are dealing with people who are under the influence and this is all a contributing factor to drivers who are leaving the industry. The number of complaints we have seen since this new legislation was introduced concerning card machines is out of hand," he said.

He went on to point out that there are parts of the country, (Dublin Airport being a prime example), where WiFi signal is not strong and the machine will not work resulting in an argument with the customer. He said that the Minister for Transport, Eamonn Ryan, and the NTA must act on this.

Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society

The newly rebranded Martina Rowe Lay Counselling Society (formerly the Taxi Drivers Lay Counselling Service) has been going from strength to strength since its inception.

"We have meetings every week with drivers who have any sort of issues, particularly personal issues which are being overlooked. We are having trips away soon to Spain and Romania. We have recently been to England, Scotland and Wales. We have had weekends away to Wexford, Limerick Carrick-on-Shannon, I could go on. Anyone who feels that they have issues they would like to air are more than welcome," said Rowe.


If you are interested in the Martina Rowe Lay Counselling Society, feel free to contact any of the Lay Counselling Committee or call Tony at 085 108 9482.



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Tips for Keeping Your Vehicle Clean

All SPSV operators are required to keep their vehicle clean to maintain a high standard of service for customers. The seats must be properly upholstered, clean and in a hygienic condition. The exterior paint must be consistent and the vehicle must not have paint or bodywork repairs in progress. Operating a vehicle which is dirty or in disrepair may result in customer complaints and could lead to a Fixed Payment Notice (“fine”) being issued.

Here are some checks you should carry out on your vehicle before operating:

- Interior and exterior of the vehicle shall be clean and of tidy condition and appearance at all times
- Trim material shall not be split, torn, unsecured, dirty, stained or sagging
- Seat fabrics shall be original equipment manufacturer quality cloth upholstery or leather retrim or equivalent quality
- Windows shall be clean

Here are some additional tips for keeping your vehicle clean during cold and flu season:

- Regularly disinfect surfaces, such as card payment devices, steering wheels, gear stick,

handbrake, door handles, seats and the backs of seats and headrests – Pay close attention to all surfaces that are touched often by passengers.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water (you can keep a bottle of water, soap and towels in your vehicle) or use a sanitizer gel if you have it – refer to the HSE handwashing guidelines.
- Do not touch your face.
- Carry a box of tissues and use tissues to catch coughs and sneezes. Dispose of used tissues in the bin as soon as possible

SPSV operators are also advised to keep up to date with HSE guidelines during the cold and flu season. Visit the HSE website for more information.

Further information on vehicle cleanliness and condition can be found in the inspections manuals which can be found here.



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ELECTRIC PEDAL TRIAL



Electric pedal-cab trial for Dublin as taxi firm FreeNow team up with new Irish start-up Kerb

The new trial has just begun . People travelling around Dublin City Centre will be able to avail of an exciting trial involving taxi firm, FreeNow and a new Irish digital start-up.

FreeNow has teamed up with new Irish start-up, Kerb, to support the rollout of a pedal-cab service trial in Dublin's city centre.

The trial will be available exclusively to passengers of FreeNow with the new pedal-cab booking option available within the FreeNow app.

The trial kicked off Thursday, November 16, at 3pm with three pedal-cabs available. This will increase to six before the end of December, with further fleet expansion possible next year.

Kerb is an innovative new Irish app launched this year which pledges to reduce the environmental impact of short city trips by using electric, carbon neutral and pedal-assisted transport.

The new start-up claims its fleet of electric pedal-cabs emits 90 times less CO2 than a petrol or diesel car and 50 times less than an electric car, a fact it claims will clean the city air we breathe.

Kerb says its mission is to "remove congestion and create more enjoyable living spaces for all" while calling for "radical thinking" by the government in the areas of behaviour and the adoption of sustainable transport links within the city.

The cabs would qualify to use bike lane infrastructure and bus lanes when possible, making short dashes within the city much quicker.

The pedal-cab is cheaper to run, meaning customers can move you from A to B for less (Image: Kerb)

FreeNow cites research data which indicates a growing

appetite for sustainable transport, showing that 51 per cent of us foresee an increase of shared micro-mobility over the next 10 years, while 42 per cent believe electric pedal-cabs will be a common mode of transport by the year 2033.

Charlie Gleeson, General Manager for FreeNow Ireland, commented on the new partnership with Kerb: "We are delighted to partner with Kerb to support the rollout of this pedal-cabs pilot scheme over the coming months across Dublin city centre.

The new micro-mobility service will be available exclusively to FREENOW passengers as part of FREENOW's ongoing commitment to diversify and enhance urban transportation choices. (Image: FreeNow)

"At FreeNow, we welcome innovation and admire those who are pioneering positive change in the industry. We believe that pedal-cabs, provided by Kerb, are complementary to our existing taxi service, providing our customers with even more choices for getting around the city."

Alan Browne and Aileen Griffin, founders of Kerb, added: "We are thrilled to join forces with FreeNow. We want to make a big impact and to help people imagine what's possible in our cities.

"We couldn't have found a better partner than FreeNow to help us achieve these goals. We can't wait to see our Kerb pedal-cabs in action in the coming days."

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Taxi drivers ‘struggling’ as Belfast depot increases fees



Taxi drivers have said they are “struggling” financially as a Belfast taxi company has announced they are rising their depot fees for drivers by 4.6%. It follows an announcement earlier this month that maximum fares taxi drivers can charge customers will increase by 9.5% during the day and 19.5% at all other times.

However, drivers may charge less than the maximum if they wish. The new prices will come into place on December 5, just weeks before Christmas.

The Department for Infrastructure said the increase is needed to tackle the lack of availability of taxis, particularly at evenings and weekends.

Increases in fuel prices and vehicle maintenance/operating costs also contributed to the rise.

It was revealed on BBC’s Nolan Show on Tuesday morning that Value Cabs are now also putting their depot rent up to £156 plus £3 for insurance from Monday December 11.

Rents for part time drivers for 1-3 days will also increase by 4.6%.

Value Cabs said that this recent rent increase is the first since December 2021.

Taxi driver Robert said on the Nolan Show that after speaking to other drivers it is clear “they are struggling at the minute and they are not happy about it.”

“I think in the circumstances, the depot rate for taxi drivers should be decreased.”

When approached by the Nolan Show, Fonacab has said they are also now considering increasing depot rent for drivers.

In a statement they said: “While we are considering the different implications of a depot service charge increase at present, we have yet to make a decision.”

When it was announced taxi fares would be increased, Hospitality Ulster chief executive Colin Neill said it was “understandable” that people would not want to pay more for their taxi in the lead-up to Christmas, but that a lack of availability of taxis was having a negative impact on the hospitality sector.

“It has been a long time since fares increased, and as everything becomes more expensive, fare adjustments are a reasonable measure for maintaining the viability of the taxi industry for the many individuals who depend on it,” he said.

“We know that limited taxi availability during peak times for pubs and restaurants is exacerbating the ongoing crisis in the hospitality sector.

“Hopefully the rise in fares will go some way in addressing this issue by encouraging more drivers to operate during evenings and weekends and expand service coverage during busy periods.”

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‘Shock’ as NI Housing Executive forks out £500k on taxi fares transporting people to temporary accommodation



The NI Housing Executive (NIHE) has spent more than £500,000 on taxi fares to transport people to emergency accommodation.

In one case a person was taxied from east Belfast to Londonderry and then Newry in a short timeframe, after being asked to move out of temporary accommodation.

Darryl Christy, an Aontú representative in Derry, expressed “shock” over the situation.

He found NIHE has spent £522,279 in the past three years on taxis taking people to and from temporary or emergency accommodation across NI.

NIHE did not provide a breakdown of the destinations or taxi firms used, saying it does not record that information.

The organisation said it has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to those who are vulnerable and will send a taxi to transport them “no matter” where they are and where their temporary accommodation is located.

It comes as concerns have been raised in recent years that offenders or individuals with complex behavioural needs are being placed in so-called ‘bail hostels’ without supervision.

A community worker and an organisation that deals with homeless people in Derry city recently raised concerns about the placement of individuals from other areas.

In the past, a notorious paedophile was placed in a street housing young families, while a serial sex offender from Belfast was given a Derry bail address in close proximity to a primary school.

On another occasion, a man was jailed for touching a woman in a sexual manner, placed on the sex offenders register and banned from entering Derry for three years after attacking two women at Quayside car park.

He was said to have told one of the victims: “I am from Belfast and Belfast couldn’t control me.”

These incidents have all prompted concerns that the appropriate risk assessments are not being carried out.

After he received a Freedom of Information response from NIHE, Mr Christy said: “For some time now it has been clear that there has been an influx of individuals from outside the north-west being placed in emergency or temporary accommodation such as hostels. This is has been replicated across the North.

“In many cases these placements are normal. However, it’s well documented that many individuals are being placed outside of their own locality because of problems with their behaviour or complex needs.

“There are growing concerns that those being moved to Derry and elsewhere have been removed from other accommodation and are no longer welcome.

“In moving these individuals, taxpayers might expect that a new address is given and people would make their own way to their new accommodation. However, we have information that taxis were being used to ferry those being moved.

Mr Christy recognised there are legitimate reasons why someone might need taxis between accommodation — for example, their current home becomes damaged or they are a victim of a crime.

“However, this should be the exception, not the rule,” he said.

“Taxpayers and those living in NIHE accommodation especially who cannot get repairs carried out due to budget constraints will be horrified by these figures.

“We have been contacted by taxi drivers who confirm they have driven people from east to west, and vice versa, multiple times, because they were asked to leave their accommodation due to their behaviour.

“Now, not only are taxpayers paying for new accommodation for those breaking the terms of their short-term lease, but also for their transport afterwards. It is outrageous... NIHE has serious questions to answer in relation to these journeys.”

NIHE said that if vulnerable people don’t have the means to get to temporary accommodation, they will get them there.

“One example a staff member used recently was that we would not leave a victim of domestic violence standing on a doorstep if they had no money or no car: we’ll send them a taxi and bring them to safety, no matter where they were or where their temporary accommodation is,” they said.

“We have a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation, and often the people we help are the most vulnerable in our society.”



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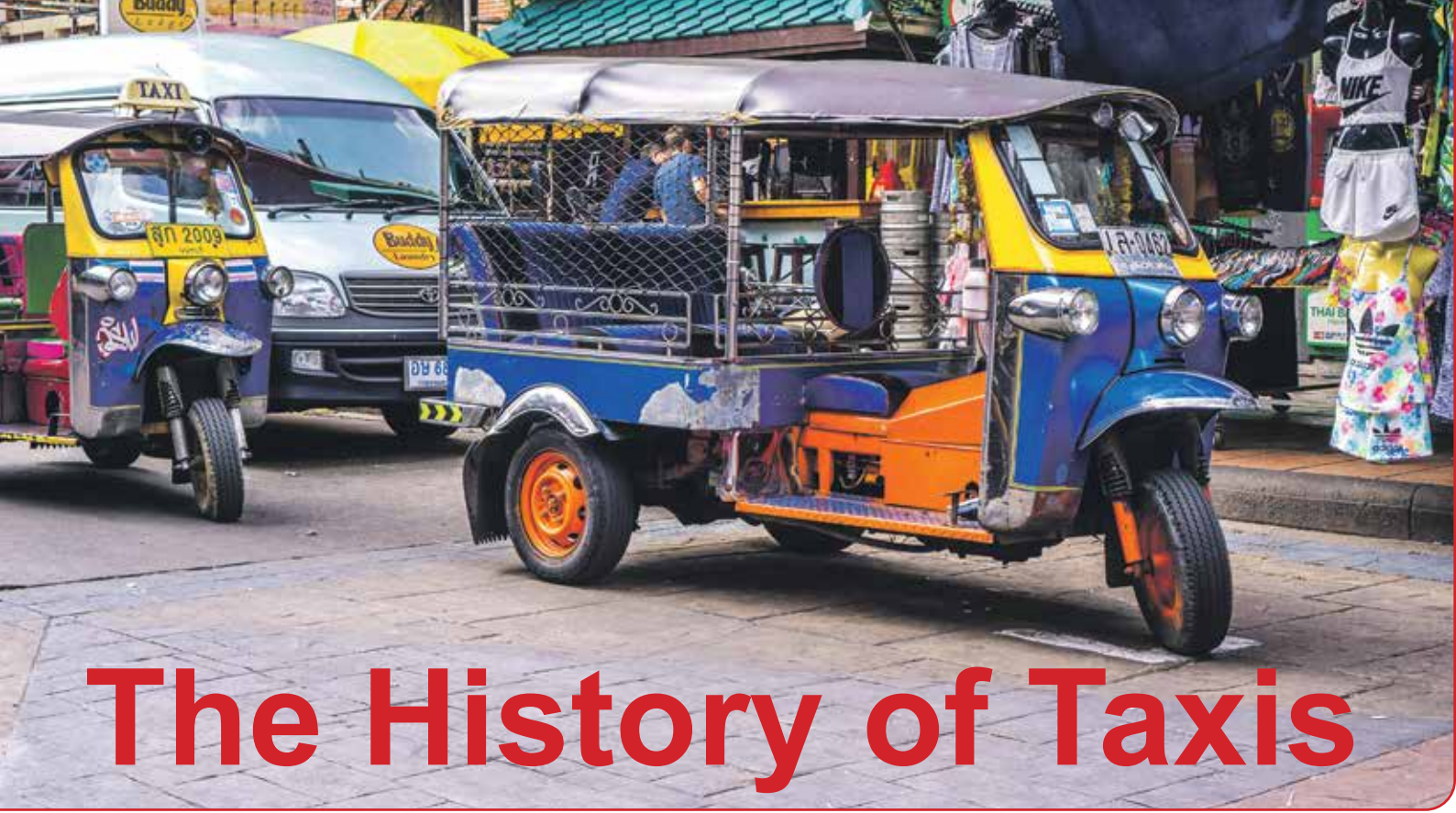
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The History of Taxis

A simple tap of a few buttons on your smartphone and poof, a Lynk taxi will appear in a matter of minutes – but where did the modern day taxi originate?

We have come a long way, but it has not always been like this, so we want to give you a brief history of how the taxi as we know it came about, just to give you an appreciation of where we are today!

The concept of taxis have been around since the 17th century, when horse-drawn carriages first became available for hire in London in 1605. It wasn't until 1897, however, that we saw the first iteration of the taxicab as we know it today, when the first gas powered taxi with a meter arrived on the scene.

Soon after, full fleets of taxicabs began operating in Paris in 1899, in London in 1903 and in New York in 1907. The New York taxicabs were imported from France by Harry N. Allen who decided to paint his taxicabs yellow to maximise his vehicles' visibility. With a growing number unofficial taxi drivers taking to the streets and customers being ripped off, the yellow coloured cabs became mandatory by law in New York in 1967.

The 1920s saw the existing automobile companies jump on the bandwagon, with General Motors and Ford buying and operating their first fleets of taxis. The next major development in taxis came in 1940 with the introduction of the two-way radio, which made dispatching taxis a lot more convenient and effective.

The 1950s and 60s saw taxicabs cross into popular culture with the founding of The Checker Taxi, whose unique cabs became iconic all around the world. In the following decades, more changes followed. We saw cities become more environmentally friendly and switch to electric cars, and the deregulation of the

taxi industry became a talking point in many countries, including Ireland. It wasn't until the introduction of mobile apps though, that we saw the next big innovation in the taxi industry, which is where we find ourselves today.

What will be next, self driving taxis? We wouldn't bet against it.

A taxi, also known as a taxicab or simply a cab, is a type of vehicle for hire with a driver, used by a single passenger or small group of passengers, often for a non-shared ride. A taxicab conveys passengers between locations of their choice. This differs from public transport where the pick-up and drop-off locations are decided by the service provider, not by the customers, although demand responsive transport and share taxis provide a hybrid bus/taxi mode.

There are four distinct forms of taxicab, which can be identified by slightly differing terms in different countries:

- Hackney carriages, also known as public hire, hailed or street taxis, licensed for hailing throughout communities
- Private hire vehicles, also known as minicabs or private hire taxis, licensed for pre-booking only
- Taxibuses, also come in many variations throughout the developing countries as jitneys or jeepney, operating on pre-set routes typified by multiple stops and multiple independent passengers
- Limousines, specialized vehicle licensed for operation by pre-booking

Although types of vehicles and methods of regulation, hiring, dispatching, and negotiating payment differ significantly from

country to country, many common characteristics exist. Disputes over whether ridesharing companies should be regulated as taxicabs resulted in some jurisdictions creating new regulations for these services.

The word taxicab is a compound word formed as a contraction of taximeter and cabriolet. Taximeter is an adaptation of the German word Taxameter, which is itself a variant of the earlier German word Taxanom. Taxe /ˈtakse/ is a German word meaning “tax”, “charge”, or “scale of charges”. The Medieval Latin word taxa also means tax or charge. Taxi may ultimately be attributed to Ancient Greek τάξις from τάσσω meaning “to place in a certain order,” as in commanding an orderly battle line,[4] or in ordaining the payment of taxes to the extent that ταξίδι (taxidi), meaning “journey” in Modern Greek, initially denoted an orderly military march or campaign. Meter is from the Greek μέτρον (metron) meaning “measure.” A cabriolet is a type of horse-drawn carriage; the word comes from French cabrioler (“to leap, caper”), from Italian capriolare (“to somersault”), from Latin capreolus (“roebuck”, “wild goat”). In most European languages that word has taken on the meaning of a convertible car.

The taxicabs of Paris were equipped with the first meters beginning on 9 March 1898. They were originally called taxibread, then renamed taximètres on 17 October 1904.

Harry Nathaniel Allen of The New York Taxicab Company, who imported the first 600 gas-powered New York City taxicabs from France in 1907, borrowed the word “taxicab” from London, where the word was in use by early 1907.

A popular but erroneous account holds that the vehicles were named after Franz von Taxis from the house of Thurn and Taxis, a 16th-century postmaster for Philip of Burgundy, and his nephew Johann Baptiste von Taxis, General Postmaster for the Holy Roman Empire. Both instituted fast and reliable postal services (conveying letters, with some post routes transporting people) across Europe

Hackney carriages

Horse-drawn for-hire hackney carriage services began operating in both Paris and London in the early 17th century. The first



documented public hackney coach service for hire was in London in 1605. In 1625 carriages were made available for hire from innkeepers in London and the first taxi rank appeared on the Strand outside the Maypole Inn in 1636. In 1635 the Hackney Carriage Act was passed by Parliament to legalise horse-drawn carriages for hire. Coaches were hired out by innkeepers to merchants and visitors. A further “Ordinance for the Regulation of Hackney-Coachmen in London and the places adjacent” was approved by Parliament in 1654 and the first hackney-carriage licences were issued in 1662.

A similar service was started by Nicolas Sauvage in Paris in 1637. His vehicles were known as fiacres, as the main vehicle depot apparently was opposite a shrine to Saint Fiacre. (The term fiacre is still used in French to describe a horse-drawn vehicle for hire, while the German term Fiaker is used, especially in Austria, to refer to the same thing.)

Hansom

The hansom cab was designed and patented in 1834 by Joseph Hansom, an architect from York as a substantial improvement on the old hackney carriages. These two-wheel vehicles were fast, light enough to be pulled by a single horse (making the journey cheaper than travelling in a larger four-wheel coach) were agile enough to steer around horse-drawn vehicles in the notorious traffic jams of nineteenth-century London and had a low centre of gravity for safe cornering. Hansom’s original design was modified by John Chapman and several others to improve its practicability, but retained Hansom’s name.

These soon replaced the hackney carriage as a vehicle for hire. They quickly spread to other cities in the United Kingdom, as well as continental European cities, particularly Paris, Berlin, and St Petersburg. The cab was introduced to other British Empire cities and to the United States during the late 19th century, being most commonly used in New York City.

The first cab service in Toronto, “The City”, was established in 1837 by Thornton Blackburn, an ex-slave whose escape when captured in Detroit was the impetus for the Blackburn Riots.

Modern taxicabs

Electric battery-powered taxis became available at the end of the 19th century. In London, Walter Bersey designed a fleet of such cabs and introduced them to the streets of London on 19 August 1897. They were soon nicknamed ‘Hummingbirds’ due to the idiosyncratic humming noise they made. In the same year in New York City, the Samuel’s Electric Carriage and Wagon Company began running 12 electric hansom cabs. The company ran until 1898 with up to 62 cabs operating until it was reformed by its financiers to form the Electric Vehicle Company. 1897 Daimler Victoria was the first gasoline-powered taxicab

The modern taximeter was invented and perfected by a trio of German inventors; Wilhelm Friedrich Nedler, Ferdinand Dencker and Friedrich Wilhelm Gustav Bruhn. The Daimler Victoria—the world’s first gasoline-powered taximeter-cab—was built by Gottlieb Daimler in 1897 and began operating in Stuttgart in

1897. Gasoline-powered taxicabs began operating in Paris in 1899, in London in 1903, and in New York in 1907. The New York taxicabs were initially imported from France by Harry N. Allen owner of the Allen-Kingston Motor Car Company. Their manufacturing took place at Bristol Engineering in Bristol, Connecticut where the first domestically produced Taxicabs were built in 1908, designed by Fred E. Moskovich who had worked at Daimler in the late 1890s. Albert F. Rockwell was the owner of Bristol and his wife suggested he paint his taxicabs yellow to maximise his vehicles' visibility. Moskovich was one of the organizers of the first Yellow Taxicab Company in New York

Taxicabs proliferated around the world in the early 20th century. The first major innovation after the invention of the taximeter occurred in the late 1940s, when two-way radios first appeared in taxicabs. Radios enabled taxicabs and dispatch offices to communicate and serve customers more efficiently than previous methods, such as using callboxes. The next major innovation occurred in the 1980s when computer assisted dispatching was first introduced

As military and emergency transport

Paris taxis carried 6000 soldiers to the front during the First Battle of the Marne

Paris taxis played a memorable part in the French victory at First Battle of the Marne in the First World War. On 7 September 1914, the Military Governor of Paris, Joseph Gallieni, gathered about six hundred taxicabs at Les Invalides in central Paris to carry soldiers to the front at Nanteuil-le Haudouin, fifty kilometers away. Within twenty-four hours about six thousand soldiers and officers were moved to the front. Each taxi carried five soldiers, four in the back and one next to the driver. Only the back lights of the taxis were lit; the drivers were instructed to follow the lights of the taxi ahead. The Germans were surprised and were pushed back by the French and British armies. Most of the taxis were demobilized on 8 September but some remained longer to carry the wounded and refugees. The taxis, following city regulations, dutifully ran their meters. The French treasury reimbursed the total fare of 70,012 francs. The military impact of the soldiers moved by taxi was small in the huge scale of the Battle of the Marne, but the effect on French morale was enormous; it became the symbol of the solidarity between the French army and citizens. It was also the first recorded large-scale use of motorized infantry in battle.

The Birmingham pub bombings on 21 November 1974, which killed 21 people and injured 182, presented emergency services with unprecedented peacetime demands. According to eyewitness accounts, the fire officer in charge, knowing the 40 ambulances he requested were unlikely to be available, requested the Taxi Owners Association to transport the injured to the nearby Birmingham Accident Hospital and Birmingham General Hospital.

Vehicles

Taxi services are typically provided by automobiles, but in some

countries various human-powered vehicles, (such as the rickshaw or pedicab) and animal-powered vehicles (such as the Hansom cab) or even boats (such as water taxis or gondolas) are also used or have been used historically. In Western Europe, Bissau, and to an extent, Australia, it is not uncommon for expensive cars such as Mercedes-Benz to be the taxicab of choice. Often this decision is based upon the perceived reliability of, and warranty offered with these vehicles. These taxi-service vehicles are almost always equipped with four-cylinder turbodiesel engines and relatively low levels of equipment, and are not considered luxury cars. This has changed though in countries such as Denmark, where tax regulation makes it profitable to sell the vehicles after a few years of service, which requires the cars to be well equipped and kept in good condition

Cities like London and Tokyo have implemented specific regulations like London's Conditions of Fitness that dictate size, fuel efficiency, emissions, and accessibility standards far stricter than that for private vehicles. Much like the NY Checker cabs of the 60s-80s, the unique attributes of the city often make the vehicles built to fit those requirements ubiquitous to its livery fleets, and often becomes an iconic image of the city itself.

Although New York City's efforts to implement new regulations has stumbled in its efforts to mandate both a hybrid and wheelchair-accessible vehicle,[28] London and Tokyo's efforts have yielded unique vehicles such the LEVC TX and Toyota JPN Taxi that meet and exceed modern emissions and accessibility requirements for the future, and will hopefully soon extend to other cities as older models get rotated out of the bigger cities and into smaller markets. Modifications of existing minivans such as the Mercedes Vito London Taxi and the Nissan NV200 have been introduced as a stopgap measures to fill the need for alternative products, however their acceptance by drivers is yet to be seen.



In recent years, some companies have been adding specially modified vehicles capable of transporting wheelchair-using

passengers to their fleets. Such taxicabs are variously called accessible taxis, wheelchair- or wheelchair-accessible taxicabs, modified taxicabs, or "maxicabs".

Wheelchair taxicabs are most often specially modified vans or minivans. Wheelchair-using passengers are loaded, with the help of the driver, via a lift or, more commonly, a ramp, at the rear of the vehicle. This feature is however a subject for concern amongst Licensing Authorities who feel that the wheelchair passenger could not easily exit the vehicle in the event of accident damage to the rear door. The latest generation of accessible taxis features side loading with emergency egress possible from either of the 2 side doors as well as the rear. The wheelchair is secured using various systems, commonly including some type of belt and clip combination, or wheel locks. Some wheelchair taxicabs are capable of transporting only one wheelchair-using passenger at a time, and can usually accommodate 4 to 6 additional non-disabled passengers.

Wheelchair taxicabs are part of the regular fleet in most cases, and so are not reserved exclusively for the use of wheelchair users. They are often used by non-disabled people who need to transport luggage, small items of furniture, animals, and other items. Because of this, and since only a small percentage of the average fleet is modified, wheelchair users must often wait for significantly longer periods when calling for a cab, and flagging a modified taxicab on the street is much more difficult.



Other

Three-wheeled Coco taxis in Havana, CubaA "bicitaxi" (identified by its license plate) in Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Mexico

Taxicabs in less developed places can be a completely different experience, such as the antique French cars typically found in Cairo. However, starting in March 2006, newer modern taxicabs entered the service operated by various private companies. Taxicabs differ in other ways as well: London's black cabs have a large compartment beside the driver for storing bags, while many fleets of regular taxis also include wheelchair accessible taxicabs among their numbers (see above). Although taxicabs have traditionally been sedans, minivans, hatchbacks and even SUV taxicabs are becoming increasingly common. In many cities, limousines operate as well, usually in competition with taxicabs and at higher fares.



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TAXI APP FREENOW SEES PROFITS TRIPLE AS ANNUAL TURNOVER RISES 73%



Pre-tax profits at the firm which operates the taxi app Free Now more than tripled last year, rising to €4.95m as the cab industry recovered from a pandemic-induced slump.

Up from a pre-tax profit of just €1.6m in 2021, accounts filed by Free Now Ireland Ltd also report a 73% increase in annual turnover, rising to more than €38.4m in 2022 despite a surge in new competitors

. In recent years, alternative taxi apps including Bolt and Uber have expanded their presence across Ireland, with FreeNow noting in its latest financial statement that a “significant number of start-ups” in the taxi hailing market, coupled with the “fragmented nature” of incumbents in the market would likely lead to increased future competition.

While up significantly on 2021, profits at FreeNow have yet to recover from pre-pandemic levels. In 2020, Free Now posted a pre-tax profit of €6.38m, with a surge in new competitors coinciding with subdued earnings.

Freenow, formerly known as MyTaxi prior to its rebranding in 2019, was founded in 2009 and is one of the largest mobility apps in Europe. Headquartered in Hamburg, the app spans across 150m cities and claims to have more than

48 million users.

In addition to competition risks, FreeNow has also noted potential supply issues, adding that it relies on drivers to be available to fulfil demand, which may cause issues if driver acceptance rates drop significantly.

The company has started trials with an electric scooter provider in Dublin and has continued to invest in electric vehicles, with FreeNow adding these moves would “ensure a future-proof business model” going forward.

The taxi app reported a cash balance of more than €20.8m, up significantly from just over €14m in 2021, with net current assets also up by more than €4m to €14.9m following efforts to restructure its costs.

The directors said they expect the company to stay in a profit position while still investing into the current business models to increase their activity in Ireland.

At the end of December 2022, the firm’s shareholder funds stood at €15.8m which included accumulated profits of €4.31m, up from €2.09m a year earlier.



New CITROËN ë-C4 X

Amazing Car, Amazing Value by Declan Glynn

The new Citroën ë-C4 X fully-electric model features a unique design combining the elegance of a fastback silhouette with the modern attitude of an SUV and the timeless cachet of a spacious 4-door. With a notable and innovative design, the ë-C4 X redefines the sedan by introducing the modern and popular crossover element. Available with several safety and technology features as standard, the new ë-C4 X also features Citroën's Advanced Comfort Programme. In a first for Citroën, this model was launched exclusively with an all-electric powertrain initially, with petrol and diesel models now also available. In terms of specification, there are four generously-equipped grades available; Feel, Feel Pack, Flair and Flair Pack. The new Citroën ë-C4 X fully-electric model is priced from just €33,418 – providing buyers with amazing value throughout the model range. The petrol version of the new C4 X starts at just €29,100 and the top-spec diesel-powered version is priced at just €37,600 – both of which are available for immediate delivery.

Commitment to Sustainability.

Enforcing Citroën's commitment to sustainability, the Citroën ë-C4 X contains 135kg of recycled materials, and is manufactured using 30% solar energy in Madrid, Spain. On the outside, the design includes a familiar front-end incorporating Citroën's assertive rounded design signature. The high, horizontal bonnet features concave indentations, and trademark chrome chevrons stretch across the width of the body, connecting with double-height front lamps using LED headlights to reinforce the vehicle's high-tech credentials and provide maximum visibility. Large 690mm diameter wheels, combined with a short front overhang, give the car a raised ride height which results in a more elevated driving position. When viewed in profile, the car's

dynamic roofline flows effortlessly and seamlessly from the top of the windscreen into the top panel of the boot lid to create a fastback silhouette. With a drag coefficient of just Cd 0.29, aerodynamic efficiency has been optimised thanks to the crisp roofline, which directly benefits range efficiency. The rear overhang intelligently disguises the length required to package the capacious 510-litre boot. Distinctive new LED tail lamps are placed either side of the boot opening and carry through the sculpted lines of the boot lid, pushing around the corners and along the sides of the car.

Unmatched Cabin Serenity.

Inside the new Citroën ë-C4 X, drivers and their passengers will enjoy an unmatched feeling of



serenity, comfort, and space thanks to Citroën's Advanced Comfort experience. This is particularly noticeable to back seat passengers thanks to its outstanding 198mm of second row knee room and a more reclined rear seatback, while its width means three people can comfortably sit side-by-side across the rear bench. The new ë-C4 X inherits the distinct offering of Citroën's Advanced Comfort programme, featuring the brand's exclusive Advanced Comfort Seats with special foam thickened by 15mm, plus a unique blend of visual, postural, and dynamic support. High-density foam at the core of the seats ensures optimal comfort, particularly on longer journeys, and maintains this over time by reducing any settling effects and ageing within the seats. Alongside the Advanced Comfort Seats, the ë-C4 X includes Citroën's innovative and exclusive 'Progressive Hydraulic Cushion' suspension system. The presence of hydraulic stops allowed Citroën engineers greater freedom to tune the suspension setup to achieve the brand's acclaimed "magic carpet ride" effect, which gives the impression that the car is gliding over uneven ground, this results in ultimate comfort when driving.

Range – Up To 360km.

Thanks to its smooth, aerodynamic shape and its 50 kWh battery, the efficient zero emission electric powertrain in new ë-C4 X offers an impressive WLTP range of up to 360 km. The 100 kW electric motor offers 136 hp with 260 Nm of torque that is instantly available to the driver, and this enables a 0-100 km/h sprint to be completed in as little as 9.5 seconds. Three driving modes are available – Eco,

Normal or Sport - and are activated by the mode selector in the centre console. At a public charging station, using a rapid 100 kW DC charger, the battery replenishes at a 'best-in-segment' rate of around 10 km/min, with 80% of charge completed in 30 minutes. Using a 7.4 kW wall box, charging takes 7.5 hours with single-phase supply or as little as 5 hours with a three-phase electricity supply. Managing vehicle charging is easy and can be pre-programmed to take advantage of off-peak electricity prices. Charging times can be pre-set using the car's touchscreen interface, or via the 'My Citroën' app..

First Drive Verdict & Pricing.

At the recent Irish launch of the new ë-C4 X, I was afforded the opportunity to take a brief drive, and I was hugely impressed by the breadth of talents on offer in Citroën's latest creation. Excellent driving dynamics, a supremely-comfortable cabin, and the very latest infotainment and safety tech, along with its handsome looks are facts that are well worth shouting about. A full road test review will follow in this publication soon. With prices starting at just €33,418 (inclusive of an SEAI consumer grant), this represents outstanding value for money. Drivers of small public service vehicles (SPSV), such as taxis and hackneys, can apply for grants of up to €25,000 when they scrap an older, more polluting or high mileage vehicle and make the switch to electric. SPSV drivers who make the switch to an EV can also avail of the Domestic Charger Scheme (up to €600) and annual toll refunds (up to €1,000). This is in addition to the significant fuel savings and lower maintenance costs associated with electric vehicles. Visit www.citroen.ie for further information.



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CASHLESS PAYMENT DEBACLE

The National Transport Authority received a total of 1,625 complaints in 2022 relating to taxi drivers

A RECORD NUMBER of complaints about taxi drivers last year has been linked to the introduction of a new regulation requiring licence holders to accept cashless payments for fares.

New figures published by the National Transport Authority (NTA), which acts as the regulator for the taxi industry, show it received a total of 1,625 complaints in 2022.

It represented almost a threefold increase on the number of complaints received in 2021, while it was also a 17% increase over the previous record annual total of 1,383 in 2019.

The NTA said the growth in the number of complaints was “mainly due to the introduction of a new requirement in September 2022 for taxi drivers to provide cashless payment terminals for fares”.

It claimed the regulation had resulted in the complaint category of “overcharging and other matters relating to fares” accounting for almost half of all complaints made last year – a total of 793 cases.

The second most common category of complaint related to the conduct and identification of drivers which accounted for 481 complaints or 30% of the total.

The number of complaints about the condition and roadworthiness of taxis was down almost 50% on pre-pandemic levels to 42.

The NTA said 40% of complaints resulted in the driver being issued with a fine, warning, advice or a summons for prosecution.

It also reported that over 204,000 checks were carried out on taxis and other small public service vehicles (SPSVs) as

well as drivers last year which involved approximately 90% of all vehicles.

They resulted in 655 drivers being issued with on-the-spot fines.

The most common offence was the failure to notify details of the vehicle being operated to the NTA which accounted for 21% of the total.

Other common breaches of taxi regulations related to vehicle standards, the unreasonable refusal to carry a passenger and the failure to print or offer a taxi receipt.

The NTA said it initiated 146 prosecutions against taxi drivers last year with a majority of cases relating to the operation of an unlicensed vehicle.

Number of taxi drivers

Meanwhile, the number of taxi drivers in Ireland has decreased by almost 7% to just under 25,400 since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The latest figures show there were 1,835 fewer drivers of taxis and other small public service vehicles (SPSVs) at the end of 2022 compared to March 2020.

A total of 25,393 active SPSV licences were recorded last year – a decrease of 6.7% since the outbreak of the pandemic – with almost 60% of drivers licensed to operate a taxi service.

It means there are now over 22,000 fewer taxi drivers in Ireland since the peak level of 47,529 recorded in May 2009.

A general downward trend in the number of people working in the taxi industry was reversed between 2017 and early 2020 as a result of a recruitment campaign by the NTA before it was adversely affected by the impact of the pandemic.

According to the NTA, a total of 1,159 new SPSV driver

licences were issued last year – more than double the number of new driver licences issued in 2021 – with almost two-thirds of the new entrants licensed to operate in Dublin.

However, the numbers leaving the industry were even higher with 25 individuals surrendering their licence, while another 1,400 allowed their licence to lapse permanently during 2022.

The latest figures also confirm the ageing profile of taxi drivers with a majority aged 50 and over.

Only 660 drivers – just 2.6% of the total – are aged under 32 years, while over 14% of all drivers are aged over 68 years.

“The figures indicate that a career in taxi driving may be popular as a second career, post-retirement,” the NTA said.

The regulator said a majority of applicants who sit and fail the driver entry test for taxis and other SPSVs do not take the test a second time.

However, NTA figures show applicants take on average 2.8 tests before they pass the exam.

More than 2,460 candidates took the test last year.

Despite the decline in the number of people working in the taxi industry, the size of the national fleet grew by almost 2% last year.

NTA figures show the total number of active licence plates rose by 1.8% to 19,281 vehicles including 16,220 taxis– an annual increase of 335.

However, the national fleet remains over 2,000 vehicles below pre-pandemic levels.

Grants

At the same time, the number of wheelchair accessible taxis reached a record level of 3,206 last year.

All new taxi vehicles since June 2010 must be capable of carrying passengers who use wheelchairs, while grants of up to €7,500 have been available for the purchase of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

A total of €1.32 million was made available in grants in 2022 which facilitated the addition of 231 new taxis and 81 replacement vehicles.

The NTA said the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the Irish fleet at over 17% compared very favourably to other similarly regulated countries.

The regulator also reported a 75% increase in applications to the grant scheme for electric SPSVs last year.

However, the NTA said only 636 applicants received funding worth €11.9 million as the remainder were unable to source a vehicle before the end of the year due to international supply chain constraints.

“Climate, energy and geopolitical challenges resulted in long delays for new vehicles in Ireland as well as inflated prices for second-hand vehicles, making it unfeasible for some to enter the fleet,” the NTA stated.

Nevertheless, the number of fully electric vehicles in the national taxi fleet more than doubled in the space of 12 months.

The latest figures show there were 1,369 e-cars in the fleet at the end of 2022 compared to 674 the previous year, while there are also a further 3,539 hybrid vehicles

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Laughy Christmas



Dear Tech Support, Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and noticed a distinct slow down in overall system performance - particularly in the flower and jewelry applications, which operated flawlessly under Boyfriend 5.0. In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs, such as Romance 9.5 and Personal Attention 6.5 and then installed undesirable programs such as NFL 5.0, NBA 3.0, and Golf Clubs 4.1. Conversation 8.0 no longer runs, and Housecleaning 2.6 simply crashes the system. I've tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems, but to no avail. What can I do?
Signed, Desperate

Dear Desperate, First keep in mind, Boyfriend 5.0 is an Entertainment Package, while Husband 1.0 is an Operating System. Please enter the command "!: http: I Thought You Loved Me.html" and try to download Tears 6.2 and don't forget to install the Guilt 3.0 update. If that application works as designed, Husband 1.0 should then automatically run the applications Jewelry 2.0 and Flowers 3.5. But remember, overuse of the above application can cause Husband 1.0 to default to Grumpy Silence 2.5, Happy Hour 7.0 or Beer 6.1. Beer 6.1 is a very bad program that will download the Snoring Loudly Beta. Whatever you do, DO NOT install Mother-in-law 1.0 (it runs a virus in the background that will eventually seize control of all your system resources). Also, do not attempt to reinstall the Boyfriend 5.0 program. These are unsupported applications and will crash Husband 1.0. In summary, Husband 1.0 is a great program, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory and performance. We recommend Food 3.0 and HotLingerie 7.7. Good Luck, Tech Support

Told my girlfriend she drew her eyebrows too high. She seemed surprised.

Teacher: How much is a gram? Tyronne: Ummm, depends on what you need

Man asks a farmer near the field, "Sorry sir, would you mind if I crossed your field instead of going around it? You see, I have to catch the 4:30 PM train." The farmer says, "Sure, go right ahead. And if my bull sees you, you'll even catch the 4 PM one."

Yo mama is so old her first Christmas was the first Christmas...

Yo mamma's so fat, I took a picture of her last Christmas and it's STILL printing...

Yo mama so ugly on Christmas when Santa saw her he said "HO HO HOLY SHIT..."



General Knowledge Questions

1. By what seasonal name was Frederick V of Bohemia known?
2. On Stir-up Sunday which way should you stir the Christmas pudding to bring good luck?
3. Featured in the Charles Dickens' story "A Christmas Carol", what is a "Smoking Bishop"?
4. Jason Statham plays ex-SAS soldier Lee Christmas in what series of movies?
5. What Christmas present did France give to America in 1886?
6. What is the alternate title of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"?
7. Tins of chocolates are always popular at Christmas, but can you put these famous brands in order of when they were first launched in the UK, [a] Cadburys Heroes, [b] Cadburys Roses, [c] Celebrations and [d] Quality Street?
8. How many times did The Beatles make a Christmas record for members of their fan club?

THE TACSAÍ MAGAZINE BUMPER QUIZ

9. Who created Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer in a 1939 book issued by the department store Montgomery Ward?
10. Designed by school children on BBC's "Blue Peter", in which year were the first Christmas stamps issued in the UK?

1. The Winter King.
2. Clockwise.
3. A type of mulled wine or punch.
4. The Expendables.
5. The Statue of Liberty.
6. What You Will.
7. [d] Quality Street (1936), [b] Cadburys Roses (1938), [c] Celebrations (1997) and [a] Cadburys Heroes (1999).
8. Seven.
9. Robert May.
10. 1966.

WORLD NEWS

Top stories from around the globe

NYC

NYC's Last Two Crown Vic Taxi Cabs Are Living on Borrowed Time

Outside of the London Black Cab, there may not be a more famous taxi cab than the yellow NYC Ford Crown Victoria. The yellow Crown Vic has been featured in countless movies, music videos, and various other artworks throughout its time in service that it's probably the car you think of first when you think of a taxi cab. However, there are only two Crown Vics left in New York City, according to the New York Times, and their time for this world is short.

Ravinder Sharma and Haroon Abdullah are the owners of NYC's last two Panther-chassis Crown Vics, both of which combine for more than one million miles. However, both Sharma's and Abdullah's cars are on borrowed time, and will soon be forcibly put out to pasture.

In 2012, the Crown Vic was taken off the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission's (TLC) approved vehicle list, which prevented new Crown Vics from getting taxi medallions. Existing cabs have a regulatory shelf life of seven years with the TLC, which meant Sharma's and Abdullah's cabs were originally supposed to be decommissioned several years ago, but an extension was given due to COVID. Those extensions are now over, and the last two cabs have officially overstayed their regulatory welcome.

Sharma turns 65 in a few months and is going to ask the TLC to extend his Crown Vic's until then. "I'm thinking if they allow me to drive, I drive," said Sharma, per NYT. "If they don't, I take my Social Security and retire."

Abdullah is unfortunately in a trickier situation, as he's in a tough financial spot and needs his Crown Vic to earn his living, as he can't afford a newer cab. "I'm behind on my bills. If they don't allow me to drive this car, I won't make the income I need to buy a new car."

Knowing that the final two Crown Vics will be decommissioned from NYC taxi cab-duty is sad, as it very much feels like the end of an era. The Crown Vic has been in taxi cab service for my entire adult life, so much so that any other sort of cab feels foreign to me. It also has tough financial implications for its final two owners, adding a real, human element to its demise. I wonder what the next affordable, iconic cab will be? Whatever

it is, it has big shoes to fill.

Japan

Getting a taxi in Okinawa harder than ever amid driver shortage
It was past 10 p.m. on a Friday night in October and a reporter was trying to ask for a cab after a drink in the Kumoji area of Naha.

"It'll take over 20 minutes till we can get a taxi. Is that alright?" he was told by a staffer at the restaurant. It's often the case that it takes over 30 minutes to get a cab on bustling Friday nights in Naha.

Outside the restaurant, a group of three men were waiting for a cab as well. They tried a cab-hailing app but couldn't get one. No taxis were cruising the street either, they said.

While the local economy in Okinawa is on a recovery track after the COVID-19 downturn, finding a taxi is becoming increasingly difficult because of a shortage of drivers. Taxis are indispensable means of public transportation in Okinawa where no railway services — aside for a monorail service — are available, but the industry is unable to meet demand and there is no easy solution in sight.

According to the prefectural taxi and hire association, there were 3,700 corporate cabs and 1,100 private cabs licensed to operate in the prefecture as of 2021. However, due to a shortage of drivers, the actual utilization rate of corporate cabs was only 56.6%. The association has received complaints that cabs cannot be reserved or found on the street.

"Many elderly drivers quit their jobs after the COVID outbreak, and they are reluctant to return," said Naoto Oshiro, executive director of the association. "All companies are having a hard time securing drivers," he said.

A male driver, 84, who works for a cab company in the prefecture, said there are almost no young people in his company. "Even if we try to recruit them, they don't come," he said as he adjusted his hearing aid repeatedly.

The retirement age at his company is 60, but many drivers stay with the firm as nonregular employees. More than a few of them are still working in their late 70s after having cleared the company's requirements, such as having no records of accidents or traffic violations, the driver said.

"We have plenty of cars available, so we can work anytime

Getting a taxi in Okinawa harder than ever amid driver shortage



we want,” he said. “Some drivers work almost nonstop because they can earn commissions as they work.”

The number of vehicles a taxi company can operate is determined by the local population and the size of the company. If the number of registered vehicles is reduced, it is difficult to obtain approval again, so taxi companies store and maintain the vehicles even when they are short of drivers.

The elderly driver’s monthly take-home pay is about ¥130,000 (\$870). He gets little base salary, and his pay mostly comes from commissions. “If you work the night shift, you can earn about ¥300,000, but it’s physically hard when you are over 70,” he said.

On the other hand, younger crew members are aiming to become independent drivers after gaining experience from working for a cab company because they can work more freely, and some of them are earning more than ¥300,000 a month, he said.

The driver said many of his fellow elderly drivers quit amid the COVID-19 pandemic for fear of infection, and few have returned even after businesses got back to normal. He remembers giving a sick customer a ride to the hospital. “I was scared I might catch it too, but it’s my job,” he said, adding that he wants to continue working as long as his health allows. “So I can give some money to my grandchildren when I see them.”

The number of cab drivers working in the prefecture peaked at 10,041 in 2009 and declined to 5,246 in 2021. The majority of them are age 65 or older.

Overtime regulations

Adding to the woes of the taxi industry is the so-called 2024 problem, which will see caps on overtime work for drivers of taxis, buses and trucks tightened starting next April. In Okinawa Prefecture, where there are no train services, buses and cabs provide more than 70% of public transportation, and the stricter regulations could have a significant impact on the transportation industries.

“Doing overtime work is a matter of course because our salary is based on commissions,” said a driver in his 60s who works for a taxi company in the prefecture. “I start working at 5:00 p.m. on the night shift and work until around noon the next day. Many drivers work overtime to the maximum upper limit,” he said.

In fiscal 2022, the number of job openings in Okinawa’s cab industry was 3.5 times the number of applicants. One of the reasons behind such a labor shortage is the difficulty in obtaining the Type 2 driver’s license, which is required to drive taxis, buses and other vehicles for the purpose of carrying passengers.

Restaurants and hotels in the prefecture have been actively hiring foreign nationals to make up for the labor shortage. Meanwhile, obtaining the Type 2 driver’s license requires not only driving skills but also a high level of Japanese language ability and knowledge of local geography, which makes it difficult for many foreign nationals to achieve. Even among Japanese drivers, the pass rate for the license is about 40%.

The bus industry is also facing a serious labor shortage, forcing operators to reduce runs of local buses and limit bookings for sightseeing vehicles. A taxi industry official said some drivers are moving to the bus and truck industries, where they are paid a stable salary instead of commissions. “Industries are competing for professional drivers,” the official said.

To alleviate the situation, the central government is considering relaxing business licenses for operating private cabs and introducing ride-sharing, through which ordinary people use their own cars to transport customers for a fee. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also stated in his policy speech on Oct. 23 that he would deal with issues related to ride-sharing.

The taxi industry, however, is cautious about the introduction of ride-sharing. “Depending on the spread of ride-sharing, it may compete with cabs, which may lead to lower wages and higher job turnover,” a taxi industry source said, expressing his concerns about a further vicious cycle.

The prefectural government has allocated funds in this year’s supplementary budget to subsidize bus and cab operators when their employees obtain Type 2 driver’s licenses, but the measure has not been a decisive factor in turning around the situation.

“A shortage of drivers is inevitable,” an official from the prefectural government’s transportation policy division said. “We’ll respond to the residents’ demand by maintaining the core bus routes as much as possible,” he said, alluding to a situation where nothing can be done immediately to improve the labor shortage in the taxi industry.

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