

TACSAÍ

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**MAN'S €660 TAXI FARE
FROM BELFAST COVERED
BY AIRLINE AFTER
DIVERSION 'ADVENTURE'
- SEE P8**



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Is it worth protecting your no claims bonus?

A customer was recently in our office asking this question..... before we could answer, the customer pulled out his phone to show us he's actually asked this question in an online forum of taxi drivers and the replies were interesting to say the least:

*'bonus protection is worth nothing'
'just another rip-off by insurance companies'
'don't touch it, they can still put up the price if they want'*

On further discussion with the customer in question, the frustration seemed to stem from the fact that even though someone's no claims bonus was protected, their price still went up! So, we thought we'd use our article this month to try and dispel some of the myths of bonus protection.

The Name and the Premise

Historically, as per the title of the article, we have used the phrase no claims 'bonus' protection. However, in recent years you'll have seen insurers reclassify this as no claims 'discount' protection. This is a more accurate reflection of what you are being offered.

In short, you earn no claims 'discount' for each consecutive year of claims free driving under your Taxi insurance policy. The discount grows to a maximum of 5 or 6 years (this varies between insurers) before you reach the largest discount available.

Discount levels are unique to each insurer but 1 year may give a 10% discount and 5 years may be a **50% discount**.

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How does this work in practice?

Insurers calculate your premium based on lots of different factors including but not limited to; age, experience (both in general driving and SPV driving), vehicle type, number of passengers carried, area of operation, claims history, penalty points etc. After putting these risk factors into their system, insurers arrive at a premium. For example, lets imagine we've put your details into the insurers system and the premium quoted is €3,000.

Now, the last thing the insurer will do is apply your no claims discount. Again, for ease of example, lets imagine you've earned 5 years and a 50% discount. This now reduces the €3,000 above down to a final premium of €1,500.

But, what happens if I have a claim during the year?

This is where confusion is often caused and frustrations arise. Going back to my previous example where an insurer puts all your details into their system - they now put in the same information that gave you the €3,000 price, but now they need to also add in the claim.

Now, continuing this example, it may mean the initial price in their system now quotes an increased premium of €5,000!

If you have protected your no claims

discount, we could apply the 50% used in this example and your final premium would reduce down to €2,500.

How can the price go up if my discount was protected?

Well, the key is in the name. You have purchased protection of your discount, not protection of your premium. It's important to state that there is no such thing as premium protection in the motor insurance market. Insurers quotations are generally valid for a maximum of 30 days but are subject to change if any of the details quoted upon change - this, of course, includes claims.

So, the insurer can increase a price based on the new information (i.e. in this example they have to consider an extra claim that hadn't happened before).

Is it worth purchasing no claims bonus protection?

Well, in the example provided, whilst the overall cost has still gone up by €1,000 your discount protection has saved you €2,500! If you didn't have discount protection your premium would have gone up to €5,000. So,

charged as much as 30% extra on top of the premium for protection! Also consider what level of protection you are buying?

We've heard some insurers charging for protecting a discount, yet still reducing the discount if there is a large claim.....the devil is always in the detail, so consider it carefully or seek advice.

Having said all of that, generally, if you can find an insurer willing to protect your no claims discount for around 10% of your premium then it's something we would generally recommend - you're a professional driver, insurance is a compulsory purchase and anything helping to keep your expenses lower/more stable in the long-term is



here is definitely a benefit to this purchase.

There are lots of factors to consider before purchasing protection of your no claims discount and a key factor is how much it costs - some customers have been

generally a good thing. We'd be happy to discuss individual cases and circumstances with any drivers seeking advice on this matter.

Visit: TaxiFair.ie

EDITOR LETTER

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoy Tacsai magazine's first issue of 2024. While January is generally a very slow month due to the Christmas come down, we have a number of interesting pieces for your perusal.

One very contentious piece regards the proposals of Dublin City officials that taxi drivers in the city centre should maintain "passive surveillance" against anti-social behavior. This proposal has been blasted by many within the industry, some of whom are resentful of the governments treatment of taxi drivers and find the proposals to be very audacious.

One such opponent of the proposal is Vinny Kearns Vinny Kearns of Expert Taxis, who warned that while taxi drivers have historically been the "eyes and ears" for gardai, they cannot be expected to police the city.

He told the Irish Mirror: "You would need Army Ranger Wing training to be able to police some areas of the city centre."

In more positive news, one lucky driver netted himself a fare totalling over €600 which was covered by Aer Lingus after a passenger trying to fly to Cork was re-routed to Belfast during stormy weather.

Meanwhile, attacks on taxi drivers remains

a continuing problem, particularly in, but not confined to Dublin. Many industry leaders are tying this directly to the introduction of mandatory card payments. Along with attacks on drivers, there has been a sharp increase in taxis being broken into at night, with one driver having his car burnt out in his garden.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has recently published a guide for applying for the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) grant, which can be found inside, along with a number of other interesting pieces pertaining to the taxi industry in Ireland and abroad.

If you have an issue you would like to highlight, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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Cheers! Unlikely impact of taxi shortage on pubs

Punters have been opting for the local pub over a trip into town thanks to a shortage of taxis, according to the head of the Vintners Federation of Ireland.

It comes as restaurants report a quieter Christmas than expected, ahead of a series of new Government-imposed cost increases expected to trigger more hospitality closures this year.

Punters have been opting for the local pub over a trip into town thanks to a shortage of taxis, according to the head of the Vintners Federation of Ireland.

It comes as restaurants report a quieter Christmas than expected, ahead of a series of new Government-imposed cost increases expected to trigger more hospitality closures this year.

The CEO of the VFI (the association for pubs outside the greater Dublin area) Pat Crotty said the 'broad strokes' were that pubs did well over Christmas, particularly those in 'smaller locales where they only have two or three pubs'.

Mr Crotty said: 'An awful lot of places in small towns and villages did well, where you might heretofore 'have had an exodus to the bigger towns and cities.

They stayed put because of the shortage of taxis, as much as anything else.' He said the taxi shortage was 'identified specifically as the reason why [some VFI members] reckon they're doing much better'.

'People have made the choice to stay local instead of going to the next town.

And as a result, the small publican says "Jaysus, I could get on to a couple of lads to play a few tunes now on Saturday".

And suddenly you're creating a buzz in the place instead of standing there wringing your hands wondering if anyone will come in.'

VFI members also reported that 'quite a lot of people seemed to come home this year', Mr Crotty said.

'Whether they're doing well abroad or whatever, they all came home and so that in itself creates a magnet in small local areas. If Johnny, who's in Australia, is home for Christmas, then I'll come in to meet him one of the nights.'

And around 60% of VFI pubs are now offering food, Mr Crotty said, compared to less than a third 'only a very short number of years ago' – a trend accelerated by the pandemic.

The village's gain may have been the town's loss, with Restaurants Association of Ireland CEO Adrian Cummins describing a 'patchy' festive period for gastronomy.

Mr Cummins told the MoS: 'There was a lot of hype around that there would be a big spend this Christmas.

That's not reflecting in what we saw in the tills, which is telling us that the consumer is being more cautious in terms of what they're spending.'

He continued that habits in previous years of going out two or three nights over Christmas seemed to have been cut back to one night out for many people.

'It depends on the demographics as well, but turnover wasn't as good as what we thought it was going to

be.’ Mr Crotty pointed out that pubs could be a more appealing option for those looking to throw a Christmas party on a budget.

‘The bigger restaurants and places people go to have parties, you need more of a corporate spend to really fill it out,’ he said.

‘But at pubs where you can either have a small party with a bit of finger food or you can just have a few friends in for a drink, it’s that much easier to organise and it’s much easier to fill a small pub.’

Mr Cummins said the special Covid VAT rate for hospitality of 9% going back to 13.5% in September is ‘really killing’ restaurants at the moment.

Another oncoming headache, he said, is the expiry of the Government’s tax debt warehousing scheme in May.

Businesses had been able to park tax debt at a reduced rate of interest to mitigate against rising costs, but from May they will have to begin repaying the debt.

By the end of October 2023, €280m was owed by 5,679 businesses in the restaurants and hospitality sector.

The minimum wage going up by 12% on January 1 will also have a major impact on hospitality, Mr Cummins said.

‘The combination of VAT going back to 13.5%, wages and supplier costs means a restaurant on a million euro turnover has an extra cost of €100,000 since January 1.

‘I think they made a dog’s dinner out of increasing the VAT rate. It’s going to make Ireland very, very expensive for tourism this year.’

He said the association is ‘predicting closures unless the Government intervenes with a bespoke package’.

‘This broad-based approach to supporting business just doesn’t work. They gave out €270m of support for businesses, but every business gets it.

Those that are more profitable and making huge profits still get it, as opposed to the smaller businesses that might need more support.’



Kildare taxi passenger refused to pay fare and spat inside vehicle

A taxi passenger who refused to pay a fare and spat inside the vehicle was prosecuted at Naas District Court.

Ross Mahon, 27, whose address was given as Newtown, Laragh, Maynooth, was before the court for criminal damage and not paying the fare on August 10 last at Leinster Street, Maynooth.

Sgt Dave Hanrahan said the gardaí were flagged down by the taxi driver who said a male passenger would not pay the €70 fare.

He said there was a €140 soilage fee outstanding for spitting in the vehicle as well as the fare.

Sgt Hanrahan said the incident took place at 10.45pm and language used by the defendant was “fairly colourful.”

The court heard that the defendant had three previous convictions for public order matters and the court was also told that all of his previous convictions arise from issues with alcohol.

“He remembers very little and he apologises,” said solicitor Tim Kennelly.

Judge Desmond Zaidan said he would apply the Probation Act if the defendant pays €210 to the driver.



Man's €660 taxi fare from Belfast covered by airline after diversion 'adventure'

Storm Fergus wreaked havoc in the skies as several flights were cancelled or re-routed due to the impossible flying conditions

A man has told how Aer Lingus paid a monumental taxi fare to get him home after his Cork-bound flight was diverted to Belfast during Storm Fergus.

David Edwards spoke to CorkBeo where he recounted the 'adventure' which left him, along with fellow passengers, with no other option but to arrange emergency travel arrangements to get home.

David would have had to fork out a massive €660 taxi fare but thankfully the airline responsible agreed to pay his fare.

Aer Lingus was David's choice airline for his return flight from Bristol to Cork after having spent some family time with his mother who lives in Cardiff. Cork man, David, elected to fly home rather than book a ferry which he figured ran the risk of cancellation due to Storm Fergus.

However, despite his best efforts not to fall foul of Storm Fergus, David ended up at George Best Belfast City Airport – 470km from the flight's destination, Cork.

"As we were getting towards Cork, the pilot told us that there was no way we were getting into Cork Airport cause the weather was too bad," said David.

"We then went up to Dublin, and as we started coming down through the clouds you could see a complete white-out from the blizzard, and it got a bit bumpy."

He continued: "I've a background in flying myself so I didn't really mind, but a lot of people were scared – some

people were crying.

"We were around Dublin Airport for 10 minutes, only took one approach to land cause it was very obvious that we weren't getting in with the weather. Then we were off to Belfast."

Landing in Belfast after 7pm, David and his fellow passengers were told to wait in the terminal before buses could bring them to Cork. However, many arranged their own transport home.

A member of airport staff in Belfast contacted Aer Lingus to alert them to the predicament, and the airline dually responded by offering up alternative forms of transport home.

Lucky for David, he managed to nab an all-expenses-paid taxi fare totalling €660 back to Cork from Belfast.

He said: "I finally got home at around 1am. The taxi to Cork cost £566.80, but Aer Lingus paid direct for me, saved quite a bit of hassle.

My wife and dogs were waiting for me at home. She was a bit nervous before I rang her, she knew that the flight had taken off but saw that it said it was cancelled online, so she was kind of like, 'Uh-oh'.

The most important thing is that everyone got down safely. Of course there were people worried about missing work the next day and things like that, but everyone was okay and it was a bit of an adventure at the end of the day."

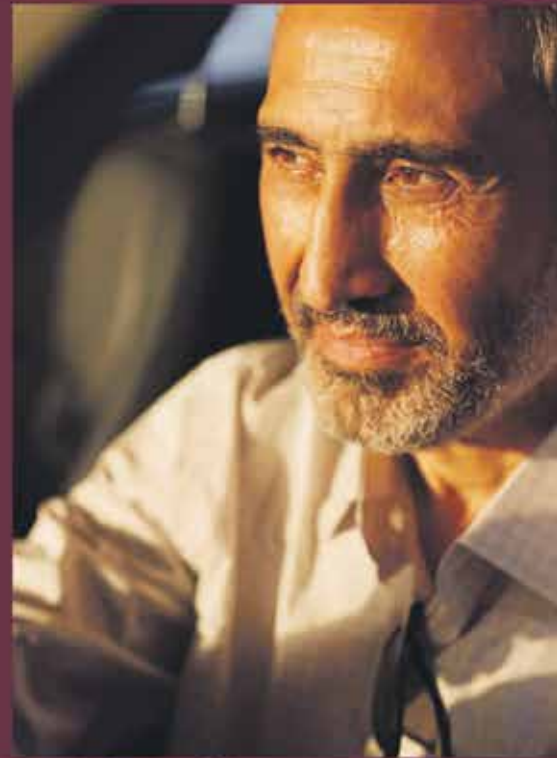
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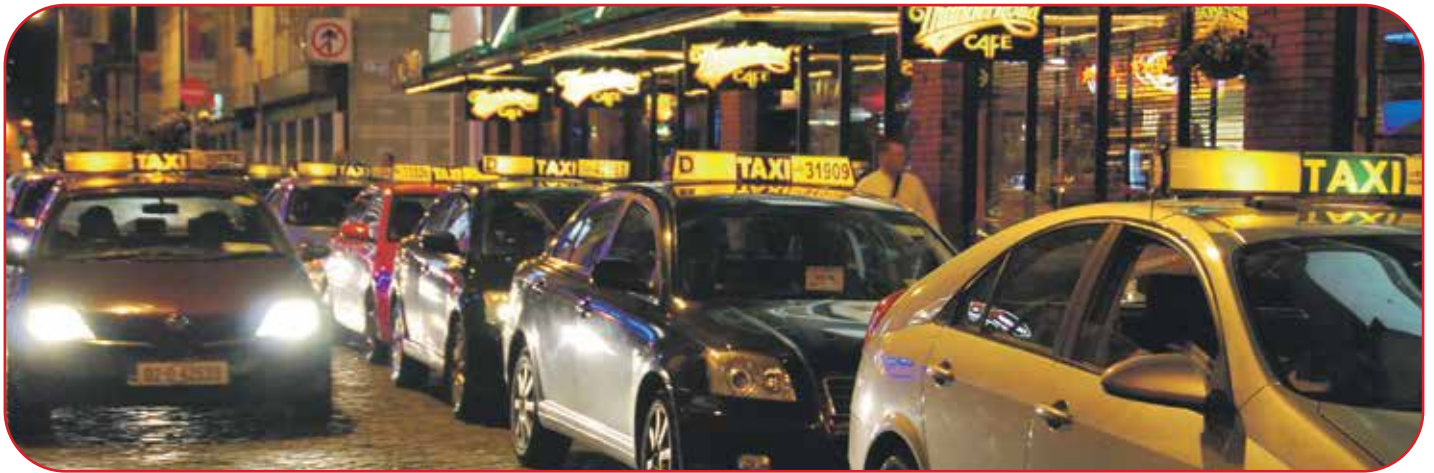
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Taxi chief blasts proposal for cab drivers to help with policing of Dublin city centre



Dublin administrators believe cabbies occupying the city will guard against leaving large, empty spaces for anti-social behaviour

Taxi industry leaders have criticised proposals for cab drivers to keep Christmas revellers safe by helping to police Dublin city centre.

City Council officials planned to fully pedestrianise new civic spaces that are planned for Dublin – but the November 23 riots sparked a re-think.

The council could now assess if taxis would be allowed into areas that were earmarked to be pedestrian zones at night to maintain “passive surveillance”.

Dublin administrators believe cabbies occupying the city will guard against leaving large, empty spaces for anti-social behaviour.

The policy change emerged in recent days during a Dublin Chamber of Commerce briefing about the proposed new Dublin City Centre Transport Plan.

But taxi industry leaders like Vinny Kearns warned that while taxi drivers have historically been the “eyes and ears” for gardai, they cannot be expected to police the city.

Vinny of Expert Taxis told the Irish Mirror: “You would need Army Ranger Wing training to be able to police some areas of the city centre.

“Taxis might have a place in policing, but their main job is getting people from A to B.

“They can be the eyes and ears of gardai and report things to them, but they cannot be expected to police the city.

The safety of Dublin city centre is for gardai, but the guards have been grossly resourced.

You try to find a guard between O’Connell Bridge and Parnell Street. They have been let down by resources. It’s not fair to them.”

Under the current Dublin City Centre Transport Plan, cars

would be banned from some city centre roads to free up more space for pedestrians, cyclists, and buses.

For example, cars would be banned from parts of the quays, and Parliament Street near Dublin City Castle would be traffic-free.

Cars have been banned in College Green since May and from Capel Street since last year.

Dublin Chamber spokesperson Aebhric McGibney said: “The debate about the use of public space once it has been pedestrian enhanced or fully pedestrianised is an important one in the context of the riots.”

She added: “There certainly is a piece around the safety in the city and passive surveillance.”

Dublin City Council’s head of traffic Brendan O’Brien said: “In the evening, it may be better that you would have taxis into [an] area so people are not walking through a big empty space.”

The Irish Parking Association yesterday claimed that safety in Dublin city centre is a concern due to reduced footfall.

Its chairperson Keith Gavin warned that activity has decreased since Covid and businesses are relating this directly to the increase in anti-social behaviour.

He said: “We have seen what has happened since Covid as the city centre footfall reduced.

“As the level of activity in the area reduced, the safety of the city centre deteriorated rapidly.”

Social Democrats TD Gary Gannon said: “The city needs to be safer.”

Kearns, who has been a taxi industry voice for 42 years since 1981, added:

“Taxi drivers have a street sense, but they are not gardai.”

Lynk Taxis reveals app's most 'eyebrow-raising' stats from the past year



'If taxis could talk... they would tell you that the most popular question asked by customers is 'are you busy?'

Taxi App Lynk Taxis has published its roundup of the quirkiest, most intriguing and downright oddest statistics it gathered from the use of its service in Ireland in 2023.

In addition to formally announcing an increase of one million passengers over this calendar year, the company eagerly released its list of "eyebrow-raising" facts and figures from its operations in 2023, including famous faces, "sleepers" and the shortest requested journeys.

It said the roundup "offers insight into the Irish consumer mindset and overall trends being seen in the taxi industry".

Among the funniest statistics to be revealed is the weirdest item left behind in a taxi being "a bag of twelve voodoo dolls, pins included", with 190 customers "nodding off" in a Lynk Taxi this year.

Possibly the funniest fact of the bunch published by the company is a trio of quite relatable (and probably very unrelatable) passenger requests from within the taxi.

As Lynk said in its roundup: "If taxis could talk... they would tell you that the most popular question asked by customers is 'are you busy?', the most popular fib heard by drivers is 'you get the taxi, I'll grab you a drink inside', and one taxi driver was even asked could he deliver a baby, fortunately he got the mother safely to The Coombe in time for the doctors to take over!"

Among the more intriguing statistics to be released include the achievement of three million total passengers in the company's taxis, equivalent to 37 and-a-half full Croke Park stadiums. Passengers were shown to largely snub cash payment, with 68% preferring the

convenience of paying through the app or by card.

The largest taxi order of the year was for 58 people in the RDS, to which Lynk sent 15 taxis to facilitate. The company's drivers paid an astonishing €1.5mn in M50 tolls alone transporting passengers to and fro', driving the equivalent of 8.5 million laps of Mondello Park.

More than half of Lynk's fleet (58%) are now driving hybrid or electric vehicles, with the most popular vehicle being a Toyota Prius.

The most famous face to book a taxi through Lynk's app was Golden Globe nominee Barry Keoghan.

The oddest statistics to be found among Lynk's eye-catching list are the fact that the company's taxi fleet witnessed 85 "runners" or people who take flight once their fare is due, leaving the driver out of pocket. One passenger requested Lynk's shortest journey of the year – a 300m journey from the Bleeding Horse to The Camden on Camden Street, while the longest journey was a 299km trek from Bray to Kinsale with a fare of €590.

Reflecting on the 2023 stats roundup, CEO of Lynk Taxis, Noel Ebbs said: "The annual roundup has gathered something of a cult following with our drivers and customers alike, everyone is always dying to hear the latest stats.

"As funny as some of them are, such as the bag of voodoo dolls, the stats are also a great way to gauge how the industry is evolving with figures on increased EV vehicles, increased passenger numbers and more."

He added: "With appetite for taxis back to a pre-pandemic level, a career in the industry is becoming more appealing as we move further away from the pandemic."



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Double Killer Suspected in Taxi Driver Cold Case



A notorious double killer is a suspect for the brutal murder of a woman taxi driver – that is still unsolved more than 25 years on, it has emerged.

Sources have confirmed to The Mirror that evil Thomas Murray, who is serving life for murders 20 years apart, is the main focus of the investigation into November 30, 1997 killing of Eileen Costello O'Shaughnessy in Co Galway.

Murray was previously convicted of murdering his former school teacher, Nancy Nolan (80), who was beaten to death with a lump-hammer at her home in Ballygar on February 14th, 2000. Murray, who was on parole at the time, had been visiting his home village and noticed Mrs Nolan in a shop. He followed her home and killed her.

A report into Mrs Nolan's murder published last week said Murray had been released despite warnings from a prison governor that he would kill again.

Murray was originally convicted of the murder of an elderly man, William Mannion, in his home village of Ballygar, Co Galway, in 1981. He was only 17 at the time but was regarded by gardai as very dangerous.

After his conviction for murdering Mrs Nolan, the Minister for Justice, Mr O'Donoghue, ordered an inquiry into how Murray came to be freed from prison. That report, by Mr John Olden, was released last week and criticised the decision to

free Murray.

The inquiry into Murray's murder of Mrs Nolan found that he had been freed at that time despite warnings from gardai and senior prison officials.

Gardai consistently warned that Murray should not be freed. They described him as having an "extremely violent nature and that unless he had changed his release would constitute a threat to the community".

Until now official Garda sources have denied there was any suspected connection between Murray and the murder of Ms Costello O'Shaughnessy. Her murder was one of the high-profile unsolved crimes of the past decade.

However, it is understood that gardai in Galway identified Murray as a suspect almost immediately after Ms Costello O'Shaughnessy's body was found at Tinkers' Lane, outside Galway on the Tuam Road.

Murray was arrested and questioned but released when it appeared he had a firm alibi placing him in a house where he was boarding.

Ms Costello O'Shaughnessy's killer drove away in her taxi, abandoning it in Galway city. Gardai were under the impression that Murray had been unable to drive as he had been committed to prison at the age of 17 and had never driven any

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vehicle up to that time. However, it later emerged that he was taught to drive while in prison.

Even though a quarter century has now passed from the murder, gardai are still hunting the 47-year-old's murderer – and made a fresh appeal for information.

It has been established that gardai suspect that Murray was allegedly seen near the spot where Mrs O'Shaughnessy's body was found at Tinkers Lane, Knockdoemore just off the N17 when officers began to seal off the scene for clues.

Murray, who is already serving time for one murder in 1982 and had a last address in Ballygar, Co Galway, was given another life sentence in the year 2000 for the brutal killing of his former teacher Nancy Nolan – committed while he was out on temporary release from Castlerea prison in Co Roscommon.

Detectives have long been baffled by the apparently motiveless murder of Mrs O'Shaughnessy.

She was beaten with her car radio and the flex was used to strangle her.

Murray, who is now 59, was one of the first people to be interviewed after the killing, but no charges followed after an associate gave him an alibi for the night.

But Gardai believe the alibi evidence was unreliable and the killer has long been their prime suspect for the murder.

He is still behind bars to this day – but gardai have not given up hope of solving the murder of Ms O'Shaughnessy.

Eileen was originally from Corofin in Co Galway and was a well-known Taxi driver in the city. She was 47 years of age at the time of her death and was driving a Silver Toyota Carina registration number 97G6663.

Eileen started work at 8am on November 30, 1997 and worked throughout the day.

At 8pm Eileen informed her taxi base that she was taking a fare to Claregalway. Approximately 20 minutes later the taxi base attempted to contact Eileen but received no answer.

At 9pm Eileen was due to meet the owner of the taxi in Galway to handover the car and keys however she failed to meet as agreed. The last known contact with Eileen was at 8pm.

Eileen's colleagues grew concerned for her whereabouts and searched the city for her taxi. Just before midnight Eileen's taxi was discovered at Lydon house bakery on the Tuam Road in Galway where it became apparent that Eileen

may have been injured. A search of the area commenced.

The following morning the 1st of December 1997, the body of Eileen Costello O'Shaughnessy was discovered at Tinkers Lane, Knockdoemore just off the N17. Eileen had been assaulted and murdered. A murder investigation commenced.

Detective Superintendent Shane Cummins, who is leading the probe, has appealed for help in catching the killer.

He said: "We are conscious that we now live in a very different era to 1997 and now with that passage of time, people may feel more comfortable sharing information with us.

"25 years on, An Garda Síochána continue to investigate this case. The investigation into the murder of Eileen Costello O'Shaughnessy continues to be a live investigation."

"We are conscious that we now live in a very different era to 1997 and now with that passage of time, people may feel more comfortable sharing information with us."

And gardai area appealing to anyone who has information about these key points to come forward"

- At approximately 8.30pm on the N17 close to Tinkers Lane a woman with blonder hair was seen walking in the direction of Galway against oncoming traffic. She was at the hard shoulder and appeared in a distracted state. This woman has never been identified.

- At 8.45pm a motorist observed Eileen's taxi a silver Toyota Carina registration number 97G6663 driving erratically on the N17 towards Galway city. As the cars approached Leaders shop the motorist overtook the taxi and saw a man with a beard driving it. The taxi turned left in Lydon house bakery. This man has never been identified.

- At approximately 9pm a man was seen jumping down from a wall close to Lydon house bakery and walking in the direction of Galway. He was wearing a green jacket and carrying a small canvass bag. This man has never been identified • Finally a small red car was seen at 2am at Tinkers lane where Eileen's body was found. The car had reversed up the laneway and had the parking lights on. The occupants of this car have never been identified.

"Anyone with information is encouraged to contact An Garda Síochána in Oranmore on 091-388030 or alternatively you can contact your local Garda station," Detective Superintendent

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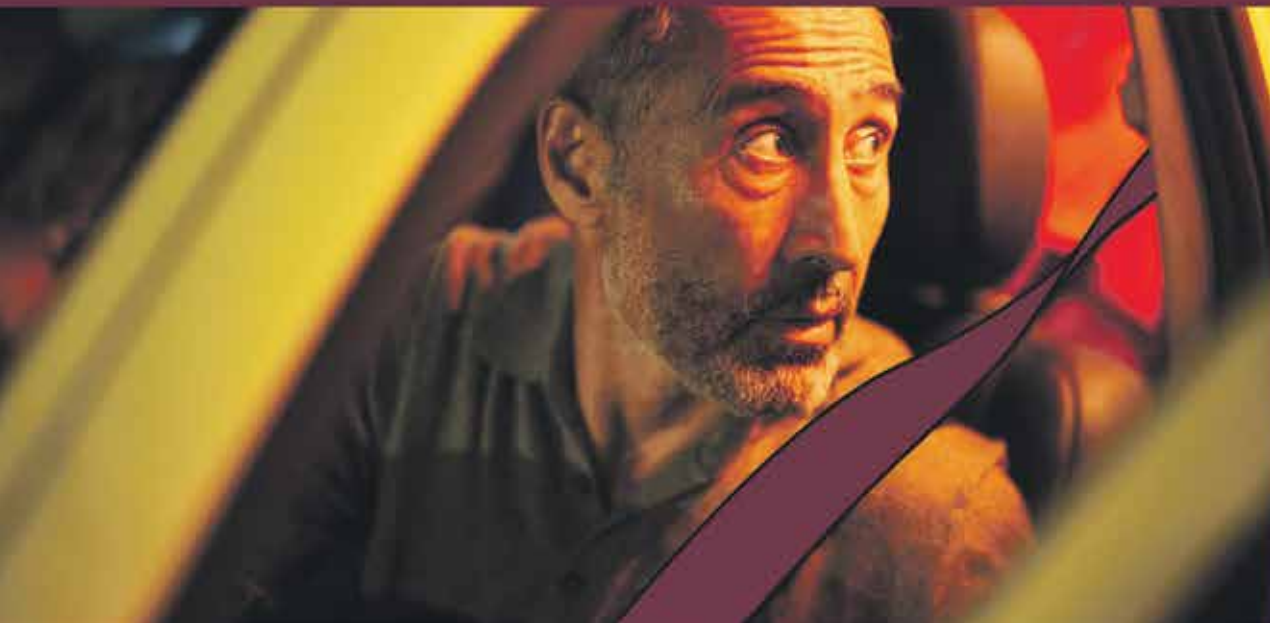
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WAV24 sees unprecedented numbers on opening day

NTA is delighted with the unprecedented response to WAV24, with over 1300 application numbers received on day one, far exceeding previous years. This very positive response means that application numbers have already met the 2024 funds available.

Applicants who did not receive a Provisional Grant Offer in January will be placed on a cancellation list. Further details on next steps will be provided to all applicants in due course.

As in previous years, applications can be made online.

NTA reserves the right to apply appropriate criteria to the processing of applications to the scheme. Such criteria may apply from the outset of the scheme and may be changed throughout the duration of the scheme, as appropriate. Applications that meet the criteria in place at a given time will be considered on a first received basis, subject to an application being satisfactorily completed.

The last date for the receipt by NTA of applications for the Grant Scheme is 30 November 2024. However, if the allocated funding is committed to payments and provisional offers to applicants at an earlier date, a waiting list will operate until the closing date is reached or the funding is spent.

The closing date for the WAV24 Grant Scheme is 13 December 2024, meaning

The proposed wheelchair accessible vehicle must have passed its initial suitability test and have received a licence; and

The proposed driver must have completed an NTA approved course on disability awareness training specific to SPSVs, by 13 December 2024 in order to qualify for the Grant.

The scheme is available nationwide to:

Persons (individuals or companies) applying for new SPSV licences;

Existing wheelchair accessible vehicle licence holders who wish to upgrade their current wheelchair accessible vehicle with a replacement wheelchair accessible vehicle; and

Existing operators who wish to exchange their standard taxi licence for an wheelchair accessible taxi licence either on conversion of their current vehicle or the purchase of a wheelchair accessible vehicle (retaining the limited future right to swap back).

NTA may not consider an application if:

The Applicant previously received a Grant in respect of the same wheelchair accessible vehicle;

The wheelchair accessible vehicle has previously been licenced as a WAV in the name of that Applicant; or

The wheelchair accessible vehicle has previously received grant funding within the last three calendar years.

Applicants are advised to:

Research the availability and cost of vehicles that meet the required measurements, standards and age for the grant (see Information Guide G1 (Applying for a new SPSV licence) or G6 (Changing a vehicle) available at (www.nationaltransport.ie).

Get several insurance quotes for SPSV use, for



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the carriage of passengers for hire or reward for the proposed type of licence, i.e. wheelchair accessible SPSV services.

Read and understand the law for priority services to be provided to persons with a disability.

The levels of grant payable by NTA are as follows:

New Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (<3,000kms and <3 months old) €17,500

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle less than one year of age €17,000

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle less than two years of age €14,000

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle less than three years of age €13,000

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle less than four years of age €9,000

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle less than five years of age €5,000

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle less than six years of age €4,000

The Applicant must:

Have and maintain tax cleared status;

Not have had a conviction under the Taxi Regulation Act 2013 as amended recorded against them or a complaint (in respect of SPSV operation) upheld against them within the 24 months preceding the application, or have a prosecution which may result in such a conviction or have such a complaint pending whilst the application is in progress.

The applicant or the proposed driver must undertake an NTA approved SPSV related disability awareness training course. This will also be made available free of charge from NTA.

Agree to register their contact details on a public website or free smartphone booking application nominated by NTA for the priority provision of the Services;

Obtain and maintain SPSV insurance as set out in the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 and the SPSV Regulations or subsequent legislation;

Ensure that the proposed vehicle complies with the standards established for wheelchair accessible vehicles as set out in the SPSV Regulations;

Be the registered owner of the proposed vehicle, or be legally entitled to the use and possession of the proposed vehicle (such as a lease or hire purchase agreement) for a period of not less than 12 months from the date of the application;

Limit their number of applications to ten; and

Submit journey records (WAV24J) to NTA at six monthly intervals during the Services Period.

Note that non-compliance with previous grants received from NTA may result in current and future grant applications being deemed ineligible.

It is a condition of receipt of any portion of the Grant that the Applicant, or where the Applicant is a company or not the proposed driver, the proposed driver, must either undertake the free half day SPSV specific disability awareness training provided by NTA or provide evidence that they have completed a SPSV specific disability awareness training course during the three years prior to the application date. Any driver of a WAV24 Grant assisted vehicle must be able to prove that such a course has been completed.

No Grant will be released by NTA without having received confirmation of successful completion of such a course in a manner satisfactory to NTA.

NTA may without liability terminate the Grant, and/or revoke and cancel the Grant and/or require and demand repayment of the Grant (or such lesser amount in respect of the Grant as NTA may determine to be appropriate in the prevailing circumstances) within the time specified in any written notice making such demand, where any one or more of the events set out hereunder occur:

Where the Service is not being delivered in accordance with the licensing

Where records of booking and journey records (WAV24J) as per this Scheme and the SPSV Regulations are not provided to NTA, six monthly or within ten working days of a request from NTA;

Where the vehicle licence falls inactive at any point during the Service Period;

Where the applicant sells the vehicle;

Where the applicant replaces or changes the vehicle within the Service Period and the replacement vehicle is older than the vehicle originally grant aided ; or

Where the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle licence holder swaps back to a standard taxi licence within the Service Period.

There are essentially six steps to the application process:

Check that as an Applicant you fulfil the criteria set out at section 7 and ensure you read and understand the Terms and Conditions of the WAV24 Grant Scheme (available on the "Forms and Guides" section of www.nationaltransport.ie).

Research appropriate vehicles and ensure both the vehicle and appropriate insurance cover will be available.

Submit an online application for WAV24 via the "Forms

and Guides” section of the National Transport website (<https://www.nationaltransport.ie/taxi/formsand-guides/>).

Applications must be received by 30 November 2024. However, if the allocated funding is committed in payments and provisional grant letters to applicants at an earlier date, a waiting list may operate until the closing date is reached or the funding is spent.

If successful, a Provisional Grant Letter, including a copy of the Terms and Conditions will issue to the Applicant. This Provisional Grant Letter is valid until the earliest of three calendar months, 13 December 2024 or the funds are expended.

Should you receive a Provisional Grant Letter, you are required to arrange to have a Technical Assessor’s Full Report completed on your proposed vehicle and submit it with a new vehicle licence application form (VL1) to:

WAV24 Technical Assessors Report,
National Transport Authority,
PO Box 436,
City North Business Park,
Tuam Road,
Galway

The correct versions of the new vehicle licence application form (VL1), Technical Assessor’s Full Report Template and Guidance Notes, together with our Information Guides in relation to the Initial Suitability Inspection for WAV inspections, provide relevant information and identify where further details can be obtained from the “Guides and Forms” section our website at www.nationaltransport.ie.

It can take 10 working days from submission for NTA to review your documents. When this is completed, you will be contacted informing you of the next steps, this could be a request for further information or you may be invited to book a vehicle inspection and start the normal vehicle licensing process. Please do not call to book an inspection before this step is completed.

Where you have any queries as to the required technical standards or vehicle test data necessary, please refer to Guide G1 (Applying for a new SPSV licence) or G6 (Changing a vehicle) available on www.nationaltransport.ie or contact the Information Line on 0818 064 000.

10.3 Once a Technical Assessor’s Full Report has been approved by NTA for the proposed vehicle, we will send you details of your scheduled appointment for

free disability awareness training. If you wish to cancel or reschedule your training for free you will have to do this within 7 working days from the issue date on the appointment letter. You will have to wait for another available training slot and this may result in a delay with your Grant payment. Should you reschedule later than 7 working days from the issue date on the appointment letter, or fail to attend at the time appointed, a fee of €50 will be payable by you on the day of your rescheduled training.

Any proposed driver for your vehicle must have completed an NTA approved disability awareness training programme as part of the Terms and Conditions for the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme 2024.

10.4 Book an Initial Suitability Inspection at one of the network of SPSV inspection centres for the proposed vehicle (Information and Booking Line – 0818 06 41)

10.5 Once the vehicle has been licensed, forward your completed Grant Payment Request Form, supplied with your Provisional Grant Letter to:
WAV24 Payment, National Transport Authority, PO Box 436, City North Business Park, Tuam Road, Galway. Once NTA confirms that all information provided is acceptable, the Grant monies will be issued to your nominated bank account within 20 Working Days.

Before filling out the online application form, please ensure you have the following to hand:

PPS number or company tax reference number (please note you must be tax cleared to be eligible for the WAV24 grant);

SPSV driver licence details and/or SPSV licence details

Where SPSV specific disability awareness training has been completed by the proposed driver in the preceding three years, a copy of the certificate of completion, including the date of completion and course provider details.

In completing the application form, you should be aware of the following:-

The name on the online application needs to match your name with Revenue exactly or the application will be rejected automatically.

The Applicant accepts that NTA reserves the right to reject/approve an application for a Grant under the Scheme.



The Applicant grants permission to NTA to verify any and all information provided on or with the application form.

The Applicant accepts that if they submit an incomplete application, it will be rejected and that they will be required to re-apply.

Any Provisional Grant Letter is valid until the earliest of three calendar months from the date of issue, the closing date of the Scheme or the allocated funds are depleted.

It Is the Applicant's responsibility to notify NTA of any change of contact details.

All applications are approved subject to the terms of the Provisional Grant Letter, the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme, this Guide, the payment request form, confirmation of training or the training certificate and the completed application form. The Applicant's agreement with NTA in the event of a Provisional Grant Letter being accepted will comprise the Provisional Grant Letter, the Terms and Conditions, this Guide, the payment request form, the training certificate and the completed application form. The Applicant shall comply with and agrees to be bound by the provisions of that documentation. NTA will use the information provided for the purpose of administering the SPSV licensing system and in order to perform the functions assigned to NTA by the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 and the SPSV Regulations including the maintenance of a public register of SPSVs and licenced drivers. This public register feeds into our public safety Driver Check

App which includes driver photographs. Information provided will be shared with certain authorised third parties where necessary in order to carry out our functions and for the purposes of law enforcement.

Is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner and all information sharing will be performed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

In the event of any breach by the Applicant/Recipient of the Terms and Conditions of the WAV24 Grant Scheme, NTA shall, among its remedies against the Applicant, be entitled to demand the repayment of the Grant in full or pro-rata, as appropriate, and the Recipient agrees to comply with any such demand within the time set out therein.

NTA reserves the right to review or supplement the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme after the Applicant's submission of an application and shall not incur any liability for such revision or additions. The Applicant should monitor NTA's website for any such revisions or additions.

In the event of there being any inconsistency or discrepancy between this Information Guide and the Terms and Conditions the Terms and Conditions shall prevail.

NTA's Compliance Officers will follow up directly with every WAV24 Recipient to ensure that the vehicle is being used to provide the Services appropriately. To assist in this service supervision, a blank journey record (WAV24J) will be issued with confirmation of payment. This documentation shall be completed by the Recipient in full and returned to NTA every six months for the duration of Services Period or within ten working days of a request from NTA.

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A rearview glance at Uber's 2023



It is more than likely that 2023 will be remembered as the year that Uber made a defining impact on the Irish Taxi Industry.

After years of quietly operating in Dublin as the international travellers' preferred app, they suddenly burst into life, with savvy investments in branding taxis across the country making them seemingly appear everywhere all at once.

Not only are Ubers spotted in every major city and town nowadays, the rise of their popularity amongst local passengers cannot be ignored.

James Quin (pictured) from Limerick, who

assisted Uber with the launch of the Uber Green (Fully Electric) service saw the continued growth in local passengers throughout the year.

"Plenty of passengers who had used Uber overseas before, but never in Ireland were being offered significant discounts to use the app, and the majority of them sounded like it has become their app-of-choice."

Further to the discounts, Uber's first Irish marketing campaign across social media channels including YouTube, Facebook and TikTok seems to have had an impact. According to James; "Passengers told me that they were



Uber Taxi

unaware they were operating locally until they saw the ads, and then the €50 credit Uber was offering to refer other riders helped spread the word.”

The launch of other services including XL (for 6+ seater vehicles) and Green have provided passengers with greater choice, and for drivers like James Quin, more work.

“There seems to be an ever growing number of environmentally conscious passengers who insist on booking EVs. Especially the corporate customers who are using the Uber 4 Business programme. That provides them a tool to track

the emissions they save as a company.”

The competition between app companies has definitely been heating up and with drivers benefiting from the various incentives being offered to cover peak time demand, long may it last says James.

“Competition has to be a positive for drivers. Whilst the apps can focus on bringing more passengers to the industry, it’s important that they compete for us as their customers too.”

With 2023 in the rearview, there’s great interest to see what lies around the corner in 2024.



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Taxi Break-In Epidemic

Tony Roe, Chairperson of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC) and Spokesperson on Taxis speaks out on the great work being done by taxi drivers on a continuous basis and the current situation of the pitfalls encountered by taxi drivers on a daily basis.

Having been on to the gardai concerning the escalation of taxis being broken into at night and the impact of windows being smashed to gain entry to carry out robberies that have been confirmed.

“These crimes are not confined to any particular area. The robberies seem to be orchestrated and we are told of spates in areas where taxis are being targeted. Drivers are contacting us now in very large numbers, and that is the reason I decided to raise it with the gardai. The numbers are very high and it seems to be out of control. We had this years ago within the industry, and now it seems to be back again, and it is probably drug related and affiliated. The trend continues; it is usually late at night and it is not noticed until the next day when the taxi driver is about to go to work, and it is quite traumatic and costly for them. A lot of drivers don’t keep money in their cars overnight and it is a poor consolation when the damage is evident. When some of the drivers have it fixed by their insurance, it is recorded by many insurance companies as a claim and it could result in a policy loading. Our advice, and my particular advice that I am telling drivers is; due to the increase in break-ins is to make your car less noticeable outside your house. This is mainly happening outside of houses and in gardens. Quite a few drivers have contacted me and told me their cars are being broken into right outside their house, generally late at night or in the early hours of the morning. I am advising all drivers to take down their roof signs and where possible to keep their car in the front of their garden with the gates closed if possible. The decals on the sides of the cars now are also highlighting taxis. Covering them up would be a further deterrent here, making their cars less of a target and avoid the senseless crime, which unfortunately is on the increase on taxis,” said Roe.

He continued: According to all of the reports we are receiving here; it seems to be back to the good old days where we are receiving a lot of complaints. One taxi driver that did have an incident, actually had his car set on fire in his garden. We did highlight this, and Tacsai magazine did a story on it a couple of issues back. The feedback I am hearing from the gardai is that this is on the increase, so anything to prevent these attacks

would be more than welcome,” he said.

He went on to highlight attacks of a different nature on drivers saying: “We have had incidents in the past where the cashless payments have been a disaster since their introduction into the taxi industry. Now we find that taxi drivers are being fined for not accepting these cashless payments. This must be addressed. There is a fine of €200 if you don’t accept a card. This is absolute nonsense. The bus driver does not have to accept a card, and he is certainly not fined for not accepting a card, so why should taxi drivers be any different? I have just received a report from a driver who contacted me, and he said that due to an incident in his car he was left unconscious, his car was taken off him and he woke up; lucky to even wake up, but he was after being assaulted and it started over a row over a payment on a machine where the card wasn’t working. We have to look into this and do something here because drivers can’t be treated like this. Taxi drivers in my opinion are being treated like a sub-culture in this country. Every other country has preventative measures in place to protect Taxi drivers. Even the seatbelt, we have been making it known to the government that in every other European country, the taxi driver is exempt from wearing the seatbelt when he has a passenger in the car for obvious reasons. The last eight assaults which were reported to us and which were highlighted in Tacsai magazine, the seatbelt was used as a weapon. The Tacsai magazine is covering these things, so the government cannot say that they don’t know about it. It’s quite evident, and it seems to be happening more and more now. You can go up the road 60 odd miles or 50 odd miles and come to Newry and up there they don’t have to wear the sat belt. The birds in the sky know this, so why aren’t we doing anything about it. I’m sick of raising this with various politicians. Do we have to wait before someone gets murdered or killed before anything is done about it. We have to be constructive. We want the administration to tackle this problem,” said Roe.

He went on to say: “The jury is out on politicians; are they anti-taxi driver or are they just anti-Irish people. We don’t know, but it can’t be allowed happen. It is an epidemic that has gone from chronic to acute.”



Record number of complaints from passengers about taxi drivers last year

One driver was fined €100 due to ‘malodour’ and another had to pay €250 for refusing to allow a passenger to bring their guide dog in the car

Just over one in three complaints investigated by the NTA concluded with a fine, summons or other sanction for drivers

The National Transport Authority (NTA) received nearly 1,800 complaints about taxi, hackney and limousine drivers last year – the highest number since the agency was established.

Some 58 percent of the complaints related to overcharging and other issues regarding fares, including refusal to accept card payments, which became an offence punishable by a €200 fine in 2022.

Another complaint in this category alleged that a taxi driver had refused to take a passenger because their destination was “too close”, while another claimed to have been charged twice for the same trip.

There were 326 complaints relating to the conduct, behaviour or identity of drivers, which included grievances concerning malodour, poor hygiene and acting in an offensive manner.

One such complaint alleged that a driver had his seat “fully reclined” for the duration of a journey, leaving the passenger behind him with no leg room. The NTA reminded the driver of his responsibilities and obligations.

Another driver allegedly parked in a disabled space at a supermarket, but there was insufficient evidence of the offence to support a prosecution, according to the authority.

Some 52 complaints pertained to the condition, roadworthiness or cleanliness of vehicles, with one driver

receiving a €100 fine for smoking in the car and leaving a “malodour of cigarette smoke”.

A total of 363 complaints related to the hiring and booking of vehicles, including refusals to take passengers in a wheelchair, refusing short fares, and the late arrival of pre-booked cars.

In one such instance, a driver was fined €250 for refusing to allow a passenger to bring their guide dog in the car. Another was fined €150 for refusing to bring a passenger to their destination.

Just over one in three complaints investigated by the NTA concluded with a fine, summons or other sanction for drivers. Another four percent were referred to other agencies such as An Garda Síochána, Revenue, the Department of Foreign Affairs, or the Department of Social Protection.

Some 39 percent of investigations did not proceed for reasons including complainants choosing not to pursue matters, or failing to provide contact details with their complaints.

A total of 14 percent did not proceed due to a lack of evidence or the acceptance of a mistake on the part of a complainant.

Three-quarters of the complaints (1,344) related to services provided in Dublin, while 138 were made by passengers in Cork. Galway accounted for 110 complaints, while Limerick was the next-highest with 30.

The data was obtained by the Irish Mirror under the Freedom of Information Act.



Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society

In other news, the Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society continues to go from strength to strength offering friendship, support and consolation to taxi drivers experiencing bereavement.

According to Tony Roe:

“The Irish Taxi Drivers Lay Counselling Society we have renamed the Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society as everyone knows. It has attracted an awful lot of response since it’s inception. It is being run by taxi driver’s, it is being run by bus drivers. We have a very strong, good committee who are doing excellent work. It is made up of bus drivers and taxi drivers who are all a credit to the transport industry, because they are all volunteers. We go visiting people on a weekly basis, we have various trips. We have a trip to Romania coming up and Spain as well. Everybody is welcome to come on these trips. It

is there for taxi drivers who unfortunately have lost their loved ones and unfortunately there is an awful lot of it and they feel disregarded, overlooked and subdued. It is something we have to work on because we don’t know of any other organization that does what we do. They volunteer, they visit people, they pay for it out of their own pockets as regards little trinkets, little presents and it is all paid for out of the drivers own pockets’. It is great to see that the industry is looking after those less fortunate than themselves.”

Anyone who needs help can contact any of the committee, or Tony Roe himself. 0851089482

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Teacher! Teacher!

Teacher: "If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many would you have?" **Johnny:** "Seven." **Teacher:** "No, listen carefully... If I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?" **Johnny:** "Seven." **Teacher:** "Let me put it to you differently. If I gave you two apples, and another two apples and another two, how many would you have?" **Johnny:** "Six." **Teacher:** "Good. Now if I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?" **Johnny:** "Seven!" **Teacher:** "Johnny, where in the heck do you get seven from?!" **Johnny:** "Because I've already got a freaking cat!"



Five out of six people agree that Russian Roulette is safe.

What do you call a guy who's really loud? Mike.

There is an overweight guy who is watching TV. A commercial comes on for a guaranteed weight loss of 10 pounds in a week. So the guy, thinking what the hell, signs up for it. Next morning an incredibly beautiful woman is standing at his door in nothing but a pair of running shoes and a sign about her neck that reads, "If you can catch me, you can have me." As soon as he sees her, she takes off running. He tries to catch her, but is unable. This continues for a week, at the end of which, the man has lost 10 pounds. After this he tries the next weight loss plan, 15 pounds in a week. The next morning an even more beautiful woman is standing at the door, in similar conditions. The same happens with her as the first woman, except he almost catches her. This continues for a week, at the end of which he, as suspected, weighs 15 pounds less. Excited about this success, he decides to do the master program. Before he signs up, he is required to sign a waiver and is warned about the intensity of this plan. Still he signs up. The next morning, waiting at the door, is a hulking 300 pound muscle man with nothing but a pair of running shoes, a raging erection, and a sign around his neck that says, "If I catch you, you're mine!" The man was supposed to lose 25 pounds in the week; he lost 34.

Why did I get divorced? Well, last week was my birthday. My wife didn't wish me a happy birthday. My parents forgot and so did my kids. I went to work and even my colleagues didn't wish me a happy birthday. As I entered my office, my secretary said, "Happy birthday, boss!" I felt so special. She asked me out for lunch. After lunch, she invited me to her apartment. We went there and she said, "Do you mind if I go into the bedroom for a minute?" "Okay," I said. She came out 5 minutes later with a birthday cake, my wife, my parents, my kids, my friends, & my colleagues all yelling, "SURPRISE!!!" while I was waiting on the sofa... naked.

A lady comes home from her doctor's appointment grinning from ear to ear. Her husband asks, "Why are you so happy?" The wife says, "The doctor told me that for a forty-five year old woman, I have the breasts of a eighteen year old." "Oh yeah?" quipped her husband, "What did he say about your forty-five year old ass?" She said, "Your name never came up in the conversation."



General Knowledge Questions

1. What is the maximum speed limit on most residential streets in the United States?
2. What does ABS stand for in relation to car brakes?
3. In what year was the Ford Mustang first introduced?
4. What is the unit of power used to measure an engine's output?
5. What is the term for the distance a vehicle travels from the time the driver sees a hazard until they apply the brakes?
6. Which car manufacturer produces the Prius, a popular hybrid vehicle?
7. What is the name for the method of starting a car's engine by engaging the starter motor while the engine is turning?
8. What is the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for

THE TACSAÍ MAGAZINE BUMPER QUIZ

drivers in most US states?

9. What does RPM stand for when referring to a car's engine?

10. Which Italian car manufacturer produces the Aventador and Huracán sports cars?

1. 25 mph
2. Anti-lock braking system
3. 1964
4. Horsepower
5. Reaction distance
6. Toyota
7. Cranking
8. 0.08%
9. Revolutions per minute
10. Lamborghini

WORLD NEWS

Top stories from around the globe

UK

Stansted Airport: Taxi drivers learn exploitation awareness

Taxi drivers at Stansted Airport were taught how to recognise the signs of child exploitation.

Essex police officers spoke to 106 taxi, Uber and private hire vehicle drivers on Saturday, January 13, giving them information from the Children's Society.

The information from this operation will be fed back to the Home Office, and will help produce a national programme to ensure taxi drivers receive vulnerability and exploitation training.

Officers identified that around a third of the drivers they spoke to had not had any form of training to help recognise child exploitation.

One driver was also dealt with for not having insurance. Superintendent Phil Stinger said: "Protecting children from being targeted and exploited by criminals, preying on their vulnerabilities, is one of our key priorities.

"Taxi drivers can play a really valuable role in this. They come into contact with a huge number of people every day so can be really effective in recognising behaviour they don't think is right.

"So it's really important we engage with them and make them aware of signs a child's being exploited.

"I want to thank Stansted Airport for their support in this work."

Similar activity will take place around other parts of Essex in the coming months.

Japan

Taxi app 'GO' prepares for a ride-share service in Japan, supporting taxi companies and local governments

Taxi app 'GO' provider is starting support services to taxi companies that are planning to start a ride-share service, as the Tokyo Hire-Taxi Association officially announced that they introduce the service. Japanese government approved a ride-share service by taxi operators first in this coming April.

'GO' will launch a consultation service for both taxi operators and local governments to deliver updated

information on the ride-share guidelines and also necessary preparations for start of the service.

In addition, GO will develop an app for ride-share drivers and a management system for operators and local governments. Recruiting drivers will be included in support services.

Wakayama taxi driver confines woman in car, saves her life

SHIRAHAMA, Wakayama Prefecture—Taxi drivers who refuse to let women out of their vehicles normally could face arrest.

But after cabbie Hiroshi Kitamoto took such action, he was commended by police and received words of thanks for saving a passenger's life.

Kitamoto had sensed something wrong with the passenger after she climbed into his taxi near JR Shirahama Station here on Dec. 10.

She apparently had taken a super-express train from the Osaka area, just north of Wakayama Prefecture, and arrived at the station at 4:47 p.m.

The woman, who appeared to be in her mid-20s, told Kitamoto that she wanted to go to the Sandanbeki cliff, a renowned landmark of this seaside town. It is also known as a popular suicide spot.

The sun was starting to set, and the woman would not arrive in time to be able to view the natural beauty of the location.

The solo traveler carried only a tiny backpack, indicating that she probably did not plan to stay overnight.

When she asked Kitamoto how much the fare would be, he replied 4,000 yen (\$29).

"Good," she said, "I have that money with me."

Kitamoto, 72, who works for Shirahama-based Meiko Taxi Co., kept talking to the passenger while driving.

"What are you going to do there?" he asked.

"Just something," she answered.

When he asked if she had a hotel reservation, she replied in the negative.

The driver warned her that no hotel in Shirahama would accept guests who show up abruptly at the front desk.

"That's OK," she said.

Wakayama taxi driver confines woman in car, saves her life



Then she started to sob.

When he asked her what was wrong, she said, "I have been working very hard, but people around me do not understand me."

After more exchanges, his car reached the front of the cliff but he kept driving.

"Here we are at Sandanbeki, but I will not get you out," he said.

In tears, she pleaded with him: "Please let me die."

Kitamoto persuaded her not to take her life.

"Everyone has their ups and downs in life, and there will be more ups and downs in the future, but you will have to overcome them," he said.

While offering comforting words, he drove to the Shirahama Police Station, escorted her inside, and asked officers to take care of her.

Her family later arrived in the town to take her in.

The woman, who turned out to be in her 40s, came from outside Wakayama Prefecture.

On Dec. 25, police officials paid tribute to Kitamoto by offering a letter of gratitude at a ceremony at the police station.

The woman's relatives expressed "deep appreciation" to the cab driver for saving her life in a message read at the ceremony.

"I am happy that her life has been saved," Kitamoto said. "I am going to share my experiences with other drivers and will remain alert."

The scenic Sandanbeki cliff, which stands 50 to 60 meters tall, is one of most popular tourist destinations in the southern part of Wakayama Prefecture. But it has also drawn a stream of desperate souls intending to end their lives by jumping from the edge.

Signs displaying the number for a suicide prevention hotline have been erected to deter potential jumpers.

Police officers, town employees and members of a private organization have joined hands to detect suicidal visitors through patrols in the cliff area.

Taxi drivers are also urged to be vigilant.

"It would be a great help if taxi and bus drivers are also watchful," said Kenji Haraguchi, head of the Shirahama Police Station.

NYC

Joby to Install First Electric Air Taxi Charger in Greater New York City Region

Joby Aviation, Inc. (NYSE:JOBY), a company developing electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft for commercial passenger service, today announced it has signed a definitive agreement with Helo Holdings, Inc. ("HHI"), to install the first air taxi charger in the greater New York City region at the company's heliport in Kearny, New Jersey, located just a two minute flight from Manhattan.

The agreement, which provides Joby with an operational base for its electric air taxi in the NYC region, builds on the partnership already established between Joby and HHI in November 2023, when Kearny served as a temporary home base for Joby's aircraft. Joby completed several flights at Kearny in preparation for the Company's exhibition flight in New York City at an event hosted by the New York City Economic Development Corporation and Mayor Eric Adams. The city has committed to electrify the Downtown Manhattan Heliport to enable electric air taxi operations.

First opened in 2011, the Kearny heliport is the largest vertical-lift facility on the east coast with 27 parking spots for helicopters and plans to expand to 32. The heliport provides ground services as well as hangar space for maintenance operations to helicopter operators in the NYC region, one of the busiest low-altitude corridors in the world.

As part of the agreement, HHI will upgrade its electrical infrastructure to support the installation of Joby's Global Electric Aviation Charging System ("GEACS"), designed to support the safe and efficient operation of all electric aircraft under development today, including Joby's quiet, emissions-free air taxi.

"We're pleased to expand our partnership with HHI as we prepare to install our GEACS charging system at Kearny Heliport. Kearny is expected to become the first heliport with an air taxi charger in the tri-state area and enable the launch of our quiet, emissions-free air taxi service in the greater New York City region," said Joe Ben Bevirt, Founder and CEO of Joby.

Let me ask you a question...

Are you a Taxi driver or an insurance worker?

Taxi driver, of course.

Aren't you just fed up of doing your insurance companies work for them?

Well, I always have to call twice to get a lower price

Not with TaxiFair. We always offer our best price, first time

That's why over 92.5% of policies have renewed with TaxiFair in 2023.

Data collated from all TaxiFair renewals offered with an effective date between 1st January 2023 and 31st May 2023



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