

TACSAÍ

IRELAND'S ONLY FREE INDEPENDENT TACSAÍ MAGAZINE FOR DRIVERS & INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS



Welcome to
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TAXI DRIVERS:
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ACCESSIBILITY FOR
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES - SEE P14

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There's the dash from town through rush hour traffic where you're pressured to go faster than you should, so they can make their flight. There's the 400 meter fare which barely seems worthwhile but for the fact that the passenger has their best high heels on. Or, the Saturday night 4am fare where you're nervous whether an intoxicated passenger may need to pull over at any time to avoid soiling your vehicle! Then you have the chatty customer, the customer with their headphones in, the silent customer and the loud customer who is mid-zoom call entering the car and barely able to tell you where they want to go. As we said at the start, no two fares are

ever the same.

The same goes for insurance. Just like you've seen all possible fares inside your vehicle at different times, we've seen all possible circumstances for customers seeking SPSV/Taxi insurance. That's because SPSV insurance is, quite simply, all that we do.

We pride ourselves on our different approach. You want to work. You need insurance to work. Our job is therefore to be an enabler. Understand your circumstances, whatever they may be, and give you that opportunity to work. At TaxiFair, we don't believe in that most frustrating approach of 'computer says no'.

Whilst we embrace technology with a system built solely for us to administer taxi insurance, we still actively engage in traditional insurance broking. Speaking to insurers, pitching customers cases to underwriters to ensure we can achieve the best possible solution for you.

So, what do different fares look like to us, from an insurance standpoint?

Owner drivers: whether you own your own taxi or are investing in a new wheelchair accessible taxi, we are here to help you.

Rental risks: insurance to protect both the vehicle/plate owner and the driver. Driving is typically restricted to the rental driver only and priced on the drivers details.

Multi-driver risks: more than 1 driver working a vehicle? No problem. Whether it's a husband and wife or a local service with drivers working different shifts, cover can be arranged.

Multi-plate owner policies: Own more than 1 taxi plate or vehicle? We can cover you also. Generally restricted to 1 driver per policy, we are able to try and leverage the buying power of multiple policies with insurers to your benefit.

New entrants: Another area we can help with. In recent months we've covered a range of drivers here in different circumstances at very different prices – from a 21 year old with little experience, to a 60 year old finishing up driving with Dublin Bus.

Electric vehicles: Many drivers are availing of the EV grant and we have comprehensive and competitively priced products to cover these vehicles.

What else? Whilst the above list may seem exhaustive, it's not. We haven't mentioned Local Area Hackneys, School Transport Vehicles and even Declined Cases Agreement (DCA) policies – yes, we can even help you through the DCA process, if required.



That's who we serve. Yet, its only half the story. We do it with our above mentioned custom built system. We do it with multiple insurers to foster competition and innovation. We do it by talking to new insurers considering entering the market. We do it by issuing insurance certificates and discs from our office. We do it by delivering documents swiftly and electronically to turn off frequent reminders from the mobile apps (not mentioning any names, Uber). We do it by facilitating out of hours vehicle change request to enable you to keep working when you have a problem. And, we do it with empathy at all times to help you.

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EDITOR LETTER

There's revolution in the air as the great Nobel Prize winner Bob Dylan once said.

Apart from the numerous protests around the country by normal average working people, taxi drivers are calling the National Transport Authority (NTA) to task, along with the current Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan and his entire department to task.

One particular driver has gone so far as to call for multiple officials to be sacked or step down. Tommy Barton of the Dublin Taxi Association (DTA) has also launched an attack on the powers that be in relation to the vetting process with the Department of Transport shirking all responsibility.

Another Dublin driver has learnt through Freedom of Information that roof sign stickers are costing drivers €60, 000 a year, despite the fact that they were to be abolished when the app went live.

Mick Barrett of TTNH has been consistently putting pressure on the government over the vehicle age rule, complete with Freedom of

Information requests and correspondence with the head of the NTA.

Tony Roe has questioned why famous ranks like that at Foster Place has been reduced and why St James Hospital has no rank.

The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society continues to encourage those in need to reach out.

There is a new feature in this edition. I have put together a questionnaire for drivers about issues - serious and light affecting the industry. I would encourage drivers to send in their own questions and opinions on the state of the industry. In this way we hope to build more solidarity among drivers.

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TACSAÍ MAGAZINE

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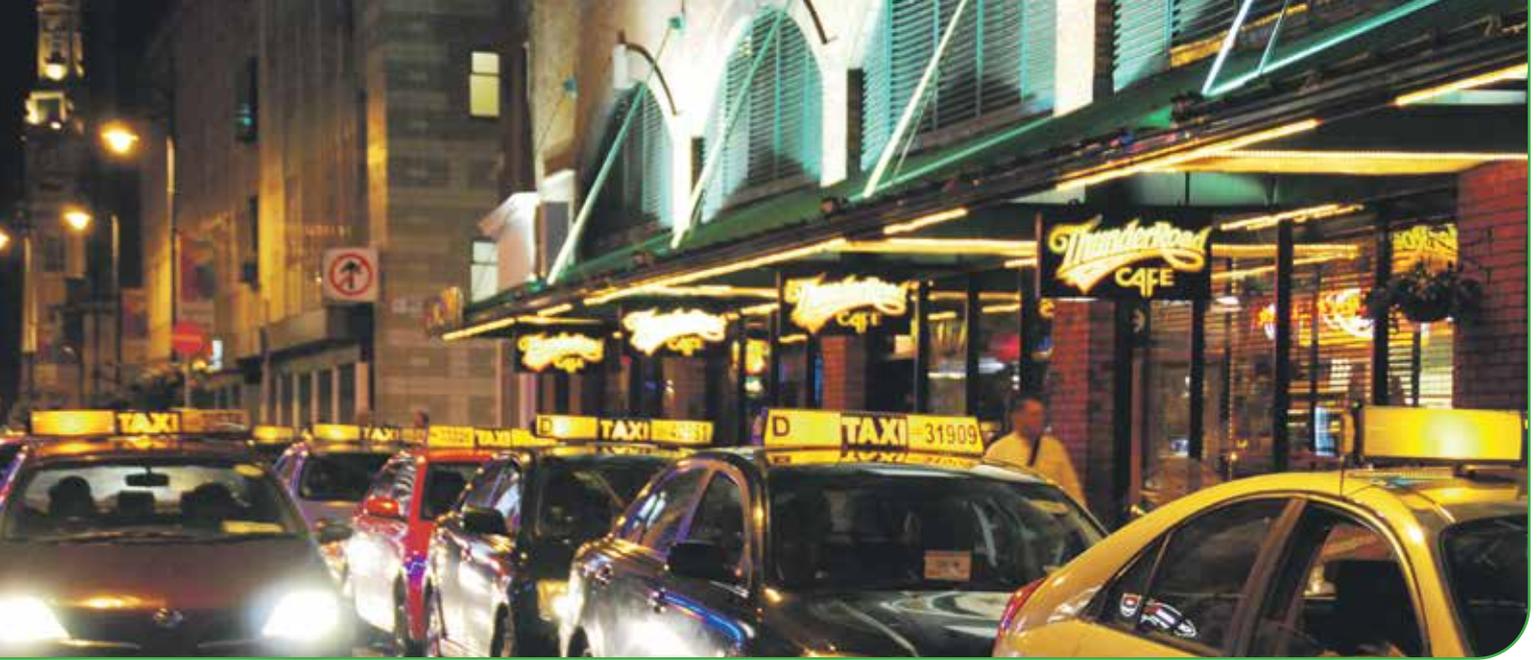
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NTA Defends Stickers

According to one exasperated driver who requested the figures which are supposed to be public domain: “They [NTA] would only give me details for one year, as you can see its over 60 thousand euro.

These stickers were supposed to be discontinued when the driver check went live over 10 years ago. So you can safely multiply 60 thousand by 10 years, over 600,000 euro. This is an absolute disgrace.”

According to the driver in question:

“This is just one example of how bad the NTA area; that roof sign sticker was meant to be done away with when the driver check app went live. That’s live now at least ten years and drivers are still paying over €60,000 a year, multiply that by ten years and it’s €600,000 at least. All the information that anyone needs is on the driver check app, the area he is entitled to work, his id card on the front of it and on the back of it. That can get a driver failed in the suitability as well because those stickers don’t last forever; the weather impacts on them and chips away at them and eventually they end up in little tiny bits. I even got mine laminated on the front to make it last longer. The other

ones get wet impact, insect impact and they just disintegrate into pieces and people go in for suitability tests and get failed on them.

A representative from the NTA responded saying:

“The National Transport Authority (NTA) introduced the Area Roof Sign stickers as a direct response to calls from industry representatives and after consultation with the Advisory Committee on SPSVs and An Garda Síochána.

The sticker is a simple external indicator that can be used by the public to identify the area the SPSV driver is permitted to ply or stand for hire. This identifier also assists NTA compliance officers in ensuring drivers are not illegally standing or plying for hire in areas for which they are not licensed.

The TFI Driver Check App is a further method available to the public to check the licence status of their taxi driver, including their licenced area of operation.”

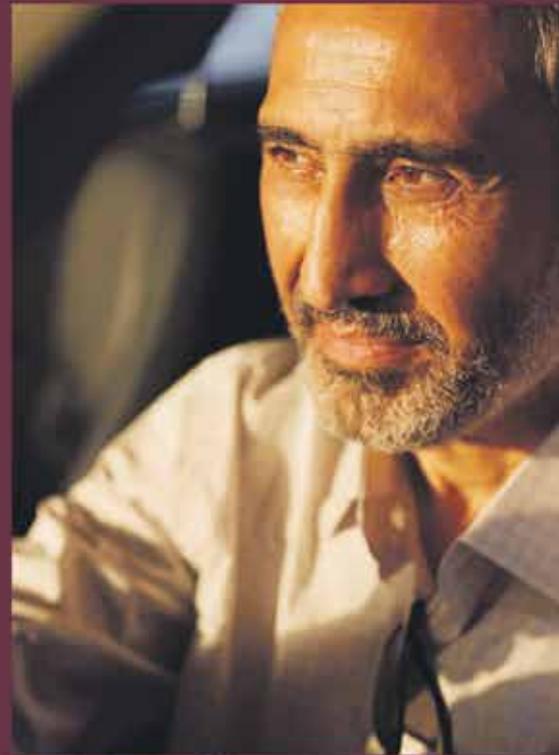
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10 YEAR RULE EXTENSION UNFAIR – SAY DRIVERS

A number of taxi drivers have expressed their frustration at the fact that vehicles just one year younger than their own in many cases have been granted three year extensions, while their vehicles which they maintain are in perfect condition, will soon be put off the road.

Speaking to **Tacsai magazine** one Dublin driver has expressed his frustration saying:

“14 registrations, 13 registrations and 12 registrations all got a three year extension through Covid, but I went through Covid too and I should have got a three year extension. In my opinion; if they were giving a three year extension because of Covid, it should have been given across the board.”

Another Dublin driver expressed the same sentiment, saying that the extensions should have been given across the board. He went on to say that he felt that drivers are being victimised.

“This happened to me when I was driving an 11 reg. My licence was up in the window. Just as soon as I got rid of it and borrowed €30, 000, an extension was given. I have just got it paid off, and now I have to change it again,” he said.

Nor is this issue limited to Dublin alone. One driver from Cork has also expressed his frustration with the current system.

Speaking to Tacsai magazine, he said

“I live and work in Crosshaven. My car is a 2015 Skoda Octavia, which is in perfect condition, it just passed the NCT the other day. It has to go off the road in January 2025 and 2010, 12, 13, 14 cars will have gotten three or four years extra throughout the pandemic.”

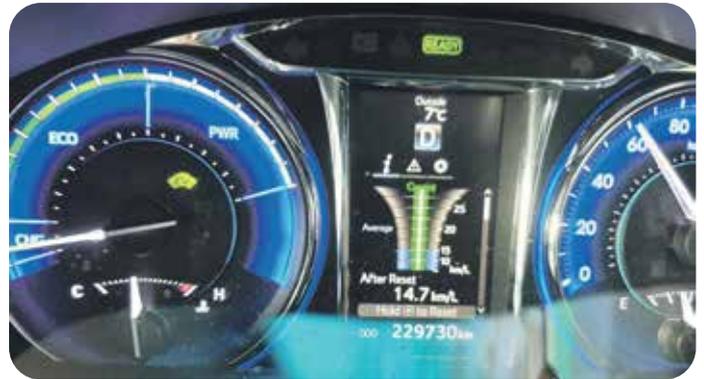
He went on to say that due to the pandemic, he lost two years worth of income, is still paying off the car, and he will have to take it off the road next year. He added that he feels discriminated against seeing these older cars, which were given extensions driving around, while he has to buy a new vehicle next year.

Speaking to Tacsai magazine, a Spokesperson for the NTA said:

“The maximum permissible ages requirements of SPSVs are set out in legislation, primarily under

regulation 31 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015. In response to a number of factors in recent years, amendments to these regulations were required to support the sector.

In summary, only those vehicles due to leave the fleet as a result of having reached the maximum



permissible age during the Covid Emergency, when there was no possibility of work for the industry, and the subsequent global supply crisis, which actually prevented the industry upgrading, had temporary emergency age extensions applied under regulations. All licence holders were advised of this in publicised regulatory consultations and relevant correspondence. The impact of these changes is temporary and the original maximum permissible age requirements apply going forward. NTA does not intend to change this.

In general, the maximum permissible age of a standard taxi, standard hackney or local area hackney is ten years from the date of first registration of the vehicle. The maximum permissible age of a wheelchair accessible taxi or wheelchair accessible hackney is fifteen years from the date of first registration of the vehicle. No maximum permissible age is prescribed for limousines in recognition of both the vintage nature of many of these vehicles, and the reduced mileage undertaken by virtue of their ceremonial and

prestigious roles.

In recent years, world events necessitated the introduction of temporary measures amending the permissible age regulations.

1.COVID-19 Temporary Measures

In response to the very specific challenges in the SPSV industry posed by Covid-19, NTA enacted a number of emergency measures amending Regulation. These emergency measures extended the maximum permissible age requirements of eligible vehicles due to expire in 2020 and 2021 in response to the impact of Covid-19. All eligible vehicles were still required to successfully complete both a roadworthiness and an SPSV suitability inspection every six months, to ensure standards and quality remain at an appropriate level.

Following ongoing impacts of Covid-19, emergency measure Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measure COVID-19) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations 2021 provided emergency COVID-19 protection to vehicles due to reach their maximum permissible age during 2022.

Vehicle Supply Emergency Measures

In late 2022, climate, energy and geopolitical challenges made it unfeasible for all end of life SPSVs to be replaced throughout the following 12-15 months. The factors facing licence holders for the replacement of end of life SPSVs included:

- Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine and the associated global shortage of semiconductor chips, neon, nickel and palladium;
- Energy rationing in Europe;
- Logistics disruptions in Germany;
- Covid-19 lockdowns in China
- Supply to Ireland.

As a result, the NTA made an exceptional contingency provision in relation to the maximum permissible vehicle age limits of vehicles due to reach their end of life before 2025. NTA held a public consultation inviting representations on the proposed Small Public Service Vehicle (Contingency Measure – Vehicle Supply) (Maximum Permissible Age) Regulations from interested parties. The period of the consultation was 19th September 2022 to 12th October 2022 inclusive. 1,938 responses were received and 94% agreed with the proposal. The Regulations were subsequently signed into being on the 18th November 2022. As a result of this measure, no licensed vehicle in the SPSV



Why are Mint Condition Cars been Taken Off The Road?



fleet at the time of enactment would be forced to leave the fleet as a result of age, before 01 January 2025.”

We encourage any drivers who are experiencing the same frustrations with the 10 year rule and the selective extension process to get in touch with Tacsai magazine to progress the issue further.



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NEW PEUGEOT E-2008 SUV POWERS AHEAD

by: Declan Glynn



The new Peugeot e-2008 fully-electric compact SUV is a more spacious, higher-riding version of the marvellous e-208 hatchback, and a major rival to the Kia Niro EV, Hyundai Kona Electric, and MG ZS EV, as well as conventional hatchback-style models like the Nissan Leaf and Volkswagen ID.3. While some electric cars go out of their way to stand out as being an EV, the new Peugeot e-2008 blends in with its 2008 PureTech petrol and mild-hybrid petrol counterparts. Having been impressed by the new Peugeot 2008 PureTech 130PS recently, I had high hopes for the new e-2008, and I certainly wasn't disappointed.

Modern & Assertive Design.

As with the new 2008, the new e-2008 boasts a modern, assertive design that features a new front and rear light signature, and a redesigned front end with the new PEUGEOT shield taking pride of place in the centre. The 2008/e-2008 also comes with new colour options, innovative wheel designs and new refined fabrics. Additionally, the car features an updated PEUGEOT i-Cockpit with a new design for the digital instrument cluster, and a 10-inch central touchscreen for all models. The PEUGEOT i-Connect system offers full connectivity through wireless mirroring (Apple CarPlay & Android Auto) and enables easy access to all infotainment functions via the "OK PEUGEOT" voice command.

Practical Cabin & Boot.

Practicality is an important consideration for buyers in the fiercely competitive compact SUV market, and the e-2008 doesn't disappoint in this regard. Measuring in at 4300mm in length and 1550mm in height, the e-2008 can comfortably accommodate up to five adults, with ample head, knee and leg room on offer throughout. Boot space is equally impressive, with 434-litres available when the rear seat backs are in their upright position, but this increases to a cavernous 1,467-litres when the rear seat backs are folded. The new e-2008's cabin is one of the most strikingly-designed in the compact SUV class – and would even put some more expensive rivals to shame. The use of high quality materials and soft-touch surfaces make it feel upmarket too.

Trim & Powertrain Details.

The new Peugeot e-2008 (like its 2008 sibling) is available in a choice of three trim levels – Active, Allure and range-topping GT – with features such as automatic air-conditioning, LED headlights with 3-claw LED daytime running lights, VisioPark 1; 180-degree colour reversing camera, rear parking sensors, Peugeot i-Cockpit™, and a host of safety systems coming as standard in entry-level Active trim. The new e-2008 features a new 100% electric powertrain with a range of up to 406km on a WLTP combined driving cycle. The electric motor produces 156bhp of power and 260Nm of torque, enabling the car to accelerate from 0-100km/h in 8.5-seconds through a single-speed

automatic transmission. The battery has a capacity of 52.5kWh and can be charged from 10-80% in just 30 minutes using a fast charger. A full charge (10-100%) takes 7.5 hours using a 7kW wallbox charger. Drivers can choose between 3 driving modes – Eco, Normal and Sport – along with 2 braking modes, with the regenerative braking mode activated by pressing the 'B' button beside the user-friendly gear selector. The e-2008 sits on the new e-CMP platform that has been developed to incorporate a high voltage battery whilst preserving space on board. Particular attention was given to weight reduction and balance to make sure the driving experience is as rewarding as possible.

Car on Review.

My review car was a Peugeot e-2008 GT in striking Selenium Grey metallic paintwork (a no-cost option) with a Black Diamond Roof. Key standard GT equipment includes 17" 'Karakoy' diamond-cut alloy wheels, gloss black roof bars and B-pillar, front parking aid (graphic & sound), smartphone wireless charging, VisioPark 2; HD front & rear cameras (with touchscreen display of front and rear views, and 360-degree view), Full LED Technology headlamps, configurable PEUGEOT 3D i-Cockpit, full-grain perforated leather steering wheel with green stitch detailing and satin chrome 'GT' emblem, keyless entry and push button start, along with a frameless electrochromic rear view mirror. Enhanced safety features include blind spot monitoring, extended traffic sign recognition and display, active lane departure with lane correction, driver attention alert, adaptive cruise control with Stop and Go function, and automatic emergency braking with pedestrian and cyclist detection.

The e-2008 is effortless to drive, while its strong brake pedal feel ensures it stops every bit as well as it goes, and this is greatly helped by engaging the brake regeneration function, which sends energy back to the battery for enhanced range. Occupant comfort is enhanced by way of a supportive suspension and damping function which is good enough to absorb road imperfections with ease. Highly versatile, and as agile and compact in the city as it is robust and energetic on the open road, the new Peugeot e-2008 comes with the benefit of zero emissions on every journey. With the MyPeugeot™ app you can easily view the e-2008's battery information and plan your charging options, while also being able to program the temperature inside the car before boarding.

Conclusion & Price.

The super-stylish new Peugeot e-2008 commands a unique presence on the road, while its strikingly-designed cabin, excellent practicality and supreme driving dynamics make it one of the very finest fully-electric compact SUVs on the market. Pricing for the new Peugeot e-2008 starts at just €35,895 (includes SEAI grant and VRT rebate). Price as tested is €40,675. A 5-year/100,000km warranty comes a standard, along with an 8-year traction battery warranty.

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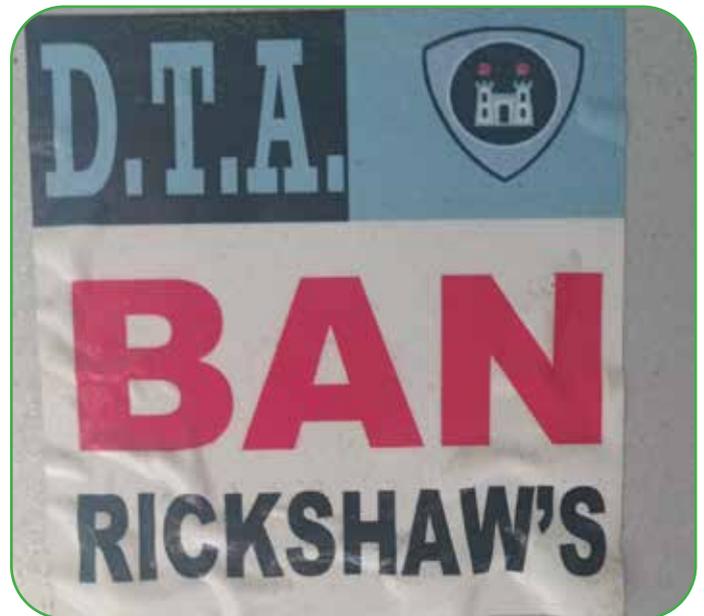
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“INDUSTRY SHOULD HANG IT’S HEAD IN SHAME” – DUBLIN TAXI ASSOCIATION

DTA – the group at the Forefront of
the Anti-Rickshaw campaign
– is asking questions of the NTA.



The DTA believes a complete overhaul of the system root and stem is needed.

A DTA spokesperson said:

If I may be so bold as to trespass upon your pages once more. A taxi driver was recently accused of a double rape. This alleged offence was perpetrated by an individual who had already been in accused of a similar offence.

“The whole industry must hang its head in shame. What controls what checks were in place? How were they circumvented?

What were the regulators doing or neglecting do?

To aggravate matters this was a revisiting of the X case scenario (the biggest case in irish legal history). A repeat offender got past the checks to get a taxi licence. Where was the NTA here?

What are the regulations for? Who is napping at the steering wheel?

It re emphasises the point I made in my last letter that more stringent background checks are needed

This is impossible for people arriving in the country without papers and then being allowed drive taxis. I suggest a law is written trice that you have to hold a valid clean 5 year Irish driver’s license before you can apply for a PSV licence.

The vetting procedure needs to be addressed from root to stem. Responsibility should be accepted by the relative authorities and persons in their positions vacated. In the vernacular heads should roll,” the spokesperson said.

They went on to say that it only makes plain and simple sense to protect the public and taxi passenger.

“I will be calling on members of Dublin city Council through Cllr Phil Sutcliffe to take the necessary steps to push for the 5 five year Irish Licence rule,” said Tommy Barton.

Finally lest I be accused of trivialising this egregious situation, may I personally and on behalf of my colleagues extend my sympathy and support to the victims.

The widely reported recent case of a taxi driver raping two young women should be fresh in your readers minds..

Needless to say words are not strong enough to condemn such an outrage..

It however draws attention to the screening for drivers in the industry... I am on record. As opposing further barriers but the case highlights the inadequacy of the regime in place.

My most recent correspondence emphasised the apparent ‘blind spot’ where non nationals seeking international protection presented without identity documents and managed to legitimately drive taxis.

I would maintain my objection to that situation because clearly there can be no realistic checks..

Preventing this resulting risk of outrage is for clever minds than mine; but long periods of ordinary driving and more thorough background checks would be a start.

Finally having condemned the culprit I am sure I speak for all in the industry in extending sympathy to the victims.

Their job is no longer tenable in that position they have totally failed to passengers and the Irish public and the NTA should be the first people to acknowledge that.”

A spokesperson for the Department of Transport responded saying:

“Neither the Minister nor the Minister of State has any role in the day-to-day operations of the SPSV sector.

That is the responsibility of the NTA who issue SPSV licences allowing taxis, hackneys, local area hackneys and limousines to operate in Ireland, after having met conditions set down by the NTA.

Section 6(2) of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013 provides that An Garda Síochána is the licensing authority to grant driver licences to individuals to drive SPSVs. AGS is responsible for issuing and renewing SPSV driver licences to suitable applicants,” said the spokesperson. The Department is not involved in either process.”



Taxi Drivers: Champions of Accessibility for People with Disabilities.

The vital role that taxi drivers play in ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities cannot be overstated. This summer, while companies like Uber are making headlines for supporting para-athletes, it's the dedication and daily efforts of taxi drivers that truly uphold the spirit of accessibility and inclusion.

Taxi drivers have long been the backbone of transportation for individuals with disabilities, providing reliable and personalized service that goes beyond the capabilities of app-based platforms. As Uber supports Irish para-athletes like Róisín Ní Ríain and Tiarnán O'Donnell, offering them financial assistance, transportation, and meal services, it's important to highlight how taxi drivers deliver part of this crucial support every single day. Limerick's Róisín Ní Ríain, an inspiring Irish para-athlete who recently secured five medals at the European

Para Swimming Championships, acknowledged the importance of reliable transportation in her preparation. "Getting preparation right before competition is so important," she said. While Uber's sponsorship aids this journey, taxi drivers are consistently ensuring individuals like Róisín reach their destinations smoothly and efficiently, whether it's to training sessions, competitions, or daily errands. Born with a visual impairment and unable to drive herself, taxis have played an important role in Róisín's rise to elite Irish swimmer and medal hopeful.

To celebrate the achievements of Róisín and Tiarnán,

Uber launched a campaign to emphasize the power of accessible transportation. Yet, it's the taxi industry that has been championing this cause for decades. Taxis equipped with wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) have long been a staple in providing essential mobility for wheelchair users, ensuring they travel with dignity and ease, whilst saloon taxis assist thousands of passengers with mobility disabilities (sometimes invisible) every day.

Irish rower Tiarnán O'Donnell, who excelled at the 2024 World Rowing Cup II in Switzerland, shared how accessible transport has eased the stress of travel for him and his team. "Having accessible transport waiting for myself and the team when we arrive for training camps and competitions has taken so much of the stress of traveling away," he said. Taxi drivers, with their expert knowledge of routes and commitment to service, play a pivotal role in making such seamless travel experiences possible for many para-athletes and people with disabilities.

Minister of State for Disabilities, Anne Rabbitte highlighted the significance of support for para-athletes, noting that it allows them to focus on their preparation without worrying about transportation.

This support mirrors the everyday reliability provided by taxi drivers, who are a cornerstone of accessible transport for people with disabilities.

The Minister also welcomed Uber's leading technology that makes it easier for people with disabilities to travel independently. The app enables VoiceOver technology worldwide for passengers who are blind or have low vision and vibrating alerts to help riders who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"We are thrilled to support these exceptional young people with their training and preparation," said Uber Ireland's General Manager, Kieran Harte. This commitment to inclusivity is echoed in the daily operations of taxi services across Ireland. Taxi drivers are dedicated to driving better mobility options for all, consistently supporting the independence and mobility of individuals with disabilities.

As the taxi industry continues to evolve, its unwavering dedication to accessibility remains a constant. Taxi drivers not only facilitate transport but also contribute significantly to the independence and empowerment of people with disabilities, ensuring that everyone has the freedom to move and achieve their goals.



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MICK BARRETT – TTNH -NTA SAGA

The following is a saga of emails back and forth between Mick Barrett TTNH and NTA head Wendy Thompson regarding vehicle extensions.

Hi Wendy .

In relation to the letter below that I sent in on behalf of drivers who basically feel they have been discriminated against in relation to the vehicle licence extensions and are not in a position to replace there 2015 vehicles from January 2025 has there been any further consideration in relation to further vehicle licence extensions been given for all these drivers by The NTA and considering the fact that they have already lost 2 and a half operational use of there vehicles under the 10 year rule due to the covid pandemic.

Hope to hear back from you soon on this .

Kind regards,

Mick

08/04/24

Hi Mick

This was indeed tabled at the last Advisory Committee on SPSVs meeting. To my recollection, possible extensions on the maximum permissible age of vehicles over 10 years old were tabled by a driver representative. NTA reaffirmed that the emergency, temporary extensions provided during 2020-2022 were once off measures, due to the industry decimating pandemic and subsequent supply chain issues, with the end date clearly signposted in all communications to the industry and the public at large. It was noted that some licence holders felt they were being discriminated against as they had to change their vehicles "earlier" than others but it was agreed that this would be the case irrespective of the date of emergency provision termination. The cut-off point for those was made clear throughout the entire legislative process and further extensions would not be considered as consistently advised by NTA and the Minister for Transport, together with the advices on vehicles ages provided by the Advisory Committee previously.

Kind regards

Wendy - 16/04/24

Hi Wendy and Con and all on The Taxi Advisory committee.

I am writing to you on behalf of numerous taxi drivers who have been in contact with me and are basically sick with the worry at the prospect of being permanently gone from the taxi business after years of service due to and not being able to afford The €20,000 needed and upwards to replace there vehicle and most have no possibility of getting finance due to either late payments or payments stalled through covid . These vehicles are all have Registrations from 2015 and upwards all are in pristine condition and are being taken out of the fleet when older vehicles can still operate on the road due to extensions given by The NTA in which was greatly appreciated . Examples are a 141 or 142 registered vehicle can now operate until 2027 but the 2015 registered vehicle is gone off the road on From January 1st 2025 .

The world faced The Covid Pandemic in 2019 and here in Ireland we had possibly the longest lockdown in Europe. Everything stood still with closures for most businesses and we in The Taxi industry were at a stand still completely .

Taxi Drivers who bought 2015 cars and upwards had not fully paid for for those vehicles and as a result either missed or stalled 're payments and through no fault of there own as there was no work . Drivers tell me today there credit rating has dropped and finance is proving impossible to get for most of them. While it was greatly appreciated the vehicle licence extensions that were granted by The NTA for vehicles affected through covid for vehicles registered up to the end of 2014 who all got almost 3 years extended to there spsv licence expiry date . The Taxi drivers who had 2015 registered vehicles and upwards got absolutely no help whatsoever . These drivers tell me that they feel totally discriminated against considering the facts are they have only got 7 and a half years use from there vehicle since 2015 to there expiry date in 2025 and no consideration was given to them in relation to vehicle licence extensions which in fairness should have

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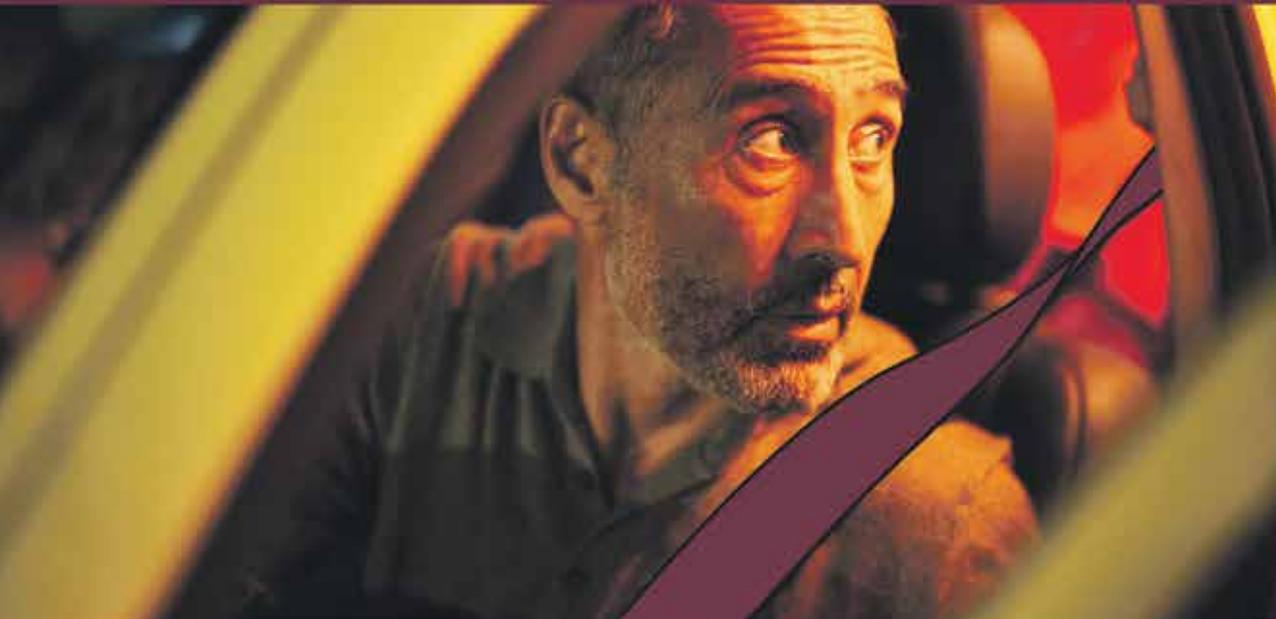
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been for all vehicles registered as a taxi during the 2 and a half years they lost due to the covid pandemic . They are the forgotten here and truthfully have been totally overlooked in the vehicle licence extensions . Despite there commitment outlaying more money to upgrade there vehicle at the time of purchase in 2015 and upwards and only getting just over 7 years use . The need for The NTA and The Taxi Advisory committee to open discussions on this is paramount as we have just over 8 months away until some very experienced drivers will be forced out of the taxi business . Taxi drivers who will be forced out of the buisness will be left looking at 2013 vehicles can still operate in 2026 or 2014 vehicles that can operate up to 2027 but there 2015 vehicle is off the Road in 2025 this is very wrong and very unfair and consideration needs to be granted for extensions for vehicles from 2015 upwards who were registered as a taxi with The NTA through the covid pandemic period.

On behalf of the numerous Taxi drivers who have raised all of the above concerns with me I ask The NTA , The Taxi Advisory committee can this letter on drivers behalf be read out at the next taxi advisory committee meeting at the end under any other business and for serious consideration to be given to the plight 2015 and upwards registered taxi now face regarding replacing there vehicles and the cost factors and also to the different spsv vehicle licence extension rules imposed on them then some of there colleagues who got treated more fairly and received extensions.

Hope to hear back from you all soon on this matter .
Kind Regards,
Mick Barrett
27/03/24

Dear Taoiseach .

I recently sent the email below to the Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan and then heard the announcement that Minister Ryan has resigned from his position . The content of the email is of huge importance to the livelihoods of taxi drivers and there family's and unfortunately the clock is ticking down for them before large numbers will be forced out of the taxi business that they have spent for some a lifetime working in .

On behalf of these drivers I ask can you please have a look below of the position that taxi drivers

are facing and any help that you could give would be greatly appreciated .

Yours Sincerely .
Michael Barrett
27/6/2024

Dear Minister Ryan,

My name is Michael Barrett and I have been a taxi driver since 2002 up to the present day . For many years during my taxi career I have been a representative for taxi drivers with TTNH and also Representing taxi drivers at Dublin Airport Taxi Rank. Back in 2019 I was appointed by Minister Shane Ross at the time on to the taxi advisory committee in which I sat until late 2020 . Minister I have been approached by large numbers of taxi drivers whose vehicles will be expiring under the 10 year rule from January 2025 for 2015 registered taxis and on up to 2019 registered taxis who did not receive any vehicle licence extension from The NTA despite only getting 7 and a half years use from there vehicle due to the fact the vehicle and Drivers sat at home for the 2 years through the covid pandemic period due to everything being closed and no work available . These drivers feel totally discriminated against and have not recovered enough to be in a position to go out and replace there vehicle that lets say for a 2015 registered taxi that was registered with The NTA during the covid period will now expire from January 2025 under the 10 year rule but the driver will only have got between 7 to 8 years use of the vehicle and have lost out on between 2 to 3 years work to put them in a position to afford to replace their vehicle .

Drivers who had these 2015, 2016 ,2017, 2018 ,and 2019 vehicles registered with The NTA all of these were new or nearly new vehicles and when the covid pandemic came and everything closed these vehicles were not paid for by drivers . Repayments had to be put on hold for 2 years as taxi drivers were on a pandemic payment and as a result taxi drivers credit history was effected which leaves them in a position today were they can't get loans to replace there vehicles from January 2025 . Taxi drivers tell me this is discrimination at it's highest by The NTA against them and feel who ever was responsible for the cut off which excluded vehicles registered 2015 to 2019 from being given a vehicle licence

extension the same way all vehicles received from 2014 downwards who all got 3 year extensions in the interest of fairness alone should have went right across the taxi fleet for all vehicles registered with The NTA during covid up to 2019 Should all receive the vehicle licence extension .

Minister this appeal letter to you on taxi drivers behalf and I want to update you that a full process has been followed in attempt to try get help for these drivers out before they are forced out of the taxi business altogether due not been able to afford to change there vehicle or can't get finance due to there credit rating has been affected over freezing car loan payments during the covid pandemic. The NTA has been contacted by letter from me for response . The head of the NTA Wendy Thompson has been contacted again by letter from me for response .

In March at taxi advisory committee meeting I sent in another letter asking for it to be brought up and highlighted at a TAC Meeting . A letter from me was read out to the committee highlighting the position that all these taxi drivers are in but the same answers for these drivers has been given . Once off measures due to the industry decimating pandemic and subsequent supply chain issues with The end date clearly signposted through communication to the industry . Further extensions would not be considered as consistently advised by The NTA together with the advices on vehicle ages provided by the taxi advisory committee previously and the above is the response I was given to go back drivers who will be losing there livelihood starting in January 2025 .

Minister it was myself and another taxi representative David McGuinness who were on the Taxi Advisory committee during the pandemic and we actually resigned from the committee because after putting a comprehensive document sent into to yourself from The TAC sub committee set up from The main TAC Committee we highlighted all of the challenges going forward for taxi drivers which included vehicle licence extensions for all taxis registered with the NTA at the time . These vehicle licence extensions were not coming quick enough and Drivers licences were expiring daily while we were waiting for decisions from your department . We most certainly did not request vehicle licence extensions for some it was for all drivers who had a

taxi vehicle registered with the NTA during the covid pandemic period. Who was responsible for the cut off for 2015 vehicles upwards is clearly unknown but be assured this advice did not come from the taxi advisory committee and most certainly up to the time myself and David McGuinness resigned from the TAC .

In attachments you will find The NTA response and statistics sent back to me for a freedom of information request sent in by myself asking how many 2015 saloon taxis that were registered with the NTA during the pandemic that will be off the Road from January 2025 and as you can see the figures are very high. Again with 2016 vehicles and on up to 2019 vehicles all impacted and all unlike drivers who received a vehicle licence extensions were discriminated against and given no reason why or how or who decided the cut off date for 2015 vehicles upwards let alone losing out on 2 to 3 years under the 10 year rule. Minister this is morally wrong what's happening and I personally am asking for your intervention and your response on behalf of these drivers . I ask Please do not refer me back to The NTA for decision or further correspondence on this matter as they have made it clear that no consideration has or will been given . Please take a serious look at the numbers in attachments provided 1489 in 2025. 1414 in 2026 and so on up to 2019 . 1311 in 2017 . 908 in 2018 . and 784 in 2019 all of these drivers no matter what way it's portrayed only got between 7 to 8 years use of there vehicles under the 10 year rule and large numbers of them I can assure you are not in any financial position to replace new vehicles at this time . Finally I will say at a time when its been widely highlighted is there a shortage of taxis that we all hear and read about unless we get intervention from you Minister and asap we most definitely will be losing a lot more drivers who are in no financial position to replace there perfectly working vehicle that they are currently using . The clock is ticking for these drivers as from January the first of them will start to lose there livelihoods. Vehicle licence Extensions are needed for all and not just some.

I sincerely hope to hear back from you asap in regards to this appeal letter .

On behalf of drivers

Yours Faithfully,

Michael Barrett 17/06/24



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Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society

The Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society has been coming on in leaps and bounds with numerous new counsellors and members.

“We are just back from a trip to Spain, Lanzarote with 28 to 30 drivers. We got a very beneficial package which was quite inexpensive collectively. Most of the drivers have lost loved ones and we have part two now coming up where we have a couple of trips. The next trip we hope to have is to Romania for five days and anyone who is suffering from bereavement get in touch with us. It’s been very successful, we meet once a week, we have

various outings. Most of the lads were taxi drivers, but we have a lot of bus drivers, train drivers and tram drivers. It just means that there is something there for them to do, because we have all seen those scenarios and we’ve all been through it,” said Roe.

Anyone experiencing bereavement should not suffer alone in silence; teach out to any of the counsellors or Tony himself at 085 108 9482

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Tokyo

Air taxi firm cites safety issues in dropping Osaka Expo flights

SkyDrive Inc., a Japanese air taxi startup, on Thursday cited persistent challenges in addressing safety and other technological development issues as the reason for abandoning its plan to offer commercial flights at next year's World Exposition in Osaka.

SkyDrive sought to develop a flying taxi that can carry up to three people to showcase its technology at the expo as one of the event's main attractions, but it decided last month to withdraw the plan and only perform demo flights without passengers.

"As we moved ahead with the development, we found more and more unexpected problems, including those related to safety," SkyDrive CEO Tomohiro Fukuzawa told reporters after a press conference for a tie-up with Kyushu Railway Co.

The company expects to take more time to develop key components such as batteries and motors than it initially planned.

SkyDrive, known for its demonstration of Japan's first public test flight of a manned flying car in 2020, followed Japanese trading house Marubeni Corp. In scrapping plans to offer air taxi services at the exposition to take place from April 13 through Oct. 13 next year.

Still, Japan Airlines Co. And a group of ANA Holdings Inc. And U.S. flying car maker Joby Aviation Inc. Are gearing up to provide such services. ANA Holdings is the parent company of All Nippon Airways Co.

But there is no change in SkyDrive's business plan, the company said, as it continues to aim to obtain type certification from Japanese regulators as early as 2026 to roll out its electric vertical take-off and landing model at home and abroad.

The startup is planning to develop a vehicle that can fly 15 to 40 kilometers, with the maximum speed reaching 100 km per hour, according to the company.

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SkyDrive said at the press conference that it will launch a feasibility study with Kyushu Railway, a railway operator in the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, for flying taxi services in the region. This follows its recently signed partnership with Suzuki Motor Corp. For the production of flying cars.

Fukuzawa said the services, if launched, will help boost tourism in the Kyushu region, known for many hot springs, scenic nature landscapes and historical sites, attracting more domestic and overseas travellers.

"There will be huge demand for foreign visitors to see the beautiful landscapes from above," he said.

Guernsey

Taxi app has 40,000 journeys booked in first year
A taxi booking app in Guernsey has facilitated about 40,000 journeys in its first year, the States of Guernsey has said.

The Guernsey Taxi App has 105 taxi drivers signed up to the platform, with about 85 actively using the app.

The government said 239 journeys were booked through the app on its busiest day in April 2024, with an average of 106 journeys arranged on the platform daily.

Air taxi firm cites safety issues in dropping Osaka Expo flights



Deputy Andy Cameron said the app was “good for customers” and “good for the industry”.

Dead mileage’

The introduction of an app-accessible taxi booking system was a key recommendation of the independent Taxi and Private Hire Car Review published in September 2022.

Since 1 January 2024, all taxi operators have been required to sign up to the app or another taxi booking app of their choice, as long as it “meets set criteria”.

Deputy Cameron said: “For customers, it provides a one-stop shop for hailing a taxi on demand, avoiding the need to phone up several companies.

“For drivers, it reduces the amount of ‘dead mileage’ [distance or time a taxi travels without paying passengers] by offering the request to the taxi closest to the waiting passenger.

“We’re pleased that this has been welcomed by the industry and continue to work alongside the Guernsey Taxi Drivers Association to see how the app can be further developed.”

NYC

NYC taxi drivers caught in crossfire of MTA and Curb fee dispute

A feud between a company that runs the credit card readers for taxi meters and the MTA has the New York Taxi Workers Alliance fed up again with congestion pricing.

“This is just ridiculous. Like, we need adults in this playground,” said Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director Of The NYTWA.

Curb, one of the taxi-tech firms that runs the credit card readers for the taxi meters, would be responsible for collecting the congestion surcharge of \$1.25 for taxis and \$2.50 For Uber And Lyft per trip when driving south of 60th Street in Manhattan.

The credit card revenue that the driver earns for the day

goes through these vendors and the vendors then deduct the taxes from that revenue and paid over to the MTA,” said Desai.

The problem, however, is that Curb wants to charge the MTA a service fee to add that per-trip toll. But the MTA is refusing, saying that if it has to pay a fee, then the drivers won’t be included in the reduced toll and will instead be subject to paying the full \$15 a day, out of their own pocket.

“There are a lot of taxes and fees that are already collected through these meters,” said MTA CEO and Chair Janno Lieber. “It’s been done before, so there’s no reason this should be different.”

In a statement to FOX 5 NY, Amos Tamam, the CEO of Curb said: “Curb is actively in a typical agreement review cycle and cooperating with the MTA to ensure a seamless resolution. We have always been a compliant partner, seasoned at working with various government regulators and entities. Curb is dedicated to collecting and distributing fees and tolls with the utmost responsibility and precision. Hence as a result, there is a significant cost associated with the technology, manpower and infrastructure needed to collect and reconcile the mandated Congestion Toll Zones fees on behalf of the MTA. Therefore, it is reasonable for these costs to be acknowledged and for Curb to be compensated for these efforts, either now or in the future.

While we surfaced the substantial cost for Curb to collect and reconcile these fees, we have made it clear late last week to the appropriate parties that we have chosen not to derail the process based on our concerns. We will move forward with implementation and address the associated cost at a later date. Much of this has been noted and translated in the redline contract that we sent to the MTA last week. There is no hold-up; it is just a matter of paperwork.”

“The MTA and Curb, these vendors need to figure it out, they shouldn’t be squeezing the drivers in the middle,” said Desai.

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