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No two fares are ever the same !



Isn't every day the same? You just drive a passenger from A to B, collect their money (or push a button to take their money these days) and head off to the next job. It's a common misconception, because as a taxi driver, you know that no two fares are ever the same.

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.

So, just like working in a taxi, when purchasing taxi insurance you simply have to know that no two fares are the same. Next time you need help, make sure you choose the right fare. **Choose TaxiFair.**

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EDITOR LETTER

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

In this edition, Tony Roe, Chairperson of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC) and Spokesperson on Taxis has once again highlighted the increasing number of attacks on drivers as well as the closure of ranks in Dublin City, one such being the historic rank at St James Hospital. Roe also highlighted the dangers to the health of drivers handling receipts which contains the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA)

This is an industrial chemical that is widely used in various industrial applications. It has concerns in its use as a color developer in thermal paper receipts since it is identified as an endocrine disruptor and causes hormonal disturbances among other health risks.

Robert McAuliffe has some advice for planning ahead in terms of retirement. He also tells us what sets the "About Ireland Taxi Tour" apart from all others.

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Designer: Patrick Browne Design

Tel: 086 831 9322

Email: hello@patrickbrownedesign.com

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02. Emo Station (Mount Brown), Kilmainham.
03. Discount Till Rolls
04. TTnH Offices, Santry Hall Ind. Est.
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Blind woman ‘humiliated’ by Dublin taxi driver who refused to allow guide dog in car

The National Transport Authority is investigating a discrimination complaint by a disability advocate who was left stranded outside DCU in May when a taxi driver allegedly declined to take her service animal

Taxi app FreeNow is facing a discrimination case after one of its drivers allegedly refused to allow a guide dog in his vehicle with its blind owner.

The incident is currently being investigated by the National Transport Authority (NTA), and FreeNow has said it has concluded an internal probe and is preparing to formally respond to the complainant.

The incident allegedly occurred outside the Helix venue at Dublin City University (DCU) on May 27, when a taxi was booked through the FreeNow app for disability advocate, Áine Wellard, who is blind.

A cab arrived five minutes later but, when the driver saw that Ms Wellard had a guide dog, he refused to accept the fare.

“At first, he just said that he wouldn’t take my dog,” she wrote in her formal complaint, notifying the company of her intention to take a discrimination case under the Equal Status Act.

“When I told him he was obliged to take a guide dog under the law, he then said that he had an allergy.” The driver advised Ms Wellard that she should book another taxi and note on the app that she had a dog, explaining that drivers who accept dogs would then respond to the call.

“It would appear that this driver was refusing to take my guide dog because she is a ‘dog’ and not because he had an allergy to dogs,” she wrote, noting that taxi operators with allergies to dogs are required by the NTA to have a

certified medical exemption.

“This driver only gave a medical reason after he realised that he was obliged to take a guide dog. Up to that point, he did not appear to make any differentiation between pet dogs and guide dogs”

In her discrimination complaint, Ms Wellard added that she had been hindered in contacting FreeNow due to the fact that its online contact form is not screen-reader accessible.

I was treated less favourably because I was refused access to a taxi because I had a guide dog and because I was excluded from using the [company’s online] submission form because it was not screen-reader accessible,” she claimed.

“I was therefore humiliated in front of a friend, seriously inconvenienced, was probably lied to by the taxi driver, and have... had my complaint treated by the FreeNow company in a trivialising and dismissive manner,” added Ms Wellard.

A spokesperson for the NTA said they regretted that the complaint had not been acknowledged or followed up in a timely manner. “This is a rare but significant oversight and NTA will conduct a review to ensure it does not happen again,” they said.

The authority confirmed that an investigation into the complaint had now commenced.

A spokesperson for FreeNow told the Irish Mirror that it had concluded an investigation into the matter raised by Ms Wellard, and would be in contact with her directly “in due course”.

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LYNK FORMS STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH LOCAL TAXI COMPANIES

Lynk has significantly expanded its driver network by forming partnerships with several local taxi companies across Greater Dublin.



Over the past few months, Lynk has been working closely with these companies to provide them with enhanced resources, ensuring they can continue to grow and remain competitive in the market.

Among the companies that have partnered with Lynk are Mill Cabs Clondalkin, Palmerstown Cabs, Autobahn Cabs, Donabate Cabs and G Cabs Ballbriggan. These alliances not only help secure local jobs but also add drivers in key areas to the Lynk network, improving service coverage and efficiency.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe impact on smaller, traditional taxi companies, with many drivers leaving the industry and service quality suffering as a result. Recognizing this challenge, Lynk, which already had strong relationships with these local companies, offered its resources to help them compete more effectively. Through these partnerships, Lynk has shared its resources, including dispatch and telephonist expertise, additional drivers, and advanced technology for booking

and app systems. This collaboration ensures that drivers, passengers, and companies all benefit from improved services.

Customers of these local taxi companies can now download the Lynk taxi app to connect with local drivers in their areas. For those who prefer to call, they can still use the local number and be connected to Lynk HQ, where their booking will be dispatched to the same local drivers.

Stephen, the owner of Mill Cabs, shared his positive experience: "Working with Lynk has enabled me to offer new services to my customers, such as the Lynk app. Previously, developing and maintaining an app was not a viable option due to high costs. Now, Lynk also manages my calls and dispatch operations, allowing me to offer a 24/7 service while reducing costs."

Lynk's expansion plans are set to continue into 2025, with more alliances in progress across Dublin and into Leinster. This strategic growth aims to further strengthen Lynk's presence and support local taxi companies in delivering high-quality services to their customers.

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FINALIST



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Nexus Legal: Fast-Tracking Accident Claims for Taxi Drivers and Protecting Your No Claims Bonus



Every day you sit in to your Taxi, the last thing you want to think about is being involved in an accident. You know that this means you are off the road, no income, damage to your car and the possibility of injuries to yourself or somebody else - But accidents happen.

This means the inevitable delays, inconvenience and expense.

We sat down to interview Ms. Nuala Lloyd who established Nexus Legal in 2012. She has over 35 years' experience in the Legal Sector working as an intermediary between individuals and Insurance Companies. This could be due to an accident at work, in a public place or on the road.

We asked Ms.Lloyd what did she feel were the challenges specifically faced by Taxi Drivers?

Although it is not mandatory yet to have a dashcam you cannot underestimate the importance and helpfulness that having such a small and inexpensive device that is an impartial and real time witness to protect you and your no claims bonus.

There are a number of challenges faced by Taxi Drivers when they are involved in a Road Traffic Accident (RTA). The first is the time it can take to deal with the claim - knowing where to start. Your drivers have all been through it. You dial the Insurance Company number, you are left on hold, you then have to press a number of options to get through to the relevant department and even then, it is difficult to get to speak to the correct person. This is the first stage in a long and arduous process of tedious form filling and all this time your car may be off the road.

If you cannot protect your No Claims Bonus you are at risk of having your premiums increased. Protecting your "No Claims Bonus" is the key. Clear signage in your vehicle is mandatory to ensure you comply with GDPR regulations.

What steps can you take to protect your No Claim Bonus?

If you are unfortunate enough to be involved in an accident, your Dashcam is your witness to safeguard your No Claims Bonus. The Dashcam does not lie.

If you have recorded Dashcam footage, processing your claim with an Insurance Company is so much more straight forward as the Dashcam offers empirical real time, eyewitness proof.

In reality, the real problem that Taxi Drivers will face in the absence of Dashcam footage, is that you have one person's word against another.

In the event of an accident between two taxi drivers the difficulty that often arises is when both Taxi Drivers are insured with the same Insurance Company, in the absence of clear evidence the Insurance Company will not take sides. This in effect means that a Driver may have to proceed through the Courts for a Judge to decide who is responsible. This can be very time consuming and costly.

You may not be aware but another consequential issue is that in the absence of liability being decided, your No Claim Bonus is affected negatively, resulting in the increase of your premium.

A person has two years from the date of an accident to submit a claim for personal injuries and six years for in relation to damage to car.

What a lot of people are not aware of is that your premium will be affected negatively until there is a resolution. In effect this could mean, that for a number of years you will be paying a lot more than you need to. As your drivers will appreciate, Insurance premiums are already expensive for Taxi Drivers, so therefore the importance of the Dashcam

"I have known Nuala for over 30 years and she has assisted me on many occasions in the past. One of the best pieces of information she has given is the benefit of having a Dashcam. In my experience it has speeded up the process immeasurably. Nuala is so helpful in explaining matters, following up and keeping you advised of developments at all times. This takes the worry away as you know what is happening at all times."

Joseph O'Gorman | Taxi Driver

as "Your Independent and Reliable Witness" cannot be underestimated.

What can Nexus Legal do to assist Taxi Drivers?

We set up Nexus Legal specifically to assist Taxi Drivers in processing their claims more efficiently. We have very good and long-established relationships with the Insurance Companies and Claims Handlers and this can result in the fast track and speedy resolution of your claim.

In relation to Taxi Companies how would they benefit from your services?

We currently assist a number of Taxi Companies. We have found that claims can be very time consuming for them particularly if they have a number of cars damaged at any given time. Claims have to be investigated; cars have to be assessed. This results in serious delays and frustration for Taxi Companies owners trying to run their business as efficiently as possible.

They also have the issue of their vehicles being off the road which results in an obvious loss of income. Once again, the key to a successful outcome is ensuring that your fleet have on-board Dashcams fitted and in working order.

Our extensive experience in this sector and our long-established relationships with all relevant parties including Insurance Companies, Claims Handlers, Motor Assessors allows us to streamline the claims process leaving the Taxi Company Owner free to do what they do best.

Taxi Owners and Taxi Companies provide an invaluable service to the community and we do what we do best by providing a professional service by assisting them to keep them on the road.

If you have an accident, contact Nuala at Nexus Legal now on 087 2908661 Visit our website at www.nexuslegal.ie

The above contains general information and cannot be relied upon as legal advice.

*Guidance for Drivers on the use of Dash Cams.pdf www.dataprotection.ie/en/dpc-guidance/guidance-drivers-use-dash-cams#Guidance

TAXI drivers...

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Dash cams provide invaluable benefits to various road users, particularly taxis. These vehicles spend countless hours navigating busy urban streets, making them highly susceptible to road incidents.

Key benefits for the Taxi Drivers

1. Enhanced Safety and Security
2. Evidence in Case of Accidents
3. Deterrence of Criminal Activity
4. Resolving Fare Dispute
5. Protection from Fraud
6. Monitoring Driver Behavior
7. Improved Customer Confidence
8. Reducing Insurance Premiums

By providing accountability, transparency, and protection, dash cams are becoming an essential tool for the taxi industry.

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DRIVER FEARS

Cork taxi driver hospitalised with serious facial injuries after vicious attack as pool of blood left at scene
Pools of blood were left on the car door and ground



A CORK taxi driver was hospitalised after he was attacked in his car in the early hours of Sunday morning in the city centre.

Pools of blood were left on the car door and on the ground at the scene of the vicious attack.

The latest incident is just one of many that has left drivers in fear when operating the night time service.

The Cork cabbie in his 40s was attacked after he refused to take a man to a certain area of the city at around 3.30am.

He was punched in the face multiple times and received serious injuries.

He was taken to hospital for treatment before being later discharged.

Taxi drivers representative Bobby Lynch said such cases are becoming more and more common as he called for more Gardai patrolling the city streets.

He said the violence against drivers is forcing people out of the industry as they fear for their own safety and the risk of having their vehicles damaged.

He said drivers are afraid to go to work and it's not a case of there not being enough taxis in the city, just a lack of drivers not wanting to operate at night time out of fear.

Many cabbies just leave before clubs close, he also stated, but others just don't have that choice because they have families to feed and mortgages to pay.

He added that the Industry needs to be protected and respected and he called on the National Traffic Authority to make safety for drivers a priority.

Mr Lynch told The Echo that safety concerns were driving people out of the industry, saying: "People do not want to be driving taxis anymore because of it."

"There's no way my children would want to do this job. There's fellas scared to go to work, and then we get the blame when people say there's no taxis. There's plenty of taxis, but there's just no safety for taxi drivers."

Mr Lynch also sympathised with bus drivers who do late-night services.

"It can be an awful job picking up drunk people, and we haven't got enough gardaí to police the streets," he said.

"They do the best they can, and they help if you're in trouble. When you go on holidays you see policemen on every corner, that would make people feel a lot safer here."

Mr Lynch said the issue has become worse in recent years: "There's a lot going on that people don't even report, too. They just want to get on with it and forget about it."

He said fear of being hurt or having their car damaged means that many taxi drivers try to avoid peak times altogether, preferring to work during the day rather than bringing people home from nightclubs late at night.

"It's a shame that it's going this way," he said.

Those in the industry need to be respected more and protected, he said.

"We're the first person tourists meet in Cork and often the last person they see when they're leaving. Often when we drop them to the airport they say they won't be coming back here. The Government needs to employ more gardaí."

He called on the NTA to make safety for taxi drivers a priority, and for politicians to advocate on their behalf.

Gardai said they are investigating reports of an assault on Grand Parade in the early hours of the morning which left a man hospitalised.

A spokesperson said: "One man aged in his 40s was conveyed to Cork University Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained as a result of this incident."

"Investigations are ongoing at this time."

Separately, in July Irish people were warned of a major rise in a bogus "taxi scam" fraud.

AIB urged customers to be vigilant after a rise in scams in which a taxi driver or courier supposedly sent by the bank is visiting customers to collect their card details.

Scam warning

Customers receive a fraudulent text claiming to be from the bank, a utility company or other businesses containing a link to click.

They provide the details, and then receive a follow-up call from an individual claiming to be from their bank and are told their card is compromised.

WHAT SETS ABOUT IRELAND TAXI TOUR DRIVER GUIDES APART



A great Taxi tour driver guide combines several skills and qualities to provide a memorable and enjoyable experience for their passengers. Here are the key elements that make our Taxi Tour driver guides exceptional:



1. Excellent Driving Skills

- **Safety First:** A great driver guide ensures passenger safety by adhering to traffic rules, driving cautiously, and maintaining their vehicle properly.
- **Knowledge of the Route:** They should be familiar with the best routes, traffic patterns, and shortcuts to make the journey efficient and smooth.
- **Adaptability:** Ability to handle unexpected situations on the road, such as detours, road closures, or adverse weather conditions.

2. Deep Knowledge of the Area

- **Historical and Cultural Insights:** A great driver guide knows the history, culture, and significance of the sites they are guiding through, adding depth and context to the tour.
- **Local Expertise:** Knowledge of local attractions, hidden gems, restaurants, and events that may not be found in guidebooks.
- **Up-to-Date Information:** Keeping updated on any recent changes, such as new exhibits, renovations, or changes in access to certain areas.

3. Strong Communication Skills

- **Clear and Engaging Storytelling:** They should be able to share information in an interesting, engaging, and understandable way, catering to different audiences.
- **Active Listening:** Understanding passenger interests and preferences, allowing for a more personalized experience.
- **Multilingual Ability:** Speaking multiple languages can be a huge asset, especially in areas with diverse visitors.

4. Interpersonal Skills

- **Friendly and Approachable:** A positive, welcoming attitude makes passengers feel comfortable and relaxed.
- **Patience and Empathy:** Understanding that travelers may have different needs, expectations, or concerns, and being patient with all kinds of situations.
- **Flexibility:** Willingness to adjust the itinerary or provide alternative options based on passenger preferences or unforeseen circumstances.

5. Professionalism

- **Punctuality and Reliability:** Being on time and dependable is crucial in building trust and ensuring a smooth experience.
- **Well-Groomed and Presentable:** Maintaining a neat appearance and professional demeanor.
- **Respect and Courtesy:** Showing respect for all passengers, being courteous, and maintaining a calm demeanor in all situations.

6. Passion and Enthusiasm

- **Love for the Job:** Genuine enthusiasm for guiding and a passion for the location or subject matter can be infectious and enhance the overall experience.
- **Continuous Learning:** Staying curious and constantly learning new information to provide fresh and interesting insights.

7. Problem-Solving Abilities

- **Quick Thinking:** Ability to handle unexpected challenges, such as traffic delays, customer complaints, or unforeseen events.
- **Resourcefulness:** Knowing how to find quick solutions or alternatives to keep the tour enjoyable and on track.

8. Attention to Detail

- **Customization:** Remembering passenger names, preferences, and special requests to personalize the tour experience.
- **Logistics Management:** Being mindful of the timing for each stop, restroom breaks, meal options, and passenger comfort throughout the journey.

9. Technological Savvy

- **Use of GPS and Apps:** Efficiently using navigation apps, traffic updates, and other tools to enhance the driving experience.
- **Multimedia Use:** Incorporating technology like audio guides, videos, or interactive maps to provide additional information or entertainment.



10. Good Humor and a Positive Attitude

- Sense of Humor: A light-hearted, friendly approach can help put passengers at ease and make the experience more enjoyable.
- Calm Under Pressure: Keeping a positive attitude, even in challenging situations, ensures that the passengers feel secure and relaxed.



11. Environmental Awareness

- Eco-Conscious Practices: Understanding the importance of sustainable tourism and making efforts to minimize the environmental impact (e.g., choosing eco-friendly routes, promoting responsible travel behavior).

12. Feedback-Oriented

- Open to Suggestions: Actively seeking feedback from passengers and using it to improve future tours.
- Adaptive to Needs: Adjusting their approach based on feedback or observed passenger reactions.

A combination of these qualities ensures that a Taxi driver guide not only provides a safe and informative experience but also creates a memorable and enjoyable journey for their passengers.

If your reading this and you think you have these qualities then we want to hear from you Contact Bob Email :: info@aboutirelandtaxitours.ie

Donegal taxi-driver jailed for sexually assaulting woman, 18, in Derry

A 63-year-old man from Donegal was today sentenced at Derry Crown Court for sexual assault by penetration and sexual assault of an 18 year old woman.



Taxi-driver Paul Bryan, from The Bungalow, Newtowncunningham, was sentenced to four years, two years in custody and two years on licence.

Bryan was also placed on the Sex Offenders Register for ten years, as well as being subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.

Detective Constable Buchanan from the PSNI's Public Protection Branch said: "Paul Bryan took advantage of a vulnerable young woman who became separated from her friends, when she was trying to get home safely in his taxi in Derry in October 2017.

"This was a complex investigation and we would

like to thank our colleagues at An Garda Síochána for their efforts and support with this case.

I would also like to commend the survivor in this case for her bravery in reporting this incident to Police.

"The Police Service of Northern Ireland takes all reports of sexual assault seriously, and we urge anyone who has ever been the victim of sexual abuse to come forward and report it, regardless of where, or when it happened, safe in the knowledge that they will be treated with respect and dignity.

"Report to Police on 101 or in an emergency always dial 999."

THE RISKS AND PERILS OF BEING A TAXI DRIVER

Tony Roe, Chairperson of the National Transport Assembly Committee (NTAC) and Spokesperson on Taxis is appalled that no action has been taken by the current Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan and the National Transport Authority (NTA) concerning the continuing life threatening attacks on drivers, which he says seems to be rampant.



“ These incidents are responsible for many taxi drivers leaving the industry in large numbers. It’s pointless complaining about the lack of taxi drivers at certain times with this continuing. One new driver that I spoke to has left after three weeks following a vicious attack on him and this is repeating itself all over the place. The majority of attacks have come about as a result of the current system that is being imposed on taxi drivers; the system whereby drivers must accept a card. It’s out of hand altogether and these vicious attacks are coming about as a result of arguments starting over cards not working, no money in the various accounts and it is life threatening in an awful lot of incidents. It’s the same old story; the driver stops and then there’s an argument over the card and usually in the very early hours of the morning and this abuse in many cases is due to drugs being involved and drugs being involved. Forcing taxi drivers to accept card payments is nonsense. The €200 fine is something we are raising with the European Commission and there is a court case coming up shortly about forcing taxi drivers to accept card payments. I think personally it should be an option for each driver,” said Roe.

He went on to say that he would encourage any driver who is assaulted or has had their vehicle damaged to get in touch with the Victim Support Unit

He also questioned why so many ranks have been shut down. He pointed out that with the closure of ranks comes the increase of fossil fuels from driving around the city rather than parking up at a rank. He pointed out that the Irish state is being fined thousands of euros per

day due to the contaminated of the air.

One such rank which was shut down a number of years ago is the one which used to be located outside the main entrance of St James hospital

In response to the issue a Spokesperson for the National Transport Authority said:

“The capacity issue is not within the NTA’s remit. Local authorities (in consultation with An Garda Síochána) are responsible for planning the location and design of taxi ranks, deciding on their size and hours of operation, building and maintaining them, and managing their use.”

They further stated that the best source for comment on this issue would be St James Hospital itself.

At the time of writing, St James Hospital has not responded to request for comment.

Roe has also highlighted the risks and Perils of Being a taxi driver in terms of exposure to Bisphenol A.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical produced in large quantities for use primarily in the production of polycarbonate plastics. It is found in various products including shatterproof windows, eyewear, water bottles, and epoxy resins that coat some metal food cans, bottle tops, and water supply pipes.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is an industrial chemical that is widely used in various industrial applications. It has concerns in its use as a color developer in thermal paper receipts since it is identified as an endocrine disruptor and causes hormonal disturbances.

This chemical is found on receipts which drivers handle on a daily basis, therefore putting their health at risk.

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Taxi drivers worried they may owe VAT on commissions paid to Uber

Unlike other taxi-booking apps, Uber does not collect tax from drivers and pay it to Revenue, leaving drivers wondering if they will be pursued by taxman



Thousands of taxi drivers have been put under significant stress because they are unsure of whether they will be pursued by Revenue for VAT on the money they have paid in commission to Uber over the past five years, it has been claimed.

The problem has arisen after the drivers became aware Uber was not collecting the tax and paying it on their behalf in the way that rival platforms Bolt and FreeNow do, according to Derek O’Keeffe, who runs the online forum Taxi Drivers Ireland.

It’s the first time in the history of the State drivers have ever had to contemplate paying VAT and it is all they are talking about at the moment,” he says.

“Uber has been operating taxis in Dublin for the last four or five years and what you have is many of the more than 11,000 taxi drivers in Dublin now asking if they are they subject to VAT and do they need to pay it for the last five years. For a lot of them, it’s absolutely scary.”

The problem arises because Uber, like Bolt and FreeNow, charges drivers a commission on the fares paid by customers who book trips through it but, unlike its rivals, does not charge them VAT on these commissions and so does not pay it to Revenue.

Uber’s view, set out on its website and in a briefing document prepared for it by KPMG, is that while charges for transporting passengers are not subject to VAT in Ireland, the “lead-generation” services it provides to the drivers from the Netherlands are and it advises the drivers to register for and pay the VAT themselves.

The problem is a particular one for drivers as there are other reporting obligations involved and they are not able to claim VAT back on fuel or other work-related goods.

Responding to a query from The Irish Times, the Revenue

Commissioners did not specifically say they would pursue the VAT but did say the regime here is subject to European law, and drivers would be liable where VAT has not been paid by a provider of services to them based outside the State. The Revenue said it will monitor drivers’ tax returns and other data available to it to assess compliance, and those drivers found not to have paid all monies due would not be able to obtain the tax clearance certificates they require to renew public service licenses.

Stephen Fennell, an accountant who advises a number of taxi drivers on their tax affairs, believes the amounts involved would be relatively small for most drivers, with the trouble involved in making returns potentially a bigger hassle.

“I don’t think the VAT liabilities here are extensive but from a driver’s point of view it’s a question of do they want the hassle registering for VAT and having to make VAT returns and be obligated for VAT compliance? Probably not. That may cause them to reconsider the use of Uber because the potential costs to administer this may be greater than the net VAT liability itself,” said Mr Fennell.

“I’d be more interested in the issue of why Uber are choosing not to charge VAT in Ireland. Why are they not playing by the same rules as FreeNow? And from Revenue’s perspective, if Uber were to charge drivers directly ... it would simplify matters. Collecting VAT from one entity, as opposed to trying to collect it from 2,000, 3000, 4000 drivers ... it’d be an administrative nightmare for Revenue Commissioners for perhaps little return.”

He estimates a typical VAT liability as about €300 per year, which could be offset against income tax, but Mr O’Keeffe says many drivers could pay €5,000 in commission to Uber each year which, over five years, would generate a VAT liability of €5,570.



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Top garda fears taxi rapist Raymond Shorten targeted other women and urges victims to come forward

Garda Commissioner Drew Harris said: ‘There is a reasonable proposition that there are other victims out there’



Garda Commissioner Drew Harris has spoken of his fears that taxi rapist Raymond Shorten targeted other women – and appealed for victims to come forward.

“There is a reasonable proposition that there are other victims out there,” the Commissioner said today – after the beast (50) was caged for 30 years recently for three rapes, including two of his taxi fares and a young child.

Now, speaking at a public meeting of the Policing Authority in Dublin, Mr Harris urged any other victims to come forward. Mr Harris said: “I would make an appeal to them to come forward and make complaints to An Garda Siochana.

“This individual has been dealt with through the criminal justice system. He has been dealt with in terms of trial and a verdict has been passed by the jury and he has now been incarcerated.

“I would say, then, to others who may have been his victim to please come forward to An Garda Siochana and make a complaint.”

Shorten has been jailed to a total of 30 YEARS in

prison for the rape of two women – and a child.

Today Father-of-seven Shorten (50), of Melrose Crescent, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, was sentenced to a total of 17 years in prison for the rape a then 19 year old woman in June 2022 and another 20 year old woman on August 9 of that year.

The sentences today will be served consecutively to the 13 years Shorten was handed down earlier this week for the rape of a seven year old child. Dressed in a white shirt with a navy spotted tie and wearing glasses, Shorten kept his head down and remained silent throughout the sentencing.

One of the victims, who was in court, became tearful and hugged family members when the verdict was read out. Passing sentence today, Mr Justice Paul McDermott said he must consider that Shorten had just been sentenced for raping a child 10 years prior to these offences – and called it a “serious aggravating factor.”

He said that this man “already raped a child and years later set about committing these offences. He knew exactly what he was doing. He appeared to do it with impunity,” the Judge said.

FREENOW launches new services in response to passenger & driver needs

Almost two-thirds of passengers rely on prebooks for trips to the airport – new Airport Prebook Promise will compensate passengers for any potential delayed or cancelled trips



One in two passengers appreciate the reassurance of booking a taxi via phonecall, new FREENOW Taxi Booking Line will make booking trips more accessible

A quarter of taxi drivers need a rented vehicle to work as part of the national fleet – new FREENOW Taxi Marketplace creates a free platform connecting taxi drivers and vehicle renters directly

Monday, 2 September 2024: FREENOW, Ireland's No.1 Taxi App, has officially launched a range of new services to improve its offering for both passengers and driver partners. These new services include: an Airport Prebook Promise initiative, a dedicated national Taxi Booking Line, and the launch of FREENOW Taxi Marketplace, a platform where drivers can easily rent a taxi from vehicle owners.

AIRPORT PREBOOK PROMISE

FREENOW's Prebooking service allows passengers to schedule trips up to four days in advance, with a significant number of customers relying on this service to plan their journey ahead of time. It is especially popular when planning important journeys, with 64% of FREENOW passengers using the prebook feature when travelling to the airport. FREENOW is committed to delivering a reliable service every time, and its new Airport Prebook

Promise will ensure passengers are compensated if any pre-booked taxis to airports (Dublin, Cork, Shannon/Limerick and Knock) are delayed or cancelled – a €15 voucher will be provided if the taxi is late by 10 minutes or more, and a €50 voucher will be provided if the trip doesn't happen.

FREENOW Taxi Booking Line

To make its booking process more accessible in line with certain passenger needs and preferences, FREENOW has launched a new Taxi Booking Line. The dedicated national phone line, exclusively for bookings, will be available seven days a week from 5 am -1 am Sunday to Thursday, and 5 am- 3 am Friday and Saturday, allowing passengers to book taxis by calling 1800 30 30 30.

The dedicated national phone line is intended for users who may not have access to a smartphone, those with specific accessibility requirements and anyone who prefers to make a taxi booking by speaking to someone directly.

Recent data from the NTA** highlights public preference for taxi phone lines, with 40% of passengers in Ireland ordering taxis by phone. Additionally, according to a recent FREENOW survey, 49% of passengers appreciate the reassurance of a phone line, and a further 35% would opt to book via the phone because they like dealing directly with another person.



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FREENOW TAXI MARKETPLACE

Almost a quarter of FREENOW driver partners currently rely on vehicle rental to operate as taxi drivers. To create a new and straightforward way to access taxis for rent, FREENOW has created a free Taxi Marketplace. The new complementary platform will connect taxi drivers directly with taxi vehicle owners, allowing them to rent vehicles from each other via the new online listing platform.

FREENOW is confident this initiative will support drivers, lowering barriers to entry for new drivers by making vehicles more accessible and affordable.

Charlie Gleeson, General Manager of FREENOW says they are committed to continuous improvement, "At FREENOW we strive to continuously improve the service we offer to ensure that we're meeting our passengers' and drivers' needs and preferences. The services we're launching today are a direct response to feedback we have received from both passengers and drivers, and we are confident they will provide an even better user experience moving forward.

With our Prebook service and new Airport Prebook Promise, we want our passengers to book journeys with confidence and enjoy the best possible service. Our new national phoneline broadens our booking accessibility, enabling more passengers to book a taxi with FREENOW

in a way that works for them. And for our driver partners, we're excited to launch the FREENOW Taxi Marketplace, making renting a vehicle simpler and more efficient for one in four drivers and, most importantly, removing the barriers to entry for new taxi drivers. These updates demonstrate our ongoing commitment to continuously enhance and invest in the services we provide to both our passengers and driver partners".

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Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society

Rock Fleadh Ceoil Wexford

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



Recently they attended Fleadh Ceoil Wexford where they stole the show with an impromptu performance much to the delight of the crowd. “A group of approximately 40 drivers took part in sessions in pubs, on streets and were welcomed by all,” said Roe.

The group is made up of taxi drivers, bus drivers, train drivers, Luas drivers and all workers in the public service vehicle sector. With over 15 volunteers from the industry.

“It is quite unique in that we don’t ask for anything; no collections, no middle men, no creaming off charities and all the drivers without filling their own pockets are helping people who are in a bad way. More importantly, we are a hands on support group and we have all been through bereavement, and that’s what makes this group so unique. The team has had over 200 events; away trips, nights out and we are delighted to be able to help support grieving people. We are all laying people, we don’t claim to be experts, but we have all been through this horrific experience. We have one driver who contacted us and was in quite a bad way, felt quite suicidal and now says to us that he is absolutely delighted to be here. He is now one of our most experienced lay counsellors and is doing outstanding work.” Said Roe.

He went on to say that he feels greedy to an extent because of the sense of fulfilment he gets from helping others who are experiencing what he himself has experienced.

“Since the trip to Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann we have also had a trip to Belfast which was quite enjoyable. We had a

great time with various musical venues we got involved in. In the Martina Roe Lay Counselling Society the youngest man is in his 50s and the oldest man is 83 years of age,” said Roe.

He went on to pay tribute to the oldest taxi driver perhaps in the world; Eddie Broe who passed away several years ago having left the taxi industry at the ripe old age of 93.

“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.”

The trip to Romania has been postponed due to the ill health of a member of the group. The group unanimously voted to postpone the trip until everyone is fit and ready to go. A testament to the ethos of inclusivity of the group; no one left behind.

“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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WORLD NEWS

Top stories from around the globe

India

DGCA frames rules for vertiports, paving way for air taxis in India by 2026

NEW DELHI: Indian aviation authorities are preparing the groundwork for the planned launch of air taxis here country by 2026. In a major milestone, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) recently issued the rules for establishing vertiports — from where these vertical take off & landing (VTOL) capable aircraft — will operate, paving the way for “advance air mobility” (AAM) in India. IndiGo parent InterGlobe Enterprises (IGE) plans to launch California-based electric air taxi-maker Archer Aviation’s e-VTOL “Midnight” here around 2026. IGE chief Rahul Bhatia has signed up for upto 200 Midnights worth \$1 billion.

Issued after “extensive consultation with all stakeholders,” the circular “provides comprehensive guidelines covering various critical aspects.” These include, basic infrastructure requirement specifications; physical attributes for vertiports; guidelines to ensure air taxis’ safe and unobstructed take off and landing; standards for visual aids to assist in landing; battery charging/energising requirements and emergency response planning. “Under this circular site clearance and authorisation post-construction of the vertiport will be granted,” the regulator said. Vertiports will be used by passengers to board and alight from air taxis; charging and parking these eVTOLs.

Delhi-NCR, where IGE has its HQ, is likely to be the first place in India to get air taxi service. Mumbai and Bengaluru are also expected to get the same in 2026. Hyderabad and Chennai could also get this traffic-buster.

Archer, whose chief commercial officer is Indian origin Nikhil Goel, is working on a number of hi-tech innovations and features for vertiports. It expects US FAA’s approvals this year and then will start service in New York next year as the launch route. After the US, India and the UAE will get the air taxis. Proving trial flights will be conducted here, with the regulator’s nod, before commercial

launch. Once they get the go-ahead, air taxis can start flying on the allowed routes. UAE’s aviation authority had this April granted operational approval for the country’s first vertiport.

Nikhil Goel had recently said the cost per passenger of using this service is likely to be just a “slight premium” over Uber. “Delhi-Gurgaon, for instance, costs Rs 1,500-2,000 by Uber. An air taxi (per passenger) will cost upto 1.5 times of that or Rs 2,000-3,000,” he had said.

Archer’s 12-rotter Midnight can seat a pilot, upto four passengers and some luggage. The same machine has been selected by US mega carrier United, one of the backers of Archer, that has also firmed up two routes for launch next year — United hub Newark and downtown Manhattan, and Chicago O’Hare and the windy city centre. UAE will use it for travel between Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Australia

Uber ‘not to blame’ for downfall of taxi booking app

A taxi booking app was already facing challenges as UberX brought rideshare to Australia with an intent to “crush” the competition, a civil trial has been told.

Taxi Apps, the company behind the app GoCatch, is suing Uber in the Supreme Court of Victoria over claims it knowingly launched UberX illegally in Australia with the intention of injuring GoCatch.

Lawyers for GoCatch have claimed “tech bros” at the rideshare giant said they wanted to crush and destroy the business, suggesting they targeted Taxi Apps, but Uber has argued the language simply equated to “out-compete”.

“It’s just the language of the business ... it’s the way they hype each other up,” Uber’s barrister John Sheahan KC told the court.

“Crushing’ GoCatch is beating them. It’s out-competing them at their own game.”

Sheahan said GoCatch and UberX effectively operated in “different dimensions” with the latter starting up in Sydney in April 2014.

Taxi Apps’ lawyers earlier pointed out peer-to-peer ridesharing



did not become legal in NSW until December 2015, and then later in other Australian states.

Sheahan suggested GoCatch was to blame for its financial failings, with business plans to mandate in-app payments long-delayed and evidence some taxi drivers were “gaming” the app.

GoCatch’s decline in performance was not because of UberX drivers in the market, and it showed its ability to grow while UberX was around, Sheahan said.

GoCatch lost market share to other taxi operators, he said.

By April 2014, GoCatch had monthly growth of about 35,000 drivers – “objectively small numbers” – and was making about 40 cents in revenue for every job, the barrister said.

The next month, GoCatch was seeking equity capital raising of up to \$6 million, and there was no suggestion by that time the business thought UberX was going to destroy it, Sheahan said.

“It wasn’t an UberX problem, it was an internal problem with GoCatch,” the barrister said.

Investor Paradise was “flamboyantly critical” of the business despite continuing to invest in it, Sheahan said.

Paradise staff member Rishi Khilnani wrote in an email in August 2014 the firm had to invest more money in GoCatch because “there is literally no-one else willing to fund the business”.

In April 2015, global investment firm Square Peg Capital partner Dan Krasnostein said he believed the GoCatch ship had sailed or burned.

“They had a market for the taking with a relative benign competitive dynamic for a few years – Ingogo not focused on bookings and Uber weren’t doing that well yet,” Krasnostein said in an email shown to the court.

“It’s not the idea ... it’s the execution.”

France

Taxi drivers in France demand payout after months of Olympic gridlock in Paris

French taxi drivers have demanded government compensation for lost revenue during the Olympic Games as traffic disruptions

and fewer regular clients weigh on demand.

In a letter to the transport ministry, taxi unions said that the Games had been “hugely disappointing” for the drivers of licensed taxis of which there are 20,000 in Paris alone.

“Demand is slowing and the entire profession is being prevented from simply doing their job because of these Games,” said the letter, seen by AFP.

The number of additional visitors drawn by the Olympics had failed to make up for “the impact of traffic restrictions, the closure of venues and the impact of usual customers staying away”, it said.

The unions demanded the creation of a “compensation fund” that they said should cover income lost for the seven-month period during which public spaces were being taken over for the Games.

Several venues in and around Paris, but also in Marseille were blocked off for several weeks before the Games started on July 26.

In response to the letter, Transport Minister Patrice Vergriete said in a social media post that taxis and ride-hailing services would now be allowed to enter the so-called “red zones” around Olympics venues, which were previously off-limits for motor vehicles.

Now that the high-security opening ceremony was in the past, several safety measures had been lifted and traffic was becoming more fluid, the minister said.

The government has encouraged French residents to go on holiday or work remotely during the Games, further dampening demand and contributing to a sharp fall in business compared to the same period in 2023, the unions said.

Some drivers had seen their income fall by 40 or 50 percent, they said.

Last month, trade groups said that Paris shops, restaurants, bars and clubs were facing an “unprecedented slump in business and footfall”, blaming in part the “heavy security measures” during the Games.

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What did it cost to get started

My Taxi plate cost me £5,000 or €6,500 yet now if I want to retire or stop working as a taxi driver for whatever reason according to the NTA regulations legally it is worthless. My first Taxi a second hand Carina E cost me £8,750 or €10,325. My first taxi insurance £5,200 or €6,136.

This meant a total investment of €22,961 before I started working my taxi Yet the NTA say that no taxi driver is entitled to recoup any of their initial investment, I don't just find this wrong I find it offensive

The NTA have know and ignored for years that there is an quasi legal black market in the buying and selling of taxi plates going on and they refuse to deal with the issue in a logical and sensible manner by allowing drivers wishing to leave the industry to sell their taxi licences especially when they are coming to retirement age or have to stop driving for health reasons. Remember it is that drivers Taxi licence (we don't get a new licence number every year that number is designated to an individual taxi driver and he renews that licence every year just like many other state licences issued. Yes the licence is issued by the state, just as a Publicans licence is issued by the state but Publicans can and do legally sell on their licences so why can't a taxi driver be allowed to sell on his taxi licence. It is not as if

the NTA will lose money by this in fact they could put a reasonable administration fee on the transfer and actually make some money. Before and after the Deregulation of the Taxi industry licences were allowed to be sold, then the NTA decided that you could only sell on a licence once but within a year or two the NTA changed the goal posts and stopped even that. I am sure we all know of some widow or family who are now tied into one of these quasi legal agreements and where the purchaser is dependent on the good will of the seller to honour an agreement that may or may not be legally enforceable.

There is a concerted campaign to bring new drivers into the industry and I believe that allowing a driver to recoup even part of their initial investment by selling on their taxi licence would make the industry more attractive to new drivers and help a lot of the older drivers who do want to retire but are not financially able to.

We are on the home stretch to a general election and this is the time to bring this issue to the fore when your local politicians are out and about ask them if they would make a statement supporting a change to the NTA rules on licences allowing licence holders to sell their licence.

By Robert McAuliffe

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DUBLIN DRIVER ROBBED

Man (24) accused of robbing taxi driver at knifepoint in Dublin refused bail



Man (24) accused of robbing taxi driver at knifepoint in Dublin refused bail. Jason Wasser Bonney (24) threatened the cabbie with a knife after being picked up from a hospital and stole €300 and two mobile phones from him, it is alleged.

A man accused of robbing a taxi driver at knifepoint in Dublin yesterday has been refused bail.

Jason Wasser Bonney (24) threatened the cabbie with a knife after being picked up from a hospital and stole €300 and two mobile phones Dublin drdvvcffvbg from him, it is alleged.

He is also accused of robbing another taxi driver after being collected from a city centre hotel earlier this year.

Judge Treasa Kelly refused to grant him bail at Dublin District Court and adjourned the case for DPP directions.

Mr Wasser Bonney, of Cromlech Court, Ballymun, is charged with two separate robberies, as well as possession of drugs, theft and criminal damage.

Garda Clodagh McDonnell said the accused made no reply after caution to most of the charges but to one, he said: "stitch up."

Objecting to bail, she said it was alleged that after a taxi driver picked the accused up from Beaumont Hospital on September 1, Mr Wasser Bonney threatened him with a knife and stole €300, two mobile phones and a Revolut card.

Gda McDonnell said the accused was seen on CCTV leaving the Emergency Department and

getting the taxi. When his home was searched, gardaí found clothing he was allegedly seen wearing on the video, as well as the taxi driver's phones and card.

When he was brought to Ballymun Garda Station yesterday, he was allegedly found in possession of €25 worth of cannabis, €146 worth of Alprazolam tablets and Zopiclone pills valued at €112.

In the other alleged robbery, Gda McDonnell said a taxi driver picked the accused up from the Maldron Hotel, Parnell Square and took him to Ballymun. On alighting, it was alleged the accused punched the cabbie in the face, robbed him of €320 and fled. The man suffered a bloody nose.

Separately, Mr Wasser Bonney allegedly stole an Apple iPad worth €600 from Circle K, Glasnevin on June 21 and a charity box from McDonald's, Corballis, Dublin Airport on March 31.

On the more serious charges, the court heard a file would be sent to the DPP, who would then direct on a court venue.

Applying for bail, defence solicitor Tracy Horan said the clothing seized by gardaí were "very generic items."

Judge Kelly said the accused was presumed innocent but the charges were serious. She said the garda objection was made out and there were no bail conditions which could deal with the concerns.

The judge granted free legal aid following an application by Ms Horan.

Mr Wasser Bonney was remanded in custody to appear in Cloverhill District Court



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SPSV

INDUSTRY UPDATE



COMPLIANCE UPDATE

NTA's Enforcement App Now Used by An Garda Síochána
NTA's SPSV mobile enforcement app was rolled out in July to An Garda's Síochána's Roads Policing unit. Following the roll out, An Garda Síochána can now complete SPSV checks and audits during roadside interactions, or ad hoc on their own mobile devices as part of their official activities. They can also issue Fixed Penalty Notices to any person found to be operating illegally. This has dramatically transformed the spread and depth of SPSV enforcement activities nationwide..

Reporting Offences

Industry members play an invaluable and key role in facilitating SPSV compliance and upholding the high standards that define our industry. While our dedicated compliance officers work tirelessly across the country seven days a week, they cannot be everywhere at once. This is where the active involvement of industry members becomes crucial. Your reports and observations are vital for NTA to swiftly identify offences or unwanted behaviours that may otherwise go unnoticed. By sharing information on potential violations or concerns, you help create a safer and more reliable service for everyone. This enables NTA to ensure that the highest standards are consistently met, benefiting both operators and customers alike. Your vigilance and proactive engagement are essential to the continued success and trustworthiness of our services.

In order for our officers to conduct a thorough investigation the following details must be provided in any report;

Complainant name and address,
Contact details (phone and e-mail for follow-up contact),
Any details identifying the driver or vehicle e.g. SPSV licence numbers, vehicle registration, Date and time that incident occurred,
Street, location where incident occurred or pick-up and drop-off location for journey, and Full details of incident.

You should also provide any receipt or additional documentary evidence that is available as part of the complaint.

Reports can be submitted through;

Web - <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/taxi/compliance-enforcement/customer-complaints/>

Email - taxis@nationaltransport.ie

Phone - Inside Rep. IRL: 0818 064 000

Outside Rep. IRL: +353 1 879 8300

MAXIMUM TAXI FARE REVIEW 2024

The public consultation on the maximum taxi fare review closed on 16th August 2024. NTA thanks all licence holders for the valuable inputs and comments to the process.

Following the public consultation, a full assessment of the submissions will be completed, together with consultations with The Advisory Committee on SPSVs and the Legal Metrology Service. A decision on the matter will then be published, and if the decision results in a change in the Maximum Taxi Fare, NTA will set out the timeline and steps for the related implementation.

NSAI TAXIMETER VERIFICATION

NSAI Legal Metrology is responsible for the compliance of all taximeters in Ireland.

Taximeters must be verified at all times. Verification is conducted to ensure the accuracy of the taximeter and to provide confidence to consumers that the charges applied for taxi journeys are correct and accurate.

You need to verify your taximeter:

When first purchased and installed in a registered taxi vehicle.

Whenever a new fare is programmed into the taximeter, or whenever the existing programme is updated.

Whenever any repair, alteration or adjustment is carried out on the taximeter or printer, which requires the security seal to be broken or removed.

Whenever your taximeter is transferred to your new vehicle.

When a new fare is approved by NTA, all taximeters require a fare programme update followed by verification.

On completion of a fare update, your installer will furnish you with a Taximeter Trader Information Form (TTI) by email. Please ensure that you have received an email containing the TTI form from your installer prior to your NSAI Legal Metrology appointment date, as the verification may not commence without proof of a TTI Form.

NSAI Legal Metrology regularly conducts inspections of taximeters to ensure active compliance in this sector.

For more information on all aspects of Taximeters and legal compliance, please see: [Taximeter | NSAI](#)

SPSV DRIVER LICENSING

Reporting Obligations to An Garda Síochána

NTA reminds all SPSV driver licence holders that there are ongoing obligations to An Garda Síochána in respect of their driver licences. Such obligations include notifying An Garda Síochána of

- any change of address

- becoming engaged in another occupation. If that other occupation involves driving, evidence that the employer has been informed that you hold an SPSV driver licence and that you drive an SPSV for hire or reward

- any surrender of a driver licence. In this instance, the paper licence, driver identity and display cards should be returned to the PSV Office that originally issued the licence

- a conviction for any offence specified in the Schedule to the Taxi Regulation Act 2013

PROPOSED NEW INTEGRATED DRIVER LICENSING SYSTEM

In 2023, NTA was successful in securing government funding to commence work on a joint project with An Garda Síochána. The aim of the project is to enhance and digitalise the SPSV Driver Licensing process. The proposed "Integrated Driver Licensing System" (IDLS) will move SPSV driver licence applications to an online platform, one that is efficient, transparent and secure, providing an enhanced applicant experience.

NTA currently supports An Garda Síochána in their role as the SPSV Driver Licensing Authority by administering the SPSV Driver Entry

Test and other limited administrative tasks. Under the proposed new system, NTA will undertake all administrative tasks under the application process, with An Garda Síochána, as licensing authority, continuing to undertake all vetting related elements. Phase II (design and build) is planned for 2025-26.

CCTV USE IN SPSV'S

If you wish, licence holders can choose to install CCTV in their vehicle. Any licence holder considering the installation of CCTV equipment that records video and/or audio of passengers, should familiarise themselves with the Data Protection Commission's "Guidance on the use of CCTV".

Where a driver decides to install CCTV, the driver is likely to be considered a "data controller" and therefore required to inform passengers of the CCTV system being in use and to store and protect the data appropriately. Controllers have a range of obligations under data protection law and the Data Protection Commission's website provides further details on the principles and responsibilities involved.

SPSV INSPECTIONS

Booking a vehicle inspection - route to success

Before booking your vehicle inspection:

1. Be certain you have read the Vehicle Inspection Checklist and the Initial Suitability or Renewal

Inspection Manuals to help you pass first time. These are available online; and

2. Book your inspection at least three weeks in advance to be sure you get a suitable location and time.

Some licence holders have to travel or have their vehicles inspected on their busy days because they leave their bookings too late. Remember, you can complete your inspection up to 8 weeks prior to the expiry date of the existing licence, so book early!

VEHICLE ASSESSMENT: 10 DAY TURNAROUND

The Suitable Vehicle List of vehicle models that have been measured and approved for use as a taxi/hackney can be found on the forms and guides section of the NTA website. Where a proposed vehicle is not on the list, or if the vehicle measurement information is missing or incomplete, please contact NTA on the SPSV Information Line prior to purchase to ensure your proposed vehicle meets the licensing requirements.

NTA aim to complete a 10 working day turnaround for vehicle approval. In reality, the turnaround time is far quicker where all documentation is correctly provided. Licence holders should be aware of the following common reasons for delay, which are outside of the control of NTA.

A) the vehicle model is stated as 'other'.

B) the vehicle registration provided is not correct.

C) the vehicle details are not yet available on the National Vehicle and Driver File. NTA cannot commence assessment of the vehicle until this external database has been updated.

Contacting NTA Regarding Your Licence - Individuals and Companies For individual licence holders, the licence holder is the only party that NTA can engage with for SPSV licensing activity. The NTA contact centre employs strict data protection criteria to ensure they only speak with the licence holder.

If you have a licence in a company name, only those listed as company directors can discuss the licence details and make inspection bookings. Please make sure all company directors, if more than one, are listed on the licence. Only general information can be given to a person who is not a company director.

2024 GRANTS UPDATE ESPSV GRANT 2024 UPDATE

The eSPSV Grant Scheme 2024 remains open for applications, with €11,500,000 made available by the Department of Transport for this year's Scheme. The Scheme provides grants towards new and second hand EVs, with a higher level of funding on offer where your



scrap your older, existing vehicle. Over €7.7 million has already been paid, with many more applications still in process. Further information on the eSPSV24 Grant Scheme is available [here](#) and applications can be made online [here](#).

WAV GRANT 2024 UPDATE

To date, NTA has licenced 350 wheelchair accessible SPSVs under the 2024 Scheme and we continue to work hard to process successful applications.

A final round of Provisional Grant Offers is expected to issue to a limited number of applicants on the cancellation list in September. In line with the terms and conditions of the Scheme, applications must complete the licensing process by December 13th, 2024 in order to avail of the grant support.

WAV OBLIGATIONS - PRIORITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Holders of wheelchair accessible taxi and hackney vehicle licences are reminded that they are legally obliged to prioritise service to persons with disabilities, including those who wish to travel in their wheelchairs. NTA can request those who hold these licences to provide booking records to confirm that the service is being provided to those who need it.

Recognising the impact on those who have trouble accessing WAVs, and to best ensure accessibility to public transport for all, NTA's compliance officers investigate all complaints made in relation to the services provided by of wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys, and they impose related fines for each instance of the refusal. These fines are:

Refusal by the driver to carry a passenger in a wheelchair - €250

Refusal to carry assistance dog or guide dog in a small public service vehicle - €250

SPSV+ App

Did you know that you can easily create driver to vehicle links and vehicle rental agreements with NTA's SPSV+ App? With the app you can also enable push notifications to receive real-time information on when a link to your licence has been created, broken, or edited. To download the SPSV+ App please visit the Apple App store for iPhones or the Google Play Store for android devices.

LOST PROPERTY IN SPSV'S - WHAT DRIVERS CAN DO

Any property left in your vehicle by a passenger that cannot be returned directly to the passenger should be delivered to the local Garda Station as soon as possible. Thanks to the many operators who go out of their way to reunite passengers with their forgotten items.

There are five designated stations within Dublin for lost property:

Finglas - 01 6667500 Irishtown - 01 6669600 Shankill - 01 6665900 Store St - 01 6668000 Tallaght - 01 6666000

Consultations

Outside of Dublin, any lost property should be taken to the nearest Garda station.

Let me ask you a question...

Are you a Taxi driver or an insurance worker?

Taxi driver, of course.

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