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# EDITOR LETTER

**A**s summer peaks and Dublin buzzes with festivals, tourists, and cruise traffic, this August edition of Tacsai delivers timely insights, practical strategies, and real support for those behind the wheel.

Our cover story reviews the all-new Toyota Prius—radically reimagined and ready for Irish roads. We also put the powerful Honda CR-V PHEV through its paces.

But this month's issue isn't just about vehicles. In "Seatbelts as Weapons", we confront the hidden crisis of rising assaults on drivers. In contrast, we spotlight the ongoing work of the Martin Roe Lay Counselling Society, offering much-needed support to those facing grief and isolation.

Looking ahead, we talk to Danny O'Gorman, FREENOW's new General Manager, about the platform's future. Our guides to the eSPSV25 scheme and hydrogen vehicles help you plan wisely as technology shifts. EScooters are now legal—so are they friend, foe, or fare-feeder? We unpack what it means for the trade.

For the day-to-day, we've got you covered: our Airport Playbook 2025 breaks down the latest Dublin Airport rules, while Mega Weekends & Cruise Waves shows you how to follow the money, not the traffic. And with December's 9% fare rise approaching, we offer clear advice on turning it into extra income—without alienating your passengers.

Stay safe out there,

The Taxi Magazine Team

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**TACSAI MAGAZINE**  
All correspondence should be addressed to:  
Tacsai Magazine, 4 Castleknock Mews, Old Navan Road,  
Castleknock, Dublin 15  
Creative Top Publishing Ltd. publishes Tacsai Magazine.  
Company registration No. 534480

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## AI is already reshaping cab work in Ireland and it will hit in layers, not one big bang

AI is starting to transform the taxi industry in Ireland in tangible ways, and the changes are arriving gradually, not all at once.

**A**l is making phone bookings faster. Voice-based systems are shaving 30 to 50 seconds off each call, which can result in significant earnings—on a busy Friday, that efficiency can translate into an extra €18 from just two additional hires.

Drivers now receive more precise surge alerts. Algorithms can flag high-demand hot spots up to 15 minutes earlier than traditional rank radios, giving those using AI a head start—such as arriving early for the letout at Aviva Stadium.

AI is also entering the car. Some fleets use dashcams equipped with seatbelt reminders and fatigue-detection features. If the AI logs a lapse, drivers can see their bonuses docked.

Automated fines are another growing concern. AI-driven systems monitoring bus lanes issue penalties regardless of context. Just one €80 fine can wipe out the profits from an entire short shift.

There's also the emergence of robotaxi trials. Even a limited rollout—such as ten autonomous

vehicles on the airport loop—could eat into the most profitable peak-hour runs. To adapt, drivers may need to pivot toward supporting roles, like doing feeder trips or city transfers for passengers with heavy luggage.

### WHAT SAVVY DRIVERS SHOULD DO NEXT

AI could contribute up to €250 billion to Ireland's GDP by 2035, with transport among the top sectors identified for productivity growth. Taxi drivers stand to benefit—but only if they embrace the technology rather than resist it.

In the 2020s, AI helps drivers become more bookable, more visible, and more accountable. By the 2030s, it may begin taking over the wheel in limited zones. To stay ahead, drivers should master dispatch algorithms, maintain impeccable compliance records, and position themselves as the human experts who keep the machines running smoothly. Those who do will find that AI doesn't replace them—it enhances their earnings potential.





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## “Seatbelts as Weapons” The Hidden Crisis Driving Taxi Drivers Out of Dublin

Taxi drivers in Dublin are facing an alarming surge in violent assaults, with incidents now being reported almost daily.

**T**ony Roe, Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee, has described the situation as deeply troubling, comparing the level of brutality to “scenes from a horror film.”

The most recent attack occurred in broad daylight near a city-centre Garda station, highlighting the brazenness of these crimes. In that case, a driver became suspicious when a passenger refused to provide upfront payment for a long journey. After attempting to take a deposit by card—which failed—the driver was met with aggression and threats. Fortunately, colleagues arrived quickly, preventing the situation from escalating further.

Such incidents follow a familiar pattern. Most assaults happen late at night when passengers are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Despite repeated warnings and years of similar cases, little has changed to protect drivers. Roe has raised the issue with the Government and confirmed that the Committee is escalating concerns to the European Commission, citing what he calls “gross negligence” in safeguarding public service vehicle operators.

The impact on drivers is devastating. Many never return to work after being attacked. The trauma extends beyond the individual, affecting families and communities. Roe referred to a particularly shocking case in which a driver was strangled from behind with his own seatbelt and left for dead. His car was destroyed, and he will never work

again. Several female drivers who were assaulted have also left the industry permanently.

Roe believes urgent reforms are needed. One key measure is the reinstatement of protective screens in taxis. Many drivers removed these barriers when upgrading to electric vehicles, but Roe argues they are vital for safety, particularly on night shifts when drivers are most vulnerable.

Seatbelt regulations are another area of concern. In many countries, taxi drivers are exempt from wearing seatbelts to reduce the risk of being attacked with them. Roe notes that in Belfast, just 45 minutes from Dublin, such exemptions exist. In Ireland, however, drivers are fined for not wearing seatbelts, while their attackers often face no consequences. He is calling for legal changes to give drivers the option to remove seatbelts when necessary.

Reporting assaults often leads to little more than a reference number, with perpetrators rarely brought to justice. Meanwhile, the taxi industry is struggling to attract and retain drivers. Roe warns that unless preventative measures and legislative changes are introduced, this cycle of violence will continue unchecked.

*“The industry cannot survive under these conditions,” he insists. “Drivers are public servants. They deserve better protection. This is now a chronic problem, and it must be addressed before more lives are destroyed.”*



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# Friendship, Music, and Healing

The Martin Roe Lay Counselling Society, formerly known as the Irish Taxi Drivers' Lay Counselling Association, continues to grow its activities, offering crucial support to those dealing with grief and social isolation.



Willy Broe (88) and Harry White (83) celebrating Eddie Broe's Commemoration Night at Kenny's on James Street.

**W**hat began as a small community initiative has evolved into a lifeline for many, bringing people together in a welcoming and uplifting environment.

The society hosts regular weekly gatherings, which have now expanded beyond Fridays to include Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings. These events take place at the Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge, just a short drive from Dublin. Far from being formal or somber, these meetups combine social connection with light entertainment, creating a safe space for people who have experienced bereavement or hardship.

Each evening begins at 8 p.m. and runs until 11:30 p.m., featuring what has become fondly known as the "Taxi Dance." With live music, ballroom dancing, and refreshments provided, the gatherings offer a warm, relaxed atmosphere where attendees can enjoy themselves while sharing experiences with others who understand their struggles. Admission is €10, which includes tea, coffee, biscuits, and entry into a raffle on selected nights. For those who wish to enjoy a drink, the hotel bar is open, and designated drivers are encouraged—soft drinks and water for them are complimentary.

"These events are about getting people out of the house and back into life," says Martin Roe. "It's about connection, laughter, and healing."

The society also organizes annual trips abroad,

with this year's getaway planned for Lanzarote in late September. The trip, already attracting strong interest, offers members a chance to relax and recharge in the company of friends.

While the social side of the society is vibrant, its core mission remains the same: to provide emotional support for those who feel overlooked or isolated after bereavement. Many participants have expressed how these gatherings helped them through difficult times when they felt forgotten. In addition to social events, volunteers provide guidance, informal counselling, and activities such as music sessions, which have proven to be both therapeutic and enjoyable.

The community also honors its members and their families. Recently, the society paid tribute to one of Ireland's most remarkable taxi drivers, Eddie Broe, who drove professionally until the age of 93. His memory was celebrated at a special event in James Street, where friends and family gathered to share stories of a man who epitomized resilience and dedication.

The Martin Roe Lay Counselling Society is more than a support group, it's a network of friendship, compassion, and positivity. In a world where loneliness often deepens after loss, this society stands as a reminder that healing begins with human connection.

For those who feel ready to step back into social life, the invitation is open: come for the conversation, stay for the music, and leave with a lighter heart.





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# In Conversation With FREENOW's New General Manager Danny O'Gorman



## Q1. How is the taxi sector doing since we spoke last year?

The taxi industry has continued to grow over the past year, with 2,087 new driver licences issued in 2024 - the highest number in the last decade. There are now more than 27,800 active SPSV driver licences, marking a nearly 10% increase since 2022. There were also 1,199 new vehicle licences granted last year, with 20,889 active SPSV licences now in operation. While there are some pressure points on drivers during large events or in rural areas, overall supply is growing steadily.

At FREENOW, we've introduced a number of new features in the past year to support drivers in increasing their earnings and ensure they have the best possible experience:

- Our multiple stop feature allows passengers to book several stops in one trip. This benefits drivers as planning journeys becomes more straightforward with all stops visible from the start.
- Prebook reminders are now being sent to drivers based on their real location and the time it will take them to travel to the prebook, allowing drivers to work as efficiently as possible.
- We are currently gathering more data on why drivers block particular passengers in an effort to protect drivers' safety.
- Our new partnership with Autodoc gives drivers discounts on a wide range of car parts purchased through the AUTODOC e-commerce platform.

## Q2. What are the other challenges for the industry and what is FREENOW doing to help address them?

One of the key challenges currently facing our industry is the push toward deregulation. At FREENOW, we firmly support the NTA's regulated framework, which ensures high standards and practices among drivers and provides stable, sustainable growth for the industry. We're deeply concerned that removing these regulations could

have serious consequences, destabilising the market and forcing experienced professionals out of the sector. As Ireland's leading taxi platform, FREENOW is committed to supporting our driver partners and engaging constructively with stakeholders, including meeting with the Taxi Advisory Committee and a number of TDs, to preserve the standards that benefit everyone in the industry.

We are also increasingly concerned that thousands of taxi drivers may be at risk due to unknown VAT liabilities. While journeys with FREENOW do not impose any VAT liability on our drivers, many drivers use multiple taxi platforms and are unaware that they are required to pay VAT on earnings if they are invoiced from abroad. If this VAT isn't paid, drivers may be unable to get a Tax Clearance Certificate and renew their licences. Taxi apps operating under the 'Reverse-Charge' model have been placing the burden of VAT on taxi drivers. This has been done without taxi drivers' knowledge and is a completely unacceptable practice. We have been actively engaging with policymakers to investigate this issue and ensure that Ireland's taxi drivers are not left to pick up the cheque for taxi operators.

## Q3. Considering FREENOW, its partner drivers, and the wider taxi industry, where do you identify potential areas for growth and development?

One area we have identified for growth and development is working with dispatchers. FREENOW's dispatching tool ensures every passenger gets a trip as requests go to the dispatcher's fleet first, and if unavailable, FREENOW steps in to cover. The tool also makes it easy to manage bookings, view your fleet's available vehicles and send instant SMS notifications. Overall, this allows dispatchers and taxi drivers who work with them to streamline operations and boost earnings.

Another ambition is to expand the availability of FREENOW into more towns and villages across Ireland. The shift to EVs is one such area for growth and development. The appetite for the switch to electric



is clear for drivers and passengers alike, with 62% of the FREENOW's newly onboarded taxi fleet being electrified. Since the start of 2025, 15% of all trips have been taken in an electric vehicle with 43% taken in a hybrid. In an effort to further encourage EV uptake among drivers, FREENOW has partnered with an EV company to offer driver partners up to €5,400 off the list price of an EV. When combined with the eSPSV grant scheme, this can reduce the cost of switching to a new electric taxi by up to €35,700.

**Q4. I know FREENOW has been exploring ways to improve supply in rural areas. What have you found out, and what are your recommendations?**

Increased access to transport is a key issue in rural communities across Ireland, and we have been working with drivers to understand the challenges they're facing. The Local Area Hackney (LAH) licence was created to support rural services, but the tight restrictions mean drivers are struggling to offer a viable service, while passengers are left unable to find reliable transport.

To support rural supply, FREENOW has written to the National Transport Authority (NTA) with several suggestions that we believe would benefit the scheme. This includes expanding the operation area to 20km and allowing drivers to either begin or end a journey in that area. This will allow passengers to arrange trips to nearby towns with



confidence that they have a lift home. We have also recommended that drivers be permitted to advertise their service on the side of their vehicle and that vehicles are allowed to operate beyond 10 years.

**Q5. Recently, it was announced that FREENOW is in the process of being acquired by Lyft. How will this benefit FREENOW partner drivers in Ireland?**

There will be no immediate changes to operations in Ireland. However, over time, new benefits for FREENOW drivers and passengers will be added.

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# Hydrogen cars: when they'll really take off and how we'll keep them topped up

## Where things stand today

Sales are tiny and falling. Global hydrogen car registrations slipped for the second straight year in 2024, with only around 14,000 units registered. Two-thirds of these were in South Korea and California. Irish infrastructure remains at a pilot scale. There is one mobile dispenser at Dublin Bus's depot and the planned Galway Hydrogen Hub (GH2) is one of the only concrete public projects currently in development. Policy is beginning to catch up. Ireland's 2023 National Hydrogen Strategy targets the deployment of the first commercial vehicle fleets between 2025 and 2030, with widespread use projected by 2040 and beyond.

## What has to happen before hydrogen cars feel "viable"

Several major developments must align before hydrogen cars can be considered a realistic option in Ireland. These include creating reliable fueling methods, ensuring practical availability for drivers, and integrating smart payment infrastructure.

## A realistic timeline for Irish drivers

Hydrogen cars are unlikely to become widely viable in Ireland before the 2030s. Until then, their appeal will be mostly limited to specific use cases, particularly in fleets and heavy transport.

## How we'll actually fuel the cars

Fueling hydrogen vehicles will require a mix of technologies and infrastructure solutions. One option is the use of onsite green electrolyzers, which would be powered by surplus offshore wind to produce between 200 and 1,000 kilograms per day of 99.999% pure hydrogen. This hydrogen would then be compressed to 700 bar for cars (or 350 bar for buses and trucks), cooled to 40°C, and dispensed in a process that takes only three to four minutes per vehicle. In the interim, many Irish stations will rely on transporting liquid hydrogen by

truck from import terminals in Shannon or Cork. The hydrogen would be gasified onsite and stored in 1,000-bar composite vessels. Looking further ahead, the European Hydrogen Backbone initiative includes a plan to repurpose an existing gas pipeline from Galway Bay to Dublin by 2035. This would deliver hydrogen at 100 bar directly to high-throughput stations in urban areas. All dispensers will need to support card and app-based payments, as required by AFIR regulations. Pricing will likely be dynamic, responding to fluctuations in wholesale renewable energy costs, potentially making hydrogen cheaper on windy nights.

## Key takeaways for Irish motorists and taxi fleets

Battery electric vehicles remain the most practical choice for the foreseeable future. Hydrogen cars will likely stay a premium option with limited infrastructure until well into the next decade. The rollout of motorway refueling stations by 2030 will be a critical milestone for making private hydrogen car ownership viable. In the near term, hydrogen adoption will mostly occur in fleets, such as buses, long-haul trucks, and possibly rural taxis, which can better absorb the high initial costs and prove the technology's value early on. From 2030, EU carbon intensity regulations will effectively phase out fossil-based hydrogen, ensuring that only green hydrogen remains competitive. By the mid-2030s, a hydrogen-powered saloon could theoretically fill up in Dublin, drive to Cork or Belfast, and refuel just as quickly on arrival. Hydrogen cars could eventually become a practical option in Ireland—but not before 2030. Even then, they are expected to complement rather than replace battery EVs. Progress in AFIR station deployment, the cost of green hydrogen, and advancements in fuel cell production must converge before hydrogen shifts from niche curiosity to serious contender.



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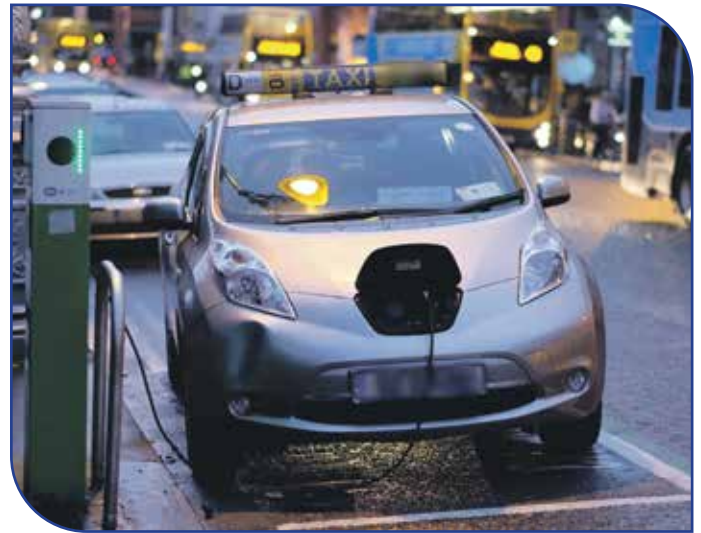
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**Frank Keane**

# A straight-talking guide to tapping the eSPSV25 scheme before the pot runs dry

The eSPSV25 grant reopened on 23 June 2025 with “just under €5 million” remaining after a record first-round uptake.



**T**o qualify, your new electric taxi must be licensed, inspected, and the grant payment form submitted by 12 December 2025. Applications close on 21 November. It's a first-come, first-served system—once the fund is gone, it's gone.

The grant offers a major financial incentive to switch to electric taxis, but timing is everything. You need to act fast, especially given the popularity of the scheme. Delays or missteps can result in losing your eligibility entirely.

## HOW MUCH CAN YOU PULL IN?

Scrappage bonuses are available if you trade in a diesel vehicle that's either within three years of its NTA age limit or has over 300,000 kilometres on the clock, and you provide a Certificate of Destruction. Newer electric cars attract larger grants, so spending time negotiating for a slightly older import may cost more than it saves. Operators with small fleets can claim for up to 10 vehicles under the scheme. However, never purchase a vehicle before receiving—and signing—the Grant Offer Letter from the NTA, as doing so voids your eligibility.

## SHOW-ME-THE-MONEY MATHS

Fuel savings are real. Comparing a typical Dublin taxi route of 50,000 kilometres per year, the cost of electricity is significantly lower than diesel, especially on a NightSaver meter. Coupled with reduced servicing costs (no timing belts, no diesel particulate filter regenerations), a scrappage-level grant can pay for itself in less than 18 months.

## THREE QUICK CHECKS BEFORE APPLYING

Before you apply, there are a few essentials to confirm. First, get a written insurance quote, as not all brokers currently offer competitive rates for electric vehicles. Second, make sure you have a charging solution in place, whether at home or at a depot. The SEAI's home charger grant of €300 is still available, and using a NightSaver meter can reduce your electricity costs by 40 to 50 percent. Finally, ensure your chosen EV is on the NTA's approved list, which only includes vehicles under four years old with a minimum range of 100 kilometres. This list updates monthly, so always verify before

placing a deposit.

## APPLICATION ROADMAP

The process typically takes about six weeks from start to finish. However, missing any deadlines will void your offer. There are no extensions, so you need to stay on schedule to secure the grant.

## WHICH EVS ACTUALLY WORK AS DUBLIN CABS

All eligible vehicles must be on the NTA's July 2025 approved list and meet the boot-size rules for use at Dublin Airport. This ensures practicality for both drivers and passengers.

## CHARGING WITHOUT HEADACHES

There are now 48 ESB high-power charging hubs nationwide that deliver over 150 kW, including a four-bay 200 kW site at Dublin Airport. This allows most EVs to charge from 20 to 80 percent in about 25 minutes. Dublin City Council is also rolling out 14 rapid, taxi-dedicated chargers, with the first installed in Finglas and more to follow by the third quarter of 2025. While on shift, a 30-minute break at a hub can add around 120 kilometres of range. Off shift, drivers can top up more cheaply at home using NightSaver rates.

## PITFALLS AND PRO TIPS

There are a few common traps to avoid. If you claim the scrappage bonus, you cannot keep your old diesel as a backup; a Certificate of Destruction is required. If the grant fund is depleted before your car is fully licensed and your payment form is submitted, you won't receive any money—regardless of how far along you are. And once you've claimed the grant, you must keep the EV in service for at least 36 months. Selling it earlier means repaying the grant.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

If you lock in the grant now, you could receive up to €25,000 upfront and save around €4,000 annually in running costs. Over five years, that's a swing of nearly €45,000. It's a meaningful financial gain, along with cleaner air for the city and quieter, smoother rides for your passengers. The application process takes a month, but the benefits can last a decade. Start the process now—before someone else gets to the money first.



# EScooters Are Now Legal Friend, Foe ... or FareFeeder?



What every Dublin cabbie needs to know since the new rules kicked in on 20 May 2024

## WHY THIS MATTERS FOR YOUR METER

The Road Traffic (Electric Scooters) Regulations 2024 officially removed e-scooters from the legal grey zone, putting thousands of new, silent vehicles onto the same kerbs that professional drivers use daily. In the six months following legalisation, collisions involving e-scooters jumped 41 percent—from 123 to 174 incidents. Two riders were killed on Irish roads last year, and one has already died in 2025. How this shift affects your business—whether e-scooters siphon short fares, block setdown bays, or help deliver first-mile trips to your rank—depends on how quickly and calmly drivers adapt to the new road dynamic.

## THE GROUND RULES AT A GLANCE

Gardaí now issue roadside fines starting at €50. In Limerick, some units are equipped with portable dynamometers and have begun confiscating illegally tuned scooters on the spot. Enforcement is ramping up.

## RISK RADAR: WHAT THE STATS SAY

Nearly a quarter of Irish scooter users have already been involved in a collision, and another third report experiencing a near miss. In Dublin, 25 percent of scooter crashes occur between 6 p.m. and 1 a.m.—the same hours when taxi demand is at its peak, according to the RSA's 2024 collision dataset. Head injuries remain the most common reason for hospital admissions following scooter accidents, and 84 percent of riders still don't wear helmets, based on an RSA survey. For drivers, this translates into unpredictable weaving, sudden hops onto footpaths, and blindspot risks—particularly when pulling away from a rank.

## FRIEND OR FOE? HOW SCOOTERS CAN FEED YOUR FARES

Though they might feel like competition at first, scooters also offer opportunities. They extend the reach of public transport and help funnel passengers to taxi ranks when batteries die or the rain sets in. For smart drivers, they're not just a risk—they're a source of top-up fares.

## STAYING SAFE AROUND SCOOTERS

Bus lanes are now shared spaces. Drivers should make a habit of extending their mirror sweep before pulling out. A dashcam setup that records at 60 frames per second, with coverage front and rear, is valuable in the event of an incident, particularly where fault is unclear. In interactions, a short horn tap combined with a hand signal works far better than prolonged honking—most riders are still learning the rules. Educating passengers can also help. Calmly quoting the 20 km/h speed cap or footpath ban often resolves frustration when your cab slows behind an inexperienced rider. If you install parametric dashcams, notify your insurer—some now offer a 5 percent discount for verified setups that help reduce fraudulent claims.

## MINIScript FOR PASSENGERS

A calm, factual explanation can defuse complaints and position you as the professional. For example: "Scooters are grand up to 20 km/h in the cycle lane, but they're banned from the footpath—€50 fine. We'll give them room, then we'll nip around at the next break."

## LOOKING AHEAD

A formal policy review is due in May 2025. The Department of Transport will decide whether to increase fines or mandate helmets based on the first full year of data. Gardaí are also testing AI-equipped cameras designed to automatically issue fines for footpath riding, starting in College Green. Shared fleet operators, meanwhile, are lobbying to expand to 2,500 e-scooters citywide—pending success in current parking rack pilots.

E-scooters are here to stay. Knowing the rules, developing defensive habits, and staying calm under pressure can protect your licence and turn a new challenge into a revenue stream. When batteries die or weather worsens, riders turn to cabs. For the drivers who adapt first, scooters won't be a daily headache—they'll be rolling ads for short-hop business.

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# AIRPORT PLAYBOOK 2025

How to stay on the right side of the new Dublin Airport taxi rules—and grab the most lucrative runs while you're there.



In May 2025, Dublin Airport released its updated Taxi Operations Manual, introducing tighter trip-volume requirements, digitised documentation processes, and stricter enforcement at the stands. These new rules raise the stakes for every airport driver. A single misstep can cost you your permit—and with it, first access to over 32 million potential fares per year.

## **Permit renewal—what changed this year**

This year's system no longer offers leeway. If you miss the payment window for your permit fee, your tag is automatically wiped from the system. Set a recurring reminder in your calendar to avoid accidental lapses.

## **Holding area operations: VMS, shunting, and short fares**

Drivers must enter the airport through the overflow area, where the Vehicle Management System (VMS) will call vehicles forward lane by lane. It's critical to remain seated in your car—if your plate appears and you're not present, the daa may log it as a service standard breach. If you get a short fare (generally under €10), ask rank staff before departing; you'll receive a 20-minute grace period to return and rejoin the same rank. Miss that window and you'll go to the back of the holding queue. Electric vehicles have access to specific charger lanes, and parking elsewhere risks immediate towing.

## **Timing your shift to match the flight banks**

Flight schedules create four daily passenger surges, and bank holiday Fridays now draw over 116,000 travellers. To maximise earnings, consider aligning your schedule with these peaks—whether by stacking shifts or timing pre-booked pickups.

## **Earning smart while staying compliant**

Combining a short fare with a return to the airport can be highly efficient. For example, a €15 hotel drop-off to Swords can turn into two airport jobs within 40 minutes. Consider applying for a Pre-Booked Only permit for side jobs like corporate meet-and-greets in the Red Car Park. Meanwhile, maintain your regular tag for standard rank operations. Always accept card payments—refusals generate complaints, and three logged incidents can trigger a service review. If you take a break at the café, watch the in-house TV feed displaying the VMS call-up list so you don't miss your slot.

## **Avoiding penalties**

The daa now enforces clear thresholds. Sharing your permit is no longer allowed—if your son drives weekends, he must have his own tag as of April 2025. The short-fare limit remains at €10, but the 20-minute return policy still applies and must be pre-approved by staff. If you're unable to meet your minimum trip count due to illness, daa may waive the requirement, but only with documented evidence submitted before the audit window closes.

The 2025 manual clearly defines expectations: complete at least 120 trips, accept card payments without exception, and respond immediately to VMS call-ups. If you master these basics and align your shift with flight surges, the airport can remain your most profitable base—without the stress of falling foul of the rules. Keep this playbook by your meter and use it to turn every runway rush into a steady stream of clean, high-yield fares.





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We now sit in a market with true choice for the consumer and lower premiums across the board for drivers compared to where things started back in October 2015. With a team of 11 and growing, we believe TaxiFair is now one of – if not the – largest insurance brokers of SPSV insurance in the country.

Whilst we are proud of that status, what's exciting for us is that we feel like we are only just getting started.

2025 will bring more exciting developments as our business continues to focus on best in class solutions for the 21st century SPSV driver.

So, thank you for your support and keep your eyes peeled for new products, developments and promotions coming this year as we celebrate 10 years serving the Irish SPSV industry.

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---

# *See you at the Show!*



# New Toyota Prius has evolved beyond recognition

By Breda Corrigan



The new, fifth-generation Toyota Prius is a really big deal for the Japanese manufacturer, as the previous four generations racked up combined global sales of more than 5 million units.

**T**oyota's experience making hybrid drive systems dates back to 1997 when the original Prius went on sale in Japan, followed by its launch in Ireland in 2000, so it will come as no surprise to hear that the new Prius benefits from a seamless transition between EV and engine-assisted driving. Available in Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) format only, the new Prius is sportier, sleeker, more rakish and more desirable than ever before. The new Prius is 50mm lower and 46mm shorter than its predecessor, but the wheelbase has increased by 50mm, and the overall width of the car has grown by 22mm.

## Plug-in Powertrain.

Available in one, highly-specified trim variant, the new Prius PHEV combines a 2.0-litre petrol engine with an uprated 161bhp electric motor for a total combined output of 220bhp. The petrol engine produces 190Nm of torque, with the front-mounted electric motor providing 208Nm, resulting in brisk acceleration right from the off. Through a combination of mechanical improvements and sleek aerodynamics, the new Prius can sprint from 0-100km/h in 6.8-seconds, a full 3-seconds quicker than the model it replaces. The 13.5kWh battery pack provides a pure-electric range of up to 71kms, and the on-board 3.3kW AC charger enables the battery to be fully charged (0-100%) via a wallbox charger in just 4 hours. A combined Co2 emission figure of 16g/km results in annual road

tax of just €140.

## Outstanding Fuel Efficiency.

The new Prius PHEV shares its underpinnings with the highly-acclaimed Corolla family hatchback, providing it with a perfect balance between comfort and handling. Drivers can choose between Eco, Normal, Sport and Custom drive modes at the flick of a button. The Eco drive mode moderately mutes the throttle response, and it relies on EV power as much as possible in order to enhance fuel efficiency, especially in urban settings. Official fuel economy stands at 0.7l/100km (404mpg) but, as is the norm with a plug-in hybrid, the achievable real-world figure will depend on how frequently you charge the battery and the type of journeys undertaken.

## Advanced Safety Tech.

The new Prius PHEV comes with Toyota Safety Sense 3 (TSS3) as standard. This advanced driver assist safety tech consists of eight airbags, Pre-Collision System with Intersection Collision Avoidance Support, Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian & Daytime Cyclist and Motorbike Detection, Front-to-Front Oncoming Car and Motorbike Detection (day) on Pre-Collision System, Emergency Driving Stop System (which can safely bring the car to a halt if the driver is taken ill), Proactive Driving Assist, Emergency Steering Assist on Pre-Collision System, rear seat belt reminder, rear-view

**Continues P.33**





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See [toyota.ie/models/prius-plugin](https://toyota.ie/models/prius-plugin) for more information on the Toyota Prius Plug-In Hybrid.

†The range indicated was tested according to WLTP regulations. \*Whichever comes first. Subject to annual/15,000km service within the Toyota Network. Image is for illustrative purposes only.



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#### New Infotainment Tech.

Toyota's new infotainment system includes a 12.3-inch multimedia display touchscreen, wireless smartphone integration incorporating Apple CarPlay™, and connectivity to a range of interactive services via the 'MyT Connected Services' app. Also included is a six-speaker audio system, DAB Radio, Touch 2 Go navigation system, Type A & Type C USB ports, and a Bluetooth™ hands-free system with smart voice assistance.

#### Test Car Details.

My test car was finished in Storm Grey metallic paintwork with stylish 19-inch diamond-cut two-tone alloy wheels. The new Prius looks like a futuristic concept car when compared to some of its rivals, and its striking design is enhanced by the stylish front light bar and glitzy rear light bar. The Prius pulls away silently and smoothly, and it drives with pleasing fluidity in urban settings as well as at motorway speeds. When the four-cylinder petrol engine kicks in, it does so in a refined manner, with none of the judder that was somewhat evident in previous generations of the Prius. Body control on twisty back roads is excellent, and the responsive and direct steering makes it easy to negotiate bends, with plenty of power available to maintain momentum. The new car drives like no other Prius ever has, and it has to be complemented for its nimble and fun character. It really is a delightful car to drive. The

ergonomic cabin can accommodate up to five occupants, but the sleek profile does impact on rear headroom. Materials and finishes are of typically solid Toyota quality, and the well-laid-out dashboard ensures that all of the important controls are within easy reach of the driver. The standard boot capacity of 284-litres is accessed via an electric tailgate, and the rear seats fold in a 60:40 fashion, creating a practical flat surface when required.

#### Pricing & Warranty.

Toyota's reputation for outstanding build quality, reliability and durability is legendary, and the new Prius PHEV has all the necessary ingredients to be yet another huge success for the Toyota brand. The Prius PHEV is priced at €47,340 and is available to buy now. A 3-year/100,000km warranty comes as standard on all Toyota passenger cars, along with a 5-year/100,000km warranty on Hybrid Components and a 12-year unlimited mileage warranty



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# FARE HIKE 101



## How to turn December's 9% taxi tariff rise into real money in your pocket without losing goodwill in the cab

### What actually changed on 1 December 2024

The National Transport Authority (NTA) updated taxi fares for the first time since 2022, with a 9% overall rise. Extras stayed simple: the booking fee increased to €3 (up from €2), each additional adult now costs €1, soiling charges can go up to €140, and tolls remain charged as incurred. The bottom line is that most daytime trips now cost around 3 to 4% more, nighttime trips increased by 7 to 10%, and the highly profitable midnight to 4 a.m. weekend runs saw the biggest jump—up 12 to 14%.

### How to explain the change to passengers

When asked, it helps to be transparent and calm. One way to phrase it is: "The NTA reviewed our operating costs—fuel, insurance, meter software—and found they've risen about 9% since 2022. The fare card has simply moved to match. For most short daytime trips, the fare only increased by about twenty cents. The bigger change is late at night, when demand is highest."

### Costs that eat into the increase

The updated fares aren't a bonus—they're just catching up with the rising costs of running a taxi. That's why it's more important than ever to work smarter, not longer, to get the most out of every shift.

### Five smart tactics to make the new tariff work for you

The new midnight to 4 a.m. weekend window is now permanent, so it pays to be logged into your apps by 11:45 p.m. Surge pricing often begins before the higher fare rate kicks in, giving you a head start. If you're collecting a pre-booked fare, the €3 booking fee now applies before the meter even starts. Use this to your advantage by offering hotels a flat €5 "priority pickup" service—it covers your wait time, looks transparent to the customer, and boosts your take-home.

In city traffic, the meter switches from distance-based to time-based fare below 21.2 km/h. That means during gridlock, you can earn between 47 and 78 cents per minute. Riders may not know this, so it's

wise to explain up front that the meter keeps running in slow traffic—you'll usually get understanding if you're polite and clear.

The new €1 charge for each additional adult can be turned into a benefit for passengers too. For groups waiting outside venues at night, suggest splitting a single fare instead of paying for two taxis—it saves them money and fills your cab. And if you're heading through the Port Tunnel after midnight, especially on a run to or from a hotel, you hit a sweet spot: the toll goes on the passenger's bill, and you land in the city just in time for post-bar demand.

### Compliance checklist to avoid penalties

Make sure your meter was recalibrated and sealed with the new 2024 program within 21 days of 1 December. Both the front and rear of the vehicle must display the updated fare card. Your printer should be set to automatically issue receipts showing time, distance, fare, and any extras. Keep a digital copy of the 2024 Technical Guidelines PDF on your phone—Gardaí are accepting it during roadside checks.

### Looking forward

Grants of up to €10,000 under the eSPSV25 scheme are still available. Switching to electric could cut your fuel costs by around 40%, helping you preserve more of the income from this fare increase. The NTA's next fare review is currently scheduled for 2026, and with general inflation running at just 1.8% as of June 2025, another rise isn't guaranteed anytime soon.

The December fare hike isn't a windfall—it's a much-needed adjustment to stay in the game. By using the new premium time slots to your advantage, adjusting your driving hours smartly, and clearly explaining the changes to passengers, a Dublin taxi can claw back €50 to €70 extra per week. It's not about working more—it's about working sharper. Keep your meter updated, laminate the new rates, and focus on the value of every trip.



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# New Honda CR-V PHEV – A Powerful Presence

by Declan Glynn



The all-new, sixth-generation Honda CR-V has arrived, and with it comes the option of a regular hybrid (e:HEV) or a plug-in hybrid (e:PHEV) powertrain, both of which promise enhanced efficiency and outright

**T**he e:HEV comes with 4-wheel drive as standard, while the e:PHEV sends power to the cars' front wheels. It is the new CR-V e:PHEV that is the subject of this review, as it is the first ever plug-in hybrid that Honda has made for the European market. While the e:HEV model comes with the option of Elegance or Advance trim grades, the e:PHEV is exclusively available in range-topping Advance Tech specification.

## Sophisticated, Rugged Look.

The new CR-V possesses terrific road presence, with a sophisticated, yet rugged look, exemplified by its striking mesh grille design, sporty alloy wheels, streamlined LED headlights with sequential turn signals, dramatic rear light design, practical roof rails and panoramic glass roof. Measuring in at just over 4.7-metres in length, the new CR-V is 106mm longer than the previous generation model, and it is 11mm wider too, while its impressive 2.7-metre wheelbase results in lots of interior space for up to 5 occupants. Front and rear legroom is especially generous, while headroom is plentiful too. Additionally, rear seat passengers benefit from seatbacks that can be reclined in a choice of 8 positions for ultimate comfort on every journey, and the seats can slide forwards or backwards too in order to prioritise cabin or luggage

space. The battery in the e:PHEV is located under the rear seats rather than under the boot floor, and this results in a cavernous cargo capacity of 617-litres in 5-seat mode, with up to 1,710-litres of space available when the rear seatbacks are folded down. The boot is easy to load, thanks to its wide aperture and power tailgate that provides a stop and hold function, along with a Walk Away Close function, which closes the tailgate and securely locks the car if you leave it without locking it.

## Impressive Power & Torque.

The e:PHEV drivetrain consists of a 2.0-litre petrol engine, an electric motor and a 17.7kWh Lithium-ion battery with a combined output of 189PS and 335Nm of torque. The car can sprint to 100km/h from a standing start in 9.4-seconds, and it is capable of consuming as little as 1.9-litres of fuel for every 100km driven on a WLTP combined driving cycle when every journey is started with a fully-charged battery. The e:PHEV comes with a zero-emission EV driving range of up to 82km, and its ultra-low CO2 emissions figure (from 18g/km) results in annual road tax of just €140. In a similar fashion to the e:HEV full hybrid, the battery in the e:PHEV charges as the car is driven, with the main difference being that it can be plugged in to enhance battery capacity, with a full charge taking around 2.5 hours at a peak charging rate of 6.8kW.

**Continues P.38**





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Honda **e:**TECHNOLOGY

Car shown is a Honda HR-V 1.5 i-MMD e:HEV Hybrid Advance in Premium Crystal Red Metallic – Economy & Emissions figures: (WLTP) Range 4.9-8.1 (l/100km), CO<sub>2</sub> 110-183 (g/km). Car shown is a Honda ZR-V 2.0 i-MMD e:HEV Hybrid Advance in Diamond Dust Pearl – Economy & Emissions figures: (WLTP) Range 4.8-7.3 (l/100km), CO<sub>2</sub> 108-165 (g/km). Car shown is a Honda CR-V 2.0 i-MMD e:HEV Hybrid Advance in Canyon River Blue Metallic – Economy & Emissions figures: (WLTP) Range 4.9-8.1 (l/100km), CO<sub>2</sub> 110-183 (g/km). Plug-in hybrid weighted combined 0.8 (l/100km), CO<sub>2</sub> weighted 18.0 (g/km). Electric energy consumption weighted combined: 15.5 kWh/100 km. Figures, sourced from EU regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experiences.





### Car on Review.

My review car was a new CR-V e:PHEV, which looked stunning in its Gold Titan metallic paint, 18-inch 'Berlina' black alloy wheels, and gloss black trim elements for maximum visual impact. The CR-V e:PHEV offers drivers an enhanced EV driving experience by providing them with all the benefits of smooth, quiet electric power, but it retains the flexibility of switching to hybrid mode when the EV battery is running low. Drivers can choose from 4 distinct drive modes: Sport, Normal, Eco and Snow, which automatically changes the vehicle set-up to provide the optimum performance, traction and efficiency required for the road conditions. Also included is a Tow Mode to assist with charge management when pulling a trailer with a braked capacity of up to 1,500kg. The new CR-V e:PHEV features a whole range of helpful and informative technology, including high-resolution screens and seamless connectivity. Key standard equipment includes a 10.2-inch digital driver display, a 9-inch Honda CONNECT infotainment system, wireless smartphone charger, Head Up Display, and parking sensors to the front, rear and side of the car, along with a multi-view camera system, Honda Parking Pilot and Honda SENSING 360. The Head Up Display (HUD) enables the driver to stay focused on the road ahead, as it projects all of the relevant driver information directly to the windscreen in an unobtrusive manner, and it is a terrific safety feature in itself. Honda SENSING 360 consists of an exclusive suite of safety and driver-assistance technologies that are powered by cameras, sensors and enhanced recognition systems,

which have been designed to keep occupants safe and to assist the driver in everyday situations, with additional corner radars and cameras in the front. The e:PHEV offers a good balance between comfort and composure, and it does a terrific job of isolating occupants from road imperfections and speed ramps. The lofty seating position in the new CR-V provides excellent all-round visibility, and the 8-way electrically-adjustable driver's seat is comfortable and supportive in equal measure. The electric motor's provide instant acceleration from the get-go and, irrespective of the power source in use at any given time, the e:PHEV feels quick, and this is especially useful when joining a motorway or overtaking slow-moving traffic. By selecting Sport mode, the driver has access to the full combined power output, while enhancing the firmness of the adaptive suspension to reduce body lean through corners. The steering is precise in its operation and it enables the driver to enjoy the excellent traction on offer. All-in-all, the new CR-V e:PHEV is a thoroughly likeable large SUV that completes every task asked of it in a refined, fuss-free manner, and it is a suitably pleasant car to drive, or to be a passenger in.

### Conclusion & Price.

The new Honda CR-V may have a familiar look, but every aspect of the design has evolved, creating a contemporary, distinctive and athletic SUV that can proudly hold its head high in the competitive large SUV market in Ireland. The CR-V e:PHEV is priced at €67,995 (ex-delivery) and is available to buy at Honda dealerships nationwide now.



# Mega Weekends & Cruise Waves



How to read Dublin's visitor tides so you're parked where the money lands—before everyone else

A full cruise berth or rugby sellout can bring between 10,000 and 35,000 extra visitors to Dublin's quays in just two hours—enough fares to fill every taxi rank in the city twice over. These surges are golden opportunities for cab drivers, but the key is timing: knowing exactly which days the passengers will arrive, where they'll head first, and whether it's better to wait at the port or avoid gridlock around Grafton Street. Miss the wave, and you're battling traffic for scraps. Catch it, and a focused shift can bring in €150 to €200 in earnings.

There are four main visitor engines that drive these crowds: cruise ships, major airport influxes, big-ticket events, and unscheduled spikes triggered by social buzz. Red-letter dates like bank holidays and sellout concerts are worth flagging in advance—they offer predictable demand boosts.

To spot the next surge before the rest of the city catches on, start with cruise timetables. Sites like [CruiseTimetables.com](#) let you scan a monthly view for double-ship days where total capacity exceeds 5,000 passengers. Checking this every Sunday helps plan the week ahead. The Dublin Airport Authority posts passenger forecasts the Monday before each bank holiday—subscribing to their RSS feed or setting a news alert gives you early insight.

Stadium concert listings are another goldmine. Platforms like Songkick or Ticketmaster update instantly, and new gigs often add a second date within 24 hours. Watch listings at Croke Park closely. For ships, the [MarineTraffic](#) app shows vessels over 250 metres on AIS radar two days before arrival. Monitor these for unannounced charters.

Social media can be a surprising tool too—searching hashtags like “#DublinBound” the night before bank holidays often reveals crowd patterns that correlate with taxi rank queue lengths.

When the crowd hits, knowing where to be is half the battle. Smart drivers schedule bookings around known exit times instead of driving aimlessly during quiet spells. Offering multi-stop tours can also increase earnings—cruise visitors often appreciate alternatives to large group buses, especially with personal touches. A Howth and Malahide loop for €120 flat, for instance, can turn a simple trip into a profitable half-day.

Using dynamic pricing on ride-hailing apps during major event letouts is another strategy. Most passengers expect a surge, and it beats driving home empty. Having a boot kit stocked with phone chargers, ponchos, and bottled water can boost tips by €5 to €10, especially on wet stadium nights.

Be aware of temporary road closures too. Events like Pride or Halloween parades often bring last-minute Garda diversions. Following [GardaTraffic](#) on social media helps avoid routes where passengers could be forced to walk long distances due to barriers.

Ultimately, tourist surges aren't random—they're scheduled. With just ten minutes of planning each Sunday, drivers can align their shifts to match peak demand. Checking cruise and event listings, airport forecasts, and online chatter can lead to an extra €300 to €500 per month—without increasing driving hours. Staying ahead of the crowd means higher fares, better tips, and fewer wasted kilometres.



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