

TAXI FARE REVIEW

The Authority is currently undertaking a review of the National Maximum Taxi Fare and has now issued a draft proposal. We would like to hear your views on the proposed changes to the fares and the fare structure. The public consultation has commenced and will be open until Monday 3rd December at 5pm. You can provide a submission to us online by clicking on www.nationaltransport.ie and visiting our consultations section. We will also receive written submissions to:

Taxi Fare Review

National Transport Authority
 Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2

The proposed changes to the fare are as follows

- 1 We propose to reduce the initial charge to €3.60 on the Standard Rate and to €4.00 on the Premium Rate with the allocated distance and time to be amended to 500 metres or 85 seconds;
- 2 We propose to remove Tariff C from the fare card in both the Standard and Premium Rates, combined with a rebalancing of the remaining Tariff A and Tariff B;
- 3 Tariff A under the Standard Rate (up to 15km or 43 mins) to be adjusted to €1.10 per kilometre or €0.39 per minute;
- 4 Tariff A under the Premium Rate (above 15km or 43 mins) to be adjusted to €1.40 per kilometre or €0.49 per minute;
- 5 Tariff B under the Standard Rate (under 15km or 43 mins) to be adjusted to €1.40 per kilometre or €0.49 per minute;
- 6 Tariff B under the Premium Rate (above 15km or 43 mins) to be adjusted to €1.70 per kilometre or €0.62 per minute; and
- 7 The special Premium Rate that applies during a four day period over Christmas and New Year is proposed to be amended such that the Premium Rate applies with an additional 25% added to Tariff A and Tariff B.

Other charges and extras remained unaltered from the current maximum fares order.

The table below represents the proposed amendments set out in tabular form.

	Standard Rate (08.00h – 20.00h)	Premium Rate (20.00h – 08.00h) & Sundays & Public Holidays*
Initial Charge Distance Allowance = 500 metres Time Allowance = 85 seconds	€3.60	€4.00
Tariff A (up to 15 km or 43 mins)	€1.10 per km or €0.39 per min	€1.40 per km or €0.49 per min
Tariff B (over 15km or 43 mins)	€1.40 per km or €0.49 per min	€1.75 per km or €0.62 per min

Overall, these changes increase fares by approximately 4% on average, while lowering the initial hiring charge which would then have a corresponding shorter distance/time included. Following the conclusion of the public consultation, a decision will be made by the Board of the National Transport Authority. Any changes to the fare will be introduced in a new Maximum Fares Order in early 2013.

* A special premium rate is proposed to apply between Christmas Eve 20.00h to St. Stephen's Day 08.00h and New Year's Eve 20.00h to New Year's Day 08.00h.

During these periods it is proposed that the Premium Rate applies with an additional 25% added to Tariff A and Tariff B.

12,428 Enforcement Checks

On street enforcement activities are a central part of the Authority's activities. In the ten months of 2012 up to the end of October, the Authority's Compliance team has undertaken almost twelve and a half thousand (12,428) on-street checks of SPSV vehicles and drivers throughout the country. These on-street checks show that the vast majority of the industry is compliant with the regulations.

Many of these operations are undertaken on a joint basis with other agencies such as An Garda Síochána, Revenue and the Department of Social Protection. Recent examples of significant joint operations included an operation at Dublin Airport in October. The agencies involved were the Authority's Compliance team, the Department of Social Protection (DSP),

Customs and An Garda Síochána. During the check, 133 vehicles and drivers were checked and the drivers were also interviewed by DSP officials. A significant proportion of the vehicles were also checked by Customs officials.

Separately a major operation in Dublin's Westmoreland Street was undertaken

during September involving members of the Authority's Compliance team and almost 30 Gardai and a total of 185 vehicles were checked.

In addition to the on-street checks we also carry out specific investigations, often in response to information we have received. Those investigations frequently draw on the support of other agencies where relevant.

We continue to be actively engaged in prosecuting those that do not adhere to the regulations. Some examples of some recent cases and investigations that we have been involved with are set out below.

Case 1:

Information was provided to us concerning a suspected unlicensed taxi service being advertised on a website. With the assistance of a Polish speaking Garda, a Compliance Officer made contact with the defendant through the Polish-language website and he agreed to take two 'passengers' from Dublin city centre to the airport. The 'passengers' were, in fact, a Compliance Officer and a member of An Garda Síochána. With the assistance of An Garda Síochána, the unlicensed vehicle was stopped at a prearranged location. The NTA charged the individual concerned with not having a valid SPSV vehicle licence. At Court the defendant pleaded guilty to the offence and a fine of €4,500 was imposed on him by the Judge.

Case 2:

A driver, having been detected by the NTA of operating without a valid SPSV Driver's Licence in Dublin and knowing that he was to appear before the District Court on the charge, was found to be illegally operating for a second time just days before his hearing. Following this second offence, the Judge imposed a fine of €2,300 and awarded costs of €800 to the NTA. He subsequently appealed this conviction but this appeal was dismissed by the Judge in the relevant court.

Case 3:

Following information provided by other drivers within the SPSV industry to the NTA, two operators were apprehended working within the same area of county Dublin although they were not licensed to operate in the county. Both appeared before the same District Court hearing and the Judge imposed a fine of €500 and awarded costs of €400 in each case.

Case 4:

In Kildare, Compliance Officers apprehended an unlicensed operator by means of hiring the vehicle and undertaking a journey and making payment when requested by the driver. At the court hearing, the offender claimed that the payment did not represent a fare but only a 'contribution to his expenses'. The Judge rejected this claim and convicted the driver, awarding overall costs of €700, of which €300 the judge determined to be a donation to charity.

Case 5:

A driver, who had been detected on a previous occasion without a valid SPSV Driver's Licence was apprehended again by a Compliance Officer and prosecuted before the District Court in Dublin. The Judge convicted the driver and imposed a fine of €1,500 and awarded costs of €400.

Case 6:

In another case, which was appealed to Dublin Circuit Court, a driver who had been issued a Fixed Charge Penalty for 'standing for hire when not at an appointed stand', claimed that he had been on his mobile phone to his child's minder at the time that he was detected by the Compliance Officer. The evidence of two Compliance Officers was that the driver had agreed to take them from Heuston Station to Dublin Airport. The Judge did not find the evidence of the driver or the child minder credible and upheld the original fine of €800 and awarded costs of €400.

Case 7:

In Cork, an unlicensed 'limousine' service was detected after it had been advertised online. The Compliance Officers made contact and arranged to be collected from Cork Airport. On the day arranged, the unlicensed operator provided the officers with a text confirming his presence and that he was awaiting their 'custom'. With the assistance of An Garda Síochána, the vehicle was stopped en-route to the city centre. At court, the operator pleaded guilty to having no SPSV driver licence and no SPSV vehicle licence and was fined €800 and costs of €400 were awarded.

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TAXI

TAXI BRANDING

Action 31 of the Taxi Regulation Review Report published by the Government in January 2012 requires the installation of semi-permanent signage on the doors of taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis.

Under new regulations to be published later this year, from 1st January 2013 all taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis will be required to have the branding fitted for renewal, when changing a vehicle, or when applying for a new wheelchair accessible taxi licence. The signage type that is to be installed is shown above and can also be installed with 'TACSAÍ' instead of 'TAXI'.

The branding will be fitted to the front doors of each vehicle and must only be fitted by an

'Authorised Supplier' appointed by the Authority. Applications are currently being processed and a list of Authorised Suppliers will be published shortly on the Taxi section of the NTA's website. This will be updated continuously as new suppliers are added. Authorised Suppliers are required to record details of the vehicles that they have branded and provide them to the Authority.

It is up to each licence holder to purchase and arrange the fitting of this branding prior to their vehicle licence inspection. The branding is required to be self-adhesive vinyl signage and semi-permanent in nature such that it is not capable of simple removal on a day to day basis.

It will be an offence to operate a taxi or wheelchair accessible taxi, without the correct signage in place after its **next** licensing transaction from 1st January 2013.

TAXI BILL

The Minister of State for Public and Commuter Transport has announced that he intends to bring a proposal to Cabinet shortly for the publication of a new Taxi Regulation Bill, which will replace the Taxi Regulation Act 2003 and provide for a comprehensive overhaul of the legislation governing the small public service vehicle industry.

The Bill will provide for the mandatory disqualification of SPSV drivers upon conviction of certain criminal offences and will also provide for the temporary disqualification from holding a licence upon the accumulation of a specified number of demerits for specified breaches of the taxi regulations. The Minister also announced that the new Bill will provide for the prohibition on the transfer of a vehicle licence recommended in the Taxi Regulation Review Report.

Transferability Prohibition

Action 14 of the Taxi Regulation Review Report sets out that taxi licences may no longer be transferred or sold to another individual. It had been intended that this would be introduced on 1st January 2013 under new regulations to be put in place by the Authority.

However, this measure will now be included in the new Taxi Bill to be published shortly by the Government and will become effective when that Bill is passed into law. Accordingly, it is not possible to indicate a definitive date for its introduction as the date will be dependent upon the passage of the new Taxi Bill through the Dáil and the Seanad.

Prohibition of Taxi Plate Only Rental

From the 1st January 2013, only 'full package' taxi rentals will be allowed and taxi plate only rentals will be prohibited. The person providing the rental must also own both the vehicle and the vehicle licence, and must provide the necessary insurance for the period of rental.

It will also be a requirement that the person providing the rental must also notify the Authority of the rental. A rental notification process will be phased in over the month of January. A web portal will be put in place from the start of January and guidance on how to register and use the simple on-line notification system will be made available. Operators will have the option of using the internet or the existing SPSV industry support line to make the notifications.

While the regulation requiring 'full package' taxi rentals only will be effective from 1st January 2013, the notification process will only become mandatory from 31st January 2013 to allow familiarisation with the notification process.

DRIVER TO VEHICLE LINK

From the start of next year, drivers will be required to ensure that the Authority's database is continually updated with the details of the vehicle that they are operating. It is intended that this notification process will be phased in during the month of January 2013. For the many drivers owning and operating a single vehicle, they will only need to make this notification once on that vehicle.

A web portal will be put in place from the start of January and guidance on how to register and use the simple on-line notification system will be issued. An easy-to-use smartphone app will also be available. In addition, the existing SPSV industry support line will be able to accept these notifications.

The notification system will be made available from 7th January 2013. While notification will only become mandatory from 31st January, drivers should use the January period to pre-notify their details on the system.

FÁILTE IRELAND CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING



Fáilte Ireland

As part of the Taxi Regulation Review Report published by the Government in January 2012, the National Transport Authority has been working with Fáilte Ireland to deliver Action 38 relating to customer service and hospitality. Fáilte Ireland has developed a three hour course about Service Excellence for passengers and it will incorporate information on The Gathering Ireland 2013 for taxi drivers to assist them with the tourist market and to help them grow their business. The purpose is to increase a taxi driver's knowledge of the hospitality market and to enhance the potential for tourists to use these services and maximise business opportunities in tourism.

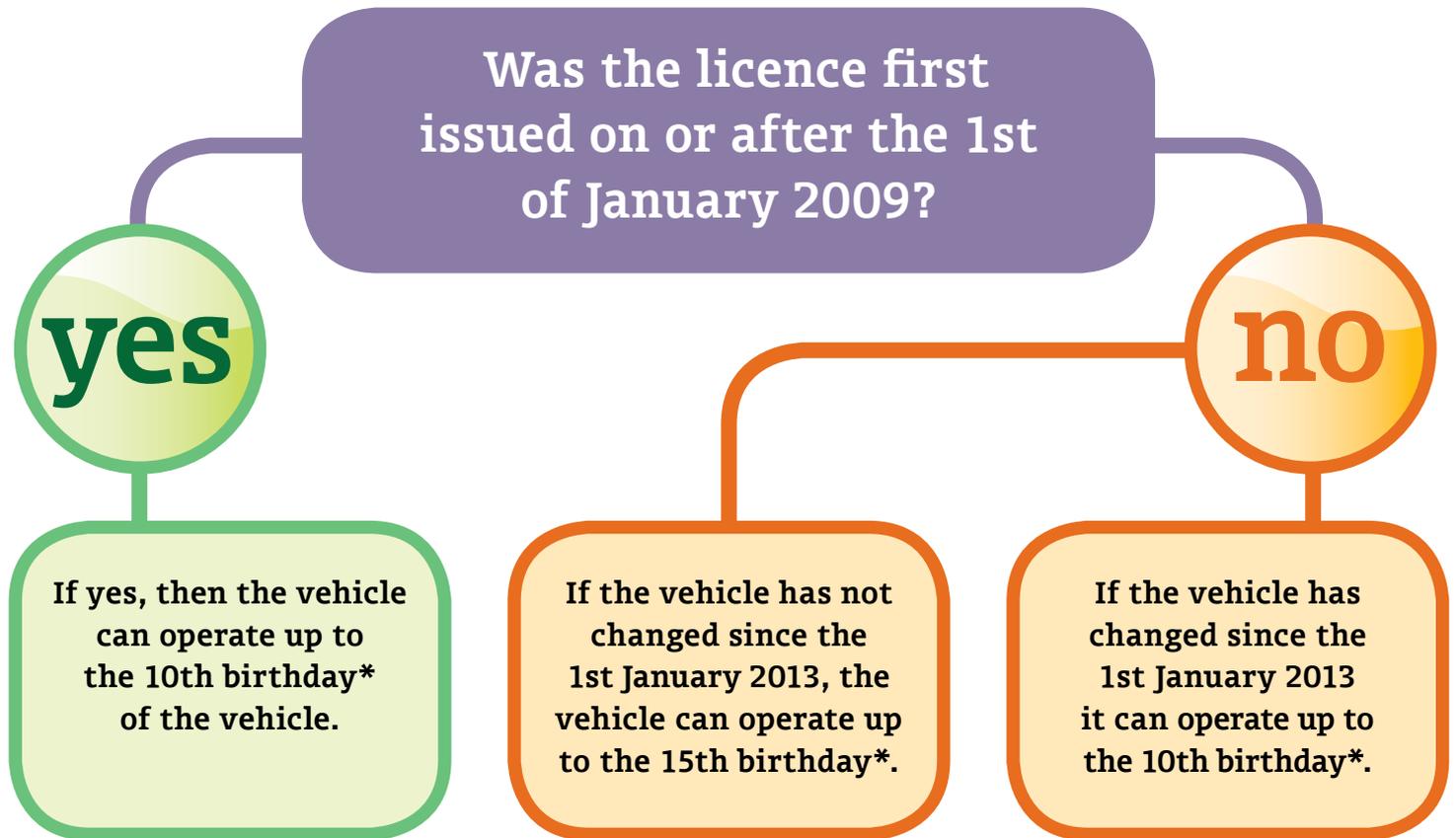
This course is being run as a pilot project and will be taking place within November on the following dates and locations:

- Monday 19th November – Dublin (morning)
- Tuesday 20th November – Dublin (afternoon)
- Monday 26th November – Galway
- Tuesday 27th November – Limerick
- Wednesday 28th November – Cork

We would like to thank the industry for their interest in this course. The Authority has already contacted everyone that has received a place on the course as we were limited to 40 places per course.

Age Limit Rules from January 2013

TAXIS AND HACKNEYS



Taxi licences which have been the subject of a transfer since 8th June 2010 will continue to be subject to the additional current requirement that any replacement vehicle on such transferred licence shall be no older than the existing vehicle associated with the licence.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HACKNEYS

If the vehicle was associated with the licence on 1st January 2013, it can operate up to the 15th birthday*. Otherwise the vehicle can only operate up to the 10th birthday*.

LIMOUSINES

Limousine licences do not have an age limit.

Six Month Renewals and Licence Expiry

Under all categories, vehicles which have passed the 10th birthday* can only be licensed for a maximum period of six months.

The last licence expiry date will be set for the 10th or 15th birthday* of the vehicle where a maximum limit applies.

* Birthday is calculated on the date of first registration of the vehicle.

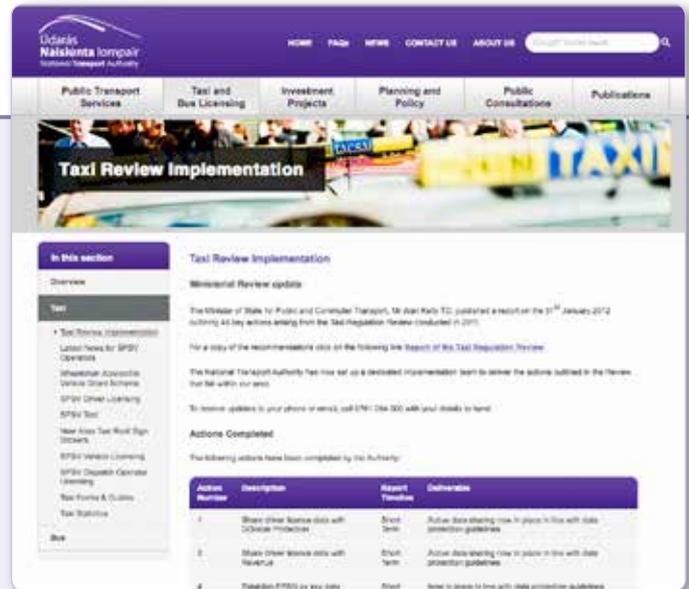
KEEP YOURSELF INFORMED



To download fact sheets for additional information on the January reforms please visit our website.

Up-to-date information and answers to frequently asked questions are also available on our website

www.nationaltransport.ie/taxi-and-bus-licensing/taxi/taxi-review-implementation



HAVE YOU GIVEN US YOUR EMAIL?

The Authority would like to provide industry members with regular updates.

So to keep yourself updated, please register your email and phone number by calling our industry line on **0761 064 000**.

We will be sending SMS texts and emails to everyone that had provided us with their information.



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