

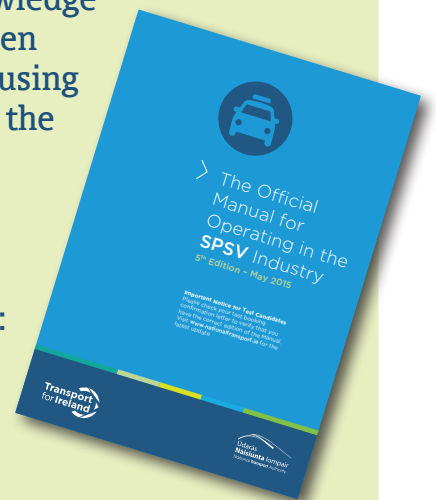
## NEW OFFICIAL MANUAL FOR OPERATING IN THE SPSV INDUSTRY – NEW INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE TEST



The National Transport Authority's Skills Development Programme for SPSV operators is designed to help you develop the knowledge and skills that you need to operate in the SPSV industry. These are detailed in the **Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry** which is the textbook for the Industry Knowledge Test.

The 5th edition of the **Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry**, [downloadable here](#), has been updated to incorporate the changes introduced by recent legislation. All operators should familiarise themselves with the content.

From 01 July 2015, the 5th edition of the **Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry** will be used as the basis for all Industry Knowledge tests. If you have been preparing for a test using an earlier edition of the manual, you should arrange to take the test before **01 July 2015** by calling the Information Line on: **0761 064 000**.



## VEHICLE LICENCE ASSIGNMENT



No SPSV licence transfer or assignment is permitted under SPSV legislation except a "Section 15 Nomination".

Vehicle licence holders will receive a S15N form, with their renewal booking confirmation letter, to nominate a representative who may, in the event of your death, apply to the National Transport Authority to continue to operate your vehicle licence. If your nominated representative changes for any reason, perhaps a child becomes eligible on reaching 18 years old, just send us in an updated form.

But you don't have to wait to receive the form with your next booking confirmation letter. You can download it from the "Forms and Guides" section of our website today, together with the **G15 information Guide** for full details.

## GET YOUR METER SEALED BY 01 JULY



### The Taxi Regulation Act 2013 (Maximum Fares) Order 2015 came into effect on 30 April.

All taximeters should now be programmed with this fare structure. It is an offence to operate your vehicle unless its meter is calibrated to operate in line with the current national maximum fare. Your reprogrammed taximeter must now be verified and fitted with the Legal Metrology Service security seal.

Applus is the contractor appointed by the Legal Metrology Service to verify and seal taximeters after programming. They now have extra capacity nationwide and have opened two extra centres, in Dublin 17 and Dublin 24, to assist with demand. Opening times and availability will vary so to find out dates and times for your area please ring 01 413 5951.

## VEHICLE LICENCE RENEWALS

Booking your vehicle's licence renewal assessment at least two weeks before your licence expiry date is your best option. Your next expiry date will follow the expiry date currently printed on your licence. It does not reduce because your vehicle has passed early - there is no disadvantage in booking early.

The advantage is that you get rid of the risk of having to pay late renewal fees, up to €350 extra, together with potential cancellation or change of appointment fees, if you leave booking your licence renewal assessment to the last few days before your licence expires.

Unfortunately, vehicles do sometimes have faults and may not pass the NCT first time round. If this happens, you can change your licence renewal assessment appointment for no fee up to two full days prior to the appointment booked. This option is lost if your vehicle is booked for an inspection a couple of days before expiry and change fees or late fees could apply. We have seen a recent rise in late fee and cancellation or change of appointment payments where booking requests could not be completed because the licence holder's tax clearance or NCT status was out of date or unable to be verified. In general, it can take up to 48 hours for Revenue and NCT data to become "visible" to the National Transport Authority.

**Reduce your risk and your costs by booking early.**

## WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE GRANT SCHEME 2015



### Early Notice - Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme 2015

A Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Grant Scheme 2015 will open on 01 July and run to 30 November 2015 to encourage the continued increase of wheelchair accessible taxi and wheelchair accessible hackney vehicles in the Irish SPSV fleet. Applications must be received by the National Transport Authority by 30 October and the vehicle successfully passed through its inspection by 30 November.

In 2014, a similar Grant Scheme issued 128 grants - ranging from €10,000 for a new vehicle to €3,000 for a five year old vehicle.

New Vehicle (less than 3,000km and 3 months old)	€10,000
Vehicle less than one year of age	€ 8,000
Vehicle less than two years of age	€ 6,500
Vehicle less than three years of age	€ 5,000
Vehicle less than four years of age	€ 4,000
Vehicle less than five years of age	€ 3,500
Vehicle less than six years of age	€ 3,000

The 2015 WAV Grant Scheme details will be downloadable from our website on 01 July.

### Important Dates:

**01 July** Scheme opens – application forms available on website

**30 October** Deadline for receipt of application form

**30 November** Deadline for vehicle inspection – Scheme closes

## END TO CHEQUES

In line with government objectives, the National Transport Authority no longer accepts payments by cheque. Payments can be made by credit card, debit card, bank draft or postal order.

## COMMUNICATIONS - EMAIL AND SMS

It is crucial that the National Transport Authority has the correct email address and mobile telephone number for all licence holders in order to communicate industry changes and news. Driver Licence renewal notices will shortly be transferred to email communication and all industry updates are already issued by email or SMS messages alerting operators to check the website.

Please contact the Information Line on 0761 064 000 or [taxis@nationaltransport.ie](mailto:taxis@nationaltransport.ie) to update your email and telephone contacts to ensure you do not miss out on important news and notifications.

# COMPLIANCE NEWS IN 2015



In April 2014, the National Transport Authority increased the number of compliance officers from eight to twenty-three and, for the first time, officers were based across the country providing an ongoing compliance presence in every region. In addition to members of An Garda Síochána, these officers enforce the SPSV regulations at a local level, dealing with local issues and addressing compliance issues raised by operators and members of the public.

In 2014, the increased number of officers was able to deal with the greatest volume of customer complaints since the National Transport Authority (and formerly the Commission for Taxi Regulation) took over the responsibility for investigating complaints from An Garda Síochána in 2006. The increase in the number of compliance officers, and the ability to maintain an ongoing presence in more locations, meant that a greater number of offences were detected, resulting in a greater number of Fixed Payment Notices being issued and more unlicensed operators being detected than previously. The additional compliance officers are now well-established and will continue to pay specific attention to:

- Unlicensed operators;
- Large events where SPSVs will be in attendance;
- Transport hubs; and
- The overall standard of service offered by SPSVs.

## JANUARY TO APRIL 2015 - COMPLAINTS

The National Transport Authority's complaints process is set up to receive complaints from members of the public and users of SPSVs. The types of complaint is categorised are as follows:

- Driver behaviour;
- Vehicle condition;
- Hiring matters;
- Fares matters; and
- Identification.

Should a complaint be made against a driver, a member of the compliance team will investigate it and a compliance officer may wish to speak to that driver. This is the driver's opportunity to provide their account of the circumstances and no decision is made on any complaint without all parties being given the opportunity to give their account. All valid complaints are investigated and members of the public may make their complaint through the website of Transport for Ireland: [www.transportforireland.ie/taxi/taxi-compliments-complaints/](http://www.transportforireland.ie/taxi/taxi-compliments-complaints/)

During the first four months of 2015, the National Transport Authority received 242 customer complaints in respect of journeys undertaken in SPSVs. The largest single category of complaint was related to driver behaviour and this accounted for half of all complaints received.

# COMPLIANCE NEWS IN 2015

## CONTINUED



### JANUARY TO APRIL 2015 – FIXED PAYMENT NOTICES

During this period, compliance officers issued 249 Fixed Payment Notices. Over half the notices issued was in relation to drivers failing to ‘associate’ themselves to a vehicle – driver to vehicle Link. This notice attracts an initial penalty of €40. To avoid this penalty, drivers are reminded to maintain valid links to the vehicle which they are operating and to always create new links when they change to another vehicle. Details on how to create a ‘driver to vehicle link’ can be found at: [www.nationaltransport.ie/taxi-and-bus-licensing/taxi/](http://www.nationaltransport.ie/taxi-and-bus-licensing/taxi/)

### JANUARY TO APRIL 2015 – UNLICENSED OPERATORS

During January to April 2015, the compliance team detected 39 incidents of unlicensed operation of SPSVs. These involved either the driver or the vehicle being unlicensed and, on occasion, the absence of any licence at all. The National Transport Authority will prosecute offenders whenever possible and, following a conviction at the District Court, the maximum fine that may be imposed for operating without a valid SPSV licence is €5,000.

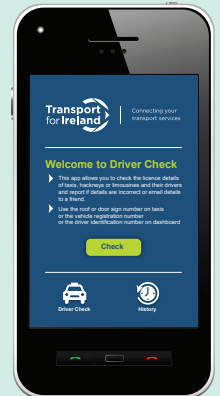
The National Transport Authority is now actively investigating offences where operators advertise or promote their services, without valid SPSV licences. Under section 27 of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013, compliance officers are able to prosecute unlicensed operators on the basis of either an advertisement or promotional material, without the need to provide evidence of a journey having been taken. All operators, who advertise their SPSV service, must ensure that they have the required licences on the vehicles advertised to operate that service. Following a conviction for such an offence, the District Court may impose a fine of up to €5,000.

The compliance team welcomes any information including printed material or website addresses where there is evidence of operators contravening ‘section 27’.

The compliance team relies upon information being provided by those within the industry. Where information can be verified, and represents a breach of regulations, action will be taken. On some occasions, evidence may not be sufficient to prosecute an individual for an offence at that particular time, however all information is valuable and welcomed.

### DRIVER CHECK APP

The introduction of the Driver Check App has provided members of the public with an excellent security tool to check on the validity of driver and vehicle licences for the taxi that they have chosen to travel in. It has also become a useful tool for other SPSV operators to report unlicensed operation.



However, it must be remembered that any reports of specific, illegal activity should not be made through this App, as it is not possible to submit the detailed information required by the compliance team. The National Transport Authority maintains an Industry Confidential Line - **0761 08 5000** - for receiving such information anonymously. Information can also be sent to [taxis@nationaltransport.ie](mailto:taxis@nationaltransport.ie)

It is also important that reports of offences which are not subject to SPSV regulations, such as criminal matters, road traffic offences and welfare fraud, are reported to An Garda Síochána or the Department of Social Protection directly and not to the National Transport Authority. The Central Control Section of the Department of Social Protection accepts reports of possible fraud online, by phone or in writing.

### KEEP YOURSELF INFORMED



by visiting [www.nationaltransport.ie](http://www.nationaltransport.ie) regularly for the latest SPSV news and updates.