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VEHICLE STANDARDS CONSULTATION

Earlier this year, February 2011, the National Transport Authority revoked the aspect of the previous 'nine-year rule' relating to taxi and hackney licences issued before 1st January 2009 and, at that time, announced its intention to review relevant vehicle standards for SPSVs.

The aspect of the nine-year rule that was revoked related to those renewing their standard taxi and hackney vehicle licence in 2011 who had applied for their first vehicle licence prior to 1st January 2009.

That vehicle standards consultation is now being launched. There are eight issues being considered; the aim of these proposals is to improve the quality of service, comfort and safety of all passengers and drivers. The establishment by Government of the Taxi Regulation Review Steering Group included reference to Vehicle Standards consultation and it has been deemed desirable to align the timescales of both. The result of this consultation will be an important input into the wider Government review.

The purpose of this consultation is to afford the industry, the public and all stakeholders and suppliers an opportunity to put forward views and suggestions, in relation to vehicle standards.

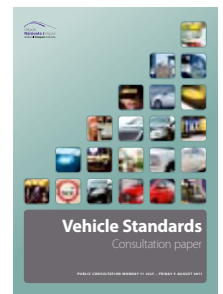
The Authority will consider all views expressed through this consultation process prior to formulating and approving any new regulations. The Authority intends that the changes, when implemented, will serve principally to maintain and improve the general quality of SPSVs and raise the overall standards of the whole SPSV fleet. Where applicable the timescales are indicated in the consultation document.

When the consultation process is concluded, the Authority will put in place revised national vehicle standards. It is therefore essential that those parties who will be affected by the changes take part in this consultation and make their views known during the consultation period.

When all the submissions have been considered, together with any advice received from the Advisory Committee, and a regulatory impact assessment concluded, the Authority will arrive at its decisions and publish these in the form of new/revised regulations.

It is important to note that this Consultation Paper relates only to vehicle standards. Please complete the online submission form at vehiclestandards.nationaltransport.ie or by post. The response questions are not designed to limit your submission but are simply there to provide a starting point for your thoughts. The deadline for any submission to be considered is 5pm on 5th August 2011

Please send your submission by post to
National Transport Authority
Taxi Regulation Directorate
35 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2



INVITATION FOR SUBMISSIONS ON THE TAXI REGULATION REVIEW

Mr Alan Kelly TD Minister of State for Public and Commuter Transport last month announced the Taxi Regulation Review in line with the commitment given in the Programme for Government. The review will address a wide range of issues relating to the taxi sector including the current regulatory policy and practices, licensing systems,

enforcement and future dialogue with the taxi sector. A copy of the review terms of reference can be accessed at www.dttas.ie

Written submissions on the review are invited from all interested parties and stakeholders and will be accepted up to and including 5th August 2011.

Please send your submission by post to
Taxi Review Secretariat
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
Leeson Lane
Dublin 2

Or in electronic format to
taxiregulationreview@dtas.ie



Grant aid scheme

As part of the Authority's commitment to deliver key objectives set out in the Taxi Regulation Act 2003, for the development of high quality accessible services by SPSV's, an announcement was made to provide a grant aid scheme to support the upgrade of existing wheelchair accessible vehicles and assist new vehicle licence applicants in the provision of further accessible services.

Due to the current exchequer budgetary constraints, large scale funding to fully replace the existing wheelchair accessible fleet is unavailable.

Consequently, the Authority intends to revoke the regulations affecting existing vehicle licences which required vehicle upgrades on renewal of licences in 2012 and to offer a limited scheme.

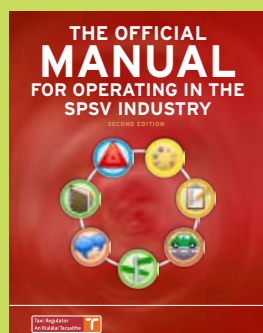
Funding for the grant scheme, which will commence in September 2011, will be set at €1.5m to year end. It is proposed to apply €1m for conversion of qualifying existing wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV's) and €0.5m for new applicants for WAV licences. In the event of under use of the €1m or €0.5m allocations, the Authority reserves the right to increase or reduce appropriately the initial allocation sums.

To apply for the scheme

	Existing applicants	New applicants
Vehicle standards 2007*	Do not have to meet the standards outlined in the National Vehicle Standard Requirements 2007*	Must meet the standards outlined in the National Vehicle Standard Requirements 2007
Vehicle age**	Vehicles must be less than five years of age	Vehicles must be less than two years of age
Maximum grant aid***	€6,000	€15,000
<p>* National Vehicle Standard Requirements 2007 (www.nationaltransport.ie).</p> <p>** Age will be determined from the date of first registration of the vehicle.</p> <p>*** Grant programme will include a cap on the maximum funding available to any one operator or undertaking. Specifically, no one applicant or undertaking may receive more than €100,000 in funding over any three year period.</p>		

The Authority recommends that you undertake the Skills Development Test as this forms part of the criteria for the grant scheme. Furthermore, ensuring that copies of booking records are in order as well as familiarising yourself with the new vehicle wheelchair standards (please see Information Guide

G9) will help preparation for the grant scheme. Details of disability awareness training providers will be made available in the coming months. Please see www.nationaltransport.ie for more detailed requirements. Further information will be available on our website closer to the launch of the scheme.



SPSV Skills Development Programme

Free Industry Knowledge tests and complimentary copies of the manual have now ended.

Over 5,000 industry members sat their free Industry Knowledge test between January and May 2011 70% of them passed. Since its introduction in July 2009, a total of 7,316 industry members have passed the Industry Knowledge (as at end May 2011).

Adding this to the number of new industry members who have successfully passed the SPSV Entry test, 9,227 industry members are now certified drivers, and are entitled to certified (purple) ID cards. This represents 23% of current industry members. The Industry Knowledge test is now priced at €84.70 and the manual costs €30.

Industry members are encouraged to sit the Industry Knowledge test and to order their certified cards. These cards advertise to consumers your expertise in the industry, and are part of a wider process aimed at raising industry standards nationwide.

Vehicle licensing service update

The enhancements to the vehicle licensing service, as laid out in the information bulletin sent to licence holders in April, are due to be introduced shortly.

The Authority will publish the release date on its website and in the vehicle licence renewal reminder letters in the coming weeks. Licence holders are advised to check the website prior to booking their renewal appointment.

Documents will continue to be checked at inspection centres until the new service has been introduced.

The new service will involve all documentation being checked at time of booking. This is designed to reduce the number of inspection failures due to incorrect documentation and ensure a more efficient turnaround time at the vehicle licensing centres.

Licence holders must make their appointment themselves and before phoning to book must ensure that:

- 1 They are tax cleared with Revenue and their tax clearance details are available online.
- 2 They have a valid NCT for their vehicle that was obtained within 90 days of the appointment date.
- 3 They have valid SPSV insurance and can provide the insurance expiry date.
- 4 They can confirm verbally that they have read and accepted the terms and conditions as provided on their renewal reminder letter and as available on the Authority's website.

Important note

Please allow sufficient time between your NCT date and making the booking for your licensing inspection. NCT and Revenue data should generally be available for verification within 24 hours. However, this is not guaranteed and licence holders should

allow a minimum of 48 hours for Revenue and the Department of Transport to update their records.

Further information

<http://taxiregulation.nationaltransport.ie>

Area stickers

New regulations state that all taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis must display an area sticker on their roof signs from 1 August 2011. This area sticker must identify the area or areas for which the driver of the vehicle is licensed to stand or ply for hire. These county identifiers have been introduced as a direct response to requests from industry representative groups, and in consultation with the Advisory Council and An Garda Síochána.

The area stickers contain numerous security features and are tamper proof, so counterfeit stickers will be very difficult to manufacture convincingly. The design of the sticker incorporates an intricate pattern of lines and angles and uses different spacing to create complex line patterns which are inherently difficult for a counterfeiter to copy.

Since 4 May 2011, area stickers have been available for all counties, and all taxi and wheelchair accessible taxi drivers can now order a set of area stickers. The National Transport Authority expects an increase in volume of area sticker orders in June and July, so you are advised to place your order in plenty of time, to ensure you receive your area stickers by 1 August.

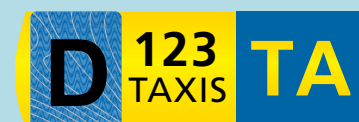
Ordering your area stickers

You can order your area sticker by going to www.nationaltransport.ie, following the link to the Taxi Regulation Directorate section of the website, and by clicking on the link for area roof sign stickers.

Please note that the details entered when placing your order – your name, address, SPSV Driver Licence number and PPS number – must match the file in the National Transport Authority's database. If you experience any issues in this regard, you are advised to telephone our industry information line on 1890 347 347.

You can also order your stickers by telephoning our industry information line. A single pair of area stickers (one for the front and one for the rear of the roof sign) is priced at €15 when purchased online, and €20 when purchased over the phone. Pairs of stickers for additional areas, when purchased as part of a single order, are available at a special discount price of €4.50.

Drivers licensed for Dublin who have already purchased a sticker and who now wish to order stickers for their secondary areas can also avail of this discount price.



Facts and figures

Tables are correct as of 30 June 2011

Active driver licences

40,253

Vehicle licences county and category as of 30 June 2011

County	Hackney	Limousine	Taxi	WAT*	WAH**	Total
Carlow	37	1	93	22	0	153
Cavan	93	1	104	10	0	208
Clare	158	37	197	15	0	407
Cork	543	138	1,442	93	0	2,216
Donegal	266	28	194	20	0	508
Dublin	120	345	10,865	552	0	11,882
Galway	267	48	687	72	0	1,074
Kerry	187	74	235	21	0	517
Kildare	193	81	667	94	0	1,035
Kilkenny	49	11	156	27	0	243
Laois	63	9	145	33	0	250
Leitrim	44	7	33	14	0	98
Limerick	136	62	562	34	0	794
Longford	29	3	65	10	0	107
Louth	84	28	501	40	0	653
Mayo	177	30	177	20	0	404
Meath	122	65	1,068	72	0	1,327
Monaghan	86	7	6	10	0	109
Offaly	110	16	73	11	0	210
Roscommon	102	15	40	12	0	169
Sligo	32	19	134	13	0	198
Tipperary	252	32	32	2	1	319
Waterford	60	43	218	29	1	351
Westmeath	39	13	254	32	0	338
Wexford	131	35	136	26	0	328
Wicklow	95	46	288	19	0	448
Total	3,475	1,194	18,372	1,303	2	24,346

*Wheelchair Accessible Taxi. **Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle.

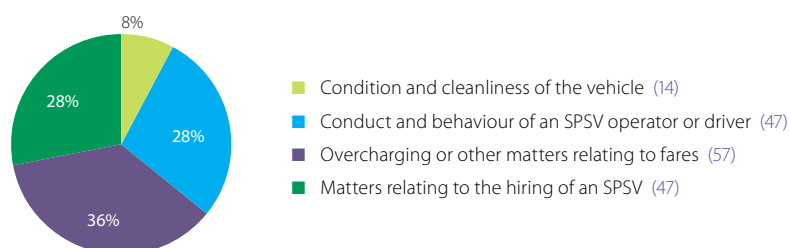
Fixed-charge penalties 2011

Offence	Number
Standing for hire at a place other than an appointed stand	99
Plying/standing for hire in a hackney/limousine	1
Failing to comply with regulations in relation to the fitting/operation of a taximeter	22
Failing to operate a taximeter	8
Failing to provide a receipt	3
Not having adequate knowledge of local area	7
Failing to display tamper-proof disc	0
Standing for hire at an appointed stand when the vehicle is not available for hire	4
Failing to have taximeter properly calibrated	0
Refusing to carry a passenger for a journey of not more than 30 kilometres	1
Refusing to carry an assistance dog or guide dog	1
Applying a booking fee	2
Failing to display driver identification	4
Failing to display in-vehicle information	0
Failing to comply with roof sign requirements	6
Causing the taximeter to operate while standing or plying for hire	0
Having forged identification	0
Displaying on a hackney or limousine a sign or advertisement other than one prescribed by the Authority	0
Total	158

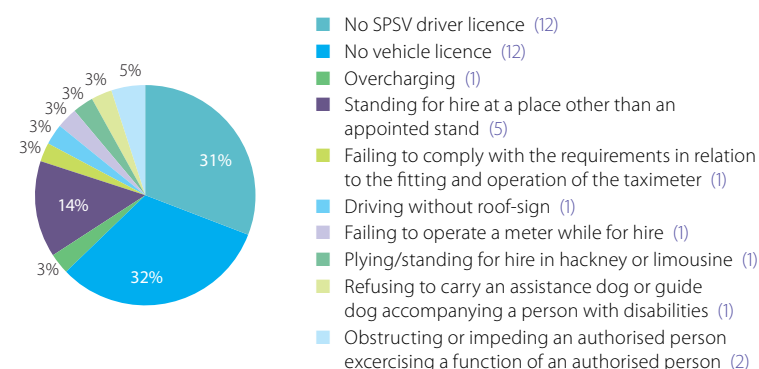
Breakdown of prosecutions by area

County	Number
Leitrim	2
Cork	4
Tipperary	1
Monaghan	1
Meath	1
Westmeath	1
Kerry	1
Louth	2
Dublin	19
Dublin Airport	4
Total	36

Breakdown of complaints 2011 | Total of 165 complaints



Breakdown of prosecutions 2011 | Total of 37 offences



Skills Development Test

Total of 9,333 certified drivers

SPSV Entry Test (for new driver licence applicants and dispatch operators)	
Total number of tests sat to date	8,893*
Number of passes	1,976
Pass rate	22%
SPSV Industry Knowledge Test (for existing drivers)	
Total number of tests sat to date	10,303
Number of passes	7,357
Pass rate	71%

*Includes re-sits.

For further information on any matter relating to SPSVs please contact

National Transport Authority
Taxi Regulation Directorate
35 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2

☎ 1890 347 347
✉ taxis@nationaltransport.ie
www.nationaltransport.ie