

Guidelines for Obtaining a Local Area Hackney Licence

Background:

Action 46 of the Taxi Regulation Review Report published by the Government in January 2012, recommended the introduction of a local area hackney licence to address transport deficits in certain rural areas. Regulations permitting the issue of such licences were introduced with effect from December 2013. This guidance note sets out the application procedure for local area hackney licences.

Applicable areas:

The National Transport Authority (Authority) can only issue local area hackney licences where it is satisfied that:

- (a) there is a demand for local area hackney services in the area in respect of which the licence is sought, and
- (b) the public transport needs of the area in respect of which the licence is sought are not being adequately met by existing public transport services.

Guide to obtaining licences to operate a local area hackney service:

To operate a local area hackney service, two licences are required. These are:

- (1) a local area hackney vehicle licence for the vehicle – this licence is obtainable from the Authority; and
- (2) a licence to drive a local area hackney – this licence is obtainable from An Garda Síochána. It is not required if you already hold a valid licence to drive small public service vehicles.

Area eligibility requirements

Any application for a local area hackney vehicle licence must be accompanied by:

- (a) A letter from an established organisation representing local businesses in the area **or** from a community group with a charitable tax status setting out the need for the local area hackney service;
- (b) An analysis of the need for a local area hackney service to be carried out by or on behalf of the relevant local authority; and
- (c) A confirmation of the need for the service signed by the local authority. Where the local authority is a county council, this should be signed at County Manager or Director of Services level.

New Licence Fees

The cost of a new local area hackney vehicle licence is €50. The cost of a licence to drive a local area hackney is €20.

Process

There are three stages in the application process. These are:

1. Area eligibility authorisation for the proposed local hackney service,
2. Vehicle licensing, and
3. Driver licensing.

The process for each of these is set out in the following sections.

Area eligibility authorisation for the proposed local hackney service

You, as the applicant, will be required to provide:

- Written confirmation of the need for a local area hackney service from either:
 - an established body representing local businesses; or
 - a community group who has been granted charitable tax status by Revenue;
- An analysis of the need for the proposed local area hackney service, carried out by or on behalf of the relevant local authority; and
- A letter confirming need for this service signed by the Manager or a Director of Services of the relevant local authority.

The Authority will assess your submission taking into account:

- The public transport needs of the relevant area;
- Any existing public transport services and the impact of the proposed service on such services – this includes other SPSVs;
- Any other proposals for public transport services in the area;
- Any transport demand analysis accompanying the application; and
- Any other information that the Authority considers relevant.

Licensing of a local area hackney licence

Stage 1: Conditional Offer of a licence

Your vehicle will be required to:

- Have a valid NCT certificate, and
- Meet the vehicle requirements (excluding luggage requirements) applicable to a standard hackney – you can get details of those requirements under the “Vehicle Requirements” part of the “SPSV Vehicle Licensing” section of the Taxi area of our website www.nationaltransport.ie; and
- Pass a suitability inspection confirming compliance with those vehicle requirements.

You should submit to the Authority (at the address on the application form):

- The completed application form (LAH1) for a local area hackney vehicle licence;
- The three items above in relation to area eligibility; and
- The licence application fee of €50 (bank draft, or postal order made payable to the National Transport Authority).

If the Authority determines that a local area hackney licence can be issued in respect of the area identified in your application, and if you have a valid tax clearance status and your vehicle is of any appropriate type and age, then the Authority will issue a conditional offer of a local area hackney vehicle licence to you. This will also give details of how to complete Stage 2 below.

Licensing of a local area hackney licence

Stage 2: Final Issue of a licence

Following receipt of a conditional offer, you will be required to get your vehicle inspected at an NTA Inspection Centre to confirm its suitability and that it conforms to the relevant vehicle requirements. There is no additional charge for this inspection. In addition, when booking this inspection, you must have in place insurance for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward and bring the insurance certificate to the inspection centre for verification.

Once your vehicle passes this inspection a local area hackney vehicle licence will be issued to you. That licence will be valid for one year and can be renewed annually up to the vehicle reaching ten years of age. Only two renewals may be made in respect of a local area hackney vehicle licence. After three years a new application would be required for a new local area hackney vehicle licence.

Obtaining a Licence to drive a local area hackney licence

- Contact the nearest Garda office that deals with licensing of drivers of public service vehicles and obtain a PSV 15/18 application form.
- Pay the driver **licence fee** of €20 to the Authority. You can do this over the phone using a credit or debit card (phone 0761 064000). The Authority will issue you with a receipt for this fee.
- Obtain two identical passport-style photographs, each measuring approximately 10cm by 7cm, showing your head and shoulders and complying in other respects with **standards for passport photographs**.

Complete the PSV 15/18 application form and submit it to the Garda office in your area that deals with licensing of drivers of public service vehicles, along with:

- A letter stating that this is an application for a licence to drive a local area hackney;
- Your two passport standard photographs;
- Valid electronic tax clearance certificate;
- Your driving licence; and
- The receipt from the Authority for your licence fee.

If you are resident in the area in respect of which the local area hackney licence is sought you are not required to undertake the Industry Knowledge or Area Knowledge tests normally applying for SPSV driver licences.

Information for local authorities supporting a local area hackney licence application

Statutory Instrument 33 of 2015 – Taxi Regulation Act 2003 (Local Area Hackney) Regulations 2013 - provides for the issuing of local area hackney licences in localities where there is a transport need that is not being adequately met by existing public transport services.

The provision of a local area hackney licence requires *“an analysis of the need for such local area hackney service in the proposed area carried out by or on behalf of the local authority in whose administrative area the local area hackney service is proposed to be provided and written confirmation from that local authority that there is a need for such local area hackney service in the proposed area.”*

An analysis of the need for a local area hackney service should address the following points:

1. Define and describe, by map if possible, the relevant geographic area that relates to the licence application;
2. Set out the details of the existing public transport service operating in the defined area, including a description of the services, what areas are served and the frequency of these services, covering (as applicable):
 - a. Bus services, both local and national;
 - b. Train services;
 - c. Services provided under the Rural Transport Programme;
 - d. Volunteer transport services in operation in the area; and
 - e. Any existing taxi or hackney service operating in the area;
3. An explanation of the transport deficit that exists in the area, highlighting any particular difficulties being experienced as a result of such deficits; and
4. Any other items considered relevant.