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TAXI REGULATION ACT 2013



The Taxi Regulation Act 2013 (other than section 49) came into operation on 6th April 2014. Some of the key provisions of the Act include:

1. The automatic disqualification of driver licence holders convicted of serious offences for specified periods extending up to lifetime disqualification.
2. A prohibition on vehicle licence transfers.
3. Arrangement for the nomination of a representative to whom a vehicle licence can be transferred to, in the event of the death of the licence holder.
4. A declaration by driver licence applicants in relation to other employments.
5. A demerits system whereby drivers accumulating eight or more demerit points will have their licence automatically suspended for three months.
6. A prohibition on offering or advertising a vehicle for passenger hire without the vehicle being licensed.
7. The right to appoint compliance support personnel under a service agreement arrangement

NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE

Transferring of vehicle licences is no longer permitted under the new legislation. However, licence holders should note that there is now a process in place allowing them to nominate a representative who can apply to have the licence transferred to them in the event of the licence holder's death.

This form – Form S15 – is available on the taxi section of our website. It is important that operators complete this form and return it to the NTA as without such nomination it will not be possible for that other person to seek the transfer of the licence.

NEW REGULATIONS:

On 7th April 2014, the Small Public Service Vehicle (Consolidation and Reform) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 165 of 2014) came into effect. These regulations were the subject of a recent public consultation which concluded in January 2014.

The regulations consolidate all existing taxi regulations into one statutory instrument, bringing together regulations made over the last 50 years. Some of the key changes in the new regulations include the following:

DRIVER LICENSING

- 1 Drivers will be required to maintain a valid tax clearance certificate at all times. The NTA will shortly activate a system of checks with Revenue.
- 2 Drivers who have been the subject of three or more complaints in relation to area knowledge may be required to sit and pass the Area Knowledge Test to be able to renew their licence.
- 3 To reduce the potential of unlicensed drivers, a late renewal fee for driver licences is being introduced. Driver licence applications completed after the licence expiry date will be subject to an additional €50 fee if the application is made within 30 days of the previous licence expiry or an additional €150 fee if made later.

VEHICLE LICENSING

- 4** Holders of a standard taxi licence may exchange their licence for a wheelchair accessible taxi licence and retain the right to “swap” back. This will allow them to avail of wheelchair accessible vehicle grants and also to operate the wheelchair accessible taxi up to 15 years of age.
- 5** Limousines whose date of first registration is prior to 1st January 1980 can be licensed for twelve months.
- 6** Holders of “Stamp 2 Visas” will not be eligible to hold SPSV vehicle licences.

VEHICLES

- 7** Wheelchair accessible vehicles associated with a licence at the start of April 2014 have no maximum age limit - all other wheelchair accessible vehicles can be operated to fifteen years of age.
- 8** Age rules for standard taxis and standard hackneys remain unchanged – for pre-2009 licences, the vehicle on the licence at 1st January 2013 can operate up to fifteen years of age. All other standard taxis and standard hackneys, including following a change of vehicle, can operate to the 10th anniversary of the date of first registration.
- 9** Advertising on taxis is permitted but subject to the following restrictions:
- No signs on front doors other than prescribed door signs;
 - Maximum of 1600 cm² of signs/advertising on rear side doors;
 - No electronic signs unless approved by NTA;
 - No offensive, discriminatory, threatening or obscene signs;
 - Only prescribed credit card symbols; and
 - No representative group’s signs or logos.
- 10** Wheelchair accessible vehicles must be able to carry one person plus an occupied wheelchair and four persons when operating in “non-wheelchair” mode.
- 11** For new wheelchair accessible vehicle licences, including where an operator exchanges their licence category, the wheelchair accessible vehicle must be under six years of age.

OPERATING AS AN SPSV

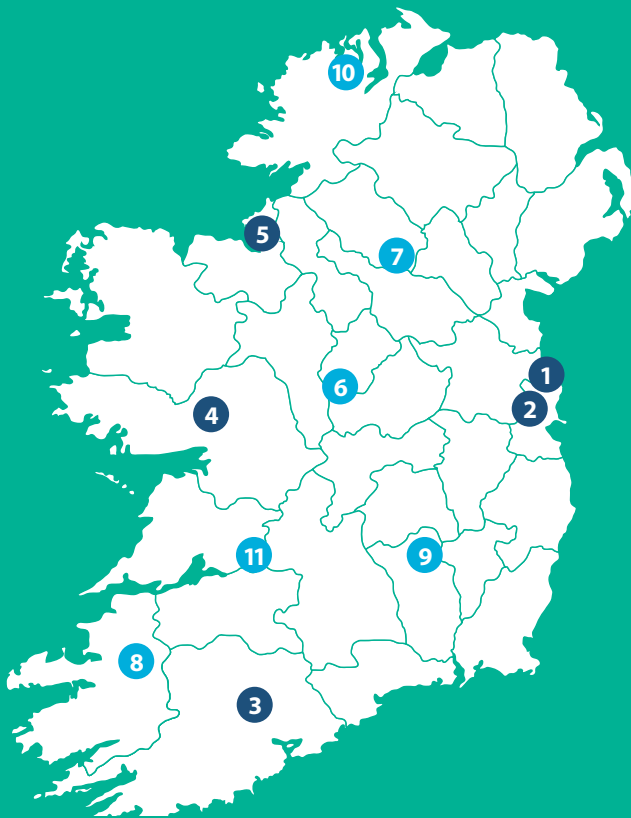
- 12** Except where there is a prior written agreement, an additional charge not exceeding 5% of the total fare calculated by the taximeter may be added to the fare where a payment is made using a credit or debit card.
- 13** Knowingly making a false notification in relation to the “driver to vehicle link” is an offence.

DISPATCH OPERATOR LICENSING

- 14** Introduction of a simplified system of dispatch operator licensing.
- 15** Requires app based booking systems to hold dispatch operator licences.

SERVICE CHANGES FOR THE SPSV OPERATORS FROM APRIL 2014

The Authority, in partnership with the Legal Metrology Service of the National Standards Authority of Ireland, has introduced a single network of 11 dedicated centres that will provide SPSV inspections, taximeter verification and skills knowledge testing services.



1. **Dublin North (Northpoint)**
2. **Dublin South (Greenhills)**
3. **Cork***
4. **Galway**
5. **Sligo***
6. **Athlone**
7. **Cavan**
8. **Killarney**
9. **Kilkenny**
10. **Donegal**
11. **Tipperary**

- Main Inspection Centre
- Inspection Centre

* These locations are temporary pending completion of 2 permanent centres in Cork and Sligo

The network will be operated by Applus, the company operating the current NCT car testing service. All centres will carry out vehicle inspection services and taximeter verifications. In addition, the five main inspection centres of Dublin North, Dublin South, Cork, Galway and Sligo, will also be capable of carrying out the SPSV Entry Test (for drivers), and will provide a public counter facility where operators can go to with queries or seeking information.

To make an appointment for a vehicle inspection or skills knowledge testing please contact us at **0761 064 000**

NSAI LEGAL METROLOGY NOTIFICATION - NEW AUTHORISED VERIFIER FOR TAXI METERS

From 31st March 2014 the new provider for taximeter verification will be Applus Car Testing Service Limited. The taximeter verifications will be provided in the same centres as the NTA vehicle suitability inspections.

To make taximeter verification bookings, licence holders should ring Applus on (01) 4135951

A price reduction brings better value for taxi owners with the price of each verification being reduced from €75 to €70 (excl. VAT).

All taxi owners/operators are obliged to have the taximeter verified when first installed and thereafter each time the seal is broken either for repair or when a new fare is programmed. This includes the transfer of a taximeter from one car to another.

Operating an unverified taximeter is a prosecutable offence under the Metrology Act, 1996.



ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

As and from 7th April, fifteen additional personnel, operating under a service agreement with Applus, were formally authorised for compliance enforcement activities. These personnel will complement the eight staff employed within the NTA.

Over the coming months additional enforcement activities will be undertaken throughout the country, focussing on the implementation of the new regulations and the prosecution of illegal operators.

KEEPING UP TO DATE WITH SERVICE AND REGULATORY CHANGES IN 2014

What you should do to keep yourself informed:



It is important you read carefully all letters issued to you by the Authority



The latest information is available to you on our website concerning all operator matters.
Visit www.nationaltransport.ie



If you have any queries please call us at **0761 064 000**