

Changing your Vehicle

This Information Guide deals with the regulations and procedures involved in changing the vehicle associated with an SPSV licence. Changes of vehicle are permitted, provided the replacement vehicle meets certain conditions, which are explained in this Information Guide. All vehicle requirements are detailed in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual, available at www.nationaltransport.ie

IMPORTANT: Do not purchase a vehicle for use as an SPSV unless you are sure that it will meet the required standards. Please read the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual carefully before purchasing any vehicle. Before purchasing a vehicle for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle licence, you must ensure the vehicle meets certain standards; this can be verified by a qualified Technical Assessor. Please note this includes test proof.

A vehicle that was previously licensed may not meet current requirements.

What will you need

There are three stages:

| Stage | You will need |
|---|--|
| Initial Application | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A vehicle that is suitable and properly equipped for operation as an SPSV in the licence category for which you are completing a Change of Vehicle; and ▪ For modified vehicles the relevant Technical Assessor's Report. ▪ If a Taxi or Wheelchair Accessible Taxi licence: a regulation roof sign, a taximeter, printer and regulation Taxi door branding. |
| Booking your Initial Suitability Inspection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An NCT Roadworthiness Certificate for the vehicle; ▪ An insurance policy covering the use of the vehicle as a Small Public Service Vehicle; ▪ A valid electronic tax clearance certificate; and ▪ The appropriate fee; payment must be made at time of booking. Payment can be made by credit or debit card. |
| Initial Suitability Inspection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details. |

Vehicle requirements for standard Hackneys and Taxis

- **Age:** Must be less than 10 years of age. The age of the vehicle is calculated from the exact date on which it was first registered (day, month and year). Even if the vehicle was imported, the age is still calculated from the date on which it was originally registered in whichever country it was first registered. Check this date on the Vehicle Registration Certificate before applying for a Change of Vehicle.
- **Vehicle Type:** The vehicle must have 4 doors and meet certain objective dimensional requirements, e.g. for luggage space. The Authority has produced a list of vehicles containing details of a large number of makes and models to assist; see the Model Report on the website.
- **Tinted windows:** Vehicles are not permitted to have dark windows adjacent to a licensed seating position. Dark means less than 70% light transmission. See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details of how to check **this**.
- **Advertising:** No advertising is permitted on hackneys. Taxis are not permitted on rear side doors that exceed 1,600 square centimetres in area per door.

*Note that holders of a standard taxi licence may exchange that licence for a wheelchair accessible taxi licence at a Change of Vehicle where the replacement accessible vehicle is under 6 years of age and meets all the wheelchair accessible taxi standards. The licence number (and roof sign) remains the same and the licence holder has the option to revert back to a standard taxi licence in the future.

Vehicle requirements for Limousines

- **Age:** No age limit currently applies to limousines.
- **Vehicle Type:** It must be obviously suited to ceremonial, corporate or other prestigious purposes and be in excellent condition. The Authority has produced an example list to assist, please see the website for details.
- **Modified Vehicles:** Some vehicles will be “modified vehicles” (e.g. stretched cars and kit (historic replica) cars. A Technical Assessor's Basic Report is required: please contact the Authority for guidance.
- **Tinted windows:** Apart from the front windscreen and front door side windows tinted glass is permitted.
- **Advertising:** No advertising is permitted on limousines.

Vehicle requirements for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

All wheelchair accessible vehicles are modified vehicles and all applications must include a Technical Assessor's Full Report complete with formal test proof.

In making their assessment of the vehicle, the Assessor will inspect some items and will rely on formal test data for others. **Without this relevant documentation, the Assessor will be unable to certify the vehicle.**

Such test proof can only be obtained from the firm that converted the vehicle originally: it is not possible to perform these (destructive) tests afterwards.

A vehicle with EC Type Approval as a Special Purpose Accessible Vehicle, as evidenced by a recognised second stage chassis plate (in addition to the original base vehicle plate) will meet the structural proof requirements. **You must still check the size of the wheelchair space etc.**

The Technical Assessor's full Report must be on the official template, see website. The qualifications required by the Assessor are on this template. This Report is not simply a visual inspection.

- **Age:** Must be less than 6 years of age. The age of the vehicle is calculated from the exact date on which it was first registered (day, month and year). Even if the vehicle was imported, the age is still calculated from the date on which it was originally registered in whichever country it was first registered. Check this date on the Vehicle Registration Certificate before applying for a Change of Vehicle.
- **Vehicle Type:** The vehicle must accommodate a person travelling in their wheelchair plus one other passenger, and, must accommodate at least three adult passengers when there is no passenger travelling in a wheelchair.
- **Tinted windows:** Vehicles are not permitted to have dark windows adjacent to a licensed seating position or a wheelchair space. Dark means less than 70% light transmission. See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details of how to check this
- **Advertising:** No advertising is permitted on wheelchair accessible hackneys. Taxis are not permitted on rear side doors that exceed 1,600 square centimetres in area per door.

Requirements Summary:

| Criteria | Main requirements (For details and other requirements, see the <i>Initial Suitability Inspection Manual</i> .) | Documentary evidence required |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Seat belts | EC approval markings or labels ('e' or 'E' marking). | Y |
| Wheelchair occupant seat belts | Approval markings or labels (usually ISO standard or 'e' or 'E' marking.) | Y |
| Wheelchair restraint (tie-down) | Approval markings or labels (usually ISO, or DIN, or FMVSS/SAE standard.) | Y |
| Seatbelt anchorages | Strength test reports (usually seat belt to seat connection, based on Directive 76/115 EEC, as amended). | Y |
| In-vehicle* wheelchair and wheelchair occupant restraint anchorages | Strength test report. | Y |

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|---|--|---|
| In-vehicle* seat and seat belt anchorages | Strength test report (for seat-to-floor connection, usually based on Directive 76/115 EEC, as amended). | Y |
| Wheelchair Space | Minimum of 700mm width, 1,200mm length, and 1,350mm headroom in vicinity of wheelchair during turning and | N |
| Doors | Minimum one wheelchair accessible door, at least 745mm x 1,250mm, and one other door to passenger compartment. | N |
| External step at nearside door | If floor or integral step of passenger compartment is more than 230mm from the ground, where the door opening is bigger than 1,150mm then an access step is required. Minimum dimensions and other requirements are specified in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual. | N |
| Continuous surface access ramp | Maximum slope of ramp 16° capable of supporting 300kg. If detachable, it must be suitable for handling, securely fixed when in use, safely stored when not in use, and permanently marked with the vehicle registration number | N |
| Seat height and legroom | Specified minimum and maximum for seat height, width and clearance. See Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details. | N |
| Internal and entrance lighting | Adequate targeted or localised lighting is required at entrance steps, signage and floor areas and money slots in any dividing | N |
| Window glass adjacent to licensed seating positions and wheelchair spaces | Must be clear, min. 70% light transmission (no dark tints). The Roman numeral 'V' marking next to the glass approval number means the glass is too dark. See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual. | N |
| Handholds | Must be provided in the vicinity of the doors, steps and central pathways. Must be in a colour that contrasts with adjacent surfaces, and approximately circular in cross-section and 35mm in diameter. | N |
| User Manual | Must cover the vehicle and any specialist equipment in it. | Y |
| Age | A Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle must be less than 6 years of age at first licensing. | N |
| Roadworthiness | An NCT roadworthiness certificate issued for the vehicle no more than 90 days before the date of the Initial Suitability Inspection. (Note: An NCT certificate is not required for a vehicle that is less than 90 days old and that has travelled less than 3,000 kilometres) | Y |

*'In vehicle' tests are destructive tests – they cannot be performed retrospectively. They must have been performed on the same type of bodyshell and the results properly documented and certified. The suppliers of a flooring system **may** be able to provide the required test data.

Vehicle requirements for all SPSV licences.

- **Roadworthiness:** An NCT roadworthiness certificate issued for the vehicle no more than 90 days before the date of the Initial Suitability Inspection. (Note: An NCT certificate is not required for a vehicle that is less than 90 days old **and** that has travelled less than 3,000 kilometres.)
- **Suitability:** The vehicle must meet the requirements for operation as an SPSV in the category specified on the licence application. The Initial Suitability Inspection Manual, which is available on the Authority's website, gives details of the items that are inspected to verify the vehicle's suitability.
- **All vehicles** must have the required safety equipment: the relevant specifications are in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual.

Fees

The fees payable are as follows:

| Licence type | Licence Fee | Expired Licence Fee |
|--|-------------|---------------------|
| Limousine (under 10 years age, licence for 1 year) | €195 | €545* |
| Limousine (over 10 years age, licence for 6 months) | €120 | €295** |
| Taxi | €195 | €545* |
| Hackney | €195 | €545* |
| Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles | €120 | €545* |
| Exchange from Taxi to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle | €120 | €545* |

*The refund payable if any category of SPSV is re-licensed less than 10 days after expiry date is €250. The refund payable if any category of SPSV is re-licensed more than 10 and not less than 30 days after expiry date is €150.

** Refund payable if any category of SPSV is re-licensed less than 10 days after expiry date is €100.

Documents required to complete the licensing process

Modified vehicle (all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and some Limousines) documents

The relevant Technical Assessor's Report (plus any supporting test data) must be submitted for review prior to booking the Change of Vehicle Initial Suitability Inspection. Call us on 0761 064 000 for the best way to do this.

You must bring a copy of this report and any associated documents with you to the Initial Suitability Inspection as the inspector may retain them.

NCT

Using your vehicle registration number the Authority will check your NCT result directly with the Department of Transport at time of booking. You should allow a minimum of 2 working days for the Department's records to be updated. To book an NCT roadworthiness test, call the NCTS booking line on 01 413 5960.

Insurance

It is the responsibility of the vehicle licence holder to obtain insurance for the vehicle. You must obtain insurance for the vehicle that covers its use as a small public service vehicle and the policy must be in your name (i.e. the policyholder name must match that on the licence application). The Authority will validate your **original** insurance certificate at the Initial Suitability Inspection. If the policy is a fleet policy then the Schedule showing the relevant vehicle is also required.

Tax clearance – Individual

An electronic tax clearance certificate must be maintained with Revenue at all times. Using your PPSN, the Authority will check your tax status online with Revenue at the time of booking your appointment. You should allow a minimum of 48 hours for Revenue's records to be updated. The name on your licence application and the name on the electronic tax clearance certificate must match exactly. If the name on the electronic tax clearance certificate is not the same as that on the licence, you should contact the Revenue Commissioners.

| Name on licence application | Name on documents | Suitable for licensing? |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| James Murphy | Jim Murphy | No |
| | James Murphy Jnr | No |
| | James J. Murphy | No |
| | James Murphy | Yes |

Tax clearance – Company

An electronic tax clearance certificate must be maintained with Revenue at all times. Using your Tax Reference Number (TRN), the Authority will check your tax status online with Revenue at the time of booking your appointment. A TRN consists of seven digits followed by 1-2 letters. The name on your licence application and the name on the electronic tax certificate must match exactly.

| Name on licence application | Name on documents | Suitable for licensing? |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| James Murphy and Sons Limited | James Murphy & Sons Limited | No |
| | James Murphy and Sons Ltd | No |
| | James- Murphy and Sons Limited | No |
| | James Murphy and Sons Limited | Yes |

Booking your Initial Suitability Inspection

Book your Suitability Inspection by calling 0761 064 000.

What you need when making a booking

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| Security Questions | Security questions will be asked for on all licence related booking calls. These will involve standard identification questions such as name, address, telephone number, date of birth and PPSN. |
| Tax Clearance | You do not need to provide any additional information regarding your tax clearance when booking but you should keep your PPSN/TRN at hand in order to confirm this when requested. |
| Vehicle Registration certificate | You should keep your vehicle registration certificate at hand in case it is required. |
| NCT Roadworthiness certificate | The Authority will check your NCT results with the Department of Transport at the time of booking. |
| Vehicle ownership | To obtain a vehicle licence, you must own the vehicle to be associated to the licence, or hold the vehicle under a lease agreement or a hire-purchase agreement. You will be asked to declare vehicle ownership status at time of booking. |
| Insurance | You will need your insurance expiry date and be able to declare that you are insured to operate an SPSV. Your insurance information may be shared with Insurance Federation of Ireland and your insurance disc will be inspected as part of your Initial Suitability Inspection. If your disc is out of date on the day of your inspection, your vehicle will fail its inspection. It is the responsibility of the vehicle licence holder to provide insurance for the vehicle. Your name on your insurance should match your name on your licence. |
| Contact details update | You will be required to update or confirm your contact details; you are obliged to inform the Authority of any changes. |
| WAV register update | You must confirm the following when booking your inspection appointment Times of operation Areas of operation Drivers This information will be published in the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Register. |

Roof sign, taximeter, printer and door signage (Taxi and Wheelchair Accessible Taxi)

- Both front doors must be fitted with the regulation taxi door signage, obtainable only from an Authorised Supplier (see website for details). You need to have your Initial Suitability Inspection booked before the Authorised Supplier can undertake the door signage installation.
- The taxi meter must be calibrated and programmed with the new registration number and cannot be sealed until after the Initial Suitability Inspection.

Changing the vehicle on an expired Vehicle Licence

A licence that has expired for more than one year cannot ever be renewed. If your vehicle licence has expired, you may, within one year of the expiry date, apply to have it renewed and associated with a different replacement vehicle.

Depending on the period of time that has elapsed since your licensed has expired, you may be eligible for a portion of the fee to be refunded. See fees table earlier for information.

Licences for vehicles under 10 years of age are generally for 12 months, except limousine licences using a vehicle over 10 years of age which are generally issued for 6 months.

What to do with the vehicle being replaced

Before you dispose of the vehicle that you are replacing, you should:

- **Remove the roof sign** – this can be used on the replacement vehicle once the change of vehicle process has been completed;
- **Remove the meter and printer** – these can be used in the replacement vehicle, but they must first be calibrated specifically for the replacement car; and
- **Remove the tamper-proof discs** from the front and rear windows of the vehicle – you must bring these with you for the Initial Suitability Inspection of the replacement vehicle.
 - If you do not have the old tamper-proof discs but have some supporting evidence (e.g. Garda report if stolen, windscreen replacement receipt) then download the TP1 Form off the website and bring together with a copy of that evidence. No additional fee is required.
 - If you do not have the old tamper-proof discs and don't have the supporting evidence above, then you need to order, and pay for, a TP2 Form. Call us on 0761 064 000.

Requirements for your Initial Suitability Inspection

When you present the vehicle for the Initial Suitability Inspection, you must bring with you

- A copy of the User Manual in respect of a wheelchair accessible vehicle;
- Where relevant a copy of Assessor's Report/test data; and
- Your original insurance certificate and, if a fleet policy, the Schedule listing the vehicle by registration number.

Operating the vehicle as an SPSV

If your vehicle passes the Initial Suitability Inspection and the documentation is in order, the Licensing Inspector records the details on the Register of Licensed SPSVs, and applies tamper-proof discs to the front and rear windows of the vehicle. You will be issued a licence certificate for the vehicle.

The vehicle may then be operated as an SPSV in the category to which the licence applies.

Operating an SPSV without a current licence and valid tamper-proof licence discs could result in a fine of up to €5,000.

Licence validity period

At change of vehicle the licence issued starts from the date the Initial Suitability Inspection is passed.

Vehicles that are allowed to operate until their tenth birthday are licensed for one year, unless that tenth birthday occurs within that period, in which case the licence is renewed only up until the vehicle's tenth birthday (that is, the licence may be issued for less than one year).

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles that are allowed to operate until their fifteenth birthday are licensed for one year until the vehicle reaches ten years of age. Thereafter, the licence is issued for six months, unless the vehicle's fifteenth birthday occurs within that six-month period, in which case the licence is renewed only up until the vehicle's fifteenth birthday (that is, the licence may be issued for less than six months).

Licences for limousines are renewed for twelve months where they are less than ten years old, or for six months if they are ten years old or more. An exception to the latter rule applies to vehicles first registered before 1 January 1980 that are licensed as limousines; licences for such 'vintage limousines' are renewed for twelve months.

When is the best time to change your vehicle?

As no refund is given for any unexpired time on the licence when the vehicle is replaced, the Authority recommends, where possible, that you change your vehicle close to your renewal date in order to minimise your costs.

A good example:

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| Date licence is due for Renewal: | 1 December 2017 |
| Replacement vehicle bought and equipped. NCT passed. All documentation in order. | |
| Initial Suitability Inspection booked for: | 1 November 2017 |
| Initial Suitability Inspection passed. | |
| Period of validity of licence on replacement vehicle | 1 November 2017 to November 2018 |
| Unexpired time on old licence | 1 month |

A less cost-efficient example:

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| Date licence is due for Renewal: | 1 June 2018 |
| Replacement vehicle bought and equipped. NCT passed. All documentation in order. | |
| Initial Suitability Inspection booked for: | 1 November 2017 |
| Initial Suitability Inspection passed. | |
| Period of validity of licence on replacement vehicle | 1 November 2017 to November 2018 |
| Unexpired time on old licence | 7 months |

Note: the above dates are purely for the purposes of illustration.

For further information please visit www.nationaltransport.ie or call 0761 064 000