



Taxi Statistics

for Ireland

Bulletin Topics:

- Overall SPSV Fleet Numbers
- Vehicle Licences Issued
- SPSV Fleet Profile
- SPSV Driver Licences
- SPSV Contact Management
- Compliance
- Compliments and Complaints



Glossary

SPSV	Small Public Service Vehicle (Taxi, Hackney or Limousine)
Taxi	An SPSV which can ply for hire on the street or stand for hire at taxi ranks or be pre-booked by or for a passenger. It must carry prescribed branding and be fitted with a taximeter, printer and roof sign. It can use bus lanes when working
Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT)	A taxi which meets a number of additional vehicle specifications designed to allow use by at least one person seated in their wheelchair with at least one other passenger
Hackney	An SPSV which must be pre-booked and cannot ply for hire on the street or stand at taxi ranks. The fare for the journey must be agreed in advance with the customer. Hackneys may not use bus lanes and may not be fitted with a taximeter
Wheelchair Accessible Hackney (WAH)	A hackney which meets a number of additional vehicle specifications designed to allow use by at least one person seated in their wheelchair with at least one other passenger
Local Area Hackney (LAH)	A hackney licensed for a designated pick up area (usually with a radius of 5-7km from the applicant's residence) specifically to address transport deficits that would otherwise not be addressed in certain rural areas, particularly where lack of commercial viability means SPSV services are not provided
Limousine	An SPSV evidently suited by reason of its style and condition to be used for ceremonial, corporate or other prestige purposes, which must be pre-booked and cannot ply for hire on the street or stand at taxi ranks. The fare must be agreed in advance. Limousines may not use bus lanes and may not be fitted with a taximeter
Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV)	An SPSV which meets a number of additional vehicle specifications designed to allow use by at least one person seated in their wheelchair with at least one other passenger
Dispatch operators	Those who provide a booking service or other facility to arrange SPSV journeys

Introduction

This statistical bulletin is a publication of the National Transport Authority. It focuses on statistics for taxis and other small public service vehicles.

The National Transport Authority (“NTA”) is a statutory body established by the Minister for Transport on 1 December 2009. On 1 January 2011, the NTA subsumed the Commission for Taxi Regulation, and became responsible for the regulation of the small public service vehicle SPSV sector, i.e. small public service vehicles, together with their drivers, owners and associated services, including booking services. The regulatory framework for the industry comprises the consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016, together with the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 and 2016 and the Taxi Regulation. Unlike many comparable jurisdictions, SPSV services are regulated at a national level in Ireland.

The rationale for SPSV regulation is to ensure that passengers have a safe vehicle for their journey, with appropriate insurance in place, driven by a driver who has been vetted by An Garda Síochána and, in the case of taxis, with a pre-established and verified charging system. While there are many other aspects to the overall regulatory system, these are the foundation elements, focussing on passenger safety and protection.

In Ireland, small public service vehicles are public transport vehicles with seating for up to eight passengers in addition to the driver. There are currently three broad categories of SPSV:

- Taxi (standard and wheelchair accessible);
- Hackney (standard, wheelchair accessible and local area); and
- Limousine

NTA is the licensing authority for SPSVs and dispatch operators (booking service providers). This includes the granting, renewal and revocation of each vehicle and dispatch operator licence, together with all associated licencing, inspection and compliance activity. Each licence requires renewal on at least an annual basis, allowing NTA to monitor the quality of the vehicles and services provided.

The operation of an SPSV vehicle not only requires that the vehicle is licensed as an SPSV but that the driver is the holder of a valid SPSV driver’s licence, together with a standard driving licence. An Garda Síochána is the licensing authority for SPSV driver licences. A current SPSV driver licence permits the holder to drive all categories of SPSV and is normally valid for a period of five years. NTA, working closely with An Garda Síochána, administers the application and renewal processes, together with the issue of SPSV driver identification cards. Vetting remains the responsibility of An Garda Síochána.

New applicants for an SPSV driver’s licence must complete the Skills Development Programme and pass the SPSV Driver Entry Test, which comprises two modules covering both regulatory industry knowledge and area knowledge for the county in which the applicant wishes to operate. NTA provides and manages this Skills Development Programme.

NTA is responsible for setting the National Maximum Taxi Fare. Only taxi journey fares are controlled by way of a maximum ceiling. This is because taxis may be hailed on the street or taken from a rank with no prior booking (public hire). All hackney and limousine journeys are pre-booked (private hire) and, therefore, both passenger and driver are aware of the journey details and fare agreed for that journey in advance. A maximum taxi fare review is carried out approximately every two years to monitor and adjust for changes in the operating costs and market environment facing the taxi industry. 2017 saw one such fare review and, on foot of the research completed and the associated public consultation, a fare increase of approximately 3% on average will be applied from February 2018 through the Taxi Regulation (Maximum Fares) Order 2017.

1



Overall SPSV Fleet Numbers

In 2000 there was a liberalisation of the SPSV industry and the years following saw an increase in the number of vehicle licences issued, from 13,637 in 2000 to a peak of 27,429 just before the Irish economy entered recession in 2008.

Since then, reduced customer demand, and higher vehicle standard and driver testing requirements, led to a reduction in the overall fleet by nearly 25% to a total of 20,581 valid vehicle licences as at 31 December 2017. Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate the change in the numbers of valid SPSV licences from 2006 to 2017.

Figure 1: Valid Small Public Service Vehicle Licences by Year, 2006 - 2017

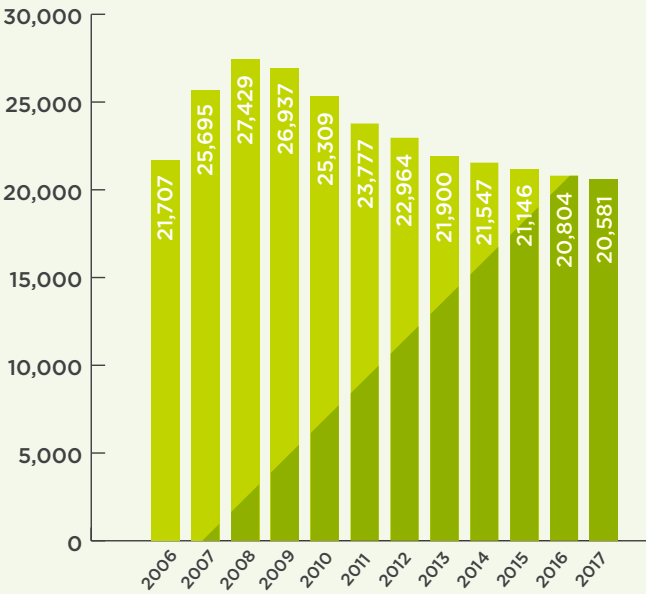


Table 1: Valid Small Public Service Vehicle Licences by Year, 2006 - 2017

Year	Valid SPSV Licences
2006	21,707
2007	25,695
2008	27,429
2009	26,937
2010	25,309
2011	23,777
2012	22,964
2013	21,900
2014	21,547
2015	21,146
2016	20,804
2017	20,581

2

Vehicle Licences Issued



Since 08 June 2010, all new taxi and hackney licences issued have been associated with wheelchair accessible vehicles. Licences for non-wheelchair accessible vehicles' which were part of the SPSV fleet prior to June 2010, may remain associated with such vehicles on each change of vehicle on that licence. New vehicle licences are also issued for limousines and local area hackneys. Table 2 below gives the annual figures, available from 2007.

Table 2: New Vehicle Licences Issued by Year and Category, 2007 - 2017

New Vehicle Licences Issued							
Year	Taxi	Hackney	Limousine	WAT	WAH	LAH	Total
2007	2,565	1,187	386	331	0	0	4,469
2008	1,701	841	213	281	0	0	3,036
2009	193	369	110	155	0	0	827
2010	24	107	97	76	0	0	304
2011	0	0	130	28	4	0	162
2012	0	0	164	28	11	0	203
2013	0	0	177	16	6	0	199
2014	0	0	190	52	5	7	254
2015	0	0	269	157	18	13	457
2016	0	0	293	261	22	2	578
2017	0	0	290	345	21	1	657

3

SPSV Fleet Profile

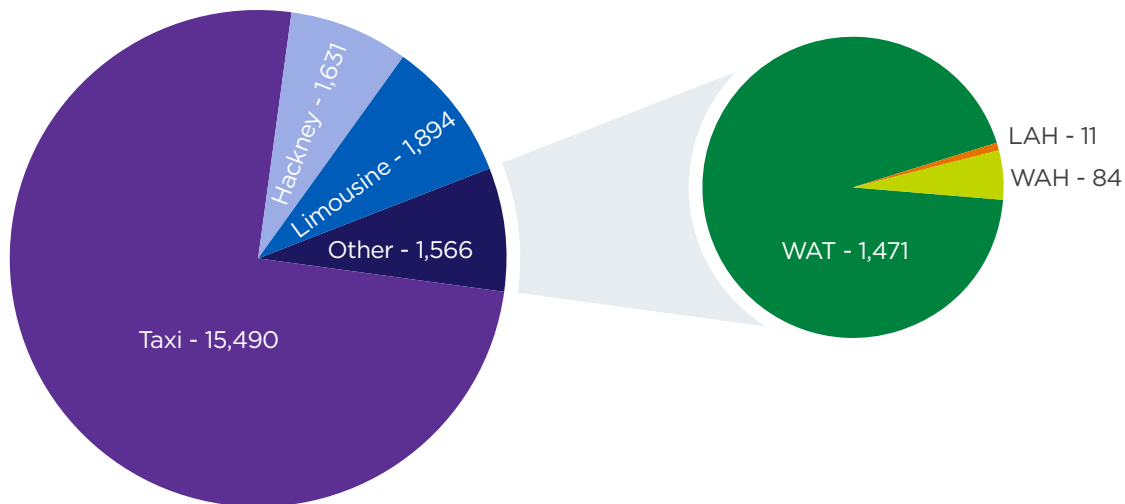


Table 3 and Figure 2 show the change in the number of valid vehicle licences across each SPSV category since 2006.

Table 3: SPSV Fleet by Vehicle Category by Year, 2006 - 2017

Year	Taxis		Hackneys			Limousines	Total
	Standard	Wheelchair Accessible (WAT)	Standard	Wheelchair Accessible (WAT)	Local Area (LAH)		
2006	15,098	1,316	4,147	n/a	n/a	1,146	21,707
2007	17,992	1,504	4,868	n/a	n/a	1,331	25,695
2008	19,577	1,600	4,914	n/a	n/a	1,338	27,429
2009	19,565	1,570	4,497	n/a	n/a	1,305	26,937
2010	18,920	1,401	3,772	n/a	n/a	1,216	25,309
2011	18,101	1,227	3,241	4	n/a	1,204	23,777
2012	17,750	1,077	2,866	14	n/a	1,257	22,964
2013	17,136	898	2,532	18	n/a	1,316	21,900
2014	16,899	889	2,281	34	7	1,437	21,547
2015	16,460	969	2,081	48	17	1,571	21,146
2016	15,961	1,185	1,838	69	10	1,741	20,804
2017	15,490	1,471	1,631	84	11	1,894	20,581

Figure 2: SPSV Fleet by Vehicle Category 2017



Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

From a peak of 1,600 wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) in 2008, the number of accessible hackneys and taxis reduced by 47% to 850 at the end of June 2014. That trend was reversed with 1,555 WAVs in the fleet by the end of 2017 on foot of two major NTA initiatives. In April 2014, the regulations relating to the size specifications for WAVs were revised, which meant that operators could purchase smaller wheelchair accessible vehicles than heretofore. In July 2014, a grant scheme was commenced which assisted licence holders in the purchase of wheelchair accessible vehicles in each year 2014 to 2017. Each grant brought either a new vehicle licence into the fleet or enabled replacement of an older licensed vehicle to enhance the quality and safety of the fleet. The vehicles replaced were an average of eight years younger than those on the licence already. Overall, WAVs constitute approximately 7.6% of the SPSV fleet. NTA remains focused on increasing this percentage to 10% by 2020.

Table 4: Grant assisted Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles 2014 - 2017

Year	Grants	Capital	New WAV to Fleet	Replacement of WAV within Fleet
2014	128	€819,000	92	36
2015	153	€871,000	134	19
2016	335	€1,987,500	284	51
2017	284	€1,747,500	233	51

Vehicle Age Profile

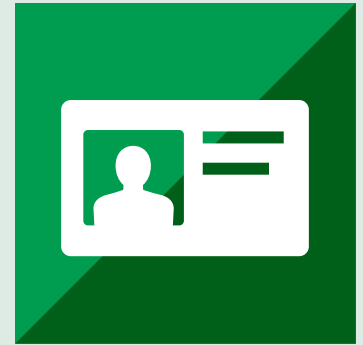
The consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. Reflecting this objective, setting an age limit for small public service vehicles is considered to be appropriate on both safety and quality grounds. In general, taxis and hackneys must be less than 10 years old and of a size, condition and quality suitable to provide SPSV services. However, a certain number of taxis and hackneys are permitted to operate up to 15 years of age as part of a transition arrangement. Vehicles are inspected at least annually to ensure standards and quality remain at an appropriate level. Table 5 demonstrates the age profile of the SPSV fleet at 31 December 2017.

Table 5: Age Profile of the SPSV fleet at 31 December 2017

Age	Taxi	WAT	Hackney	WAH	LAH	Limousine	Total
< 1 year of age	342	108	51	9	0	127	637
1 to < 2 years of age	590	121	81	11	0	132	935
2 to < 3 years of age	769	90	67	8	0	116	1,050
3 to < 4 years of age	1,087	110	123	13	0	101	1,434
4 to < 5 years of age	1,153	94	107	4	1	125	1,484
5 to < 6 years of age	1,685	201	172	8	0	123	2,189
6 to < 7 years of age	1,827	225	185	13	2	90	2,342
7 to < 8 years of age	2,099	83	172	6	3	81	2,444
8 to < 9 years of age	1,402	35	144	4	2	60	1,647
9 to < 10 years of age	1,364	59	172	2	3	173	1,773
10 to < 15 years of age	3,172	243	357	6	0	601	4,379
15+ years of age	0	102	0	0	0	165	267
Total	15,490	1,471	1,631	84	11	1,894	20,581

4

SPSV Driver Licences



The operation of an SPSV vehicle not only requires that the vehicle is licensed as an SPSV but also that the driver is the holder of a valid SPSV driver's licence as well as a standard driving licence. An Garda Síochána is the licensing authority for SPSV driver's licences. A current SPSV driver's licence permits the holder to drive all categories of SPSV and is normally valid for a period of five years. NTA, working closely with An Garda Síochána, administers the application and renewal processes, together with the issue of SPSV driver identification cards. Vetting remains the responsibility of An Garda Síochána.

The number of valid SPSV driver licences was 26,012 at the end of 2017. As with the vehicle fleet profile geographically, the majority of drivers (54%), hold a Dublin licence entitlement. The number of new drivers entering the SPSV industry increased significantly from 548 in 2016 to 823 in 2017. A total of 140 SPSV driver licences were formally surrendered in 2017 compared to 112 the previous year. In addition, 1,985 drivers allowed their licences to lapse permanently in 2017, compared to 2,828 in 2016.

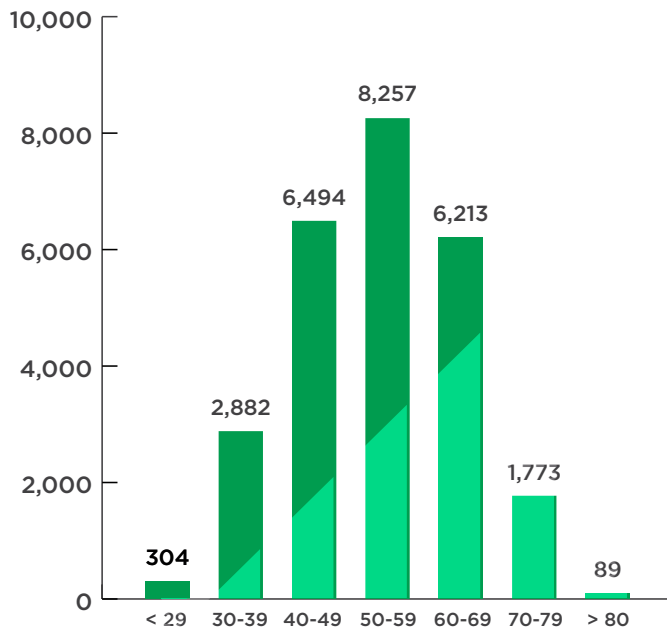
Table 6: Valid SPSV Driver Licences by year, 2007 - 2017

Year	Valid Driver Licences
2007	43,262
2008	46,845
2009	47,222
2010	42,605
2011	38,499
2012	34,679
2013	31,186
2014	29,457
2015	27,440
2016	26,420
2017	26,012

Figure 3: Valid SPSV Driver licences by year, 2007 - 2017



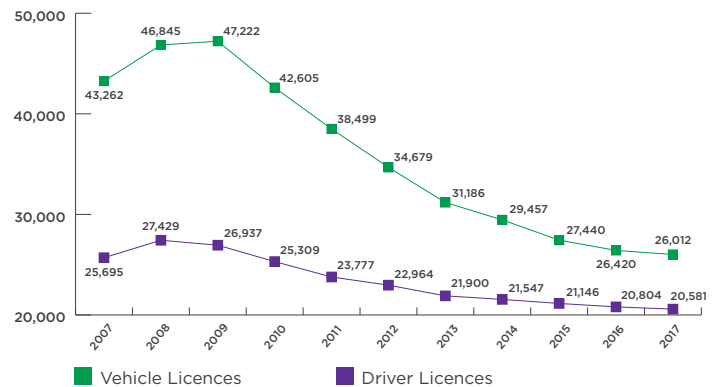
Figure 4: Age Profile for Valid SPSV Driver Licences at end 2017



The number of valid SPSV driver licences in Ireland has reduced by 45% from the peak of 47,529 in May 2009, prior to the July 2009 introduction of:

- a rise in SPSV driver licence renewal fees from €3 to €250 for a five year SPSV driving licence;
- a rise in SPSV driver licence application fees from €12 to €250 for a five year SPSV driving licence; and
- the national standardised Skills Development Programme for SPSV operators.

Figure 5: Comparison of SPSV Driver and Vehicle Licences 2007-2017



NTA also provides the “Skills Development Programme” for SPSV operators which is designed to assist SPSV operators to develop the range of skills needed to operate in the Irish SPSV industry on a day-to-day basis. New applicants for an SPSV driver’s licence must complete the Skills Development Programme and pass the SPSV Driver Entry Test, which comprises two modules covering both regulatory industry knowledge and geographical knowledge for the county in which the entrant wishes to operate. If an operator wishes to pick up passengers in any county who have not pre-booked the service, he/she must have passed the area knowledge test for that county. It is possible to be licensed for several counties.

During 2017, 4,427 entry tests were taken by 1,957 candidates wishing to become licenced SPSV drivers, a 38% increase on 2016 test figures. Almost 60% of the candidates were successful in 2017. The average amount of times the test was taken to achieve the pass mark was 2.5, with 42% of successful candidates passing on their first attempt and a further 23% successful on their second attempt. Of the unsuccessful candidates, 61% did not attempt a second test.

In 2017, a full review of the Skills Development Programme was undertaken, comprising international research and benchmarking, a public consultation and discussions with the ministerially appointed Advisory Committee on SPSVs and other stakeholders.

Resultingly, both the Programme process and marking were revised. Since 25 October 2017, SPSV Driver Entry Test candidates may carry forward a pass in one module for a period of twelve months whilst attempting to pass the failed module. Each module now has a pass mark of 75% (previously 80%).

5

SPSV Contact Management



NTA operates on the SPSV Information Line for both SPSV industry members and consumers, together with a variety of online and traditional post channels of communication.

In 2017, over 147,000 licensing notifications were issued to industry members in writing and over 105,000 telephone calls were handled, the bulk of which were from industry members. Table 7 and Figure 6 detail the total calls by year and the split between industry and consumer calls.

Table 7: Calls to the SPSV Information Line by Year and Source 2007 - 2017

Year	Industry Members	Consumers	Total calls
2007	72,360	10,000	82,360
2008	43,000	10,000	53,000
2009	52,527	7,871	60,398
2010	103,943	5,727	109,670
2011	77,186	6,066	83,252
2012	71,760	1,767	73,527
2013	123,340	3,319	126,659
2014	123,657	8,904	132,561
2015	115,053	2,348	117,401
2016	99,919	2,758	102,677
2017	101,406	3,762	105,168

In 2017, 3.6% of calls came from the public. Top three consumer queries related to lost property, complaints and general enquires.

Industry members use the SPSV Information Line for driver and vehicle licensing questions, together with booking vehicle inspections and industry/area knowledge tests. The top three industry queries for 2017 were requests for assistance with driver to vehicle links, vehicle licence booking inspections, and general vehicle licensing queries.

Figure 6: Calls to SPSV Information Line by Year and Source 2007 - 2017



6



Compliance

NTA continues to focus on education, deterrence and enforcement measures to maintain high levels of compliance by SPSV operators with the regulatory framework. During 2017, NTA's compliance team comprised 24 authorised officers who could engage in compliance activities across the country. This team consisted of 9 employees of NTA and 15 authorised officers employed under an external outsourcing contract.

Compliance activities include vehicle and driver licencing checks, roadside vehicle and driver audits, investigating consumer complaints and participation in multi-agency compliance operations (e.g. with An Garda Síochána (Traffic Corps and Immigration), the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection).

Since July 2015, Compliance Officers have been able to undertake real-time mobile checks of SPSVs observed operating. This bespoke tool has enabled Compliance Officers to check each SPSV remotely, including the status of both driver and vehicle licence in real time, and then focus comprehensive face to face audits on vehicles and drivers where potential compliance issues are identified. This system has resulted in a marked increase of authentications of SPSVs observed operating with a minimum of disruption to compliant operators and their passengers.

Mobile Checks, Face to Face Audits and Fixed Payment Notices

Over 150,000 mobile checks were undertaken throughout 2017, representing 19,156 individual vehicles, or over 93% of licensed vehicles. Compliance Officers undertook nearly 11,000 face to face audits at the roadside following these checks and 1,512 fines were issued for a variety of offences. In 2017, Compliance Officers opted to undertake a full audit in approximately 7% of mobile checks and, arising from these audits, detected offences which warranted the issuing of a fine in just under 14% of cases.

Fines issued by NTA have 82% payment conformity; the remainder proceed to court prosecution. The highest volume of fines issued (approximately 47%) related to drivers "failing to notify details of the vehicle being operated". This offence arises in connection with the legal requirement for a licenced driver to register the licenced vehicle being driven with the central database system managed by NTA. This database supports the Driver Check App, which allows passengers or intending passengers to assess the licenced status of their chosen vehicle and driver and to email a chosen third party with those details.

Table 8: SPSV Checks, Audits and Fixed Payment Notices 2015 - 2017

Year	No. of checks	No. of roadside audits	Fixed Payment Notices
2015	29,123	11,765	692
2016	90,243	12,012	1,099
2017	151,561	10,959	1,512

In 2017, 150 court cases brought were by way of direct prosecution for a breach of the legislation outside of the on-the-spot fines regime, following specific operations and detection by Compliance Officers. Of those, 54 cases involved the offence of not holding a valid SPSV driver's licence, 28 cases of not holding a valid SPSV vehicle licence and 30 cases where the offender held neither a valid SPSV driver or vehicle licence. 10 cases were prosecuted for a licence holder or booking service allowing an unlicensed driver or vehicle to operate. In addition, 28 cases were prosecuted for other breaches of regulations and 112 further cases were brought for the non-payment of Fixed Payment Notices. More than 95% of the 262 cases presented by NTA nationwide were successful.

Table 9: Prosecutions by Offence Category 2017

Prosecutions by Offence Category 2017			
Category		Number	%
Unlicensed SPSV Operation	No current SPSV driver licence	54	20.6
	No current SPSV vehicle licence	28	10.7
	No current SPSV driver and vehicle licence	30	11.5
	Allowing an unlicensed driver/vehicle to operate	10	3.8
Dispatch Operator		3	1.1
Failure to take the shortest route		1	0.4
Driver behaviour		6	2.3
Obstructing an Authorised Person		1	0.4
Unlawful use of signage/identification on an unlicensed vehicle		15	5.7
Advertising an unlicensed SPSV vehicle/service		2	0.8
Direct Prosecutions		150	57.3
Failure to pay Fixed Payment Penalty		112	42.7
TOTAL CASES		262	100

7



Compliments and Complaints

During 2014, NTA introduced improved website contact forms and email arrangements to make it easier for consumers to submit compliments or complaints about taxi, hackney, limousine and dispatch operator services nationwide. This, together with enhanced consumer education through the media in 2017 in particular, had a positive impact leading to an increase in both the compliments and complaints received.

All feedback is reviewed by a member of NTA's compliance team. Compliments are highlighted in the quarterly SPSV Industry Updates to members. Following a preliminary investigation of each complaint, almost half received in 2017 did not proceed any further. The reasons further action was not taken included:

- genuine mistake or misunderstanding by either party;
- no offence having been committed;
- the complainant deciding not to pursue the complaint when contacted;
- the complainant not providing contact details;
- anonymous complaints; or
- the operator not being correctly identified.

In the remainder of cases, the compliance actions included the issuing an operator with advice, a formal warning, a fine or a summons for prosecution.

Any allegations of traffic violations or criminal acts are referred to An Garda Síochána; those of an SPSV driver smoking in an SPSV to the Office of Tobacco Control; and allegations of suspected social welfare fraud to the Department of Social Protection.

There are five categories of complaint which can be dealt with by NTA under Section 64 of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013.

Category	Sample complaint
Condition, roadworthiness and cleanliness of the vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interior or exterior dirt or staining • malodour • rubbish or deleterious matter
Conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to prominently display the required driver identification • acting in a manner that is perceived to be a nuisance or a danger to any person • malodour or poor hygiene
Overcharging and other matters relating to fares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to issue a receipt • €2 booking charge being added incorrectly • overcharging or no change • route selection • taximeter not working or not used
Hiring and booking of the SPSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refusal of fare, typically due to the short nature of the intended journey • unavailability of wheelchair accessible vehicles • poor service from a dispatch operator • late arrival of pre-booked vehicle
Identification and general appearance of the SPSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location of logos, stickers or advertisements • content of logos, stickers or advertisements • leaflets or other advertising matter

Table 10: Complaints by month 2017

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total 2017
Condition, roadworthiness and cleanliness of the vehicle	4	2	8	2	7	7	6	9	8	10	3	6	72
Conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver	36	30	31	39	40	36	44	38	41	49	34	27	445
Overcharging and other matters relating to fares	21	27	28	28	31	33	34	39	34	29	32	44	380
Hiring and booking of the SPSV	10	9	17	5	19	22	28	20	17	15	35	51	248
Identification and general appearance of the SPSV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	71	68	84	74	97	98	112	106	100	103	105	128	1,146


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