



Taxi Statistics

2018

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, NTA subsumed the Commission for Taxi Regulation, and became responsible for the regulation of the small public service vehicle 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 Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 and 2016 and the Taxi Regulation (Maximum Fares) Order 2017. 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, focusing on passenger safety and protection.

In Ireland, small public service vehicles (SPSVs) 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)
- 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 licensing, 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 valid for a period of up to 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 was applied from February 2018 through the Taxi Regulation (Maximum Fares) Order 2017.

1

Overall SPSV Fleet Numbers



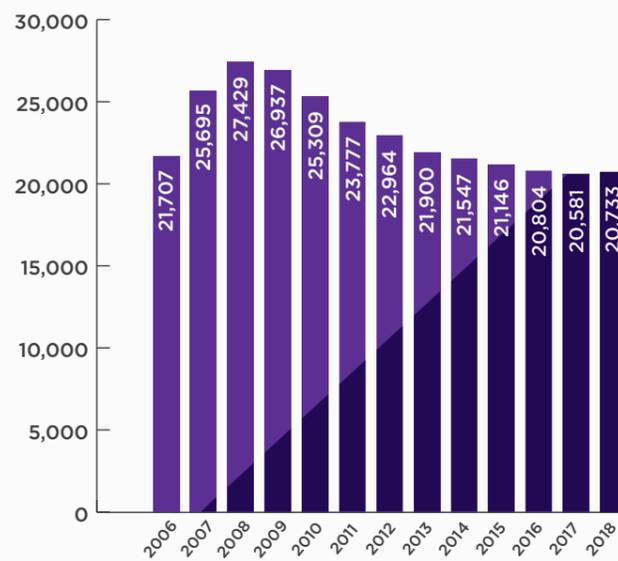
In 2000 there was a liberalisation of the SPSV industry and the years following saw an increase in the number of vehicle licences issued, from 13,637 in 2000 to a peak of 27,429 just before the Irish economy entered recession in 2008.

Since then, reduced customer demand, higher vehicle standards 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. This downward trend was reversed in 2018, when the fleet total increased by 1% to 20,733. Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate the change in the numbers of valid SPSV licences from 2006 to 2018.

Table 1: Valid Small Public Service Vehicle Licences by Year, 2006 - 2018

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
2018	20,733

Figure 1: Valid Small Public Service Vehicle Licences by Year, 2006 - 2018



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 - 2018

Year	New Vehicle Licences Issued						Total
	Taxi	Hackney	Limousine	WAT	WAH	LAH	
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
2018	0	0	236	713	25	4	978

3

SPSV Fleet Profile

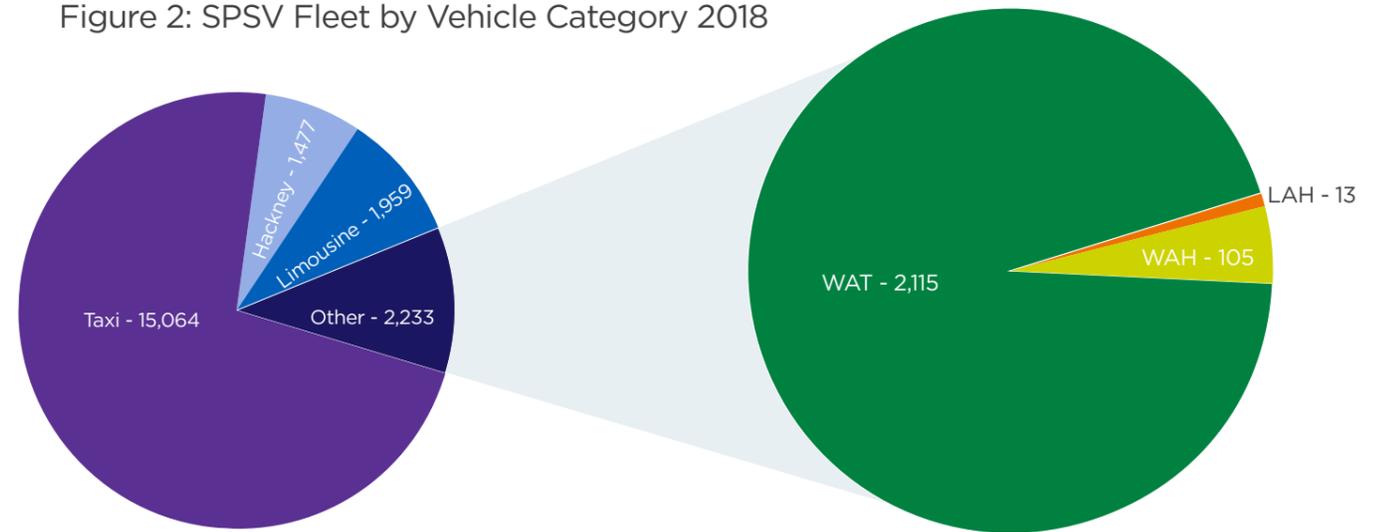


Table 3 and Figure 2 show the change in the number of valid vehicle licences across each SPSV category since 2006.

Table 3: SPSV Fleet by Vehicle Category by Year, 2006 - 2018

Year	Taxis		Hackneys			Limousines	Total
	Standard	Wheelchair Accessible (WAT)	Standard	Wheelchair Accessible (WAH)	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
2018	15,064	2,115	1,477	105	13	1,959	20,733

Figure 2: SPSV Fleet by Vehicle Category 2018



Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

From a peak of 1,600 Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) in 2008, the number of accessible vehicles reduced by 47% to 850 at the end of June 2014. That trend was reversed with 2,220 WAVs (Fig 2) in the fleet by the end of 2018 on foot of two major initiatives. In April 2014, the regulations relating to the size specification 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 2018. Each grant brought either a new vehicle in to the fleet or enabled replacement of an older licensed vehicle to enhance the quality and safety of the fleet.

Table 4: Grant assisted Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles 2014 - 2018

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
2018	761	€3,366,000	679	82

Vehicle Age Profile

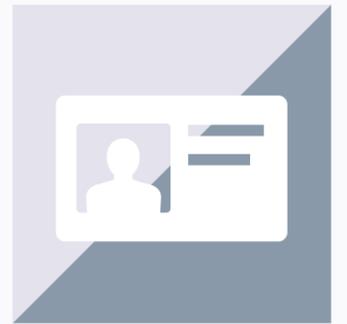
The consolidated Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 require NTA to seek to promote the provision and maintenance of quality services by small public service vehicles and their drivers. Reflecting this objective, setting an age limit for small public service vehicles is considered to be appropriate on both safety and quality grounds. In general, taxis and hackneys must be less than 10 years old and of a 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 2018.

Table 5: Age Profile of the SPSV fleet at 31 December 2018

Age	Taxi	WAT	Hackney	WAH	LAH	Limousine	Total
< 1 year of age	271	160	34	14	1	92	572
1 to < 2 years of age	487	157	71	14	0	173	902
2 to < 3 years of age	838	190	110	14	0	150	1,302
3 to < 4 years of age	1,317	158	109	11	1	147	1,743
4 to < 5 years of age	1,619	182	171	12	3	135	2,122
5 to < 6 years of age	1,705	312	120	5	1	134	2,277
6 to < 7 years of age	1,853	347	195	6	0	112	2,513
7 to < 8 years of age	1,821	213	178	13	1	85	2,311
8 to < 9 years of age	1,867	77	150	4	4	80	2,182
9 to < 10 years of age	956	30	92	4	2	61	1,145
10 to < 15 years of age	2,330	211	247	8	0	622	3,418
15+ years of age	0	78	0	0	0	168	246
Total	15,064	2,115	1,477	105	13	1,959	20,733

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 licence as well as 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 valid for a period of up to 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 26,405 at the end of 2018, an increase of 1.5% from the previous year. As with the vehicle fleet profile geographically, the majority of drivers (55%) hold a Dublin licence entitlement. The number of new drivers entering the SPSV industry increased significantly from 823 in 2017 to 1,168 in 2018. A total of 105 SPSV driver licences were formally surrendered in 2018 compared to 74 the previous year. In addition, 354 drivers allowed their licences to lapse permanently in 2018, compared to 1,985 in 2017.

Table 6: Valid SPSV Driver Licences by year, 2007 - 2018

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
2018	26,405

Figure 3: Valid SPSV Driver licences by year, 2007 - 2018

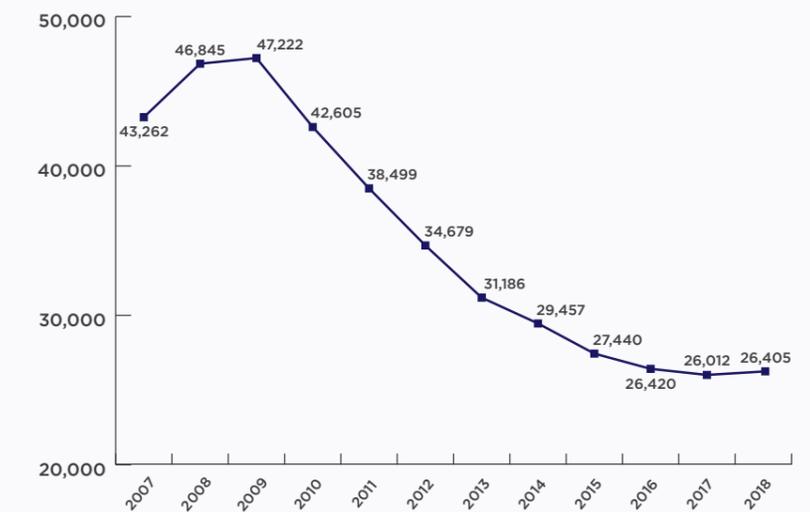
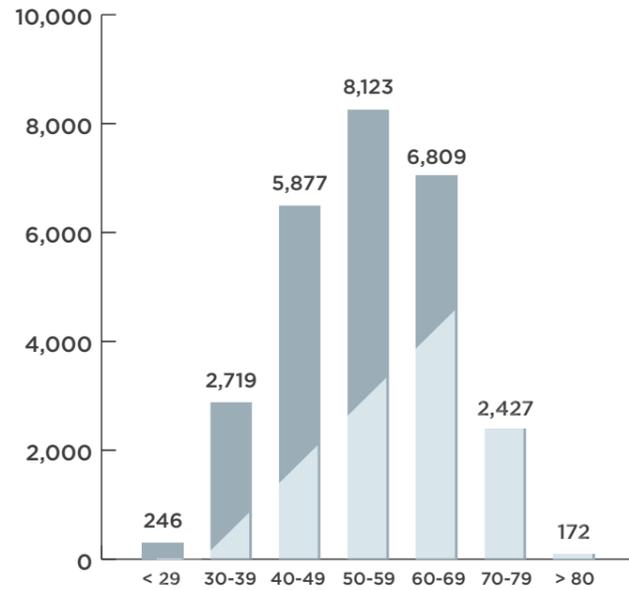


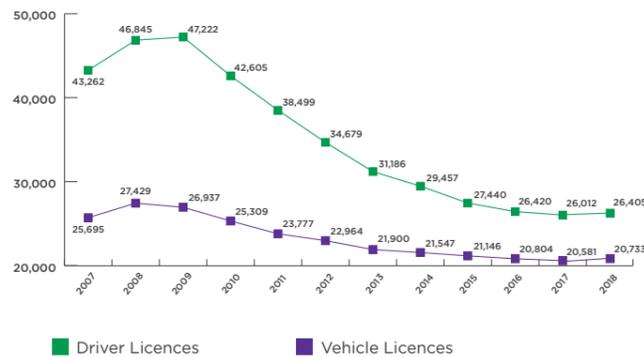
Figure 4: Age Profile for Valid SPSV Driver Licences at end 2018



The number of valid SPSV driver licences in Ireland has reduced by 44% from the peak of 47,529 in May 2009, prior to an increase to the driver licence fee from €3 to €250 and the introduction of a national, standardised Skills Development Programme for SPSV operators.

The total number of drivers increased in 2018 for the first time since 2009. There were 26,405 drivers licensed at the end of the year, an increase of 1.5%.

Figure 5: Comparison of SPSV Driver and Vehicle Licences 2007-2018



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 2018, 5,458 entry tests were taken by 2,619 candidates wishing to become licensed SPSV drivers, 61% of the candidates were successful in 2018. The average amount of times the test was taken to achieve the pass mark was 2.85, with 40% of successful candidates passing on their first attempt and a further 24% successful on their second attempt.

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 has a pass mark of 75%.

5 SPSV Contact Management



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

In 2018, 3.7% of calls came from the public. The top three consumer queries related to lost property, complaints and general enquiries.

Industry members use the SPSV Information line for driver and vehicle licensing matters, together with booking vehicle inspections and skills development programme tests. SPSV drivers must notify NTA when they are operating a vehicle – commonly known as “linking” – so that they will appear on the Driver Check App. The top three industry queries for 2018 were requests for assistance with driver to vehicle links, vehicle booking inspections, and general vehicle licensing queries.

In 2018, over 95,000 licensing notifications were issued to industry members in writing and over 120,000 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 - 2018

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
2018	115,606	4,465	120,071

Figure 6: Calls to SPSV Information Line by Year and Source 2007 - 2018



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 2018, NTA's compliance team comprised 24 authorised officers who engaged in compliance activities across the country, together with a number of office-based complaints and investigative staff.

Compliance activities include remote 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, INIS, Revenue and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.)

Since July 2015, Authorised Officers have been able to undertake real-time mobile checks of SPSVs observed operating. This bespoke mobile app has enabled authorised 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 190,000 mobile checks were undertaken throughout 2018, representing 19,207 individual vehicles, or over 93% of licensed vehicles. Authorised Officers undertook over 17,000 face to face audits at the roadside following these checks and 1,878 fines were issued for a variety of offences. Authorised Officers opted to undertake a full audit in approximately 9% of mobile checks and, arising from these audits, detected offences which warranted the issuing of a fine in just under 11% of cases.

Fines issued by NTA have 89% payment conformity; the remainder proceed to court prosecution. The highest volume of fines issued (approximately 34%) 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, if desired.

Table 8: SPSV checks, Audits and Fixed Payment Notices 2015 - 2018

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
2018	199,369	17,610	1,878

In 2018, 212 court cases brought were by way of direct prosecution for a breach of legislation outside of Fixed Payment Offences/on the spot fines, following specific operations and detection by authorised officers. Of those, 57 cases involved the offence of not holding a valid SPSV Driver's Licence, 54 cases for not holding a valid SPSV Vehicle Licence and 47 cases where the offender held neither a valid SPSV Driver nor Vehicle licence. 20 cases were prosecuted for allowing an unlicensed driver or vehicle to operate and 5 cases related to a Dispatch Operator not holding a valid licence. In addition, 29 cases were prosecuted for other breaches of regulations and 114 further cases were brought for the non-payment of Fixed Payment Notices. In total, more than 90% of cases presented by NTA were successful.

Table 9: Prosecutions by Offence Category 2018

Prosecutions by Offence Category 2018			
Category		Cases	%
Unlicensed SPSV Operation	No Driver Licence	57	17.5
	No Vehicle Licence	54	16.5
	No driver and no vehicle licence	47	14.5
	Allow an unlicensed driver/vehicle to operate/ Failure to keep accurate records	20	6
	No Dispatch Operator Licence	5	1.5
Illegal display of taxi sign		19	6
Advertising an unlicensed SPSV service		1	0.3
Failure to take the shortest route		2	0.6
Exceeding the maximum number of passengers		6	1.8
Charging above metered fare/agreed fare		1	0.3
Failure to pay Fixed Payment Penalty		114	35
TOTAL CASES		326	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 has 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, more than half received in 2018 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 Employment Affairs and 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 2018

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total 2018
Condition, roadworthiness and cleanliness of the vehicle	36	43	47	37	36	45	40	38	53	43	57	54	529
Conduct, behaviour and identification of an SPSV driver	2	8	2	1	3	3	7	3	6	4	7	4	50
Overcharging and other matters relating to fares	15	14	20	27	19	22	28	21	15	21	20	39	261
Hiring and booking of the SPSV	51	33	39	29	50	43	51	29	33	31	30	51	470
Identification and general appearance of the SPSV	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	104	98	109	94	109	113	126	91	107	99	114	148	1,312



DOWNLOAD THE

Driver Check App

Driver Check

- Check the licence details of the vehicle and driver
- View photograph of the authorised driver
- Send report if details are incorrect
- Email trip details to a friend

Travel Safe








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