

## NEW ENTRANTS - VEHICLE LICENCES AVAILABLE

If you are new to the SPSV industry, it is important to be aware of the different options available if you want to operate your own small public service vehicle. NTA has several initiatives in place to assist operators with the purchase of a suitable vehicle.

There is no cap on the numbers of vehicle licences available throughout the State. NTA is currently accepting SPSV licence applications for the following categories of vehicle: wheelchair accessible taxi, wheelchair accessible hackney, limousine and local area hackney. Grants are also available to support the industry, and further information on the relevant grant schemes is provided later in this Newsletter.

- Wheelchair accessible taxi or hackney licences are available to applicants with a suitable wheelchair accessible vehicle less than 6 years of age. Wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys must be constructed or converted specifically to accommodate at least one person sitting in a wheelchair and at least one other adult. More detail [here](#).
- Limousine licences are available to applicants who have a suitable vehicle. **Guidance for Limousine Vehicle Choice** can be found on our website. There is no age restriction on limousine vehicles.

It is not necessary to buy a vehicle outright to apply for a licence, however the applicant must have the legal right to use of the vehicle. A vehicle licence can be granted only to a person who is the registered owner of the vehicle or is otherwise legally entitled to the use and possession of the vehicle (such as under a lease or hire-purchase agreement). Where an applicant is considering a vehicle for use as an SPSV, the vehicle registration must first be provided to NTA in order to ensure it is suitable for use. NTA strongly recommends that applicants do not acquire a vehicle until this confirmation is received.

Remember, transferring (selling) an existing vehicle licence to another person is not permitted by law. The only way for an alternate person to operate an existing vehicle licence is in accordance with Section 15 of the Taxi Regulation Acts. Details on this process are provided later in this Newsletter.

If you are interested in finding out more, call us on 0818 064 000 to discuss your options.



## SPSV VEHICLE RENTALS

SPSV licences may be held by self-employed individuals or companies. There is no requirement on the licence holder to drive the vehicle. SPSV Regulations permit a vehicle licence holder to rent out or lease the insured and licensed taxi, hackney or limousine to another person with or without actual money changing hands. The vehicle licence holder providing the rental package must be the registered owner of the vehicle (or be entitled to use it as an SPSV for a minimum period of 12 months), have the vehicle licensed in their name, and must provide the insurance on the vehicle. That is normally included in the rental fee to the licenced driver. The vehicle licence holder is the only party the NTA may engage with in respect of licensing activity relating to their SPSV licence, for example arranging suitability inspection bookings.

The SPSV licence holder providing the rental must notify NTA of the rental, either using **NTA's online system**, or by calling the SPSV Information Line on 0818 064 000.

They must provide NTA with the details of the period of the arrangement, the renter's SPSV driver licence number and the vehicle registration number. They must maintain a record of the vehicle licence associated with the rental agreement.



## VEHICLE LICENCE HOLDER OBLIGATIONS

The owner of a vehicle licence must:

- ensure that the person driving has a valid SPSV driver licence
- provide and maintain appropriate SPSV insurance for that/those renter drivers
- keep a record of the name, address and contact number of each person driving the SPSV and their SPSV driver licence details
- retain these records and make them available for inspection by NTA on request



## DRIVER LICENCE HOLDER OBLIGATIONS

All drivers must ensure they create a driver to vehicle link before operating. It is a criminal offence not to have a link notified to NTA.

As a driver, it is your responsibility to create a new driver to vehicle link:

- Before you start driving a taxi, hackney or limousine;
- If you change your vehicle; and
- If your driver licence or vehicle licence expires.

Information on how to create a driver link can be found **here**.

This database feeds into the NTA public safety app, Driver Check, which allows users to verify the licence and registration status of any SPSV they intend to hire.

## MICROFINANCE IRELAND

The Microenterprise Loan Fund, operated by Microfinance Ireland (MFI) assists businesses with fewer than ten employees and/or turnover less than €2 million, that are not able to access lending from conventional sources. Microfinance Ireland provides vital support to microenterprises by filling the lending gap in the market by lending to business that cannot obtain loans from other commercial lenders. SPSV operators are often perfect candidates for this financial assistance.

In addition to its lending services, MFI provides post approval mentoring services free of charge to its borrowers.

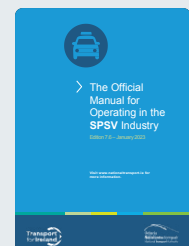
The mentoring services are delivered through the Local Enterprise Office Network. Further information on the range of services offered by Microfinance Ireland is available [here](#).



## OFFICIAL SPSV MANUAL

The Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry is a very useful resource for all industry members.

It contains information on licensing, vehicle standards, fares and tips and advice for operating an SPSV. The manual may be downloaded in audio format from [NTA website](#).



## HAS YOUR VEHICLE LICENCE EXPIRED? ENSURE IT DOES NOT TIME OUT!

Following revised Regulations introduced in 2021, the timeframe allowed to an expired vehicle licence was increased from one to two years. Vehicle licence holders are reminded that once this two year period elapses, the licence will “time out” and can not be replaced. NTA have identified over 90 licences which, if not replaced, will die completely in September. If you are the holder of an expired licence, please ensure you renew in good time if you wish to keep it.



## SECTION 15 NOMINATION PROCESS

Section 15 of the Taxi Regulation Acts enables a licence holder to nominate a representative who may apply to NTA to continue to operate the licence in the event of the licence holder's death. The nomination process is free of charge and NTA encourages all licence holders to complete the nomination process. Transfer of licences is not legal in any other way. NTA's licensing teams are currently working with our compliance colleagues to revoke all SPSV licences sold or transferred illegally.

Further information on the process can be found in **Guide G15 (Section 15 Nomination and Assignment)**. To make a nomination please complete, including signature, **Form S15N (Application to Nominate a Person in the event of death)** and return to the NTA.

The nomination will only be complete when you have received your confirmation of nomination letter from NTA. Please retain this valuable letter with your personal documents.

This is the only way that a vehicle licence may be given to someone else – an intention in a will is not sufficient.



## COMPLIANCE

As well as our usual compliance and enforcement activities, NTA Compliance Teams continue to work alongside An Garda Síochána nationwide to ensure that all licence holders are complying with regulations and, through continued joint covert activity, detect and prosecute individuals offering SPSV services without valid licences.



**An Garda Síochána** @GardaTr... · 1d  
Cork City Roads Policing were running a joint-operation with the National Transport Authority in Ballincollig yesterday when they detected this vehicle operating for hire without any proper licenses or insurance.

Court is to follow for the driver.



**Garda Síochána Dublin**  
56m ·

On the 26th of June 2023 Gardaí from the Roads Policing Unit in Santry Garda Station carried out a joint Garda NTA SPSV Compliance Operation in Dublin Airport.

Two vehicles and drivers were detected operating for hire or reward without the requisite licences to do so.

The Skoda Superb is a Northern Ireland registered taxi which was operating in the Republic of Ireland without the requisite licence to do so.

Both vehicles were seized with court to follow.

#KeepingPeopleSafe #RoadsPolicing



## SPSV LICENCE AND VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Since 1st March 2023, original vehicle registration certificates (“the log book”) have been recorded as part of all SPSV suitability inspections. Evidence of vehicle ownership or evidence of legal entitlement to the use of the licensed vehicle is a legal requirement at both Initial Suitability Inspection and Licence Renewal Inspections. This applies to all SPSV vehicle licence categories.

Licence renewal suitability inspections will result in a fail if satisfactory documentation is not presented at the time of licensing.

For initial suitability inspections (new licence or change of vehicle) where the licence holder may not be in possession of the vehicle registration certificate, licence holders who have not provided evidence of vehicle ownership (vehicle registration certificate) or evidence of legal entitlement to the use of the licensed vehicle have been issued with a ‘Advisory Fail’. This allows the licence holder time to submit the evidence to the NTA. A failure to subsequently submit the correct documentation will result in the licences being inactivated and no longer licensed to be used as a SPSV.

Since 1st March;

- NTA has contacted each licence holder where either incorrect or no documentation has been submitted.
- Where evidence has not been provided, licences have been moved to an inactive status. The vehicle cannot be used as a SPSV.

- Once the licence has been changed to inactive and the licence holder informed, all SPSV signage must be removed and the ‘tamper-proof discs’ and SPSV licensing certificate must be returned to the NTA. This is a legal requirement under section 17 of Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016. Failure to comply may result in a fine, upon conviction, of up to €2,500 at court.
- The display of any taxi sign on a vehicle that is not licensed as a taxi is an offence under section 26 of the Taxi Regulation Acts 2013 and 2016 and may result in a fine, upon conviction, of up to €5,000 at court.

**NTA’s licensing team will refer the inactive licences to NTA’s compliance team to investigate all potential offences. In addition to licences being inactivated, NTA will prosecute cases where any legal requirement has not been met.**



## PROSECUTIONS

In June, NTA prosecuted the first cases connected to the legal requirement, introduced in September 2022, to have a functioning cashless payment device and to accept cashless payments in taxis for all passengers wishing to pay by this method. Since 1st September 2022, it has been a legal requirement for all taxis to accept cashless payments for journeys when requested by passengers. Following compliance investigations, Fixed Payment Notices have been issued where drivers have not complied with the law.

Of the four cases listed for court, two cases have been adjourned until September 2023. Two cases heard in June achieved convictions and fines and costs of €850. Each case followed the issuing of, and the failure to pay, a Fixed Payment Notice. To date, 85 notices have been issued in respect of cashless payment devices following 14,456 roadside compliance checks of taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis since the requirement became law.

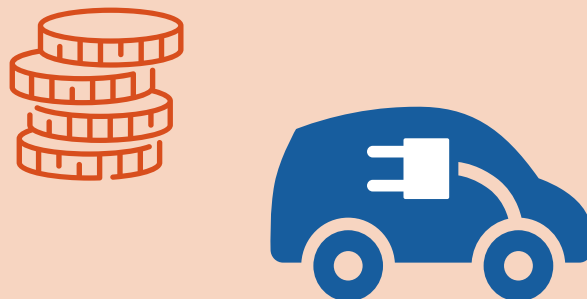
Recent roadside checks by compliance officers have shown that some vehicles now display signs indicating that cashless payments will

not be accepted or that there is a ‘preference’ for cash. The regulations are clear, every taxi should have a functioning cashless payment device and where a passenger wishes to use that method to pay, it must be accepted. NTA will continue to inform passengers that this is a legal requirement and they have the right to pay any taxi fare by means of a cashless payment. NTA will investigate all passenger complaints where it appears that this is not the case.



## ELECTRIC SMALL PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE GRANT SCHEME 2023 – ESPSV23

**Applications are still being accepted for the eSPSV23 Grant Scheme.** Of the €15 million allocation, approximately €6.4 million had been approved for payment to applicants to date, with a large number of additional applicants progressing through the grant process. Further information on the eSPSV23 grant scheme is available [here](#) and applications may be made through our online application portal [here](#).





## WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE GRANT SCHEME - WAV23

Following very high interest in the WAV23 Grant Scheme in the initial months of this year, the scheme was closed to new applications in May. In July 2023, an additional €2,000,000 was made available thereby bringing the total funding allocated to the Scheme for 2023 to €5,000,000. NTA contacted all parties on the waitlist in relation to the status of their application throughout the month of July and an additional round of provisional offers has now been issued to eligible applicants.

The offer is only payable where a suitable vehicle is licensed within three months. The grant offer period is clearly outlined on the provisional grant offer letter from NTA. It is important that applicants do not commit any money to a vehicle purchase until they have received a provisional grant offer letter from NTA as individual grant aid cannot be guaranteed.

Please note, as per the WAV23 Terms & Conditions, if you license a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle without receipt of a Provisional Grant Offer, you will not receive grant funding.



## SPSV: AGE RULES – INFORMATION DOCUMENT

An updated information document explaining the current **Small Public Service Vehicle age rules** has recently been published on NTA website. The document provides age rule information for all vehicle licence types and incorporates the contingency age rule measures introduced in 2022. Before purchasing a vehicle, please refer to the age rules guidance to ensure the proposed vehicle meets the age requirements for your SPSV licence (or licence application). You should never purchase a vehicle for licensing without making sure it meets all requirements, including age.



## SPSV+ APP

NTA has launched a new app for SPSV online services, called SPSV+. With the new, user friendly app you will be able to complete driver linking and vehicle rentals in the same place. SPSV+ is available on the app store and Google play store. An information video is available [here](#).



## EPILEPSY IRELAND FOR NTA



In support of International Epilepsy Day, Epilepsy Ireland and NTA wish to remind industry members of the importance of knowing what to do when someone on a bus, tram, train or taxi has an epileptic fit.

*“I’m a normal person who happens to have epilepsy. So do almost 1 in 100 people in Ireland. If I have a seizure around you, don’t be afraid to help. Just make sure the area around me is safe, and stick around until it passes –*

*usually within a few minutes. One day I hope I can stand up for you too”.*

Further information is available [here](#).



## COMMENDATIONS

Congratulations! The following driver has received a commendation from his passengers:

John Onojedje N4968. For assisting his customers with their search for their lost property at the Guinness Storehouse, the retrieval of the items after the customer had left Ireland and returning the items by tracked mail to the customer in the United States. Highly Commended!

