

MAXIMUM TAXI FARE REVIEW 2024

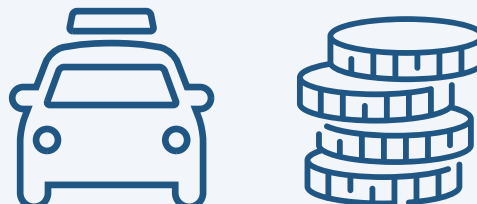
NTA has commenced work on the National Maximum Taxi Fare Review 2024, which will assess for changes in taxi operating costs and the market facing the industry. This work was last carried out in 2022 when the Maximum Taxi Fare was increased by an average of 12% to reflect the then increase in operating costs faced by taxi drivers.

The objectives of the Maximum Taxi Fare Review are to:

- Estimate the average activity level of taxis in a year based on survey data directly from taxi drivers and data from the Central Statistics Office;
- Update each element of the Taxi Cost Index, which includes an update of the fixed and running costs of an average taxi and labour costs; and

- Determine whether there should be any change in maximum fares chargeable by operators.

NTA will keep operators updated as the Review progresses, with industry and user surveys commencing in the first quarter of 2024 and a full update of fixed and running taxi costs being completed in parallel. A public consultation will follow, with operator and user submissions invited.



HIGHER WEIGHTING OF TAXI FARES FOR NIGHT TIME WORK

Results of the Maximum Taxi Fare Review research undertaken in February 2022 showed that 30% of licensed taxi drivers would provide services to the night time economy if the fares were increased. Taxi users surveyed also showed that they would absorb quite substantial increases to get services provided at night. As a result, taxi fares were increased during the hours from 20:00 to 08:00. Drivers can operate during the peak fare times of the night time economy to maximise earning potential and to help ensure the supply of taxis meets demand.



MAXIMUM TAXI FARE REMINDER: SURCHARGE & CUSTOMER INFORMATION CARD

It is illegal to charge a hirer any extra fee or surcharge for using a credit or debit card to pay for a journey.

The amount displayed on the taximeter is the maximum fare that can be charged for a taxi journey.

NTA has investigated a number of customer complaints relating to surcharges being added to the fare by the driver as an extra charge for using a credit/debit card instead of cash. This is prohibited under the Taxi Regulation Acts and the Maximum Fares Order. If a driver is found to have knowingly overcharged a customer, NTA will prosecute the driver in the District Court where the Judge could fine up to a maximum of €4,000 as well as awarding legal costs.

SPSV operators are also required by law to display specific in-vehicle customer information. Customer information cards were last updated in September 2022 and are available at all SPSV inspection centres free of charge. Failure to display required in-date customer information carries a fine of €100.

CARRYING GUIDE AND ASSISTANCE DOGS

SPSV operators must carry guide dogs, assistance dogs and mobility aids for passengers who need them, at no extra charge. The fine for refusal to carry a guide or assistance dog in a small public service vehicle is €250.

When carrying a passenger with a guide or assistance dog, allow the owner to direct the dog themselves. All guide dogs wear a harness that indicates the type of guide dog they are: guide dogs for the blind have a white and yellow reflective strip; assistance dogs have a blue harness. Guide dog owners and assistance dog owners will often carry an ID card giving their name and the name of their dog.

ROUTE SELECTION AND TOLL CHARGES

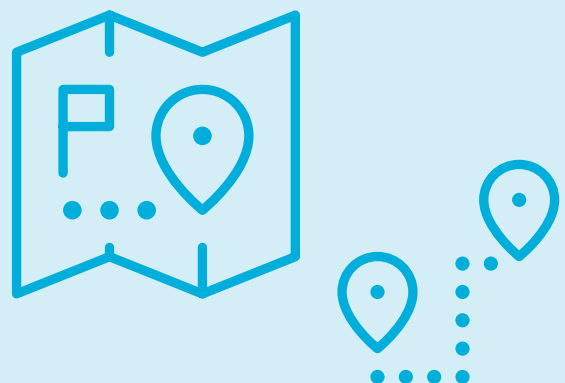
ROUTE SELECTION

As an SPSV operator, if you believe that you should take a route that is not the most direct, you should explain your suggestion to your passenger and get their agreement.

- The customer is entitled to choose the route, even if you disagree with their choice
- When advising passengers of the alternative route(s) available, you should also advise of likely costs and journey times associated with each
- If any of the alternatives involves a toll you should tell the passenger what the toll charge will be and ensure the customer is happy to pay the toll

TOLL CHARGES

- If the chosen route is subject to toll charges, you are entitled to include the toll charge in the fare charged to the passenger
- Such toll charges should be recorded on the receipt
- If you are using an electronic tag to pay the toll, it may not be obvious to the passenger what the charge is
- You are advised to keep a schedule of toll charges in the car, so that you can show it to customers if necessary (for example, on the M50, or in the Port Tunnel)



UNLICENSED DETECTIONS AND PROSECUTIONS

As well as our usual compliance and enforcement activities, NTA Compliance Teams continue to work alongside An Garda Síochána, Revenue and the Department of Social Protection 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 and other matters.

To date in 2023, NTA has been successful in 31 court prosecutions for unlicensed operators. These detections included persons operating services with no SPSV driver and/or vehicle licence and also displaying taxi signage while unlicensed.

This type of compliance activity is carried out specifically for the purpose of ensuring safety for members of the travelling public and to ensure fairness to SPSV operators who work legally within the regulatory framework of the SPSV industry.

An Garda Síochána @GardaTraffic

Dublin West Roads Policing Unit took part in a joint operation with @TFIupdates checking compliance in Lucan, Co. Dublin recently.

They found 2 drivers operating without the required licences for taxis or hackneys.

Cars were seized and court to follow.

#KeepingPeopleSafe

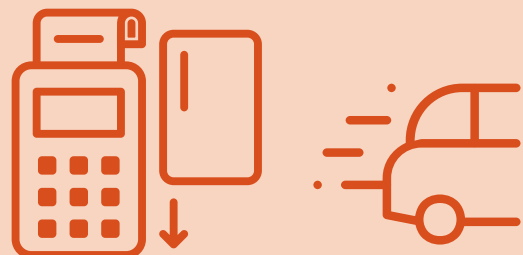


11:13 AM · Aug 31, 2023 · 17K Views

CASHLESS PAYMENTS

As stated in the last SPSV Industry Update, NTA continues to receive complaints in relation to refusal to accept cashless payments. With the festive season approaching and an expected surge in customer demand, all SPSV operators are reminded of their obligations. 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.



An Garda Síochána @GardaTraffic

Gardaí from Bangor Erris and Kevin Street Garda Station along with @TFIupdates Compliance conducted a joint operation, where a vehicle and driver was detected operating for hire or reward without a licence or insurance to do so.

Car was seized & court to follow for the driver.



3:55 PM · Sep 24, 2023 · 34.4K Views

LICENCE SUSPENSIONS AND REVOCATIONS

As you'll be aware, NTA is the licensing authority for SPSVs and An Garda Síochána is the licensing authority for drivers of SPSVs. Section 12 of the Taxi Regulation Acts permits either licensing authority to suspend a licence for a period of up to 3 months or to revoke a licence which is permanent.

There are a number of reasons which may trigger either authority to suspend or revoke an SPSV driver or vehicle licence.

NTA has recently been made aware of threatening behaviour being displayed at an SPSV inspection centre as well as at Dublin Airport. Investigations are underway and, depending on the outcomes of those investigations, actions for suspension or revocation of the licence(s) may progress.



WAV JOURNEY RECORDS REMINDER

In accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Schemes, recipients are required to submit journey records every 6 months to NTA.

If you have received a grant and have not submitted journey records in the last 6 months, NTA requires that you provide a copy of your records for all journeys taken where the customer required a wheelchair accessible vehicle. **A submission to NTA is required to maintain compliance with your grant terms and conditions, even if you have not carried a passenger requiring a WAV.**

These records may either be included in the **WAV Journey Records Template**, or be incorporated into your individual record keeping process, and be submitted to NTA. At a minimum, the information required is:

- The date and time of the journey;
- The start and end point of the journey;
- The SPSV vehicle licence number; and
- The SPSV driver licence number

If you do not return your journey record you will be in breach of the Terms and Conditions of the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Schemes and may have to repay the grant you have received.

The record may be scanned and returned via email to taxis@nationaltransport.ie or photocopied and posted to: **WAV Grant Compliance, National Transport Authority, PO Box 436, City North Business Park, Tuam Road, Galway**



RENTAL AGREEMENTS AND LEASE OR HIRE PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

RENTAL AGREEMENTS

The regulations permit a vehicle licence holder to rent their insured vehicle to another person. The person providing the rental must own the vehicle and be the holder of the vehicle licence, and must provide appropriate insurance for the period of the rental. The person providing the vehicle must notify NTA of the rental, either using the **NTA's online system**, or by calling the SPSV Information Line (0818 064 000). As the vehicle licence holder, you are required to provide NTA with the details of the period of the arrangement, the renter's SPSV driver licence number and the vehicle registration number. The person providing the rental of the licenced vehicle must keep up these records up to date at all times.



LEASE OR HIRE PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

The regulations require that either evidence of vehicle ownership or evidence of legal entitlement to use of the vehicle for a period of not less than 12 months is provided to NTA for licensing.

Licence holders must bring the original Vehicle Registration Certificates (VRC – still commonly referred to as the log book) to all SPSV suitability inspections. Alternatively, where a vehicle is held under a lease or hire purchase or agreement, NTA will accept written confirmation on letter headed paper from the registered owner of the vehicle, stating the SPSV licence holder is legally entitled to the use and possession of the vehicle for a period of not less than 12 months.

Failure to provide this documentation at the time of inspection will result in a fail, so if you are in doubt regarding this inspection requirement, please query this with NTA at the time of booking your suitability inspection or email

taxis@nationaltransport.ie

PURCHASING A TAXI OR HACKNEY VEHICLE

Whilst each SPSV driver must decide their own business strategy within the regulatory framework, it should be noted that purchasing a second hand wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) under a new SPSV Licence is currently the most economical option available. Second hand WAVs are readily available for purchase and a second hand WAV up to 6 years of age can be licensed and then operated until it reaches 15 years from the date of first registration.

Should SPSV drivers require financial support, the Microenterprise Loan Fund provides vital support by filling the lending gap in the market by lending to businesses that cannot obtain loans from other commercial lenders.

Further information on the range of services offered by Microfinance Ireland is available [here](#). In addition, NTA provides a WAV Grant Scheme to support with WAV purchases. The WAV Grant Scheme 2023 has closed to new applications, however it is expected that a WAV Grant will once again become available early in 2024.

Information on the different routes to operating in the SPSV industry can be found in Chapter 9 of the [NTA Official Manual for Operating in the SPSV Industry](#) and NTA recommends all new entrants study this section thoroughly, to assess what route is most economical and appropriate for them.

EPILEPSY IRELAND

“If I fall down, will you stand up?” is a question many people with epilepsy ask themselves everyday – and is the question being put to the public by Epilepsy Ireland as part of their new awareness campaign.

There are over 45,000 people living with epilepsy in Ireland – the problem is, too many of the wider public don’t know how to “stand up” and correctly respond to a seizure.

Epilepsy Ireland would like you to remember three words to help you stand up – TIME, SAFE, STAY! But what is the basis behind these three key words? [Click here for more details.](#)



BE WINTER READY: RSA GUIDANCE

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) has published useful guidance for driving in severe weather conditions in winter and tips to ensure your vehicle is prepared for winter. Further information can be found on the [RSA website](#).



LOST PROPERTY

As the festive season draws closer and an increase in the use of SPSVs is anticipated, the possibility of passengers mislaying their belongings in SPSVs is likely to increase. Any property left in your vehicle by a passenger should be delivered either to a designated Garda Station (Dublin), or the local Garda Station, as soon as possible.

There are five designated stations within Dublin for lost property: Finglas, Irishtown, Shankill, Store Street and Tallaght.

Thank you to all the drivers who have gone out of their way to reunite passengers with their lost property.

Further information can be found on [An Garda Síochána’s website](#).

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS

The SPSV Information Line and Inspection Centres will be closed on the 25th and 26th December and on 1st January 2024.

NTA encourages you to keep up to date on industry matters by visiting the SPSV Latest News section of the website.

Wishing you a safe and peaceful festive season.

