

SPSV NEWSLETTER

March 2026

ISSUE 71

INDUSTRY INFORMATION LINE: 0818 064 000



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Dispatch Operator review



The regulatory framework for dispatch operators in Ireland was last updated in 2015, before the rise of app-based booking services. As a result, all operators, whether they connect with passengers in person, by phone, or through an app, and regardless of the number of drivers they work with, are currently regulated in the same way.

To ensure the system continues to reflect passenger needs and the realities of a changing SPSV market, the NTA is now inviting submissions on the role of dispatch operators and how they should be regulated.

The first step in this process is an NTA Call for Inputs.

The Call for Inputs seeks feedback from passengers, industry members, and other stakeholders on all matters relating to dispatch operators, including customer experience, accessibility, safety, competition, and cost. Submissions will inform the next stage of the review, with a full public consultation expected later in 2026.

Further details can be found [here](#).

New local area hackney measures to support rural transport

Following a public consultation process in 2025, the NTA Board has approved a series of important updates to the Local Area Hackney (LAH) licence regulations.

Under the revised approach, local communities have a greater say in their transport needs to support LAH services to address local demand.

The updated measures will come into effect on 1 April, when the NTA will launch a new Local Area Hackney application process. Further information on the improved process, along with clear guidance to support prospective applicants through each stage will also be published shortly.

Full details of the NTA Board's decision can be found [here](#)..



Sustainability

Transitioning to a battery electric powered vehicle

As the SPSV industry continues moving toward zero-emission vehicles, many operators are considering the switch to battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and availing of funding through the eSPSV26 Grant Scheme and the SEAI EV Home Charger Grant to assist with the purchase and operation of a new BEV.

When comparing BEVs, always request the full “on-the-road” quotation from your car retailer. This ensures you have an accurate total cost before committing to purchase.

Important information to request includes:

- Base vehicle price
- SEAI Grant reductions
- VRT relief
- Dealer delivery fees
- Registration and plates
- Warranty
- Optional extras- e.g cost of installing an EV Charger, service costs or additional warranty terms
- Delivery lead times

By taking the time to research and gather a full, detailed quotation and understanding all associated costs, you'll be better prepared to make an informed decision about transitioning to a BEV.

SEAI electric vehicle home charger grant

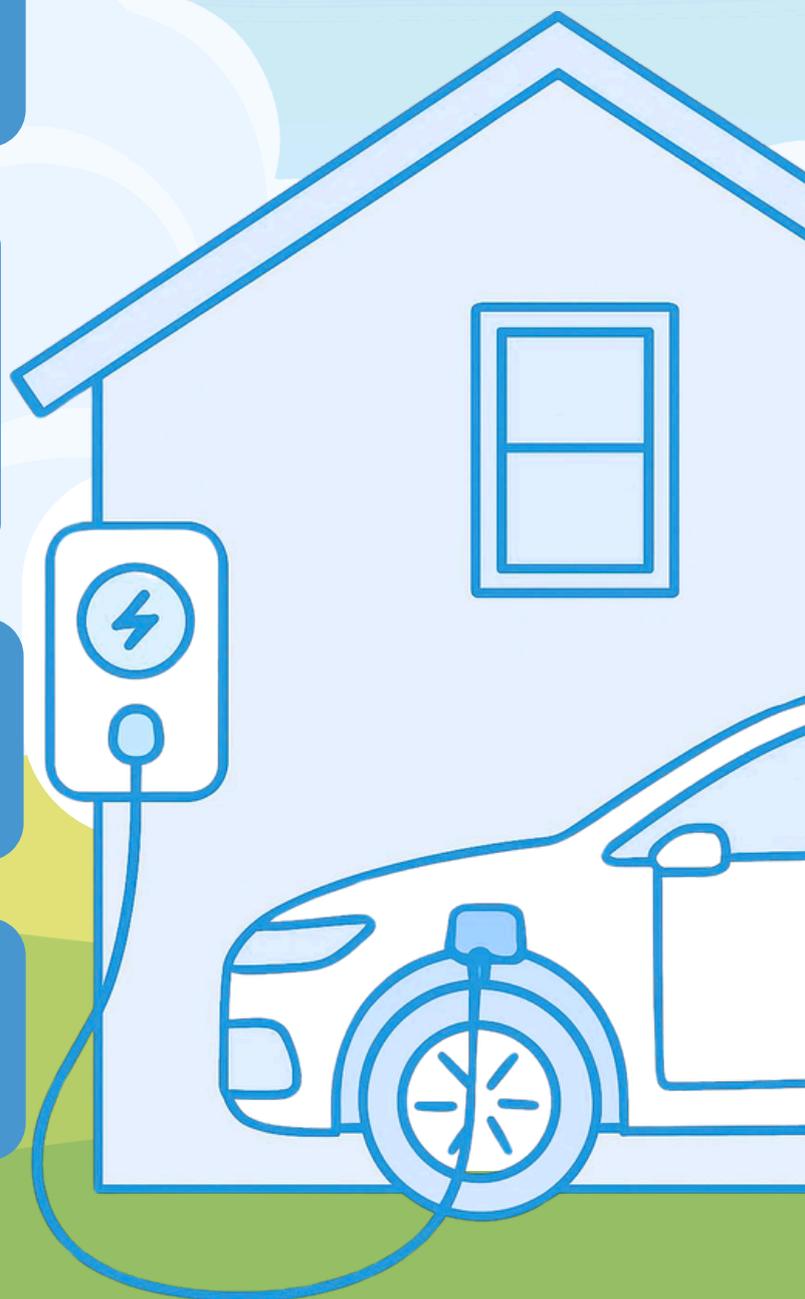
SPSV owners considering a move to an electric vehicle- or simply looking to future proof their property can benefit from the Electric Vehicle Home Charger Grant from the SEAI.

The scheme provides up to €300 towards the purchase and installation of the home EV Charger unit. This financial support helps to reduce the upfront cost of installing a reliable, convenient charging point at your home.

Having a home charger offers:

- Lower running costs
- Greater charging convenience
- Reduced downtime during work hours

Information on the scheme, including full terms and conditions and how to apply are available from [the SEAI website](https://www.seai.ie).



Accessibility

Guide and assistance dogs on public transport

Guide dogs and other assistance dogs supporting people with disabilities are fully entitled to travel on all public transport services, including Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs). They travel free of charge and without any restrictions.

Reminders for SPSV drivers

- Drivers must accept a guide dog or assistance dog accompanying a person with disabilities. Refusal is not permitted.
- These dogs are professionally trained and will sit calmly in the footwell of the vehicle.

Refusing to carry a guide dog or assistance dog in an SPSV is a serious offence and carries a €250 Fixed Payment Notice.

Let's work together to ensure safe, respectful, and inclusive transport for all passengers.



Disability awareness training 2026

The NTA continue to provide disability awareness training to all interested SPSV drivers – not just WAV grant recipients - free of charge. The 3-hour course provides operators with hands on practical training on the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) and their lifting and clamping equipment. It also provides training in how to support passengers with disabilities and helps to build confidence in drivers in servicing this community.

Training sessions recommenced in February and will continue throughout the year at locations in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

To enquire about training please call 0818 064 000.

Often SPSVs are the only form of public transport available to wheelchair users so providing a quality service can have a huge impact for these service users.

Compliance

Wheelchair restraint systems: a reminder on safety requirements

Operators must ensure that all wheelchair restraint systems and ancillary equipment are present, undamaged, and fully operational before a vehicle enters service. This is essential for the safe transport of wheelchair users and to avoid situations where operators cannot accommodate them.

Recent inspections have identified recurring issues, including:

- Missing rear restraint clips
- Faulty lock/release switches
- Damaged access steps and ramps
- Missing or damaged seatbelts
- No user manual on board
- Spare tires and equipment in the wheelchair space

Where necessary, these defects have resulted in Fixed Payment Notices (FPNs) and in some cases vehicles being recalled for suitability re-inspection. Maintaining proper equipment is both a safety requirement and a regulatory obligation.





Refusing to take a fare is an offence

By law, there are specific circumstances in which an SPSV driver is permitted to refuse a passenger. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Journey Distance: The proposed journey is more than 30 kilometres.
- Passenger Behaviour: The intending passenger is aggressive, intoxicated, drunk, or disorderly.
- Sanitation Concerns: The passenger is so dishevelled that, in the driver's reasonable opinion, carrying them would affect the cleanliness or sanitation of the vehicle.

If a passenger believes that none of these conditions applied in their situation, they are entitled to submit a complaint to the NTA for investigation.

The statutory Fixed Payment Notice (FPN) for an unreasonable refusal of hire is €150, rising to €225 if not paid within 28 days.

Note: Shorter journeys are often more profitable

Many drivers prefer longer journeys, but research shows that completing more frequent, shorter trips often leads to higher overall earnings. Shorter hires reduce dead mileage, increase passenger turnover, and minimise waiting time between fares. Refusing a journey because it is "too short" not only risks a Fixed Payment Notice, it also works against your own business interests.



Fixed Payment Notices – How They Work

NTA Compliance Officers and members of An Garda Síochána may issue Fixed Payment Notices for a range of offences designated in law as Fixed Payment Offences. An FPN may be issued:

- During roadside checks, or
- Following a customer complaint.

Each FPN specifies the amount due to avoid prosecution. The payment deadlines are:

- Days 1–28: Pay the standard amount on the notice.
- Days 29–56: Pay the amount plus 50%.

If payment is not received within 56 days, the NTA will initiate a prosecution for the original offence. The driver will be required to attend court and may receive a criminal conviction, a court-imposed fine, and legal costs.





eSPSV26 grant scheme now closed following record first-day demand

The Department of Transport's eSPSV26 Grant Scheme, which opened for applications at 10am on Wednesday, 25 February, has now closed after all available funding was fully allocated on the first day. The scheme saw an incredible surge of interest, with a record number of applications submitted within hours of opening!

A total of €7 million was made available this year to support owners of small public service vehicles in purchasing electric vehicles. The scheme is funded by the Department of Transport and administered by the NTA, helping the SPSV fleet transition towards cleaner and more sustainable technologies.

Due to exceptionally high demand, the 2026 allocation is now fully assigned, and no further applications can currently be accepted. However, the scheme may reopen later in the year if additional funding becomes available. We will provide updates through the NTA Latest News channel should this occur.

WAV26 grant scheme

Round 1 closed; Round 2 expected to open in July

Round 1 of the WAV26 Grant Scheme is now closed, and all applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, have now been contacted and notified of the status of their application.

The WAV26 Scheme will reopen in July. Prospective applicants can prepare for their application by reviewing the Terms and Conditions, Information Guide, and FAQs carefully. These can be found here on the NTA website.



Respect on the information line

A reminder for callers

NTA always aim to treat callers to our Information Line with respect, but we expect the same in return. We respectfully ask that you engage positively with our call advisors so that all parties can complete calls in an efficient and positive manner.

If your language or behaviour on the call is offensive, our call advisors to terminate the call. This could interfere with your ability to complete licence administration like booking your suitability inspection, and may impact your ability to apply for SPSV grants

Respect is a two way street.



Respect



Respect