

Commercial Passenger Vehicle Reforms

Information for Drivers of Commercial Passenger Vehicles (includes taxi, minibus, private hire cars and rideshare)

Background

After an extensive period of consultation with industry and the community, the Northern Territory Government is reforming the way commercial passenger vehicles are regulated. This includes:

- making ridesharing services legal;
- reducing red tape for taxi, minibus, and private hire vehicles; and
- reducing operator licence fees, to be offset by the introduction of a \$1 per trip levy.

Territorians are encouraged to have their say on the draft regulations available at:

<https://dipl.nt.gov.au/transport/transport-strategies-and-plans/commercial-passenger-vehicle-reforms>.

Passenger Services Levy

Annual operator licence fees are being significantly reduced, and will be replaced by the introduction of a \$1 passenger services levy which will be payable for each fare.

In the case of taxis, minibus and private hire vehicles, the operator (not the driver or network) will be responsible for reporting on trips taken and paying the levy.

For rideshare vehicles, the rideshare platform will be responsible for the levy.

Drivers are not liable for payment of the levy nor are they required to report on trips taken in the ordinary course of events. However, drivers may be required by the Department to provide information regarding trips when the Department is investigating an operator or rideshare platform's levy responsibilities.

Further information regarding the levy is available at: dipl.nt.gov.au/transport/transport-strategies-and-plans/commercial-passenger-vehicle-reforms.

Driving Unsafe Vehicles

Offences which involve putting people at risk of injury have been significantly increased in order to provide a sufficient deterrent and to reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Increasing the penalties for offences regarding vehicle standards will ensure operators have greater incentives for closely monitoring the vehicle's wear and tear.

Responsible operators who ensure as a matter of good practice that their vehicle is safe will not be disadvantaged by this change. However, operators who have in the past allowed their vehicle to fall into disrepair and become a safety risk will now have a greater incentive to ensure their vehicle is maintained.

Although operators are responsible for ensuring vehicles are maintained and safe, the person driving the vehicle is also responsible for ensuring they do not drive a vehicle which they know to be unsafe. Drivers who do so face potential fines of \$2,310.

Driver Behaviour

Although most drivers are professionals who provide a high quality service, during consultation it was identified that sometimes, *some* drivers are incentivised to do the wrong thing. For example, taxi drivers may refuse short fares in the belief that it ends up being worth the occasional small fine when enforcement does occur.

As a result, penalties which were found to provide an insufficient deterrent are being increased. For example, the infringement penalty for a taxi driver who refuses a short fare when parked at a rank is being increased from \$154 to \$616.

Codes of Conduct

Consistent with Government's decision to generally focus on regulating to ensure personal safety and leaving service standards to the market, the Codes of Conduct for Drivers have been reviewed.

This means Government expects the industry to take responsibility for service quality, which will be necessary in light of the increased competition expected from the regulatory reforms.

In particular, Government will not be enforcing things like driver uniforms and dress standards, nor will it require specific training for drivers.

Operators may ask their drivers to wear uniforms as a condition of employment or bailment agreement; however Inspectors will not be issuing infringements against drivers who do not wear uniforms.

Drivers are encouraged to review the draft Codes of Conduct.