

FREE MAGAZINE JUNE - JULY 2018

TACSAÍ

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incentives for
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EDITORIAL

The big news this month is news we've been waiting for; the potential banning of rickshaws – and all it took was one well-placed politician to put his life in his hands to go for not one, but two journeys in the infamous “vehicles” to find out for himself that they are not safe, nor roadworthy, and now, the Minister for Transport Shane Ross TD has proposed the ban. It is the news that's on everyone's lips right now and we hear from long-time rickshaw critics the DTA, the TTnH and Tony Roe, plus we have our own editorial on pages 6 & 7.

We received a phone call last month from a concerned driver who raised the issue of the S15N form, and how little is known about it, even amongst those working in the taxi industry. It's the form that allows your taxi plate to pass on to your next of kin in the event of your passing. It's a very important form, as one woman found out, and it was a form that neither she or her husband knew about until it was too late.

The good folks at mytaxi are helping drivers get motoring in many different ways, most recently by trying to help potential drivers enter the industry, now mytaxi drivers can secure wheelchair accessible and electric vehicle grants in excess of €15,000 as part of a range of new incentives now available – a move which has been welcomed by Minister Ross.

The very fit and super healthy crew here at Tacsai are also keen to keep you guys in shape this summer too, so that's why we've asked a personal trainer for his advice on how to keep the pounds off. We also have some helpful tips on healthy eating too. We have our pelvic-thrusting tips for your in-car exercises on page 22 (though we do advise you wait until your customers leave the car before attempting them... but that's a judgement call).

We have all that, plus a whole lot more in this month's edition of the Tacsai Magazine. Safe travels,
Stephen Young
Editor

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- 02. Emo Station (*Mount Brown*), Kilmainham.
- 03. Discount Till Rolls
- 04. TTnH Offices, Santry Hall Ind. Est.
- 05. Fonthill Motor Factors.
- 06. Harbour Radiators.
- 07. The Kesh at Dublin Airport.
- 08. Fonthill Autoparts.
- 09. Hailo, 12 Upper Mount Street.
- 10. Dublin Corporate Cabs, Ballymount Ind Est.
- 11. Phoenix Motors, Prussia Street.
- 12. South Dublin Autos.
- 13. Ozone Cabs
- 14. Go Service Station, Kylemore Road.
- 15. Excel Auto Parts, Old Naas Road



MYTAXI DRIVERS CAN NOW ACCESS €15,000 IN WHEELCHAIR AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE INCENTIVES

Minister Ross welcomes new mytaxi measures

m mytaxi drivers can secure wheelchair accessible and electric vehicle grants in excess of €15,000 as part of a range of new incentives now available, Ireland's leading taxi e-hailing app has announced.

mytaxi is offering a €1,000 commission rebate to drivers who avail of the National Transport Authority's (NTA) Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Grant Scheme for 2018, which offers financial assistance of up to €7,500 per vehicle. The move looks to further upgrade the company's fleet, which has seen an increase of 54% in the number of

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) since July 2017, with 100 added in the past three months alone.

mytaxi also offer the €1,000 commission rebate to drivers who avail of the electric vehicle incentive scheme that has been introduced by Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross TD, which offers a €7,000 grant towards the purchase of an electric vehicle for those with a small public service vehicle (SPSV) licence.

Drivers availing of both these schemes on the purchase of a new vehicle can enjoy over €15,000 in reliefs in total, and while only entitled to a single €1,000 commission rebate from mytaxi, are able to take passengers who use the wheelchair facility without having to pay a commission to the company.

Minister Shane Ross, welcoming mytaxi's announcement, said: "My department is committed to the electrification of the national SPSV fleet as part of our transition to a cleaner and greener Ireland. With the NTA, we are also pushing hard to increase the number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in the fleet as part of meeting the needs of a diverse, modern society. mytaxi is supporting these initiatives with its own measures, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the company in the national drive towards a sustainable, modern public transport system. Taxi drivers should look into these schemes and to avail of all the incentives on offer."

Stephen Cluskey, Mobility Mojo CEO, said: "Taxis are a very important door-to-door public transport service for many people in Ireland, that need to be inclusive of all members of our society. It is vital we move towards a taxi industry which supports the diverse and varied needs of our modern, contemporary population. I believe these new mytaxi incentives, combined with recent moves by the Department of Transport and NTA in this area, will go a long way towards encouraging more drivers to opt for a fully accessible taxi and so this is an extremely positive announcement."

General Manager for Ireland at mytaxi, Alan Fox, said: "At mytaxi, we are continually pushing to upgrade and expand our fleet to ensure Ireland has a sustainable and accessible taxi service that is fit-for-purpose. WAV taxis now make up 10% of our driver fleet in Ireland. However, we still believe there needs to be a step-change in the number of such taxis available to the public and, in partnership with the Department of Transport and the

National Transport Authority, we are determined to play our part in continuing to boost the number of wheelchair accessible and electric taxis by the end of this year. mytaxi drivers are now in a position where they can avail of over €15,000 in grants and incentives in this respect, and we urge them to get in touch with us now to find out how they can do this."

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE
<https://ie.mytaxi.com/WAVandElectricGrant>

Call in to the Driver Centre on Mount Street to speak with a member of the Team or email us at Dublin@mytaxi.com



MEET ALAN FOX

Alan joined mytaxi as General Manager for Ireland in March of this year. Before taking on the role of General Manager, Alan worked in the Automobile Association and in various senior management positions in O2, Zurich Insurance, Meteor Mobile and Eircom. Alan brings his diverse range of management, business development and marketing experience to mytaxi.

Speaking about his first three months in mytaxi, Alan said: "What I've really enjoyed is getting to know the mytaxi team and how the business operates. The drivers I've spoken to have been really helpful in giving me their feedback and thoughts on how we can continue to improve the service that we offer to them. mytaxi is a fast growing business with loads of opportunities to continue to grow and improve both the functionality of our app and the services we offer to our drivers".

"We have a really close relationship with our drivers; whether that's in our dedicated Driver Office on Mount Street in Dublin or through our dedicated driver engagement teams who are constantly gathering driver feedback, solving technical issues and trying to help drivers get the most out of our app. All the feedback we get is taken on board and used to help us improve the functionality of the app and make it a lot easier to use".

ROSS LAUNCHES RICKSHAW BAN PROPOSAL

Minister makes push after taking a rickshaw, saying: “driving was reckless. This person broke virtually every rule in the book. They were going on the footpath along Stephen’s Green at great speed ... treated red lights as if they didn’t exist, drove on the tramlines.”

There is a myriad of reasons to ban rickshaws from our country’s streets. Galway have already done so, and now, it seems, Dublin may be about to follow suit.

For starters, rickshaws are uninsured and ungoverned. Their drivers are reckless in traffic, and many have run into legal trouble which I’ll return to. They are a horribly tacky travel option for short-distance journeys, often openly carrying alcohol-drinking members of the public. Organisations have fought against their presence on the streets for three years. Finally, it seems, there may be some movement.

Minister for Transport Shane Ross has proposed an outright ban on rickshaws due to safety concerns and because of the costs of regulating the sector.

Speaking before the Oireachtas transport committee last week Minister Ross outlined a range of concerns about rickshaws including dangerous driving, passenger safety and criminality.

The Minister said that 154 rickshaw drivers have been arrested under the Misuse of Drugs Act in the Pearse Street District alone over the past 18 months.

Despite these concerns Ross stopped short of confirming that there will be an outright ban, saying he will announce a preferred policy decision before the end of the Dáil term.

“It is clear to me that the choice is between a full and effective licensing regime and complete prohibition. Retaining the status quo is not an option,” he said.

The Minister said he favours prohibition because of the significant resources that would be needed to regulate the sector, these include introducing a licensing scheme,

controlling fares and enforcing penalties for offences.

He outlined how an outright ban requires fewer resources than attempting to regulate rickshaws.

The minister revealed that the National Transport Authority (NTA) wants to regulate the mode of transportation but the Department of Transport wants them banned.

He also recounted two rickshaw journeys he took as part of his research in which the drivers broke numerous rules, including driving on the footpath and driving on the wrong side of the road.

“We nearly lost you minister,” Cork North Central TD, Mick Barry, quipped.

Sinn Féin TD Imelda Munster queried the minister’s preference for banning rickshaws, asking if it was motivated by “laziness”.

“Every other country has managed to regulate rickshaws,” she said.

“It’s the pure lazy option to ban them, try to keep up with other countries.”

The comment was strongly rejected by the Minister, who said that rickshaws are banned in London.

Drug-dealing among Dublin’s rickshaw drivers is rampant and has become normalised, a key member of the Garda team involved in a concerted operation to tackle the issue has conceded.

As Minister Ross said, Gardaí have arrested 154 rickshaw drivers since January 2016 under offences related to section 15 of Misuse of Drugs Act in the Dublin City B District, covering the Pearse Street area. A huge number!

The Dublin South Central District Drugs Unit has been running targeted operations with assistance from the



National Drugs Unit, the South Central Task Force and Garda units in Pearse Street.

The operations involve squads of up to six or seven gardaí, who watch people going up to rickshaws to buy drugs, identify specific rickshaws that are selling drugs and interrupt transactions, arresting the dealers.

“It happens quite quickly,” said Sgt Ger Walsh of the Dublin South Central District Drugs Unit.

Specific operations are run on rickshaw drivers every two to three weeks as well as smaller operations at night-time between Thursdays and Saturdays, Sgt Walsh says. Those operating the rickshaw drug trade are a “very transient population”, with those involved often staying in Ireland on short-term visas.

Although most rickshaw drivers are not involved with drug dealing, rickshaw drivers are now seen as the “accepted” source for many people seeking drugs on a night out in Dublin, he said.

“The implementation of a licensing regime to regulate rickshaw drivers and operators would be a more substantial cost to the State than prohibition

“As new people are coming into the rickshaw business, they’re taking it on and probably bringing it further. In recent times, some of the street seizures were getting of increasing size,” he said, noting the Garda operations are resource and labour intensive.

“There’s a big impact on our work generally. The bigger guys that we’d be looking after, it takes away from that as well,” he said. “Something needs to be done, whether it’s prohibition or regulation. If they were to continue in their current form, the same pattern will continue.”

On the matter, Minister Ross added:

“Regulating for a very small group of people is extraordinarily difficult and will take a lot of resources continuously. Banning them in their present form will be difficult legally and that’s the only thing stopping us,” he said in an interview on RTÉ’s Today with Seán O’Rourke last



week. He said he would consult with the Attorney General about the proposal of prohibition and expects to announce a decision before the end of the Dáil term.

The Minister cited the results of a public consultation on rickshaws in Ireland, released by the National Transport Authority last year. Of the 4,727 respondents to an online survey, 54 per cent supported prohibiting rickshaws and 37.7 per cent thought they should be regulated.

Mr Ross took two trips in rickshaws for research recently and described the experiences as shocking at the Oireachtas Committee meeting. He said the price was arbitrary and the driving was reckless. “This person broke virtually every rule in the book. They were going on the footpath along Stephen’s Green at great speed ... treated red lights as if they didn’t exist, drove on the tramlines.”

Lucas, a 25-year old rickshaw driver, said very few accidents occur directly because of rickshaw drivers. “We can’t deny sometimes we do break some traffic rules, but we try to be safe.”



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Luke said: "Whilst TaxiFair Insurance is a relatively new name in the market, we are a vastly experienced team with almost 100 years combined experience. We've spent the last three years trying to bring some much-needed competition into the taxi insurance market and drivers are now benefitting from added competition in the market.

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"A; Listening to a driver's story. Not everyone has a perfect, unbroken driving history. We take details of your full driving history and present those directly to senior underwriters, often with success. We have a very high success rate in getting drivers on the road when alternative providers have been unable to. This applies to those with private no claims bonus, taxi rental experience, taxi fleet experience or a combination of those three areas. So, if you've

been unable to secure cover elsewhere all is not lost, give us a call. "B; You will always be dealing directly with Directors of our business, which makes a big difference. This means we are not focused on hitting short-term sales targets but instead providing advice in your best interests for the long-term."

Luke added: "We're experiencing an exciting time working with two insurers keen to grow their taxi book further. Our exclusive Liberty underwriting criteria is being developed further, which will benefit our clients, both old and new. Our exclusive Patrona offering is completely unique and based upon mandatory installation of a camera telematics device. This is the type of protection drivers need – these are highly sophisticated devices with built in G-Force sensors to ensure claims are notified and acted upon immediately. This means we can provide drivers with protection against 'he said/she said' type claims which can drag on as well as protection against fraudulent claims etc. Ultimately, these devices will see claims costs come down and help to both reduce and – most importantly – stabilise premiums, rather than the constantly increasing premiums experienced over the past few years.

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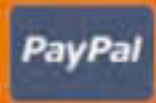
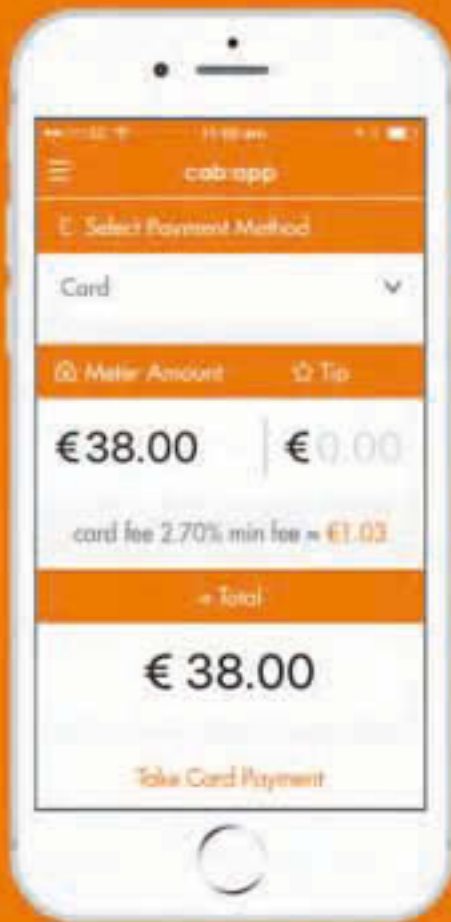


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Eco/Electric mode 50% of the time. Taxi drivers are telling us they are now saving up to 2/3rd on fuel and are fresher after a shift because of the seamless change in the CVT gearbox really suits their driving style. No more changing gear manually will save the knees and hips, and with an industry losing drivers quicker than they can be replaced we will be able to keep you on the road earning for a little longer.

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Network planning for the taxi trade in the public domain

By **Derry Coughlan** (of the Cork Taximens' Association)

Regulations that apply to Small Public Service Vehicles, their Licenced Drivers and Employment Agents (Order Base Offices and Digital Apps) have not been updated, or put in protective order for the industry under the Statutory Instruments Act 1947, which is defined as meaning every “order, regulation, rule, scheme or bye-law” made in the exercise of a statutory power, must be recorded by a Law Commission and issued or available for public inspection.

This neglect of Taxi Organisation by law is highlighted by the statutory powers' own function, no “valuable safeguard” in our functions and operational laws, but you, the taxi drivers must comply to the internal self-regulations of (1) An Garda Síochána, (2) Road Safety Authority, (3) local authorities/councils, (4) the legal metrology service, (5) the Department of Social & Family Affairs, (6) the Revenue Commissioners, (7) the Office of Tobacco Control, (8) the Health and Safety Authority, (9) the Equality Authority and (10) the Competition Authority.

The National Transport Authority works closely with these bodies to ensure compliance with their regulations. But where is our defence?

What's this Advisory Council to the National Transport Authority doing on achieving its purpose in the best interest of the taxi driver?

This Council member advises the National Transport Authority, Garda Commissioner and the Minister for Transport on a broad range of issues and requirements relevant to the taxi industry, but it appears to be a failure and only a routine exercise. We now require at this late stage; harmonisation, aims to create a “level playing field,” thus we need guidelines, supervision and documented operational laws, clarifying the works and verifying taxi rank administrative law, etc. Clarification and protection laws for dispatch office bases, incorporating the mobile phone digital hiring systems that are trying to dictate the business and take over the role of a taxi driver. If the licensing authorities after collecting MILLIONS in support funds from the taxi industry, won't move on this jurisdiction on the growing

need for administration law in our business organisation, otherwise taxi-drivers will end up like the greyhound and race horse industries, the “bookmakers” will only give you the fare on your “commission” that you are prepared to offer them, just like they operate in other countries at present.

We recommend that the “taxi” remains a sole city street trader and the “taxi cab”, by market trends, gets specimen functions under the new and reviewed administration law, where artificial laws no longer exist or can survive. There are two different markets involved here, and must be strictly legalized in the planning, management and operation of public transport in the Republic of Ireland. Patterns of travel must be catered for, in the distribution of taxi ranks, call centres, technology and other advanced booking methods. Arrangements for crowd gathering events, and passenger transfers, through efficiency, availability, capacity carriage, category carriage, cost efficiency, quality service and affordable journey costs/passenger support, all associated with legislative changes.

The internal structure of the taxi transport market must also be examined in the terms of trip length distribution, traffic congestion, obstruction on taxi ranks and bus lanes, split by time of day or night and day of the week, thus at peak periods the intending passengers must be prepared to wait or organise themselves satisfactorily, because the over-supply of licenced vehicles will never support the required income for the service providers, otherwise you will get a reduced standard in our country, which has happened and shown by experience since deregulation.

Immediately, the style of our taxi service must be cleaned-up, business manners must be restored, dress-code, clean/

fresh cars, passenger assistance and guidance where needed, also passengers must respect the service, as other people also use it!

It must become a condition of licence offer for wheelchair taxi applicants, that they are available for “school-runs,” because this is the only way to get the shortage at present covered and in most cases these vehicles are sought, etc. The overall conduct and behaviour of taxi drivers in public places must be addressed and supported by the “compliance officers,” e.g. no cars left unattended on taxi ranks, proper taxi rank movement with intending passengers being directed to the first taxi on the rank – equality prevails here with service levels being covered at all times; a taxi rank is there for public transport and not to run your own business on – obey the rules and comply with the regulations (bye-laws, trading customs).

Next, is the method of entry to the taxi industry, keeping quality, standards and practices in mind, based on public interviews and reports (behavioural scientist and intelligence assessors) etc. I would suggest that the prospective client, be interviewed firstly, just like any other job application (Bus Eireann and Civil Service, etc.) and checked out. Is he or she suitable for such a lawful calling that doesn't guarantee anything, but competing with other operators that have an interest in the travel trade, which also requires an investment? Now if he or she passes the medical and business interview (which is now law) then he or she is accepted and allowed make an application for sitting a taxi driver examination and test and if successful, the granting of an SPSV taxi-driver five-year operation licence is issued, subject to conditions etc.

The current and present application method can be achieved by any unsuitable person with no business experience, maybe records or complications, etc. Remember Sports Clubs, and Voluntary Groups for example have extreme vetting procedures in place nowadays! The Traffic Commissioner in the P.S.V. Carriage Office must be satisfied that the applicant can fulfil certain requirements; All must be: (A) “of good repute,” meaning that account must be taken of any previous convictions of the applicant, updating the social welfare issues involved, as they may apply; (B) of “appropriate financial standing,” meaning the applicant must show evidence that there is sufficient “financial support” for the vehicle to be maintained safely and administer the business properly and lawfully, etc.

In conclusion; your PSV Drivers Licence should be for ONE taxi meter area only and also on the understanding you are available for 40 hours per week. This taxi drivers' licence must be segregated from the private hire drivers' licence (hackney and limousine car operators) and should carry the operational rules and duties in conjunction with international circulation orders, for;

(1) taxi ranks (permanently appointed), (2) night ranks

(occasionally appointed), (3) street driving (pick-up, set-down and hailing routines applicable), (4) transport terminals, (5) crowd removal site provisions, (6) taxi call centres, (7) advanced booking office bases, (8) unsocial hours service, (9) wheelchair taxi functions, (10) ferryport arrangements, (11) contracts and school runs, etc., (12) goods and courier dispatch, (13) obligation to carry sufficient change, (14) disposal of lost luggage, (15) credit card payment arrangements/cost transactions etc., (16) dress code (stating what you can't wear), (17) unattended vehicles & touting, (18) vehicles cleanliness and preparation, (19) taxi meter and receipt printers purpose, (20) return to fixed journey prices over taxi meter Radius, (21) disputes, criminal damage and non-payment of fares, verified by a member of An Garda Síochána, (22) use of word 'taxi', (23) payment of fares, (24) functions of local authorities, (25) powers of a driver of a public hire vehicle, (26) duties of passengers hiring a taxi, (27) parking and stopping bye-law exemptions, (28) public hire insurance claims exemptions, etc.

Penal rules must return to the Road Traffic Act for offences by drivers or/and passengers, plus updating the work exemption rules under this act.

Having said all that as the way forward, brings me to the serious fouling of the taxi operations by other road users while parking, stopping or set-down on taxi ranks located in the city centre, especially on Sundays!

We recommend a special fine of €250 for this careless and unnecessary behaviour-obstruction in the workplace must be stopped. The Legal Handbook of Superior Legislation must be issued to all taxi drivers for the purpose of understanding and full awareness of their performance and transport role, with the penal regulations included, etc. The public/intending passengers/visitors to our country also seek insurance, coping with environmental and location changes, as the early taxi industry was primarily a service for the rich. We must now adjust to the travel volume variable and the economics of equipment in producing profit, for staying in business and protecting our livelihoods.

Finally, a matter which must be addressed, in the promotion of the market place, is our roof light sign which is the most obvious identifying feature of the modern taxi. But in Ireland, it must be placed in the centre of car roofs and in the front in mini-bus roofs only. I suggest it should return to the original specifications, first day introduced which was classed as one of the Best in Europe, noticed and admired by everyone, (until the cowboy manufacturers jumped on the bandwagon). Anywhere you go in the world there is a standard design roof light sign, fixed in one only position on the vehicle roof, which gives public confidence and awareness of the safe vehicle to hire.

The challenge is lawful standards and state support for taxi drivers (Transport For Ireland).

A RETRACTION

In our last edition, the April issue of Tacsáí Magazine, an article appeared under the headline of ‘Convicted cocaine dealer gets his license back’. The use of the word ‘convicted’ in relation to the man in question, Mr Barry Burns, instead of the term ‘successfully prosecuted’ was a regretful mistake, and one we here at Tacsáí Magazine sincerely apologise for and retract.

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Former cabbie claims “wrong man” is suing him

A FORMER TAXI driver has told a judge the man who was suing him for €60,000 damages because of a traffic collision was not the man involved in the accident.

Judge Terence O’Sullivan nevertheless told Michael Finlay, of Corkage View, Clondalkin, Dublin, to pay “the wrong man” just under €18,000 for personal injuries and indicated he was only marginally dissuaded from awarding punitive damages against the taximan.

Barrister Barry Browne, counsel for the injured Marius Vrancean, told the Circuit Civil Court that when his client, a builder, turned up last week to prosecute his claim he had been told Mr Finlay did not recognise him as the driver he had spoken with at the scene.

Mr Browne, who appeared with Bismilla Solicitors, said the case had been adjourned to allow Mr Finlay, backed by his insurers AXA, change his defence to deny that Vrancean was the driver involved in the accident at all. He said his client was being openly accused of lying.

Vrancean, 42, told Judge O’Sullivan that Finlay’s cab had collided with the back of his car on the Navan Road on 5 May 2015, causing him injuries to his shoulder and back and aggravating a replacement hip.

He had exchanged details and mobile phone numbers with Finlay and later attended for treatment at Blanchardstown Hospital.

Finlay in evidence said Vrancean was not the other driver he had dealt with. This man had been more than six feet tall, was slim and had bushy black dishevelled hair, nothing like Mr Vrancean.

Forensic engineer Pat Culleton said the damage to both cars was not consistent with Mr Vrancean’s vehicle simply rolling back into the taxi as suggested by Mr Finlay. There had been a collision, albeit a minor one. Judge O’Sullivan said he had been strongly



Former cabbie claims “wrong man” is suing him

influenced by Mr Culleton in accepting Mr Vrancean’s account of what had happened. He said Mr Culleton was an expert witness who did not attempt to act as an advocate for anyone and did not push the boat out, telling it as he saw it “warts and all”.

The judge said he had paid particular attention to the demeanour of Mr Vrancean in the witness box when it was being suggested he was lying and that he was not involved in the accident at all. He had struck him as a reliable and honest witness and he had been able to quote Mr Finlay’s mobile number as given to him at the scene.

Judge O’Sullivan said he had been asked to award aggravated damages to Mr Vrancean on the basis of his being “accused of being a liar or inventing the story” but he felt more inclined to the view that Mr Finlay’s memory, with the passage of time, had just proved to be faulty.

He awarded Mr Vrancean €17,826 and his legal costs against Mr Finlay.



GOING ELECTRIC

TeslaTaxis.ie to take Ireland by storm.

There's a little known fact about the world's first automobiles: some of the very first were powered by electricity.

Physicist Thomas Edison even invented the famous American Barker electric car in 1895.

It's a stunning fact that by 1900 in America, a total of 38 per cent of cars were powered by electricity, 40 per cent were powered by steam and a mere 22 per cent by gasoline.

That all changed and now more than a century later we are on our way back to the original situation — but this time in the name of the environment.

Currently there is a push to phase out liquid-fuelled cars by the year 2040.

Now, there's a man who is taking this trend and turning it into a business.

His name is Brian Hewson and he runs TeslaTaxis.ie

He said: "In Ireland there are only two licences available — a regular taxi licence or a chauffeur one. We want to create something like what they have in New York which is a service between yellow cabs and limos."

If you were ever in New York you might have seen 'town cars'. They are usually nice Lincolns or Cadillacs and are privately booked but not overly expensive.

Hewson says that many of his clients are people who might be going to the airport frequently or who want to use their service for special occasions.

It also works well with people who come here for Airbnb because of their ability to pre-order the transportation they

need. Hewson adds: "Taxis are still lightly regulated here — many can't even take payment by card."

He sees this as a mistake, and as a consumer of taxi services I tend to agree with him. His background is in IT and then he studied architecture. This turned him onto matters environmental and this morphed into an interest in electric vehicles.

Ireland is still coming to grips with the transition. Six years ago Hewson went to the Netherlands and came across a project run by Schiphol Airport where they had bought a fleet of 100 Teslas to use as taxis and were leasing them out to drivers.

A large part of making something work is getting it to work with what already exists. One thing that is already contentious is the small number and placement of charging stations around the country.

This might be resolved with a new system that is being piloted in South Dublin where a charging system that can work off the lighting system is being tried.

If that works it means that potentially every lamp post in the nation is a charging station.

But in looking at sites that advertise secondhand cars I noticed that when you filter the results to 'fuel type' and choose 'electric', most of the cars are either brand new or just a year old.

But cost is an issue. Most electric vehicles are more than €30,000 with the likes of a Tesla being closer to €100,000 when you include add-ons.



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TACSAÍ MAGAZINE'S

FITNESS & DIET TIPS

Some pointers on keeping fit and healthy, even while working.

As someone who doesn't drive a taxi, but drives long distances for work and spends between 3 and 4 hours a day in the car, I've had to adjust, recently; things like my posture and become aware of the kinds of foods I'm eating when I drive. My back is hunched, far worse than it used to be, even for my thirties. Coffee, fizzy drinks, snacks too... these are all tough to avoid, particularly sugar and coffee when driving tired.

So, on some advice from the personal trainer who has been straightening my posture and helping me lose a couple of pounds recently, I've compiled these helpful tips to get you through your working day a little healthier.

What are the top exercises for drivers?

It's recommended that if you're aged between 19-64 that you'll need on average 150 minutes exercise per week. Regular exercise will help you to look and feel better. It can also reduce your risk of heart failure, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer.

To get you started here are some simple exercises you can do outside of your vehicle:

- *Take a short walk down the road*
- *Walk up and down sets of stairs*
- *If you want to increase your exercise; you could try these moves that'll make you breathe hard and fast:*
- *Jogging on the spot*
- *Star jumps*
- *Shoulder circles*
- *Side-to-side leaps*
- *It's also important to include strength exercises. These are great for building stronger bones and to burn calories:*
- *Push-ups on a short wall*
- *Squats*
- *Sit ups*

On a rainy day you could try some in-vehicle exercises. These will also help avoid getting headaches, neck tightness and back pain; try shoulder rolls, 20 backwards rolls and 20 forward. There's also neck rolls (10 in each direction), and pelvic thrusts (don't laugh! ok go on so...) try do 20 of them when stopped at lights, and ideally when you don't have someone in the car – but that's up to you...

Doing different exercises each day will help to give you some variety. This'll make it more fun and less like a chore!

What diet tips can improve your health?

Having a good diet is an important part of living a healthy lifestyle. You might not eat when you're out on the road. However, if you do become hungry you may be tempted to



grab a takeaway, if you have little time and need to keep on the move.

Eating healthily will help you to cut down on calories and can save you money. Let's take a look at what food and drink you could try:

- *Eating fruit or Porridge for breakfast*
- *Here's the money saver! Prepare your own healthy packed lunch for work*
- *Eat grains with vegetables for your lunch and at dinner time*
- *Drink water to keep yourself hydrated and improve your alertness on the road*
- *Fast food is full of saturated fat, sugar and salt. This will not do your waistline much good. Here's what we recommend you avoid:*
- *Eating late at night, as your body will digest food slower at that time*
- *Eating junk food like burgers, pizza, crisps, cake and chocolate*
- *Drinking fizzy drinks*
- *Putting sugar in your cup of tea or coffee*

What are the short and long term benefits?

When you begin exercising and eating healthier, you'll be surprised at how quickly you'll start to feel better.

You'll instantly feel increased energy levels, concentration and improved sleep.

Switching to exercising and eating healthier can help you to lose excess body fat, lower your blood pressure and build leaner muscle.

Over time you'll become used to a healthier life style making it easier to keep up.

So give it a shot guys, nothing to lose, everything to gain.

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TTnH CAUTIOUSLY WELCOME RICKSHAW NEWS

McGuinness says he hopes to see the ban followed through in the Dáil now

The huge news this month is the mooted ban on rickshaws by Minister for Transport, Shane Ross TD. The move has been greeted with unanimous support and relief from all sectors of the taxi industry.

And while any such ban would be welcomed, there is still an air of scepticism but also hope that the ban will be delivered through the Oireachtas.

We recently spoke to Dave McGuinness of the TTnH, who had his concern.

He said: “As readers are aware Transport Minister Shane Ross recently voiced his intention to ban rickshaws due to his own experience and the large number of convictions processed through the court for rickshaw operators convicted of drug dealing.

“The Minister has stated his intention, and is awaiting the advice of the Attorney General’s office.

“We would hope this process moves swiftly. TTnH members have been campaigning since early 2012 to have these operators banned. Despite successive ministers refusing to deal with this issue we would hope Minister Ross carries out his intentions.”

Fianna Fáil’s transport spokesman Robert Troy said people’s lives had been put at risk due to delays in drafting legislation. He said he was not convinced of the need for an outright ban, noting that other cities had introduced regulations. The approach being taken by the minister was “lazy”, he charged.

Rejecting the claims, Mr Ross said the issue was “complicated”, and that he was in consultation with the Attorney General about the best approach to be taken.

“I wish to put the rickshaw industry on notice that whether by regulation or a ban, the days of indulging a reckless activity that appears to be running amok are coming to a close,” he said.

While the issue of rickshaws may be headed for a positive outcome for the taxi industry, the TTnH also have concerns regarding a number of other matters.

Dave added: “Following on from the last issue of Tacsáí the industry is currently under review on the following headings, (these are primarily discussion documents) credit cards, decals and branding, transferability of vehicle licences, local area hackney licence, vehicle standards, age



Inset: Dave McGuinness

limit and tinted windows, and peak time fare bands. It is our intention to produce a full document on this issue and we would welcome advice from drivers to tnh2012@gmail.com.

“Online taxing of SPSV vehicles is something TTnH members have been requesting for a number of years through both the Department of the Environment and the NTA. We have recently been informed this process has been granted and is due to commence in September.”

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TIME TO CUT THE HEAD OFF THE BEAST



The DTA credit Shane Ross for his move to ban rickshaws

There is a myriad of reasons to ban rickshaws from our country's streets. Galway have already done so, and now, it seems, Dublin may be about to follow suit.

One of the earliest and most ardent and outspoken campaigners in the fight against the plague of rickshaws has been Tommy Barton and his organisation, the DTA.

As the Minister for Transport, Shane Ross TD announced his plans for a ban on rickshaws, it was seen by many a huge victory for the industry.

Tommy spoke to us here at Tacsáí recently to share his thoughts on the matter.

He said: "I'm sure most taxi drivers, like me, watched the Prime Time program on the telly last week and saw the shocking report by the Garda, who we have to thank for the dedicated work long hours and professional persistence in bringing these death traps through our justice system and our courts, which is costing every taxi drivers and tax payer money. We'd also like to say thanks to the Tacsáí Magazine for all the work they have done in keeping the issue highlighted and helping the industry push these operators out.

"And now something as simple as a stroke of a pen by Minister Ross would finally cut the head of this out of control beast, which is still growing day by day.

"In fairness to Minister Ross, giving credit where credit is due, he said himself that he is going to put a stop to this as soon as possible. I'm sure he reflected on the NTA position, which the minister said.

"The NTA had carried out the survey and they recommended that they should be regulated. Could you imagine the amount of money the NTA would make on fines alone never mind the heap of money they would make if they brought these death traps to court; that's of course if the "students" would stay for their own court case.

"I was flabbergasted to hear Sean O'Rourke present a picture to the Minister saying that the rickshaw added to the gaiety of the city. Does he really suggest that the mayhem and madness rickshaws create some kind of ambiance and street theatre to our city?

"I'd say every magazine and brochure that promotes our lovely and fair city are shaking in their boots at the thought

of these rickshaws getting regulated, not alone would it be an embarrassment for our legislators, but our tourists would be getting used and abused and ripped off in our lovely city by the establishment if they legislated for these rickshaws.

"Now let's look at all these surveys – there was many surveys done and the DTA wrote to every Dublin City councillor about these rickshaws the Dublin City Transport Committee many years ago.

"The Dublin Taxi Association has met officially with three different ministers over the years, we have sat down with numerous TDs and spoke to them at length about why we wanted the rickshaws banned full stop.

"We gave the last minister, Pascal Donoghue, thousands of signatures that we got, thankfully, from you the taxi driver to voice your concerns on your behalf. We got hundreds of BAN RICKSHAW stickers and gave the money to the rape crisis centre and they were very grateful for the support of taxi drivers and the money you gave to them, which was at least some sort of positive out of a total mess that blights are streets.

"No other taxi organisation way back then even cared about the rickshaw problem. We were there from day one as you well know promoting and getting your voice heard.

"Now, finally, at last Minister Ross has an option which seems to be very easy for him as he suggested he doesn't want to regulate a very, very small bunch of people which would be very, very expensive and will take a lot of resources to continually monitor and regulate rickshaws, which don't fill a market need because the journeys are too short the fare is too high and the law is always broken.

"Let's look at statistics; there has been so far to date 154 people within 18 months charged if you put that into context of 1000 drivers one in nearly every five rickshaw drivers charged

"8% in the survey said leave as is? I bet before the survey was even done the public were not aware of the gravity of the situation... 34% said regulate them that leaves over 50% to have them banned. Does majority not rule in these surveys?

"The complaints that the National Transport Authority got were very, very serious, mostly about safety as the DTA have been saying from day one – that they are a death trap, pure and simple.

THE NET CLOSES ON RICKSHAWS



The National Transport Authority (NTA) has announced that it will ban rickshaws from Dublin city streets from next year.

The decision comes after a long period of consultation with stakeholders, including the taxi industry, the public, and various community groups. The NTA believes that rickshaws pose a significant safety risk to pedestrians and other road users, particularly in busy urban areas.

The ban will apply to all rickshaws operating in the city centre and surrounding areas. The NTA is committed to ensuring the safety and efficiency of Dublin's transport system, and this decision is a key part of that commitment.

IT 'SHAW AIN'T PRETTY

RICKSHAW ROW RANDBLES ON



The rickshaw row in Dublin has continued to simmer, with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the taxi industry at the center of the controversy. The NTA's decision to ban rickshaws has been met with significant opposition from rickshaw drivers and their supporters.

Protests have taken place in various parts of the city, with rickshaw drivers expressing their frustration and anger. They argue that the ban is unfair and will harm the livelihoods of many people who rely on rickshaws for transport.

The NTA has defended its decision, stating that it is necessary to ensure the safety and efficiency of the city's transport system. It has also offered to provide support and training for rickshaw drivers who wish to transition to other forms of transport.

DTA STICK TO THEIR GUNS

Anti-rickshaw stickers now highly visible




The National Transport Authority (NTA) has announced that it will continue to enforce its ban on rickshaws in Dublin city streets. The NTA has issued a statement saying that it is committed to ensuring the safety and efficiency of the city's transport system, and that the ban on rickshaws is a key part of that commitment.

The NTA has also announced that it will issue anti-rickshaw stickers to taxi drivers to make it easier for them to identify and report rickshaws. The stickers are highly visible and feature the NTA logo and the words 'NO RICKSHAW'.

The NTA has also offered to provide support and training for taxi drivers who wish to transition to other forms of transport. It has also announced that it will continue to enforce its ban on rickshaws in Dublin city streets.

FOUR WOMEN LEFT WAGON AFTER MURKIN FROM NETA

15 MINUTES TO GOO AWAY! MOODSOME CYCLE ON!



Going to work in a rickshaw is a common sight in Dublin, but it's not always the most pleasant experience. A group of four women were left in a rickshaw after a 'murky' situation involving the National Transport Authority (NTA).

The women were on their way to work when they encountered a rickshaw driver who was acting suspiciously. They decided to get out of the rickshaw and cycle to work, but they were stuck in traffic for 15 minutes.

The NTA has been criticized for its handling of the situation. It has offered to provide support and training for rickshaw drivers, but it has also been accused of being biased in its favor.

"If, god forbidding, a person was killed in these rickshaws by now would we be still waiting on the Authority to do something. Minister Ross has the power now at his desk to do something very important and also a very popular decision to make. He seems to be a very straightforward no-nonsense Minister he is not hacked or jostled by anybody. So for the sake of people's lives; the taxi community, the tourism industry, and also the face of Dublin, the capital city of Ireland, please use your power and ban rickshaws for good in our city streets. You will be doing everybody a huge favour."

Meanwhile on the issue of electric car grants, Tommy

added: "As we discussed in the last edition of the taxi magazine the DTA are the first taxi organisation who believes that there should be a provision by the NTA for every taxi driver who decides to go for a hybrid car. Taxi drivers are changing and updating their taxis because of the nine-year rule to mainly 1.6 diesels like Skoda etc. but very few hybrids, and we believe that the National Transport Authority missed a golden opportunity at the time they introduced to nine-year rule to incentivise drivers to buy hybrid and electric.

"It's not too late and they should consider a grant for hybrid taxis like there is a grant available for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis already in place and fully electric, so why not hybrids?"

"We also believe that there should be a very strong campaign and advertising program from the NTA, like they do with their up-to-date news letters to incentivise towards this – not only is it economically better, but also better for our environment also. Again, we believe that at every taxi rank around the city and around the country a recharging point should be made available for easy access for taxi drivers only."

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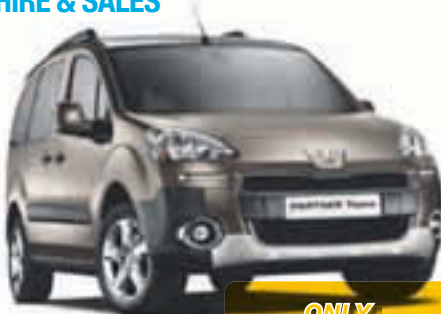
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ROE SPEAKS OUT AGAINST RESTRICTIONS

Dublin taxi drivers have been receiving complaints from people with disabilities and tourists visiting the city because of restrictions put in place in the last year.



Taxi driver Rob Squires, Minister For Transport Shane Ross and Tony Roe of the NTAC

Tony Roe, chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee, and a taxi driver in the capital himself, has said the restrictions around College Green and the removal of over a dozen taxi ranks has negatively impacted on the service.

He said Dublin still has more taxis than any other European Capital, but drivers have “abandoned the city centre, especially around the Grafton Street and Dawson Street areas” due to the restrictions.

Roe said bringing a customer to destinations in those areas now takes much longer and in many cases drivers cannot bring them right to the door because of the restrictions.

A ban on taxis travelling southbound in the College Green area in peak times was introduced earlier this year to address traffic congestion following the launch of the Luas Cross City.

Roe said 18 taxi ranks have also been taken out of circulation, which means drivers have few places in the city centre to use as a base to collect people.

He said his organisation was recently contacted about a wheelchair user who regularly uses taxis to bring her from her house into a bookshop in the city centre to meet friends for a cup of tea.

“She had to be dumped out at Grafton Street in the rain

because the driver couldn’t bring her down, he was banned from going into the College Green area at that time of the day,” he said.

“People with disabilities are being treated deplorably. The Luas will never be able to replace a taxi service for people with disabilities because it doesn’t go to their door and pick them up.”

He said the lack of ranks combined with these restrictions are also “making us a laughing stock” among tourists.

“Tourists are contacting us in large numbers saying they can’t get taxis in town, all the ranks are gone. There are lots of elderly tourists and now it’s hard to drop them right to their hotels, sometimes they have to be dropped with their luggage and walk.

“It’s sending out the wrong message to be throwing tourists out of cars just because we can’t go to high footfall areas.”

Roe said he has asked Dublin City Council to work with taxi drivers on the issue and has put forward proposals for new taxi rank locations in the city.

Tony was also glad to hear the news of Minister Shane Ross’ decision to try ban rickshaws. Tony, and the National Transport Assembly Committee, have been big advocates for action on the matter and were enthused to hear the “very important” news following their meeting with the Minister earlier this month, just before the Minister’s announcement.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE GRANT SCHEME 2018



NTA is happy to announce that it has received confirmation of funding availability which allows us to open Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme 2018 (WAV18) on 01 February 2018, offering financial assistance of up to €7,500 per vehicle depending on its age at the time of licensing. This Grant will build on the success of the Schemes funded since 2014, which issued 896 grants to help improve mobility access to people with disabilities. This Grant Scheme will operate on a first come first served basis until all funding has been allocated.

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THE IMPORTANT S15N FORM

And how one widow is devastated as her recently-deceased husband's taxi plate "has died with him".

Form S15N

Udarás Náisiúnta
National Transport Authority

Application to Nominate a Person in the Event of a Death of a Licence Holder

This form shall only be used by a living licence holder to appoint a nominee onto a vehicle licence, who may apply to the Authority to continue to operate the licence, in the event of the licence holder's death. Any nomination must be confirmed by the Authority prior to the licence holder's death, to be valid.

Licences in company names cannot use the Section 25 Nomination process.

All the standard licensing criteria will apply to the nominee should they make such an application, e.g. the vehicle age, vehicle suitability, insurance and tax clearance status. Please see the website www.nationaltransport.ie for further details.

Section 1: Licence holder details

Licence holder details: All fields below are mandatory and to be filled in BLOCK CAPITALS. These details should exactly match those on your current electronic tax clearance certificate and vehicle licence.

Licence holder
surname
Licence holder first
name

The little-known S15N form.

A driver contacted us here at Tacsai last week to highlight the important and little-known S15N form, which means that a plate can be passed on to the next of kin in the event of a driver's passing.

Recently, a grieving widow has been left devastated after finding out her recently-deceased husband's taxi plate "has died with him".

Marie Keegan couldn't believe it when she was refused the retention of her husband's taxi licence shortly after his death.

Marie, from Drogheda, Co Louth was still in shock after her husband Tommy's sudden death while on holiday in Lanzarote in January when she was told by the Taxi Regulator her husband's licence died with him.

Because Tommy, 64, had not filled in a little-known S15N form, the valuable plate cannot be passed on to his next-of-kin, Marie.

The Regulator claims the form was sent out to Tommy in 2014 but it has now emerged that few taxi drivers are aware that the form even exists.

Marie is desperate to get what is rightly hers and wants the rules changed to allow licences to be passed on.

She said: "It's not the money, it's the principle of it. Tommy killed himself working and didn't earn more than the minimum wage when you considered all the hours he did.

"It's the sheer unfairness of it all, because he didn't sign something that was supposedly sent to him in 2014. How many people could remember to fill in a form they got four

years ago?"

Much-loved cabbie Tommy died in hospital shortly after suffering a brain haemorrhage while the couple were on holiday in Lanzarote.

To add to her grief Marie, who had been married to Tommy for 43 years, was told that her husband's taxi plate was gone with him.

Marie and other taxi drivers have described the situation as bureaucracy gone mad as those involved in the trade can't cope with the amount of paperwork and regulations.

Marie praised the staff at the hospital and resort in the Canary Islands but criticised the Taxi Regulator.

She said: "Tommy was a driver, he wasn't a bookkeeper. He got people home at night safely, he provided a service. He didn't do emails, he wasn't on the internet.

"Everything from the Regulator is log on to do this and that. Tommy was old school, he didn't do computers. How was he supposed to know about a form sent out four years ago?"

"For me that plate is part of Tommy's estate, he worked hard for it and no one has the right to take it away.

"Tommy did everything by the book and always obeyed the law and this is the way we are treated."

Local politicians Deputy Imelda Munster and Senator Ged Nash have been in contact with Marie and are set to bring the issue to attention of the Transport Minister.

The National Transport Authority stated that the S15N form can only be used by a living licence holder to appoint a nominee to a vehicle licence.



UBER PLAN ON ADDING CAR-SHARING, BUSES AND TRAINS TO ITS APP

Harte says Limerick base “is vital”.

Limerick beware. Under the guise of 150 planned new jobs for the county, Uber have also made moves to add car-sharing vehicles, as well as public transportation like buses and trains, to its app – car-sharing vehicles which would be in direct violation of Irish law, all this despite their strong lobbying to Minister Shane Ross last year falling on deaf ears. It appears the company are pushing ahead with their plans regardless of what rulings are passed down to.

Let us reaffirm; ride-sharing is not permitted in Ireland.

Nonetheless, Uber plan to increase its Limerick based workforce by up to 150 more jobs.

That is according to the new chief executive of the US transportation company who aims to bring Uber beyond its current operation as a ride sharing app.

Uber is understood to be increasing its operational footprint at its Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) headquarters on Thomas Street where around 400 staff are employed across a range of services.

Uber’s Head of Cities for Midlands and South West UK, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland, Kieran Harte said that the firm would be adding to its centre of excellence, a first for the tech giant outside the United States.

Mr Harte said that the Limerick base “is a vital part of our business providing world-class support for everyone who uses the Uber app. As our business has grown so has the need for additional support, so we’re delighted to be expanding further in Limerick” where customer service staff support customers in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Although not operational in Ireland due to taxi regulations, the ride-sharing app allows registered drivers offer shared car journeys through smartphone technology.

The tech firm is operational in 329 cities across 59 countries.

When Uber announced its arrival in Limerick, 300 jobs had been planned but this soon increased to 400 and now to an expected 550.

Since taking the reins at Uber in August 2017, the tech firm’s new chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi has focused on making a series of deals to grow Uber beyond app-based ride-hailing.

Amongst the ideas of flying and driverless cars, Uber is also making moves to add car-sharing vehicles, as well as public transportation like buses and trains, to its app.

In a recent interview, Mr Khosrowshahi said that Uber aims to share more of its traffic data with cities “to become true partners to cities in the long term”.



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SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO MAKE THE NIGHT SHIFT SAFER

Story in the *Dublin Inquirer* highlights the danger of plying for hire after dark.

Ismall Daramola's taxi sits third in line at the St Stephen's Green rank and he nudges the cab forward as the lines moves up.

Day shifts like this one on a Monday afternoon are reasonably safe. It's the night shifts that are hazardous, says Daramola, who has been driving a taxi for seven years.

There's more money in the early-hours runs, though – even if sometimes, some passengers skip out on paying fares. Or shout, and swear, or punch and kick.

"I've a friend who was attacked from behind," says Daramola, as he holds an imaginary knife in his left hand and slices at his throat. "Lucky for him, it didn't get through to his oesophagus."

The dangers of night-time pick-ups mean that Daramola and others are looking at extra precautions when on the job. More CCTV perhaps, or partition screens.

"We need more protection," says Daramola.

"But we'll end up paying for it," says John Byrne, leaning against his taxi's bonnet as he soaks up the 20-degree heat on a Monday afternoon.

He's chatting with another driver, Richard Murphy. Both are regulars at the St Stephen's Green rank. Byrne has driven taxis for 18 years, Murphy for 14, including a stint in New York City.

Abuse? Assault? Sheer bloody nuisance? Sure, they all occur, says Murphy. But that's part of the job, as he sees it. "You just get on with it. Get your week's wages and get out," says Byrne.

Or not. Last week, for instance, Byrne picked up a "bogey fare". Two lads headed to Darndale hopped out upon arrival and ran, leaving Byrne €23 short.

"They're gone. Unless you want to get out and scrap with them. So what can you do? What can you do?" says Byrne.

"What can you do?" adds Murphy.

Nowadays, many taxi drivers in Dublin have CCTV, but that only goes so far, he says.

Before attacking a taxi driver, Murphy says, people often go straight for the camera. So there's no record of the assault. "They know what they're doing," he says.

That's starting to change, however.

New technology has made work safer for taxi drivers, says Joe Herron, president of the Irish Taxi Drivers' Federation (ITDF).

Violence towards drivers isn't widespread, Herron says. But it does happen "and it can be quite horrendous".

Neither An Garda Síochána nor the Central Statistics Office had statistics for incidents of violence involving taxi drivers.

Taxi drivers tend not to publicise cases of thefts or when they're attacked, either. "Then it makes it look easy," says Herron.

Some taxi drivers in Dublin have opted for CCTV cameras that automatically upload in-car footage. "So even if someone steals your camera, what is recorded has already been stored on the cloud," says Herron.

But the cost is an issue. That kind of camera can cost €900, plus a €150 annual monitoring charge, says Herron. "That's not cheap."

That's the "modern-day equivalent" of a partition screen, which in some taxis in London or New York, say, would serve as a buffer between passenger and driver.

Although in widespread use throughout the late 1970s, not



many drivers want those these days, says Herron. “Screens take away from what we are. We’re conversationalists.”

The National Transport Authority (NTA) looked at whether or not taxi drivers wanted mandatory security measures back in 2015.

Ireland’s taxi industry “has an almost unique set of characteristics”, notes the report from the NTA, which regulates taxis.

Taxi drivers work around the clock and work alone, so they are vulnerable. In recent years, threats of violence and to personal security have increased.

But in their submissions to the NTA, drivers showed little appetite for mandatory security measures like partitions. Of the 2,649 submissions the organisation received, 97.3 percent said safety equipment in vehicles like taxis shouldn’t be mandatory.

Partitions could lead to a “perception of poor customer service”, the report says, and that is “a risk which would ruin the reputation of the sociable Irish driver”.

Alan Brennan, secretary of (TTnH), agrees. “Many of the lads felt that a partition went too far,” he says. “They felt it didn’t reflect well.”

Taxi drivers also rejected the idea of making mandatory other measures, such as CCTV, largely due to cost.

That’s still an issue for taxi drivers in Dublin, says Brennan of TTnH. Equipment is expensive, which means some taxi drivers choose to forgo it, even if it means more risk.

Brennan says he tried to persuade AXA Insurance, one of the major taxi insurers, to consider knocking €100 off policies for taxi drivers who had installed the system.

“But they didn’t seem interested,” he says.

Extra tech might help limit theft or violence, says Herron of the ITDF.

But he also sees conversation as a way to keep safe. “I think it’s less likely you’ll be assaulted if you have some type of relationship with the passenger,” says Herron.

Taxi drivers who have been decades in the trade have picked up their own ways of dealing with threats.

“I’ve been attacked so I steer away from late nights as much as I can these days,” says Alan Davis, who was sat parked on the curb of Sean McDermott Street last Friday.

“I’ve a brother-in-law, two years ago, who was attacked by a guy with a knife,” says Davis who has been a tax driver for more than 29 years.

If somebody is desperate enough, there is little that preventative measures can do, says Davis. “What I do now is I go with my gut,” he says.

If a passenger seems dangerous, he will drive them to the most public spot he can think of – O’Connell Street or Dame Street – and ask them to get out.

Davis says he “totally understands” other taxi drivers wanting to put safety measures in place. “I’d a friend in Clondalkin who was hijacked, thrown in the boot and driven around,” he says. “There’s some horror stories.”

At the St Stephen’s Green rank earlier this month, Daramola reaches the top of the queue.

He says he thinks it would be better for Dublin taxi drivers to have partition screens in their cabs, similar to those in New York’s yellow cabs or London’s black cabs. “I really think we should be given more protection,” he says.



FEMALE CAB DRIVER ASSAULTED AND MAN BRANDED A “COWARD” BY JUDGE

“A coward” is how the district court judge has described a Newbridge man who punched a female taxi driver to the back of the head after refusing to get out of her taxi.

Judge Flann Brennan told Myles Moloney (34), Morrinstown Estate, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, that the only reason he wasn't going to prison immediately was that the court was required to seek a victim impact statement on the taxi driver before finalising the matter.

At last week's court, the accused was charged with assault at the Dublin Road, Monasterevin.

Inspector Ollie Baker gave evidence that on May 7, 2017, the injured party, a female taxi driver, was sitting waiting outside a Chinese restaurant with a passenger in the front seat, when the accused got into the back of the car and told her to drive.

He was intoxicated and began shouting and roaring and the taxi driver, who was frightened, told him to get out of the car.

The accused then grabbed her by the back of the head by the hair and was punching her, but she managed to get out of the taxi and rang the gardai.

Insp Baker said the accused was in the company of others when he entered the car without permission.

The accused had 15 previous convictions.

Defence, Mr Gerry Meagher said his client wished to unreservedly apologise as the incident must have been very upsetting and distressing for the taxi driver.

Mr Meagher said that the accused had very little recollection of the incident on the night as he had been out with a number of other gentlemen and had far too much drink consumed.

He saw the taxi with someone in the front and decided to get into the back.

Defence went on to say that the accused would be willing to put some money aside as compensation for the woman, who may have had to stop her fares on the night due to her upset.

“The accused would like to make good on that loss,” said Mr Meagher.

After hearing the evidence, Judge Flann Brennan said the accused was a coward.

“When I was growing up, any man who struck a woman was by definition a coward, it's a cowardly thing to do,” said Judge Brennan.

The judge said that the only thing in the accused's favour was that the judge was required to seek a victim impact statement in the case.

“That's the only reason you're not going to prison today,” Judge Brennan told the accused.

Telling the accused that the first thing on his mind should be compensation, Judge Brennan put the matter back to September 6 next for a probation report.

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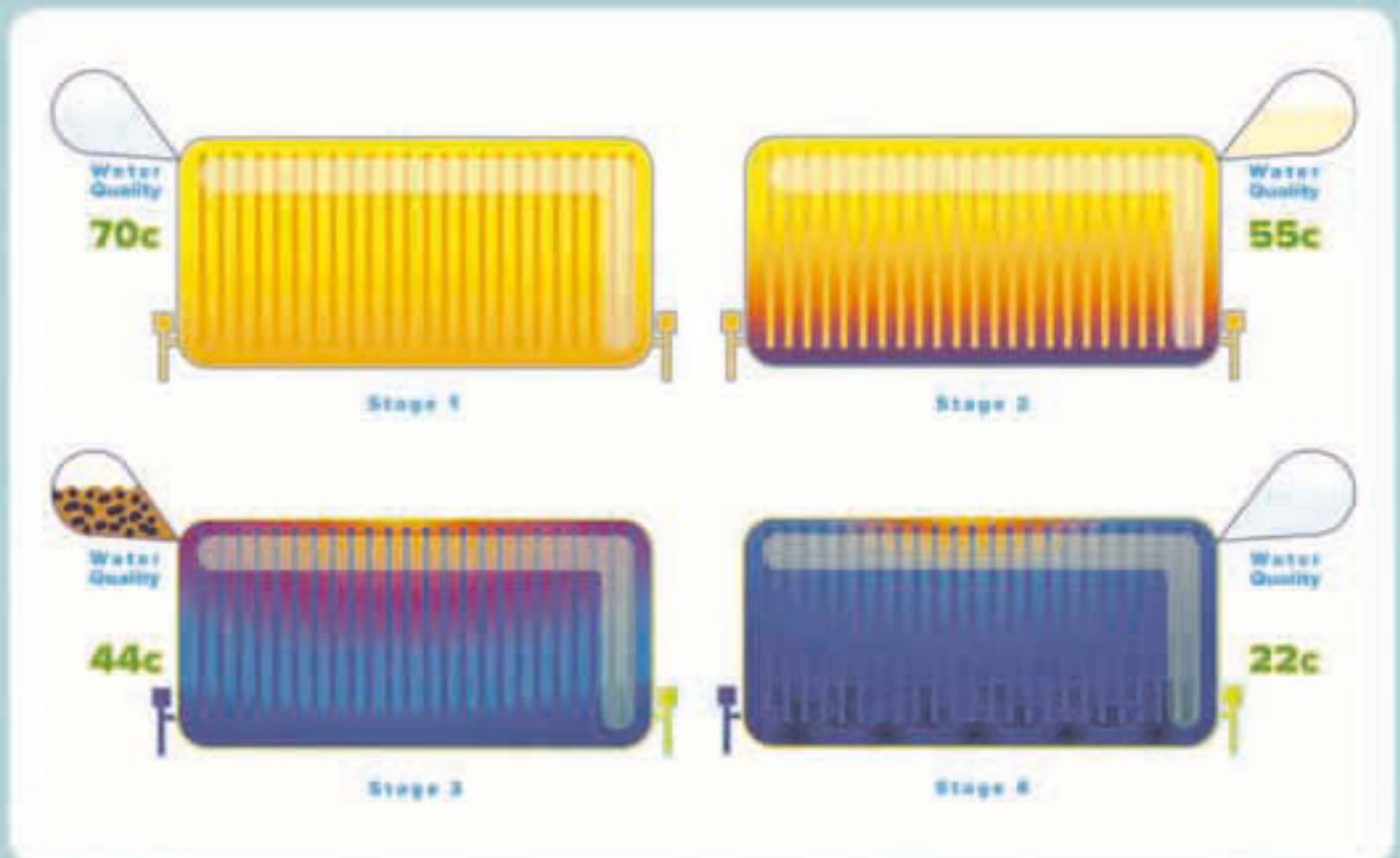
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WORLD NEWS

TOP STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

BAHAMAS

Grand Bahama taxi drivers will have the opportunity to earn up to an additional \$40,000 monthly based on an agreement between the Taxi Union and Bahamas Paradise Cruises, announced June 4, 2018.

Minister of State for Grand Bahama, in the Office of the Prime Minister, Kwasi Thompson described the day as “a significant one” for taxi drivers as well as Bahamas Paradise Cruises.

“Today is a significant day for our taxi drivers in Grand Bahama,” Thompson said.

“Particularly those who operate from the Freeport Harbour. Taxis have continued to struggle for business in Grand Bahama for many years. It also cannot be denied that there continues to be inequality in the business that taxi drivers receive at the harbour.”

“To this end, we are very pleased that an agreement has been arrived at between the Taxi Union and Bahamas Paradise Cruises.”

Both parties came together with the hope of coming to an agreement amicable to all involved. According to the minister, “While this does not resolve all of the issues the taxi drivers have, it does represent a significant step forward for taxi drivers.”

The taxi drivers will transport the overnight guests, and the tour buses will take the day passengers. As a result of the agreement, it is estimated that taxi drivers will receive up to \$10,000 weekly or \$40,000 monthly with new business.

“What makes this business even more important is the taxis are able to build relationships with their passengers who are staying on the island overnight, and therefore, can arrange future trips which can result in a better experience for the guests and more economic activity for the driver,” he said.

FINLAND

Taxi drivers and cab companies are wondering how upcoming deregulation of the taxi industry will end up affecting their businesses.

Some of their worries include questions like: what will happen when Uber returns to Finland after being unceremoniously banished last summer? Will Estonian or Swedish taxi cabs arrive to steal their customers? Will there be enough customers for the new taxi options?

Some customers are also wondering about what changes the reforms could bring. One thing is certain, at least according to capital city taxi driver Kaj-Erik Selenius, who said “the Helsinki taxi business is going to

be like the Wild West this summer.”

“But things should calm down after a while. Gold diggers who arrive in their moped cars and vans to drive taxis will definitely see there’s no gold mine in driving a taxi in Finland,” Selenius predicted.

He drives for Kovanen, one of the larger taxi firms in town, and said the major taxi companies are not very threatened by the coming reforms.

In July Finland’s heavily-regulated taxi market will be liberalised and opened up to competition. Fares and prices will change, along with how cabs can be summoned by customers and the market will see relaxed rules on obtaining taxi drivers’ licences. Earlier rules on fare limits, cars and drivers will also vanish.

A major concern that Selenius said cab drivers are discussing are questions about the basic ground rules in the industry.

“How will tax officials keep an eye on income when taxi fares are paid online to drivers who are operating their own vehicles?” Selenius asked. “Will we all be playing by the same rules?”

Selenius said he has heard that some Estonian taxi firms plan to come to Finland when the rules are relaxed, but said they were still just rumours.

He said the reforms will likely change the situation for taxi drivers in Finland’s bigger cities the most, such as the Helsinki region, Tampere, Turku and maybe Oulu.

“The changes won’t have such a big impact in Joensuu or Seinäjoki,” he said.

NEW YORK

Members of the New York City Taxi Workers Alliance gathered outside of City Hall this month to protest for better laws that protect drivers’ ability to make a living.

Five taxi drivers have killed themselves in just over five months, and many say the suicides were because these drivers could no longer make ends meet.

Kenny Chow was identified as the latest driver to commit suicide. The 56-year-old had a wife and children, and he owed \$560,000 on a medallion worth less than \$200,000.

“So many people told stories of him not being able to keep up with his medallion payments whenever he was at the airport,” said Bhairavi Desai, with the New York Taxi Drivers Alliance.

Yellow cab drivers have seen the business upended in recent years with the advent of Uber and other ride-sharing apps. Many have been left



struggling.

“You now have a vicious race to the bottom where no driver can survive,” Desai said. “We need the same minimum rate of fare across this industry so no company can go lower and all drivers can benefit whenever there’s a raise.”

SYDNEY

Sydney might top the world when it comes to glittering beaches and distinctive landmarks, but draconian taxi rules are being blamed for tarnishing its image as a global city.

While taxi drivers in New York and London are free to pick up or drop off passengers in areas where standing or parking is prohibited — and Brisbane takes a “commonsense” approach — councils in Sydney and Melbourne are slugging taxi drivers with fines for stopping briefly in “no stopping” zones to collect passengers who have hailed them.

Sydney City Council, which does not distinguish between taxi and non-taxi fines, made about \$30 million last year from all parking offences.

Melbourne slugged drivers \$217,000 for no-stopping offences over the same period, which accounted for an estimated 0.3 per cent of all its traffic infringement revenue. “Disobeying the rules” costs \$159 in Victoria and \$257 in NSW.

The tough approach in Australia’s biggest cities contrasts with London where cabbies are allowed to stop briefly for customers to get out in areas with parking restrictions. Between 8pm and 6am drivers are also able to park in “no stopping” zones for up to five minutes to allow customers to use ATMs.

In New York, a provision allows for the “expeditious pick-up and drop-off of passengers in ‘no standing’ zones,” deputy commissioner for public affairs at the NYC Taxi & Limousine Commission Alan Fryberg told *The Australian*.

Sydney taxi driver Michael Burrage described the situation as an “embarrassment” for a global city. He said he was “very, very upset” to have been issued a \$257 fine last September after he stopped briefly in a no-stopping zone to drop a passenger in Sydney’s Chinatown district.

The taxi driver of 37 years fought the infringement notice in court — and won. “The magistrate completely agreed with my interpretation,” Mr Burrage said. “I was neatly pulled up behind a row of parked cars in an area of the city notorious for its lack of parking.”

Mr Burrage said the taxi industry copped “unnecessary” fines “all the time”, but “some drivers don’t always go to court because they’re afraid of the potential court costs”.

FRANCE

France is entitled to bring criminal proceedings against local managers of ride-hailing app Uber for running an illegal taxi service, the EU top court ruled this month, dealing the Silicon Valley start-up another legal setback.

“Member states may prohibit and punish, as a matter of criminal law, the illegal exercise of transport activities in the context of the UberPOP service, without notifying the Commission in advance of the draft legislation,” the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) said in a statement.

The case concerned Uber’s use of unlicensed drivers as part of its UberPOP service in France, which has since been suspended.

Uber had argued that France should have sought the European Commission’s approval of its proposed taxi law - something it did not do - and that therefore the criminal charges brought against two of the company’s French managers were not valid.

Under EU law, national legislation affecting digital services needs to be pre-notified to Brussels to ensure it is not distorting the single market.

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THE TACSAÍ MAGAZINE BUMPER QUIZ

General Knowledge Questions

1. Who first played Dr Who in the BBC series?
2. In terms of population, which is Switzerland's largest city?
3. Which duo had both a UK and US number one in 1964 with "World Without Love"?
4. Who wrote the novel "Jurassic Park" upon which the movie series was based?
5. Which club does Seamus Coleman play for?
6. In which US city was the TV sit-com Cheers set?
7. What is the common name of the plant Atropa belladonna?
8. Who is the creator of the "Discworld" series of books?
9. Which animal's name translates to "No Water" in native Aboriginal?
10. Jazz musician Miles Davies was famous for playing which instrument?
11. In literature, by what name were Athos, Porthos and Aramis better known?
12. How many strings are there on a standard Spanish guitar?
13. Near which North American city do the Missouri and Mississippi river meet?
14. In which position did Peter Shilton play?

15. What was the name of the dog in Enid Blyton's Famous Five stories?
16. Which is the longest bone in the human body?
17. For which movie did John Wayne earn his only Oscar?
18. Who composed "The New World Symphony"?
19. Which mountain range lies between France and Spain?
20. Who composed an Ode to a Nightingale?

10. Trumpet.
11. The Three Musketeers.
12. Six.
13. St. Louis.
14. Goalkeeper.
15. Timmy.
16. Femur.
17. True Grit.
18. Dvorak.
19. The Pyrenees.
20. John Keats.

1. William Hartnell.
2. Zurich.
3. Peter & Gordon.
4. Michael Crichton.
5. Everton.
6. Boston.
7. Deadly Nightshade.
8. Terry Pratchett.
9. Koala.

ANSWERS

Knock Knock

A man went to his lawyer and told him, "My neighbour owes me 500 quid and he won't pay up. What should I do?" "Do you have any proof he owes you the money?" asked the lawyer. "Nope," replied the man. "OK, then write him a letter asking him for the 5,000 he owed you," said the lawyer. "But it's only 500," replied the man. "Precisely. That's what he will reply and then you'll have your proof!"

Two Kerry men are traveling to Australia. Before they leave home, one of their dads gives them both a bit of advice: "You watch them Aussie cab drivers. They'll rob you blind. Don't you go paying them what they ask. You haggle." At the Sydney airport, the Irishmen catch a cab to their hotel. When they reach their destination, the cabbie says, "That'll be twenty dollars, lads." "Oh no you don't! My dad warned me about you. You'll only be getting fifteen dollars from me," says one of the men. "And you'll only be getting fifteen from me too," adds the other.

A boy with a monkey on his shoulder was walking down the road when he passed a Garda who said, "Now, now young lad, I think you had better take that monkey to the zoo." The next day, the boy was walking down the road with the monkey on his shoulder again, when he passed the same Garda. The Garda said, "Hey there, I thought I told you to take that monkey to the zoo!" The boy answered, "I did! Today I'm taking him to the cinema."

A woman was taking an afternoon nap. When she woke up, she told her husband, "I just dreamed that you gave me a pearl necklace. What do you think it means?" "You'll know tonight," he said. That evening, the man came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it to find a book entitled "The Meaning of Dreams."

Two little boys were known troublemakers, stealing everything they could get their hands on, even from the church. One day a priest stopped one of the boys and asked, "Where is God?" The boy shrugged and the priest repeated, "Where is God?" The boy ran out of the cathedral crying to his home where he hid in a closet. Eventually his brother found him and asked, "What's wrong?" The crying boy replied, "We're in trouble now! God is missing and they think we took him!"

A man walks out on his front porch one day and sees a gorilla in the tree in his front garden. He calls animal control and about an hour later a man shows up with a ladder, a pit bull, and a shotgun. The animal control employee tells the man, "I'm here to get the gorilla out of your tree. I'm going to use this ladder to climb up the tree and shake the branch the gorilla is on to knock him to the ground. The pit bull is trained to go after anything that falls from the tree and bites their balls which calms the animal down so I can put him in the truck." The man says "Okay, I see what the ladder and the pit bull are for but what is the shotgun for?" The animal control employee says, "Oh, that's for you. In case I fall out of the tree instead of the gorilla."



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