Taxi and Hire Car Knowledge Handbook

DRIVER BEHAVIOUR

Study Guide for the Driver Behaviour Assessment
The Taxi Services Commission (TSC) has prepared the *Taxi and Hire Car Knowledge Handbook* for the purposes of preparing for taking one or more modules of the Knowledge test. There are five sections in this handbook:

- **Introduction**
- **Driver Behaviour**
- **General Understanding for Drivers**
- **Knowing Your Way Around Melbourne**
- **Driving a Hire Car.**

There is also the *Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) Handbook* for the purposes of preparing for taking the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) Endorsement:

- Theoretical assessment (computer based)
- Practical assessment.

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**Disclaimer**

The TSC may update this handbook from time to time. Please visit [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au) for the most up to date version of this handbook.

The information presented in this and the other Knowledge handbooks is of a general nature only. It is a summary of the information taxi and/or hire car drivers will need to know to pass relevant modules of the Knowledge test, and does not replace the need to consult relevant laws or any conditions that may apply to your accreditation. Driver accreditation applicants using this handbook are responsible for their own preparation. The Taxi Services Commission does not guarantee or make any representations that users of this handbook will be able to obtain driver accreditation. For more information on driver accreditation, please visit [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au).

CONTENTS

1. THE DRIVER BEHAVIOUR MODULE OF THE KNOWLEDGE TEST

2. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES: RULES AND REGULATIONS
   2.1 The basics
   2.2 Accepting and refusing fares
   2.3 Obeying the Victorian road rules
   2.4 Using mobile phones
   2.5 Seatbelts for passengers
   2.6 Using the 'Not For Hire' sign
   2.7 Advertising in the taxi
   2.8 What to display on the dashboard
   2.9 Property left behind
   2.10 If you are ill
   2.11 Changes to your details

3. CUSTOMER SERVICE
   3.1 Greeting passengers
   3.2 Accepting and refusing fares
   3.3 Passengers with communication difficulties
   3.4 Understanding disability
   3.5 Passengers with limited mobility
   3.6 Passengers with assistance animals
   3.7 Responding to passenger needs
   3.8 Customer service and mobile phones
   3.9 Finding the best route
   3.10 What to do if you lose your way
   3.11 Dealing with difficult situations
   3.12 Handling customer dissatisfaction
   3.13 Dealing with difficult customers

4. USING THE TAXI METER, FARES AND PAYMENTS
   4.1 Using a taximeter
   4.2 Calculating fares
   4.3 Managing payments
5. YOUR SAFETY AND DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

5.1 Your personal safety

5.2 Checking the safety of your taxi

5.3 Recognising and managing fatigue

5.4 Dealing with emergencies

6. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AS A DRIVER

6.1 Racism

6.2 Sexual harassment

6.3 Theft

6.4 Intimidation of passengers

6.5 Assault of passengers

6.6 Sharing driver logins, driver identification cards and accreditation certificates

SAMPLE KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS
This section of the handbook is designed to provide useful information that can act as reference and support for the taxi industry, existing drivers and other interested parties. This section is also a useful guide to those wishing to prepare to sit the Driver Behaviour module of the Knowledge.

New drivers who want to be accredited to drive in the Melbourne metropolitan taxi zone or in the urban and large regional taxi zone will need to pass the Driver Behaviour module of the Knowledge.

Drivers who have been accredited for less than five years and want to continue driving a taxi in the Melbourne metropolitan taxi zone or in the urban and large regional taxi zone, will need to pass the Driver Behaviour module of the Knowledge test prior to their accreditation expiring. If a driver fails to complete the module required for the zone they drive in, the TSC may restrict the driver from continuing to drive in that zone.

For more information refer to the Introduction section of this handbook or visit [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au).
2. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES: RULES AND REGULATIONS

2.1 The basics

As a taxi driver you are expected to:

• be courteous and helpful at all times
• know, obey and respect the Victorian road rules
• respect other road users and share the road safely with them
• understand, read and speak English
• provide honest, ethical service – in other words be fair and respectful to everyone and do the right thing
• be neat, clean and tidy in appearance and free of offensive body odour.

The main difference between taxi drivers and hire car drivers is that:

• taxi drivers can accept passengers who hail the taxi from the street, undertake taxi-rank work as well as accept pre-booked jobs
• hire car drivers can only accept pre-booked jobs.

See 2. About the Industry in the General Understanding section for more details of the differences between taxis and hire cars.

Compliance with legal requirements

As a taxi driver, you are required to comply with all the requirements relevant to your accreditation, including but not limited to any requirements imposed by or under:

• the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983
• the Road Safety Act 1986
• any regulations made under these Acts
• any conditions imposed on your accreditation.
2.2 Accepting and refusing fares

It is important to know which fares you must accept and which you can refuse.

You must accept the fare:

- regardless of distance (for example if the passenger asks to be taken only a few streets away, even if you have waited for a long time at taxi rank for a fare or have just had several short fares)
- for a pre-booked fare where the person changes the destination to only a short distance away
- for a person who uses an assistance animal such as a guide dog for a passenger who is visually or hearing impaired (for more information about transporting assistance animals: www.taxi.vic.gov.au)
- for a mother who is breastfeeding a child
- for a person who seems to have been drinking, but not if they are violent or offensive
- even if the destination is in an area where you do not think you will pick up another fare
- even if you are in a taxi-rank, but are not the first taxi in line, you must still take a fare if a passenger asks you (passengers have the right to choose any taxi in a rank)
- if someone is injured and asks you to take them to hospital.

Note that if a passenger requests to be taken to a hospital you must take them to the hospital even if they are violent, offensive, very dirty or noisy. If you think taking the passenger would put you or them in danger, you should call 000 to access emergency services.

You are expected to accept the fare for:

- bookings offered or allocated through a dispatch system
- a person using a collapsible (folding) wheelchair, providing it can be safely stowed in the taxi – a wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT) should be called for a person in another type of a wheelchair or who is using a scooter.

You may refuse a fare or not continue with the trip if:

- a passenger is violent, noisy, misbehaving, very dirty or offensive
- a passenger is carrying an object that cannot be carried safely in the taxi
- a passenger is unable to demonstrate an ability to pay an estimate of the fare
• you have an approved “not for hire” sign displayed
• the destination is not within five kilometres of the suburb displayed on a destination sign.

You may indicate that you will only accept fares to a specific destination. In this situation you will need to display a Taxi Services Commission (TSC) approved destination sign that is clearly visible to passengers and indicates your destination suburb.

If a passenger is being difficult you must still take the fare. If the behaviour becomes offensive, then there are grounds to refuse the fare or not continue with the trip.

2.3 Obeying the Victorian road rules

You must know, obey and respect all the Victorian road rules as a professional taxi driver. You must obey the road rules even if a passenger asks you to do something illegal, such as:

• make an illegal U-turn
• drive faster than the speed limit
• double park to drop them off
• stop in a no stopping zone.

Taxis are able to use a loading zone to drop off and pick up passengers or goods. You must not stay more than the time limit specified on the sign, or more than 30 minutes when there is no time limit specified.

Taxis are the only vehicles allowed to use a taxi rank. However, it is a legal requirement that all taxis must be safely parked and not blocking traffic. If there is no room at the rank you should move away until a space becomes available or move to another rank. If you have parked in a taxi rank it is considered that you are available for hire and you must fulfil any request for hire.

At present the Victorian child restraint road rules do not require taxis to provide child restraints or booster seats for children. See 2.5 Seatbelts for passengers for further details.

2.4 Using mobile phones

A mobile phone can legally be used when the car is parked. It is illegal to use a mobile phone in certain ways while you are driving and the vehicle is moving or sitting stationary in traffic. You can legally use a mobile phone when driving under the following circumstances:

• making or receiving a phone call using voice activation (hands free), if you are not touching the phone or the mobile is in an approved holder (commercially designed mobile phone holder, affixed to the vehicle)
• playing music while driving, if the mobile is not being held by you or it is in an approved holder and you do not touch the phone
• using a map application with the mobile in an approved holder and you do not touch the phone unless you are legally parked.

“Legally parked” means stopped on the side of the road, though you may still have the engine running. It does not mean stationary in traffic.
While you are driving (when the vehicle is moving or stationary in traffic) you must not:

- hold or touch the phone or have it resting touching your body (for example, it is not allowed to be on your lap)
- send or read a text message
- send or read emails, or any similar message communications
- watch movies or similar entertainment.

If you need to use your mobile to send or read a text message, then pull over and park legally on the side of the road first. It is not necessary to turn off the engine.

2.5 Seatbelts for passengers

As a taxi driver, you have a legal responsibility to make sure that any passenger aged under 16 years is wearing a seat belt. While all passengers are expected to wear seat belts you are not responsible for adult passengers aged 16 years or over.

At present the Victorian child restraint road rules do not require you to provide child restraints or booster seats for customers. However, the taxi must be fitted with at least one anchor fitting ready for passengers who wish to supply their own restraint. At present, when travelling in a taxi, children aged:

- under 1 year do not have to use a child restraint, but they must travel in the back seat and sit in the lap of a passenger aged 16 years or over
- over 1 year but under 7 years must travel in the back seat, and be wearing their own properly fastened seatbelt if no suitable child restraint or booster seat is available (not sitting on someone’s lap).

Note that this exemption may be removed in future and a child restraint would be required to be provided by the passenger, permit holder (taxi operator) or driver if you wish to carry a child in the vehicle.

2.6 Using the ‘Not For Hire’ sign

The ‘Not For Hire’ sign is located on the back of the sun visor in each taxi. The ‘Not For Hire’ sign should be used:

- to tell customers that you are unavailable as you are on your way to a pre booked job
- when you are parked in a taxi zone which is designated as a meal stand, and you are having a meal break
- when you are returning to the depot at the end of a shift and the dome light and tariff lamps are turned off
• when you are using the taxi solely for the purpose of carrying goods.

2.7 Advertising in the taxi

Any advertising must comply with the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) Code of Ethics. You are not permitted to:

• have advertising for sexual or erotic services
• use overtly sexualised imagery or messaging
• have references to a religious service or belief
• advertise a political party, group or belief.

Only visual display units (VDUs) that are approved by the TSC for displaying commercial advertising for rear seat viewing are permitted.

2.8 What to display on the dashboard

You must only display your taxi driver photo ID and taxi number on the dashboard, as well a dispatch system if your taxi is affiliated with a taxi booking service.

You are not permitted to mask or alter your photo ID or display any decorations, ornaments or religious items on the dashboard. This is because unsecured items placed on the dashboard may block airbags, vents and visibility and may become dangerous in the event of an accident or emergency.

2.9 Property left behind

Any item left by a passenger in a taxi should be reported to your taxi booking service and immediately handed into a police station.

2.10 If you are ill

It is a requirement of your driver accreditation that you must inform the TSC within seven days if you develop a medical condition that may affect your fitness to drive a taxi.

2.11 Changes to your details

It is a requirement of your driver accreditation that you must inform the TSC within seven days if you have had a change of name or residential address. It is also good practice to inform the TSC if your contact details have changed, such as your telephone number.
3. CUSTOMER SERVICE

3.1 Greeting passengers

Greeting passengers positively can involve greeting different people in different ways. When you greet a passenger you should always be polite and courteous. You should:

- smile
- speak in a friendly voice
- be polite, even if they are rude
- use positive body language
- show respect for all customers
- give passengers reasonable help with putting luggage or belongings into the taxi or boot.

3.2 Talking to passengers

Talking to customers is part of the job and you need to be polite but not intrusive. Here are some examples of what you could do and what you should not do.

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You pick up a group of people from the Aussie rules footy final. It is obvious that they have been drinking.

You could ask: Did you enjoy the game?

NOT: Are you drunk? Do you drink a lot?

This is polite and not intrusive.

You pick up an elderly woman from a house.

You could ask: How was your day/evening?

NOT: Is that your house? Are you a widow?

This is polite and not intrusive.

It is never acceptable to use offensive language or to swear in front of a passenger, even if:

- the passenger swears during their conversation with you
- you feel threatened or offended by the passenger’s behaviour
- another road user is aggressive toward you.

3.3 Passengers with communication difficulties

You will sometimes carry a passenger who has difficulty speaking to you or hearing you. In this situation:

- Be clear, concise and courteous when talking to the passenger.
- Ask what your passenger’s preferred method of communication is. The TSC has produced 'Talking Taxis Communication Boards' to help you with passengers with communication difficulties (contact the TSC for details).
- Speak clearly, but not aggressively, when communicating with your passenger.
- Listen to what your passenger tells you they need. Do not prejudge their requirements.
- Politely ask your passenger to repeat themselves if you did not understand them.
- Politely confirm your passenger’s instructions or directions to ensure you have understood what they have told you.
- Keep your explanations brief and clear.
- Check that your passenger has understood what you have told them.
3.4 Dealing with different people

Taxi drivers are required to deal with different people every day, including:

- people from a range of cultural backgrounds
- people of different ages, ranging from children to the elderly
- people with disability
- people with different gender and sexual orientations, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and intersex.

You need to be polite, courteous and show respect to all your passengers no matter who they are. Passengers are paying for you to provide a professional service.

People with disability or elderly passengers may require some additional assistance. This may range from help in getting in and out of the taxi or assistance with belongings, to communicating with a passenger who has difficulty speaking to you or hearing you (see 3.3 Passengers with communication difficulties).

There are times when a passenger may fall asleep in your taxi. Avoid touching the passenger to wake them and be careful to act appropriately. As you approach your passenger’s destination try:

- raising your voice slightly, and repeating that you have reached their destination
- turning on the interior light
- turning the air conditioner to a low temperature
- turning on the radio.

In the event that a passenger does not wake up after falling asleep in your taxi, contact your taxi booking service if you are affiliated, or you may need to take the passenger to the nearest police station.

3.5 Understanding disability

Disability is defined under the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 very broadly to include physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, learning disabilities, physical disfigurement and disease or illness.

Different types of disability and their characteristics are:

- Sensory – e.g. vision impairment and hearing impairment.
- Physical – e.g. cerebral palsy (movement and posture is affected), paraplegia (paralysis of both lower limbs) and quadriplegia (both arms and both legs are affected by paralysis).
- Neurological impairment or acquired brain injury or any combination thereof, which may lead to developmental delay and learning disability, and communication difficulties – e.g. autism spectrum disorder.
- An intellectual disability – e.g. Down Syndrome (some level of intellectual disability and characteristic facial and/or physical features).
- Medical conditions that result in total or partial loss of body function – e.g. multiple sclerosis, circulatory diseases and respiratory diseases.
3.6 Passengers with limited mobility

You should offer to assist passengers with limited mobility (such as people with disability and the elderly) as much as possible, including providing help with getting into and out of the taxi.

You should accept a fare for a person using a collapsible (folding) wheelchair, if the chair can be safely stowed in the vehicle. Conventional taxis can often carry a folding wheelchair in the boot. You should assist in organising a wheelchair accessible taxi for a person in another type of wheelchair or who is using a scooter.

Passengers who use a mobility aid must be given priority service. You should always stop to pick up passengers with limited mobility as close as possible to where they are situated. This also applies to dropping passengers at their destination. However, you must obey the road rules and all parking restrictions, even if the passenger asks you to stop illegally, such as in a no stopping zone.

When driving people with disability make sure you:

- do not move, touch or lean on a passenger’s wheelchair, unless you have permission
- offer to assist the passenger in loading and unloading any mobility aids
- attract the attention of a passenger with a hearing impairment before speaking, so they know you are talking to them
- maximise the comfort for a passenger with a disability or a medical condition, such as an injury, by taking the smoothest route and avoiding road obstacles and hazards, if they ask you to.

3.7 Passengers with assistance animals

You must take a passenger with an assistance animal such as a guide dog for someone who is visually or hearing impaired, in the passenger area of the taxi. If you are driving a station wagon taxi you cannot insist the animal travel in the caged area at the rear. For more information about transporting assistance animals: [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au).

If someone is in a wheelchair ask permission before you move or touch their wheelchair.
3.8 Responding to passenger needs

It is important that you respond as much as possible to your passengers’ needs. This may range from helping with luggage or assisting an elderly passenger with their seatbelt to providing advice to tourists. However, you should always ask first if you can help and only do so if the passenger consents (gives their permission for you to help).

When you have the right to not respond to the needs of your passenger

It is important that you try to respond as much as possible to your passengers’ needs; however, this must not involve driving unsafely, breaking the road rules or any other laws.

If a passenger asks you to do something illegal you should explain that you are not permitted to do this. Tell them that you will do your best to get them as close as possible to their destination or to be on time, without breaking road rules or driving unsafely.

There are some other situations where you are not required to do as your passenger requests, although you should politely explain why. This includes where you may experience unreasonable discomfort, for example:

- a passenger request to turn up the radio too loud
- changing the air conditioning to an extreme level.

Helping with luggage and other items

It is considered good customer service to provide reasonable help to get passengers and their luggage, or other items, into and out of the taxi. It is also a legal requirement of holding your driver accreditation. This includes assistance with getting luggage into and out of the taxi. This assistance should only be provided if the passenger is happy for you to do so. You must let a passenger unload their own luggage or other items if they choose to, even if it delays you getting to a pre-booked job. If you see the passenger struggling with their luggage or belongings you should offer again to assist them and do so if they give their consent.

The taximeter should be paused for a Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) member while luggage or other items are being loaded or unloaded.

You are not expected to move luggage when it may cause injury to you or others. Nor are you expected to carry more luggage than can be safely stowed in the vehicle. If a passenger has more luggage than can be safely stowed in one taxi then you could advise the passenger that they should hire another taxi to carry the remaining luggage.

Assisting tourists

As a professional driver you should be able to recommend places that people unfamiliar with Melbourne may want to visit. This gives you an opportunity to provide an extra service to your passengers at no charge. You may also be asked to take a more scenic route and you should do this, but let the
passenger know if it is not the most direct route and if the fare will cost more money.

You are expected to know places of interest to tourists around Melbourne and this is covered in Geographical Assessment module of the Knowledge test (details can be found in the Knowing Your Way Around Melbourne section of this handbook).

**Taking the most direct route**

You are required to take a passenger to their destination via the most direct route. If the passenger tells you they want to travel by another route you should do this. However, if this route will take longer and will cost more money you should explain that this is the case and seek the passenger’s approval. The passenger may not realise their route is longer, or they may have a reason for wanting to go via the most direct route.

**Helping out with a passenger emergency**

You should help in any way that you can in an emergency situation as long as it is safe to do so. If a passenger requests to be taken to a hospital you must take them to the hospital, even if they cannot pay the fare, are violent, noisy, misbehaving, very dirty or offensive.

For example you may be asked to take someone who is injured to hospital even though they tell you that they cannot pay a fare. The right thing to do is to take them to hospital, but you should turn on the meter so that the journey is recorded, even though you will not be able to collect a fare.

However, if you consider that taking the passenger would put you or the passenger in danger, you should call 000 to access emergency services.

### 3.9 Customer service and mobile phones

As well as obeying the laws related to using a mobile phone (see 2.4 Using mobile phones), it is important that you consider good customer service when it comes to using your mobile around passengers. Make sure that you make your passengers feel comfortable by not making or receiving calls while you are driving because:

- a passenger may not feel safe, because they may feel you could be distracted by talking on your mobile while driving
- a passenger may want to give directions or ask you a question, but may feel uncomfortable interrupting your conversation.

It is poor customer service to use a mobile phone while driving, even if it can be used legally. It is best to have your phone on silent while driving and let mobile calls go through to a voicemail service while you have passengers. Do not have a ringtone that could be considered offensive by a passenger.

> There are some situations where it is okay to use your mobile, such as while parked in a taxi rank, but when a person opens the door to get in, you should end the call and greet them.
3.10 Finding the best route

You need to take note of things such as road closures, traffic flows and special events that will affect route choice and travel times. VicRoads has up-to-date details of major roadworks and incidents on its website www.vicroads.vic.gov.au.

If there are major roadworks or other delays on the most direct route to a passenger’s destination then you should:

• advise them of the possible delay
• suggest an alternative route
• let the passenger decide which route to take.

If you are in an area you are not familiar with you should monitor the road and traffic conditions and adjust your route, if needed. It is okay to check a map if you are unsure of where to go. You should also be prepared to ask your passenger for information about the area if there are things you are not sure about rather than losing your way.

A GPS unit may not always give you the most efficient route of travel. Take into account all factors that affect travel times.

3.11 What to do if you lose your way

There are times when you may lose your way when driving in an unfamiliar suburb. The professional way to deal with this is to apologise and advise your passenger that you have lost your way.

You should offer to pause the meter until you are back on the correct route and ask if they can help with directions to the destination, or check a map. Asking your passenger for help as a last resort is not unprofessional. It can often be the quickest solution. You should advise your passenger when you are ready to start the meter again once you are back on the correct route.

3.12 Dealing with difficult situations

As a taxi driver you will occasionally face difficult and challenging situations with passengers. Here are some examples of possible situations and strategies for how to deal with them.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of difficult situations</th>
<th>Strategies to deal with these</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a mistake with change.</td>
<td>Apologise to the passenger in a polite and calm voice. Explain that you have made a mistake and immediately give them the correct change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going the wrong way.</td>
<td>Apologise to the passenger in a polite and calm voice. Explain that you have made a mistake and offer to pause the meter until you are back on the correct route.</td>
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**Examples of difficult situations**

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<tr>
<td>Having an accident or a near miss.</td>
<td>Apologise to the passenger in a polite and calm voice. If appropriate, explain that you were not at fault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone commenting negatively on your driving.</td>
<td>Apologise to the passenger in a polite and calm voice. If you are driving quite safely then explain that this is the case. Consider slowing down or taking similar actions to reassure the passenger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints about the radio station you are listening to.</td>
<td>Politely offer to turn it off or ask if there is a radio station the passenger would prefer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.13 Handling customer dissatisfaction

Be courteous and polite and listen carefully to what your passenger’s concerns are. If you need to apologise do this in a polite and calm voice and take action to address the concerns (see 3.11 Dealing with difficult situations).

It may be that a passenger has had a poor customer service experience earlier with another taxi driver. If this is the case you should:

- see this trip as an opportunity to improve the passenger’s day by providing better customer service
- listen to the passenger attentively if they want to tell you about their experience
- advise them on how to make a formal complaint.

If a passenger wishes to make a formal complaint you could direct them to your taxi booking service and/or the TSC website: [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au). The TSC’s mobile website will also allow a passenger to log a complaint on the spot using their mobile phone.

### 3.14 Dealing with difficult customers

As a taxi driver, you may from time to time experience difficult or challenging behaviour from your passengers. It is important to know what you should do in these situations:

- be courteous and polite to difficult passengers at all times
- ensure you have the correct address and/or directions for a passenger’s destination
- speak clearly and repeat what a passenger says to ensure you have understood them correctly
- listen carefully to what your passenger says and offer to help in any way you can.

At times you may need to carry a passenger who has drunk too much alcohol. You cannot refuse a fare because someone is drunk. Do not assume that because they are drunk they will be difficult or offensive. Engage with the passenger, for example by asking them to pay a prepaid fare or having a friendly conversation with them.

*Remember that you may refuse a fare or not continue with the trip if a passenger is violent, noisy, misbehaving, very dirty or offensive.*
4. USING THE TAXIMETER, FARES AND PAYMENTS

4.1 Using a taximeter

The taximeter is used to calculate fares. It must be used for all trips even if you have agreed to a lower set fare for the journey.

In a taxi, the meter must be:
- visible to passengers who are facing forward
- turned to the correct hiring rate (fare)
- showing the fare to be paid at all times during the journey (unless a lower set fare is agreed).

You must not take passengers unless you are on duty and logged onto all required equipment/systems, including the dispatch system if you are affiliated with a taxi booking service.

When to start the taximeter

With pre-booked fares you should make contact with the passenger to let them know you have arrived. You must speak to them. Leaving a voicemail message is not considered as having made contact. You may not start the meter until you have made contact with the passenger.

If you have arrived at the passenger’s pick up location and the passenger is running late, and they ask you to wait, you may turn the meter on at the time they booked for pick up.

Where you have been hailed on the street or at a taxi rank you should wait to start the meter until the passenger has entered your taxi and you are about to indicate to pull out into traffic.

When to pause the taximeter

You should pause the meter when you are responsible for a delay. For example:
- if you need to stop to refuel the taxi, and this should be done when you have no passengers
- if you need to stop to repair the taxi (e.g. flat tyre)
- until you are back on the correct route when you have lost your way.

You must also pause the meter when instructed to do so by a TSC Industry Compliance Officer.

4.2 Calculating fares

It is your responsibility to ensure you understand taxi fare structures. You should always provide your passenger with a receipt.

You must only charge the amount shown on the taximeter, plus any additional fees and charges, such as booking fees, toll road fees or airport rank fees.

You need to provide a full breakdown of how the fare has been calculated, including any additional fees and charges, if a passenger questions the fare amount.
4.3 Managing payments

However short or long the journey, passengers can pay with cash, credit or debit card, e-ticket or voucher.

Cash transactions

A passenger has the right to pay using cash. You must carry enough cash to give the passenger change – even if the passenger gives you $100 and the fare is $5.

You must provide the passenger with correct change and offer a receipt. If you are running low on change you must still accept payment in cash; however, it is acceptable to ask a passenger if they have smaller, or exact change, or if they could pay using EFTPOS instead.

Payment by e-ticket or voucher

A passenger can pay by e-ticket or voucher. If the e-ticket or gift voucher does not work:

- gain the passenger’s agreement to process the payment manually
- provide a receipt for the fare and any additional charges
- ensure that all fields are completed accurately on the manual voucher

- do not take any more passengers until the fault is fixed.

Electronic payments (EFTPOS)

Passengers can pay their fare electronically no matter what the fare is.

Prepayments can be made electronically or in cash.

Only use the manual swipe machine if the electronic EFTPOS has malfunctioned. You can only use an EFTPOS terminal that has been approved for use by the TSC.

Deposit or prepaid fares

Taxi fares should be prepaid for all trips between 10pm and 5am. However a driver has a right to ask for prepayment at any time of the day or night.
At the beginning of the trip you must estimate as accurately as possible how much the fare will cost and tell the passenger. When the passenger gives you that amount, give them a receipt for that amount.

You may refuse a fare if a passenger is unable to demonstrate an ability to pay an estimate of the fare.

If you take a prepaid fare you must still use the meter and the final amount on the meter is what the passenger should pay (unless you have agreed a lower set fare). For example:

- if the passenger prepaids $30 and the fare comes to $35, the passenger must pay an extra $5
- if the passenger prepaids $30 and the fare comes to $25, you must give the passenger $5.

Give the passenger a receipt at the end of the trip for the correct amount.

Accepting a tip from a passenger

It is okay to accept a tip from a passenger as this is a way of them showing their appreciation for your good service. However, if the passenger has clearly made a mistake and gives a larger amount than is to be reasonably expected, you should be ethical and do the right thing in telling them that this amount is very large for a tip.

If the passenger does not provide you with a tip, you cannot ask the passenger for additional money to the fare on the taximeter.

Cleaning charges

If a passenger makes a mess in a taxi, such as someone who has vomited, you must not ask the passenger to pay extra for cleaning. Cleaning costs are considered as a cost of operating a business.

Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP)

All MPTP fares must be calculated using the taximeter.

You must return a MPTP member’s card to them or their carer immediately after the fare is processed.

If a MPTP member does not have their card with them, you must charge them the full amount and provide a receipt. Tell them to contact the TSC and use the receipt to claim the subsidy.
5.1 Your personal safety

**Passengers who do the wrong thing**

You may refuse to continue with the trip if a passenger is:

- violent, noisy, misbehaving, very dirty, offensive or abusive towards you
- unable to demonstrate an ability to pay an estimate of the fare
- in possession of an object that cannot be carried safely within the vehicle.

However, it is important that you deal with such situations carefully and make sure that you remain safe. The following are typical of some situations with passengers that you may experience.

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**SITUATIONS YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF IN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATION</th>
<th>WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:</th>
<th>WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have arrived at your passenger’s destination when they suddenly leap from the vehicle and start running away without paying the fare.</td>
<td>Remain in the taxi and let them go. Report the passenger’s behaviour to the police.</td>
<td>Get out of the taxi and chase after them. Remain in the taxi and chase after them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have arrived at your passenger’s destination. When you advise them of the fare, they try to hit you.</td>
<td>Press your emergency button. Allow the passenger to leave the vehicle. Report the passenger’s behaviour to the police.</td>
<td>Lock the doors so the passenger cannot run away. Physically restrain them and call for the police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A passenger tells you that they cannot pay the fare when they arrive at their destination.</td>
<td>Organise a time for you to return and collect the money for the fare. Let them out and report them to the police. If the passenger refuses to make payment at a later date.</td>
<td>Offer to waive the fare if the passenger agrees to pay you in another way. Lock the passenger in the taxi and drive to the nearest police station.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Note: that security cameras are fitted to the taxi to assist in making you and your passengers safer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATIONS YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF IN</th>
<th>WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:</th>
<th>WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A passenger starts being racist toward you.</td>
<td>Try to remain polite and courteous regardless of what your passenger says. Ignore the comments if you can, as that is often the easiest way to handle the situation. Ask the passenger to stop, which you are within your rights to do. If they refuse to stop, you can refuse to continue to drive them. Report the passenger’s behaviour to the police.</td>
<td>Use offensive language when responding to the passenger. Lock the passenger in the taxi and drive to the nearest police station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A passenger starts swearing.</td>
<td>Ignore the comments if you can, as that is often the easiest way to handle the situation. Ask the passenger to stop, which you are within your rights to do. If they refuse to stop, you can refuse to continue to drive them. Report the passenger’s behaviour to the police.</td>
<td>Use offensive language when responding to the passenger. Lock the passenger in the taxi and drive to the nearest police station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A passenger starts using obscene language.</td>
<td>Try to remain polite and courteous regardless of what your passenger says. Ignore the comments if you can, as that is often the easiest way to handle the situation. Ask the passenger to stop, which you are within your rights to do. If they refuse to stop, you can refuse to continue to drive them.</td>
<td>Use obscene language when responding to the passenger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other road users who do the wrong thing

Taxi drivers are professionals. They are expected to be able to handle difficult road users in a professional way.

For instance you should allow another driver to pass if they are tailgating you, rather than react inappropriately. You should never, for example:

- sound your horn because you are annoyed when another driver cuts you off
- yell at other drivers, or make rude hand gestures
- flash your hi-beams when other drivers cut you off
- tailgate other drivers if they cut you off.

Remember that a passenger has the right to raise an official complaint about a taxi driver’s customer service or behaviour on the road. You also risk being fined and incurring demerit points if caught by the police acting in this way.

5.2 Checking the safety of your taxi

It is good practice to carry out a daily vehicle inspection. All faults must be fixed before the taxi can be used.

If you find a fault or defect, report it to the permit holder (taxi operator) immediately. You should never drive a taxi which you know has faults or defects.

5.3 Recognising and managing fatigue

Driver fatigue (being tired) is a risk to your health and safety and to the public. Being able to see the signs of fatigue can help you to decide if it is safe for you or someone else to drive a taxi. Always be aware of high fatigue risks that exist at night. Some signs of fatigue are:

- poor concentration
- difficulty remembering periods of time when driving
- not being able to see clearly
- having blurred vision
- sore or heavy eyes
- difficulty keeping eyes open and on the road
- always yawning
- failing asleep
- not feeling refreshed after sleep
- the need for longer sleeps during breaks
- wanting things done quickly (or having a short temper)
- fidgeting
- stretching
- stiff muscles
- poor control when driving a taxi or car
- difficulty maintaining steady speed
- drifting outside your lane.

Stop driving immediately if you find it hard to keep your eyes open and/or your head is nodding – these often happen after microsleeps. Microsleeps are very short periods of sleep you may not even be aware of.

The only real way to treat fatigue is to sleep. Aim to get seven and a half hours of quality (uninterrupted) sleep each day or night.
Make sure you get out of the taxi and have a break every two hours. Even if it’s only for ten minutes, this helps manage fatigue. You should also drink plenty of water to keep well hydrated, as this will help to keep you aware and thinking clearly.

Make sure you get a decent sleep before your shift starts, especially if you are changing from day shift to night shift.

To help manage driver fatigue, the TSC has developed Fatigue Management Guidelines. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum working hours (including breaks) in a 24 hour period</th>
<th>12 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum break between shifts</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum break when changing from day to night shift</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 5.4 Dealing with emergencies

**Traffic accidents**

If you are involved in a traffic accident or crash you must act in accordance with Section 61 of the *Road Safety Act 1986*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you hit another car or other property but there is no damage</th>
<th>Stop the taxi.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange details (your name and address, the name and address of the permit holder (taxi operator), the vehicle registration number) with the other driver or, if the other driver is not present, report the crash in person to the nearest police station.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If police are present at the accident, give them your name and address, and the name and address of the permit holder (taxi operator) holder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a car or other property is damaged</th>
<th>Stop the taxi.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange details with the other driver or, if the other driver is not present, report the crash in person to the nearest police station.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If police are present at the accident, give them your name and address, and the name and address of the permit holder (taxi operator) holder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If a person is injured, but not seriously:

Stop the taxi.
If there are no police at the scene of the accident, you must exchange details and provide assistance.
Offer to call an ambulance on emergency phone number 000 (triple zero).
If police are present at the accident, give them your name and address, and the name and address of the permit holder (taxi operator).
If police are not present report the accident in person to the nearest police station.

If a person is seriously injured:

Stop the taxi.
If there are no police at the scene of the accident, call an ambulance.
Give your details to the injured person or to someone who is with the injured person.
If police are present at the accident, give them your name and address, and the name and address of the permit holder (taxi operator).
If police are not present report the accident in person to the nearest police station.

Remember, you must provide your name and address, and the name and address of the permit holder (taxi operator) to others involved in the accident.

Giving way to emergency vehicles
You must move out of the way of any emergency vehicle (such as police, ambulance or fire service) driving with its siren and lights on. This applies whether or not you have a passenger.
6.1 Racism

Racism is treating someone unfairly simply because of their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status. Racism is unacceptable and illegal, and under the law you must treat people of all backgrounds equally.

As a taxi driver you must accept all fares and treat all passengers equally with politeness, courtesy and respect.

A complaint of racism could lead to you having your taxi driver accreditation cancelled.

6.2 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour, which could be expected to make a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. It can be physical, verbal or written. Sexual harassment is against the law, and some types of sexual harassment may also be offences under criminal law.

As a taxi driver you must not engage in sexual harassment of any kind, such as:

- making comments of a sexual nature to a passenger
- repeatedly or insistently asking a passenger if they would like to go on a date
- offering to waive the fare in return for sexual favours.

A complaint of sexual harassment could lead to you having your taxi driver accreditation cancelled.

6.3 Theft

Theft is a criminal offence and offenders can incur criminal charges and large fines. As a taxi driver you can be accused of theft if you:

- overcharge for a fare
- keep money in excess of the fare from a passenger who accidentally makes an overpayment
- notice that a passenger drops money or some of their belongings, but you do not tell them
- keep a passenger’s belongings or money they have left behind, rather than handing these in to a police station
- use credit cards illegally when they are left behind by a passenger.

It is also theft if you:

- drive off with a passenger’s belongings when they have refused to pay the fare
- take money or use credit cards from a passenger without their permission, even where a passenger who has refused to pay the fare has accidentally left their wallet.

In both of these situations you should go to a Victoria police station and hand in the items left behind and also file a report on the passenger.

6.4 Intimidation of passengers

It is not acceptable to detain a passenger (such as locking them in the taxi), threaten them or intimidate them. If you were to intimidate a passenger you could face numerous criminal charges, large fines, and lose your driver accreditation.

There are no circumstances which can justify you intimidating or threatening a passenger. Situations which would be considered as intimidation are if you:

- lock a passenger in the taxi unless they pay the fare
- take a passenger somewhere other than their destination and threaten to leave them there unless they pay the fare.
6.5 Assault of passengers

It is not acceptable for you to assault a passenger under any circumstances, even if the passenger is being offensive or racist towards you.

If you assault a passenger you have committed an offence and could face criminal charges, large fines and lose your driver accreditation.

6.6 Sharing driver logins, driver identification cards and accreditation certificates

You must never allow another driver to use your login, driver identification card or accreditation certificate.

These are breaches of the driver accreditation conditions for which you may be fined and have your driver accreditation cancelled.
1. A new taxi driver asks you: “What behaviours are expected from taxi drivers?”

What would you tell them?

[Identify the three correct responses]

☐ A. To respect other road users and share the road safely with them.
☐ B. To get your passenger to their destination as quickly as possible, even if you have to break a few rules.
☐ C. To know, obey and respect the Victorian road rules.
☐ D. To be able to speak English even if you cannot read it.
☐ E. To be courteous, honest and helpful and provide a safe and comfortable service at all times.

2. You are first in the taxi rank when a person with a seeing guide dog opens the door and asks you to take them a short distance away.

What should you do?

[Identify the correct response]

○ A. Only take the fare if you are comfortable with carrying an animal in your taxi.
○ B. Take the fare and allow the dog to travel in the passenger area of the taxi.
○ C. Offer to call a wheelchair accessible taxi as they are permitted to carry assistance animals.

3. When can a taxi driver refuse a fare?

[Identify the two correct responses]

☐ A. If you have waited for a long time at taxi rank for a fare or have just had several short fares, you may refuse a short journey fare.
☐ B. If you arrive for a pre-booked fare and the person chooses the destination to a very short distance away.
☐ C. If a person seems to have been drinking and is slurring their words.
☐ D. If a person is carrying a surfboard that you cannot carry safely in the taxi.
☐ E. If a person is swearing and being offensive.
4. When is a taxi driver allowed to send a text message on a mobile phone?

[Identify the correct response]
- A. While driving if the mobile is in commercially designed mobile phone holder, affixed to the vehicle.
- B. If you are stopped waiting at a set of traffic lights.
- C. If you have pulled over and parked legally on the side of the road first.

5. You are an operator driver and your taxi has two electronic visual display units (VDUs) installed for displaying commercial advertising for rear seat viewing.

What type of advertising should you display?

[Identify the two correct responses]
- □ A. Advertising for sexual or erotic services.
- □ B. Advertisements for a major city hotel.
- □ C. Advertising for a religious service or belief.
- □ D. Advertisements for a political party.
- □ E. Advertisements for a Melbourne restaurant.

6. If you are hailed by a person with a folding wheelchair what should you do?

[Identify the correct response]
- A. Take the fare and put the folding wheelchair in the boot if it fits safely.
- B. Stop and call for a wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT).
- C. Ignore the person and let them wait until a wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT) comes along.
7. As a professional driver, you will pick up passengers with different backgrounds and beliefs. Which of the following statements are correct and which are incorrect?

[Identify the one correct and four incorrect responses]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORRECT</th>
<th>INCORRECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. You should always speak in a friendly voice and be polite, even if the passenger is rude.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. If you pick up a passenger from the airport it is good to get to know them and ask things about their personal life, such as whether they are married or single.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. It is okay to swear if a passenger swears during their conversation with you because this makes them feel more comfortable.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. You should be more courteous to female passengers than male passengers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. With a transgender passenger who is dressed as a woman, you should treat them as a woman and call them “madam”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. You should try to respond as much as possible to your passengers’ needs. When should you do what your passenger asks you?

[Identify the three correct responses]

A. If a passenger asks you to turn down the volume of the radio.
B. If a passenger asks you to make the taxi a little cooler by adjusting the air conditioning.
C. If a person asks you to carry a large box that you cannot carry safely in the taxi.
D. If a passenger insists on unloading their own luggage.
E. If a passenger asks you to quickly drop them where there is a No Stopping sign.

8. Answers: A, B, D

9. It is considered good customer service to make your passengers feel comfortable by not making or receiving mobile phone calls while you are driving, even if your mobile is in an approved holder.

When is it acceptable to make a call?

[Identify the correct response]

- A. If the passenger does not want to have a conversation with you.
- B. If you are parked in a taxi rank, but end the call when a passenger gets in the taxi.
- C. If you speak in another language so that your passenger does not know what you are saying and so they will not feel like they may hear something private.

10. As a taxi driver you are required to use a taximeter to calculate fares.

Which of the following statements are true and which are false about using a taximeter?

[Identify the three true and two false responses]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. With a pre-booked fare you may start the meter as soon as you arrive at the pick-up address, even if you have not made contact with the passenger.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. You should pause the meter if you have a fare and you have to stop to refuel the taxi.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. You may refuse to take a payment in cash if you are running low on change.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The meter must be visible to passengers who are facing forward and show the fare to be paid at all times during the journey.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Pre-payments for trips between 10 pm and 5 am can be made electronically or in cash.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Answers: True: B, D, E  False: A, C

9. Answer: B