The Taxi Services Commission (TSC) has prepared 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.

There is also 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 the *Taxi and Hire Car Knowledge Handbook*:

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

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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).

9. RESPECTING YOUR PASSENGERS

9.1 Acting ethically

9.2 Discrimination

9.3 Sexual harassment

10. THE MULTI PURPOSE TAXI PROGRAM (MPTP)

10.1 Details of the MPTP

10.2 Using a taximeter for MPTP fares

SAMPLE KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS
1.1 The WAT Endorsement

To drive a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) in Victoria, drivers need to have WAT endorsement, which is the condition code ‘W’ endorsed on their driver accreditation certificate.

In the Melbourne metropolitan zone and the urban and large regional zone, this requires completion of the computer based WAT theory module and then the WAT practical module (for new applicants only) as a part of the Knowledge test.

This handbook is designed to assist you in studying for the WAT theory module and the WAT practical module.

It is not a Taxi Services Commission (TSC) requirement that applicants have undertaken and successfully completed any training prior to completing the WAT modules of the Knowledge. However, you are advised that it is your responsibility to undertake sufficient study to ensure you are adequately prepared for each assessment.

It is recommended that you complete the training on providing wheelchair accessible services to passengers with a disability that is offered under the Certificate II in Driving Operations. This can be completed through various training organisations.

1.2 The WAT practical module

The WAT practical module is the second module of the WAT endorsement, taken after successfully passing the theory module. It ensures anyone wanting to drive a WAT can demonstrate their competency in:

- meeting the needs of a passenger with a disability
- operating any vehicle specific systems (such as wheelchair tie downs, occupant restraint systems, ramp and hoist operation).

The vehicles used in this assessment are:

- a hoist vehicle
- a ramp vehicle.

The criteria used during the assessment is similar to the Programmed Observation Licence Assessment (POLA) used by VicRoads. This standard was developed to achieve a consistent and objective evaluation of an applicant being assessed.

The content of the WAT Practical module is based on the unit of competency TLIC2040A – Provide Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Services to People with Disabilities, which is a part of the Certificate II in Driving Operations TL21210.

The assessment officer will record results for each task as:

- P (Pass) – If the applicant meets the performance criteria for the task
- NYC (Not Yet Competent) – If the applicant does not meet any part of the performance criteria for the task.

An applicant will receive an immediate failure if they perform a task unsafely or illegally. An example of a critical error is not restraining a wheelchair correctly in the vehicle.
There are nine assessment tasks that must be completed in order to pass the module. The following table lists these assessment tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Number</th>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Carry out a pre-operational check of the vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Load a wheelchair in the vehicle with a passenger using a hoist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Load a second wheelchair in the vehicle without a passenger using a hoist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Undertake a directed drive of approximately 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Unload the wheelchair without a passenger using a hoist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Unload the second wheelchair with a passenger using a hoist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Load a wheelchair in the vehicle using a ramp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Unload a wheelchair from the vehicle using a ramp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Scenario based disability assessor questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Where to find further information

Visit the TSC website: [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au) to find more information about the WAT endorsement.
2. GUIDELINES FOR A WAT

2.1 Gaining approval as a WAT

Vehicles must meet all applicable vehicle standards to be approved by the TSC for use as a WAT.

For an updated list of TSC approved WAT vehicles, where the supplier/converter has satisfied the TSC that the vehicle configuration meets the standards for licensing as a WAT in Victoria, go to the TSC website: www.taxis.vic.gov.au.

2.2 WAT priority bookings

The WAT taxi operator and driver of a WAT must give priority to a booking by a wheelchair user ahead of any other requests at all times (unless a pre-booked job has already been arranged for the time requested), in accordance with the licence conditions of the taxi.

2.3 High occupancy taxis

Some WAT vehicles have the passenger capacity to also operate as a high occupancy taxi.

A high occupancy taxi can accommodate and secure at least one occupied wheelchair, and has seating capacity for between five and 11 passengers, not including the driver, when in its non-wheelchair configuration.

WATs are required to give priority to bookings by people who use wheelchairs, but may be used to carry other passengers when not engaged with wheelchair bookings. When not carrying wheelchair passengers, WATs have the same operating rights and conditions as conventional taxis, but charge an additional occupancy fee (metropolitan Melbourne, Frankston, Dandenong, Port Phillip, Western Port) and high occupancy fare (Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, country and regional) when carrying five or more passengers. The high occupancy hiring rate does not apply to patrons who use the Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) or are unable to use a conventional taxi and must use a WAT, unless a total of five or more passengers (including wheelchair-using and ambulatory passengers) are being carried.

Where a passenger in a taxi allows the driver to undertake a multiple hire journey, the maximum to be charged to each hirer is 75% of the metered fare for the journey.
3. UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

3.1 What is 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.

3.2 Different types of disability

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 – 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.
4. COMMUNICATION WITH PASSENGERS WITH A DISABILITY

4.1 Showing respect to people with disability

You must show respect to people with a disability when communicating with them by:

- treating them as an individual and with dignity
- focusing on them, not their disability
- not making assumptions about how they may prefer to communicate
- observing any requests to not talk during the journey
- never using words which may offend like ‘cripple’, ‘spastic’ or ‘retard’.

4.2 Dealing with communication difficulties

You will be able to communicate effectively with passengers with communication difficulties, if you:

- use simple, easy to understand language
- be clear, concise and courteous when talking
- concentrate on what your passenger is saying
- politely ask your passenger to repeat themselves if you did not understand them
- check that your passenger has understood what you have told them
- use active listening and summarise your passengers’ requests to ensure you have understood them
- try repeating a passenger’s instructions in different words (paraphrasing)
- face the passenger and speak clearly, but only when you are not driving
- reduce background noise and minimise distractions (for example, turn off the radio or close your window to reduce traffic noise)
- be patient and give the person time to speak if they have a speech or language impairment

- be tactful and patient if a passenger asks the same questions, or tells you the same story over – for example the passenger may have dementia
- use non-verbal techniques such as positive body language, including smiling, nodding or having a relaxed posture
- if necessary, 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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talking Taxis Alphabet Communication Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="talking_taxis_alphabet_board.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are unable to understand the passenger when they tell you their destination, try asking:

- “Is there another way you can let me know where you’d like to go? For example, do you have it written down somewhere, or can you point to it in my street directory?”
- “Rather than telling me aloud, would you like to write it on a piece of paper, or is there another way you would like to communicate?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talking Taxis Tourism Communication Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="talking_taxis_tourism_board.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following pre-operational vehicle and equipment checks should be carried out on the WAT at the start of your shift.

Inside the vehicle:

- the ramp or hydraulic lift (hoist) is operating properly
- the ramp or hoist control boxes or switches are operating properly
- all occupant restraints can be accounted for and are fully functional, and it is a good idea to have a spare set of restraints
- an adequate number of functioning wheelchair tie-downs are stored in the vehicle and are in good working order
- floor tracking is undamaged

Any defects must be reported to the taxi operator. The Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 requires the driver to ensure the taxi is free from risks to health and safety. You are responsible if you drive a taxi which you know has faults or defects.
6. HELPING YOUR PASSENGERS IN AND OUT OF THE TAXI

6.1 Assistance with getting in and out of the taxi

Always ask how you can assist your passenger and remember to:

- ask for permission prior to moving a passenger in a wheelchair
- ask how you can assist them into and out of the taxi
- allow a passenger with an assistance animal to bring the animal into the passenger area of the taxi
- ensure the person is safe and ready before lifting them into position when using a rear hydraulic lifter
- store any mobility aid safely and where it will not interfere with the movement of passengers into or out of the vehicle
- offer to assist to load and unload any mobility aids
- help them with getting any mobility aid, luggage or other items into and out of the taxi.

Be respectful and treat passengers with disability as you would treat any other individual, that is fairly and with dignity. For example you can offer to push, but should not insist on pushing a passenger’s wheelchair onto a hoist or up a ramp.

Never do the following:
- touch the joystick of a passengers wheelchair, because electric wheelchairs and scooters can be sensitive and easily active
- allow a passenger to stand on the hoist without being seated in a wheelchair or on a scooter.

6.2 Transporting passengers in a wheelchair

A passenger occupying a wheelchair must only be taken in a taxi if:

- The wheelchair is securely restrained by applying restraints to the floor from two points on the front and two points on the rear of the wheelchair frame.
- The passenger is secured by a wheelchair occupant restraint (seatbelt) fitted to the taxi, and this has been properly adjusted and fastened in the manner in which the seatbelt is designed to be worn. Note that a postural belt that forms part of a wheelchair cannot be used as a substitute for a lap/sash seatbelt fitted to the vehicle or a harness-type occupant restraint system.
- The wheelchair is positioned with the occupant facing towards the front of the taxi and with the wheelchair located between the appropriate restraint attachment tracks/points on the floor.
6.3 Transporting passengers with a mobility scooter

A passenger who uses a mobility scooter must be seated in a conventional passenger seat for the duration of the journey and wear the seatbelt provided for that position. Passengers are not allowed to remain seated on mobility scooters during their journey in a WAT.

The scooter must be fitted with all restraints to prevent movement of the scooter during the journey. A scooter must only be loaded if it can be safely loaded, carried and adequately secured using approved restraints.

6.4 Transporting passengers with high-care mobility aids

Under no circumstances is it safe to take passengers while they remain seated in high-care mobility aids as doing so puts their safety, and the safety of other occupants of the taxi, at risk.

‘Princess’, ‘Duchess’ and ‘Tub’ chairs/beds lack the structural integrity to withstand a minor impact and, in the event of an accident, their tilt-lock mechanism or the frame could fail, exposing the occupant to serious injury.

As they carry the occupant in a reclined position, the occupant cannot be properly restrained with the danger they could slip under the restraint, endangering themselves and others.

High-care mobility aids do not meet national design and construction standards and manufacturers advise that they are not designed to be carried in vehicles while the passenger is in them.

Any driver who allows a passenger to travel in one of these mobility aids in their taxi is not only risking their own physical safety, they are risking their accreditation and opening themselves up to potential legal liability if the passenger is injured.

Examples of mobility aids that may be carried in a WAT, but the passenger must transfer to a fixed seat in the vehicle.

- Electric and manual wheelchairs are generally suitable to be transported in a WAT with the person seated.
6.5 Using a wheelchair hoist

**Loading**

The following are the guidelines for loading a wheelchair into a WAT with a hoist (rear hydraulic loader). The lifting equipment attached to the WAT must only be used by the driver.

Wheelchairs may be manoeuvred, and their brakes applied and released, by either the WAT driver or the wheelchair user depending on the wheelchair user’s preference. In the case of an electric wheelchair, switching off the control box should be considered equivalent to applying brakes. It is the responsibility of the WAT driver to ensure that all of the following steps are followed regardless of whom is operating the wheelchair throughout the loading process.

1. Legally park the vehicle in a safe place with enough loading room.
2. Ask permission to touch the wheelchair.
3. Position the wheelchair safely out of the way of the hoist.
4. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
5. Open the rear door and lower the hoist safely.
6. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
7. Position the wheelchair safely on the hoist platform with the wheelchair facing forward (towards the front of the vehicle).
8. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair and make sure the wheelchair cannot accidentally roll forwards or backwards.
9. Ensure the passenger is safe and ready with their legs and feet out of danger, before using the hoist to raise the wheelchair to the level of the floor of the taxi. Raise the hoist correctly with one hand on the wheelchair and the other on the controller. Ensure the hoist platform is level with the floor of the WAT before moving the wheelchair into the WAT.
10. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
11. Move the wheelchair into the correct position.
12. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
13. Lock the two front anchorage restraints into the floor tracks. Note that this may be done before the passenger is hoisted into the WAT.
14. Connect the two front anchorage restraints to two secure points on the wheelchair.
15. Lock the two rear anchorage restraints into the floor tracks.
16. Connect the two rear anchorage restraints to two secure points on the wheelchair.
17. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
18. Tighten the rear anchorage restraints using the ratchet mechanism on each restraint.
19. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
20. Attach and fit the wheelchair occupant restraint fittings (seatbelt) correctly (not across the throat or the pelvis).
21. Ask if the passenger needs any further assistance and if they are comfortable.

Unloading

These are the guidelines for unloading a wheelchair from a WAT with a hoist. Again, the lifting equipment attached to the WAT **must** only be used by the driver. The same points regarding operation of the wheelchair in the loading process detailed above also apply for unloading.

1. Legally park the vehicle in a safe place and with enough room to unload.
2. Open the rear door of the vehicle.
3. Lower the hoist safely from being stowed upright to a position level with the vehicle floor.

4. Release the passenger from the wheelchair occupant restraint fittings (seatbelt).

5. Release the two rear anchorage restraints from the wheelchair.

6. Release the two front anchorage restraints from the wheelchair.

7. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.

8. Slowly position the wheelchair safely on the hoist platform.

9. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.

10. Lower the hoist to ground level correctly with one hand on the wheelchair and the other on the controller.

11. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.

12. Move the wheelchair off the hoist or inform the passenger once it is safe to reverse out from the hoist.

13. Position the wheelchair safely and apply the brakes.
6.6 Wheelchair ramp loading

The following are the guidelines for loading a wheelchair into a WAT with a ramp. The same points regarding operation of the wheelchair in the hoist usage process detailed above also apply to ramp usage.

1. Legally park the vehicle in a safe place with enough loading room.
2. Ask permission to touch the wheelchair.
3. Position the wheelchair safely out of the way of the ramp.
4. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
5. Open the rear wheelchair entry door.
6. Unlock and position the ramp for safe loading.
7. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
8. Position the wheelchair safely at the bottom of the ramp.
9. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
10. Unlock the front restraints using the lock switch.
11. Connect the two front restraints to two secure points on the wheelchair.
12. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
13. Push the wheelchair smoothly into the vehicle with both hands on the wheelchair.
14. Position the wheelchair correctly.
15. Lock the two front restraints with the lock switch.
16. Lock the two rear anchorage restraints into the floor tracks/points.
17. Connect the two rear anchorage restraints to two secure points on the wheelchair.

18. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.

19. Tighten the two rear anchorage restraints using the ratchet mechanism on each restraint.

20. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.

21. Attach and fit the wheelchair occupant restraint fittings (seatbelt) correctly (not across the throat or the pelvis).

22. Ask if the passenger needs any further assistance and if they are comfortable.

23. Position and lock the ramp in the vehicle.

24. Close the rear wheelchair entry door.

**Unloading**

These are the guidelines for unloading a wheelchair from a WAT with a ramp. The same points regarding operation of the wheelchair in the hoist usage process detailed above also apply to ramp usage.

1. Legally park the vehicle in a safe place with enough unloading room.
2. Open the rear wheelchair entry door.
3. Unlock and position the ramp for safe unloading.
4. Release the passenger from the wheelchair occupant restraint fittings (seatbelt).
5. Unlock and release the two rear anchorage restraints connected to the wheelchair.
6. Release the two rear anchorage restraints connected to the floor tracks.
7. Unlock the two front anchorage restraints using the lock switch.
8. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
9. Pull the wheelchair smoothly out of the vehicle to the bottom of the ramp with both hands on the wheelchair.
10. Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
11. Release the two front anchorage restraints from the secure parts of the wheelchair.
12. Put the front anchorage restraints back into the holder and lock using the lock switch.
13. Release the brakes on the wheelchair.
14. Position the wheelchair safely.
15. Close the rear wheelchair entry door.
7.1 Safe and legal parking

It is a requirement to park legally and safely when you are dropping off and picking up your passengers. As well as making sure it is safe to park and obeying parking restrictions you should ensure:

- there is adequate room to the side or rear of the taxi for loading and unloading using the ramp or hoist
- you are in a place where the passenger can travel safely to or from the taxi.

You may park in a disabled parking zone only if your passenger has a permit and it is properly displayed in the vehicle.

Special parking rules for taxis

Note that there are some special parking rules for taxis and you may stop in a:

- clearway while picking up or dropping off passengers
- loading zone while dropping off or picking up passengers or goods
- bus lane, transit lane or truck lane while dropping off or picking up passengers.

A taxi driver may also stop within one metre of a fire hydrant, fire hydrant indicator, or fire plug indicator, providing it is in a taxi zone and the driver does not leave the taxi unattended.

7.2 Safe driving practices

It is important that you drive safely at all times and ensure a comfortable journey for your passengers while driving a WAT. For passengers seated in a wheelchair any movements, such as a vehicle over bumps in the road, are amplified and so cause discomfort. Some things to consider are:

- make sure your passenger is comfortable throughout the trip.
- be familiar with smooth, unobstructed roads and ask passengers if they would like to avoid routes with road obstacles, such as speed bumps or roundabouts.
- consider any obstacles that may cause discomfort to your passenger, such as speed bumps and roundabouts, when planning your route.
- advise your passenger if you are going to travel on a route with obstacles that may cause discomfort. In this case ask them if they have a preferred route.
- take extra care while driving over railway tracks, speed bumps and at roundabouts.
• ensure you enter and exit roundabouts smoothly.
• be mindful of upcoming road controls such as speed bumps and stop signs.
• always try to avoid pot holes.
• be mindful of other drivers around you and drive carefully.
• increase your usual following distance while driving in traffic.
• take extra care when you see warning signs ahead, such as a slippery surface or strong winds.

Always obey the road rules even when passengers ask you to disobey them, such as to drive faster than the speed limit or perform illegal U-turns.
8.1 Keeping your passengers comfortable

You should try to maximise the travelling comfort for all your passengers at all times. There are some extra things you can do to make a journey more comfortable for a person with a disability, including:

- communicating with your passenger clearly and concisely
- asking if they are comfortable during the journey
- asking if the temperature is comfortable for them and offer to adjust it if needed
- planning routes that avoid bumping passengers around too much
- keeping the passenger informed of the progress of the journey
- avoiding heavy braking or accelerating too quickly
- taking extra care while driving over railway tracks and speed bumps
- entering into and exiting smoothly through roundabouts
- increasing your usual following distance while driving in traffic
- if needed, driving at a speed lower than the speed limit to improve the comfort of your passenger.

You must obey all road rules even if a passenger asks you to break them, such as to drive faster to get them to their destination on time.

Some models of WATs have more than one position in which a wheelchair can be secured. It is possible that one position may provide a more comfortable ride than others. For example, in a van-type WAT the position located above the rear axle can be less comfortable than a position further towards the front of the vehicle. Consideration should be given to this, and you should ask wheelchair using passengers if they have a preferred position.

You should offer to assist people with a disability as much as possible, including providing help with getting into and out of the taxi.

You should try to stop to pick up a passenger with a disability 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.

When carrying a passenger with a disability make sure you:

- do not move, touch or lean on a wheelchair, unless you have permission
- offer to assist them in loading and unloading any mobility aids
- attract their attention if they have a hearing impairment before speaking, so they know you are talking to them
- maximise their comfort by taking the smoothest route and avoiding road obstacles and hazards.
8.2 Transporting assistance animals

You must take a passenger with an assistance animal in the passenger area of the taxi. Passengers with an assistance animal pass include dogs for people who are vision or hearing impaired, medical alert animals, mobility assistance animals and psychiatric service animals. Assistance animals are highly trained to ensure appropriate and exceptional behaviour and health standards, so they can be safely admitted where other animals are not otherwise permitted.

Under Commonwealth legislation (Disability Discrimination Act 1992, section 24) you cannot discriminate against a person with a disability because they possess, or are accompanied by, an animal trained to assist them to alleviate the effect of the disability.

In order to maintain high standards of customer service and meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, you should transport in the passenger area of the taxi an animal which:

(a) is accompanying a person with a disability that is trained to help the person to alleviate the effect of the disability

(b) has assistance animal accreditation.

The TSC will not penalise or take action against a taxi driver for allowing an animal reasonably believed to be an assistance animal in the passenger area of a taxi.

For further enquiries about assistance animals, taxi drivers can contact the TSC on telephone 1800 638 802 or their Network Service Provider.
9.1 Acting ethically

Taxi drivers need to act ethically at all times. You need to understand what is ethical and unethical behaviour for taxi drivers, especially as it relates to being a WAT driver.

The following table below provides examples of ethical and unethical behaviour for WAT drivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is ethical behaviour for a WAT driver?</th>
<th>What is unethical behaviour for a WAT driver?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To pick up a passenger when you have accepted a dispatch booking for that passenger.</td>
<td>To accept a dispatch booking, but then not pick up the passenger (passive rejection).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a passenger who has an assistance animal.</td>
<td>Refusing to take a passenger who has an assistance animal. This is also against the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering to assist a person with vision impairment.</td>
<td>You remove the money/payment card from the passenger without asking for permission or explaining what you are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A passenger’s disability means they cannot retrieve their money or card themselves, so you:</td>
<td>You keep the passenger’s Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) card, if they have one, for the next time they travel with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• obtain permission to remove the money/payment card</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• explain to the passenger what you are doing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• carry out the transaction in full view of the passenger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ensure you return the change/payment card from where it was taken.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain the passenger’s permission before physically assisting them.</td>
<td>Physically assist the passenger without asking their permission first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out transactions in full view of the passenger.</td>
<td>Carry out transactions in a way that the passenger cannot see what you are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening the door for a passenger.</td>
<td>Touching a passenger. Some kinds of touching could be considered sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting a passenger’s privacy.</td>
<td>Asking the passenger about their private life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with your passenger politely and respectfully.</td>
<td>Shouting at your passenger if they do not understand you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is ethical behaviour for a WAT driver?</td>
<td>What is unethical behaviour for a WAT driver?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charging the correct fare at all times.</td>
<td>Charging more than the correct fare. This could be fraud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling a passenger that tipping is not expected.</td>
<td>Telling the passenger how much to tip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting about general topics, e.g. sport, weather, public events.</td>
<td>Asking personal questions (e.g. if the person is married or has a boy/girlfriend, or about their religion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a passenger to the destination they request.</td>
<td>Dropping a passenger somewhere other than the destination they requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering to take a passenger on a route that will cost them less than the one they requested.</td>
<td>Not telling passengers about a more efficient route that will cost them less than the route they requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling a passenger they have dropped some money in the taxi.</td>
<td>Not telling a passenger about money they have dropped in the taxi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving your mobile phone number to a passenger if they ask for it for future bookings, if you are happy to give it to them.</td>
<td>Adding an extra charge if a pre-booked fare has kept you waiting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusing to take passengers who show any signs of violence.</td>
<td>Threatening to hurt a passenger. This could also be illegal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning on the air conditioner to wake a sleeping passenger.</td>
<td>Taking the correct fare from the bag or wallet of a person who is asleep when you reach their destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking loudly to wake a passenger.</td>
<td>Taking photos of a passenger who is asleep when you reach their destination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting a short trip, even though you have been waiting a long time for a fare.</td>
<td>Refusing a short trip. It is a requirement that you accept short trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refusing to take a short trip unless the passenger agrees to pay an extra amount of money. You are not allowed to refuse a short fare or require the passenger to pay extra for one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with luggage and bags.</td>
<td>Refusing to assist a passenger with luggage and bags.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following are offences under criminal law:

- theft
- fraud
- physical assault
- indecent exposure
- sexual assault
- stalking
- obscene communications.

9.2 Discrimination

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. In Victoria it is against the law for someone to discriminate against you because of a personal characteristic that you have, or someone assumes that you have. These personal characteristics are things like age, race, disability, physical features and political beliefs.

You are not allowed to discriminate against people based on their disability. You must not deny anybody access to a taxi or refuse a fare based on their disability. This is a legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).

Similarly you must not discriminate against people based on their culture, race, language, religion, gender, age or sexual orientation.

You need to treat all people fairly and without discrimination at all times.

9.3 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.

Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) it is unlawful for a person to sexually harass another person, including when providing taxi services.

Some examples of sexual harassment are:

- comments about a person’s private life or the way they look
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- asking questions of a sexual nature
- displaying offensive photos, calendars or objects
- raising the subject of or requesting sex
- repeatedly asking a passenger for a date
- taking or showing sexually explicit photos
- touching yourself or exposing yourself inappropriately
- sexually explicit emails, text messages or posts on social networking sites.

Sexual harassment is against the law and some kinds of sexual harassment are also a criminal offence.
10. THE MULTI PURPOSE TAXI PROGRAM (MPTP)

10.1 Details of the MPTP

MPTP fares

The MPTP provides government subsidised taxi fares for residents of Victoria who have a severe and permanent disability, who meet financial eligibility criteria.

MPTP members carry a card provided by the TSC that entitles them to receive subsidised taxi fares. Members receive a subsidy of up to 50 per cent of the standard fare at a maximum of $60 subsidy per trip. For example, in the metropolitan zone if:

- the fare is $20 on the meter – the passenger pays $10
- the fare is $100 on the meter – the passenger pays $50
- the fare is $150 on the meter – the passenger pays $90 as the fare is $60 over the maximum subsidy that is covered per trip ($60).

Some members have a yearly limit.

All MPTP fares must be calculated using the taximeter. Road tolls, airport fees and Silver Service fees are not part of the metered fare and must be paid in full by the passenger. These are not included as part of the MPTP subsidy. The lifting fee for carrying a passenger in a wheelchair is also subsidised through the MPTP.

The taximeter should be paused for a MPTP member with a wheelchair/scooter taxi card, while their wheelchair is being loaded or unloaded.

You must return a MPTP member’s card to them or their carer immediately after the fare is processed. You should never keep a passenger’s MPTP card, even if the passenger is a regular and they ask you to.

If a MPTP member has a valid card but does not have their card with them, or the card is not able to be processed, then you must charge them the full amount and provide a receipt. Advise them to contact the TSC and explain that they can use the receipt to claim the subsidy.

A MPTP member’s card can only be used to subsidise a journey if the MPTP member has travelled in the taxi during that journey. If it is a shared ride then the MPTP member must be in the taxi for the whole journey for the MPTP fare to apply.

Lifting fee

When driving a MPTP member with a wheelchair/scooter taxi card (“Wheelchair/Scooter” is embossed on their MPTP card), drivers receive a lifting fee when loading and unloading WAT passengers. The MPTP member is never required to pay the lifting fee. The lifting fee is covered under MPTP membership. A driver can not directly charge or ask for the lifting fee from the passenger. MPTP wheelchair or scooter using members do not even need to be aware that the lifting fee exists.
In non-metropolitan Victoria a lifting fee is also paid for loading a wheelchair into the boot of a sedan or station wagon.

The lifting fee is subsidised under the MPTP membership. This fee is indexed and so it is important to check regularly for changes. The current lifting fees are:

- $16.50 for a WAT
- $8.25 for conventional taxis in non-metropolitan zones.

The lifting fee recognises the additional time it takes a driver to safely load and unload a passenger in a wheelchair or on a scooter.

The taximeter must not be turned on while a MPTP passenger with a wheelchair/scooter taxi card is being loaded or unloaded.

When a passenger does not have a MPTP wheelchair/scooter taxi card the lifting fee is not paid. On these occasions drivers are permitted to turn the taximeter on while loading/unloading passengers. This includes when carrying WAT passengers from interstate or overseas.

If you encounter a MPTP member that permanently uses a wheelchair or scooter outside of their home, but only has a conventional MPTP card that is not embossed with “Wheelchair/Scooter”, it is reasonable for you to inform them that they are probably entitled to a different card. This will of course save them being charged for the time taken for loading and unloading, and also enable WAT drivers to collect a lifting fee. MPTP members can arrange to have their card changed by contacting the TSC to obtain a “Change of Circumstances” form. Such members are not obliged to change their card. If they choose not to, you are still required to prioritise bookings placed by those members as you would any other WAT booking.

**MPTP smartcard for accredited taxi drivers**

The TSC issues a MPTP smartcard to all accredited taxi drivers.

At the start of each shift, drivers must log on to the approved electronic transaction terminal compatible for processing MPTP payments. The driver must remain logged on at all times during their shift and log off at the completion of their shift. Taxi drivers who are not logged on with their smartcard will be fined and may have their driver accreditation reviewed.

The smartcard shows the driver’s name, driver licence number and driver accreditation number.

### 10.2 Using a taximeter for MPTP fares

The taximeter is used to calculate fares. It must be used for all fares. The taximeter must be switched on and operating for all journeys.

All MPTP fares must be calculated using the taximeter.

In a taxi, the taximeter must be:

- visible to passengers who are facing forward
- set to the correct tariff
- showing the fare to be paid at all times during the journey
- programmed to record and display only the fares and additional charges allowed.

You must not take passengers unless you are on duty and the taximeter is turned on.
A subsidised fare must not be processed for an individual where their MPTP card has been rejected by the electronic terminal as:

- subsidy cap reached
- card expired. Do not proceed with voucher payment
- card cancelled. Do not proceed with voucher payment.

Charge the full fare and give the passenger a receipt and suggest that they contact the TSC.

A booking fee must not be charged for a MPTP fare unless the taxi was pre-booked (by telephone/internet/phone app).

However short or long the journey, MPTP members can pay like any other passenger with cash, Cabcharge or electronically (credit card or EFTPOS).

You must always offer to give your passenger a receipt. The receipt must contain:

- the number of the taxi
- all the items which make up the fare and any additional fees, rates and charges
- the total amount paid
- the date of the payment.

When to start the meter

The taximeter must not be running while a MPTP passenger with an wheelchair/scooter taxi card is being loaded or unloaded.

With pre-booked fares you must make contact with the passenger to let them know you have arrived. You must speak to them or their carer. 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 and the pre-booked time has passed.

If the passenger is running late and they ask you to wait, you are allowed to turn the meter on at the time they booked. However, as a matter of customer service, you may decide not to do so. If you do choose to start the taximeter while you are waiting for a MPTP member with a wheelchair/scooter taxi card, you must pause the taximeter before you commence the loading process and only start again just prior to moving off.

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

When to pause the meter

Except as described above, you should only 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.
1. What is true about a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) in Victoria?

[Two are TRUE, three are FALSE]

A. A WAT may only carry passengers in wheelchairs or who use a scooter.  

B. A driver of a WAT may choose to take a large group of passengers who have been waiting a long time, instead of a single passenger in a wheelchair.  

C. Some WAT vehicles have the passenger capacity to also operate as a high occupancy taxi.  

D. A driver of a WAT must give priority to wheelchair-using passengers at all times.  

E. Any accredited taxi driver can drive a WAT.  

2. “Hello, I have just got my WAT endorsement. What would you recommend I do if I have a passenger who I am having difficulty understanding?”

What are some suggestions?

[Identify the four correct responses]

- A. Use simple, easy to understand language.  
- B. Concentrate on what your passenger is saying.  
- C. Pretend to understand what the passenger tells you so you do not offend them.  
- D. Try repeating (paraphrasing) the passenger’s instructions.  
- E. Be patient and give the person time to speak.  

1. Answers: TRUE: C, D FALSE: A, B, E

2. Answers: A, B, D, E
3. Which of the following is a type of sensory disability?

[Identify the correct response]

- A. Acquired brain injury
- B. Hearing impairment
- C. Multiple Sclerosis

4. Which of the following is true about communicating with a vision impaired passenger?

[Identify the correct response]

- A. Speak slowly and use non-verbal techniques, such as positive body language.
- B. Reduce background noise and minimise distractions.
- C. Speak normally.

5. Select the types of pre-operational vehicle checks, including WAT equipment checks, which should be carried out at the start of your shift.

[Identify the four correct responses]

- A. Floor tracking is undamaged.
- B. Lights and indicators are working correctly.
- C. Suspension and steering components are in good working order.
- D. An adequate number of functioning wheelchair tie-downs are stored in the vehicle and are in good working order.
- E. Fire extinguisher is undamaged.
6. What are some things drivers can keep in mind when helping passengers into and out of a wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT)?

[Tick three actions drivers should DO and one action drivers should NOT DO]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>NOT DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Ask how you can assist them into and out of the taxi.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Ask for permission prior to moving a passenger in a wheelchair.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Offer to assist to load and unload any mobility aids.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Allow the passenger to operate the rear hydraulic lifter if they ask whether they can.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. You are picking up a passenger who uses a mobility scooter. They ask if they can remain seated on the scooter during the journey.

When can you agree to your passenger’s request?

[Identify the correct response]

- A. If the scooter is securely restrained by applying restraints to the floor from two points on the front and two points on the rear of the scooter frame.
- B. At no time because passengers are not allowed to remain seated on mobility scooters during their journey in a WAT.
- C. If the trip is only short and you drive very carefully.
8. To unload a passenger who uses a wheelchair from a WAT with a hoist, the driver should:

[Identify each correct response]

☐ A. Stop the vehicle in a safe place and with enough room to unload.
☐ B. Release the passenger from the wheelchair occupant restraint fittings before releasing the rear restraints from the wheelchair.
☐ C. Position the wheelchair safely on the hoist platform and apply the brakes on the wheelchair before lowering the hoist.
☐ D. Lower the hoist to ground level correctly with one hand on the wheelchair and the other on the controller.
☐ E. Move the wheelchair off the hoist, position the wheelchair safely and apply the brakes.

9. To load a passenger using a wheelchair into a WAT with a ramp, the driver should:

[Identify the four correct responses]

☐ A. Ask permission to touch the wheelchair.
☐ B. Position the wheelchair safely out of the way of the ramp and apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
☐ C. Open the rear wheelchair entry door and unlock and position the ramp for safe loading.
☐ D. Push the wheelchair smoothly into the vehicle with both hands on the wheelchair.
☐ E. Unlock the front restraints using the lock switch and connect the two front restraints to one secure point on the wheelchair, after the wheelchair is in the vehicle.

10. You have arrived at your passenger’s destination in a busy part of the Melbourne CBD. Your passenger who uses a wheelchair says: “Can you please park in that space where the ‘No Stopping’ sign is right out the front of the building I am going to. It only takes a few minutes to get me out and I’ve done this a lot of times before.”

What should you do?

[Identify the correct response]

☐ A. Comply with their request. You can stop where there is a ‘No Stopping’ sign if you have a disabled passenger.
☐ B. Comply with their request. You can stop where there is a ‘No Stopping’ sign if you are only a few minutes and you remain with your vehicle.
☐ C. Find another place where you can park legally, even though it may be less convenient for the passenger.