

Minimum requirements for approval –

Transport (Buses, Taxi-Cabs and Other Commercial Passenger Vehicles) Regulations 2016

BACKGROUND

The *Transport (Buses, Taxi-Cabs and Other Commercial Passenger Vehicles) Regulations 2016* permit a taxi operator, owner or driver of a taxi-cab to fit inside a taxi-cab a driver protection screen approved by the licensing authority. Any driver protection screen must be fitted in a manner approved by the licensing authority.

1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This document sets out the minimum requirements to be met for a taxi driver protection screen to be approved for fitment in Victorian taxis.
- 1.2 An approved taxi driver protection screen will be a screen that is constructed of suitable material and designed to primarily restrict a seated driver being attacked from behind. At the same time, the screen must not present any hazard for the driver, passengers or any other road users. In this context, a screen must not hinder the driver's control of the vehicle and not adversely impact upon the comfort and safety of vehicle occupants.

2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 The screen design must facilitate easy installation and removal by the taxi operator or taxi driver.
- 2.2 The installation of a screen must not in any way inhibit access to, or the operation of, any driving controls and, subject to clause 3.4, must not restrict seat adjustment including forward or backward travel or seat height adjustment. In this context, screen designers/manufacturers will need to consider the range of seat adjustments available to accommodate both taller and shorter drivers.
- 2.3 Access to the driver's seat belt webbing and seat belt mechanism at the B-pillar by a person behind the driver's seat must, as much as is practicable, be prevented either by the screen or ancillary means, provided that the normal operation of the seat belt is maintained. Normal operation of the seat belt means that the angle at which the sash section of the seat belt webbing operates must not be altered by the presence of the screen and the seat belt must not be in contact with the screen or screen fittings throughout the range of available seat adjustments and seat belt height adjustments.
- 2.4 The screen must not present any hazard to the driver, the passengers or any other road user.

- 2.5 The screen may be constructed from one or more parts.
- 2.6 Screens made of or which include open wire mesh or metal mesh grills are not permitted.
- 2.7 The requirements set out in this document should not be interpreted as precluding the fitting of a screen which totally encloses the driver, subject to all the requirements in this document applicable to such a screen and all relevant Australian Design Rules (ADRs) relating to occupant protection being complied with.

3. SCREEN DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

Single seat screen

- 3.1 In the case of a screen designed to provide protection solely in respect of the driver's seating position, the screen must:
 - be located immediately behind the driver's seat
 - extend from the ceiling to at least the lowest point of the driver's seat back
 - extend from the off-side B-pillar to the longitudinal centreline of the vehicle
 - have a longitudinal return to provide side protection for drivers – the return (side partition) should be positioned between the front seats provided it does not compromise existing seating space for the driver and/or front seat passenger
 - at the intersection of the longitudinal and lateral panels of the screen, provide adequate curvature to ensure its compliance with relevant ADRs
 - not significantly restrict the opening and use of any centre console storage compartment in the vehicle beyond that necessary to maintain adequate protection to the driver.

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Wide screen

3.2 In the case of a screen designed to separate the front row of seats from the rear section of the vehicle, the screen must extend from the off-side door B-pillar to the near-side door B-pillar; and

on the driver's side:

- be located immediately behind the driver's seat
- extend from the ceiling to at least the lowest point of the driver's seat back
- extend from the off-side B-pillar to the longitudinal centreline of the vehicle

on the passenger side:

- cover the area behind the seat from the ceiling to the top of the front passenger seat back, when the seat base is set in its rearmost and lowest position, in that part of the vehicle which is between the near-side B-pillar and the longitudinal centreline of the vehicle.

If a wide screen is fitted in a van type taxi that has a solid panel behind the front seating positions as part of the vehicle construction, the driver protection screen must, either independently or in conjunction with the existing panel, provide an adequate level of protection.

Note: additional ADR testing may be required depending upon the design proposed for a pillar to pillar wide screen

All screens

3.3 The edge clearance between any screen and the ceiling when compressed and between the side of the screen and the door pillar including any upholstery when compressed, must be kept to a minimum.

3.3.1 Clause 2.3 requires that the normal operation of the seat belt must be maintained. However, the TSC will consider a variation to compliance with clause 3.3 where necessary to maintain normal seat belt operation. Nevertheless, screen design should keep any gap/s to the minimum necessary to allow normal operation of the seat belt.

3.4 The design of the screen should ensure there is adequate leg room for rear seat passengers, for example, by moulding the screen shape to match/correspond to the profile of the driver's seat.

4. AUSTRALIAN DESIGN RULES

4.1 The screen and its anchorages must not affect the vehicle's compliance with any relevant ADRs and must not interfere with or impede the operation of seat belts or vehicle airbags.

4.2 Compliance with relevant ADRs must be certified by an engineer who is a signatory to the Vehicle Assessment Signatory Scheme (VASS) administered by VicRoads. The engineer's assessment and certification report supported by the test results must be submitted with any application for approval of a particular taxi driver safety screen. Results must not be dated more than six months before the date the application is lodged. A list of VASS signatories can be obtained from the VicRoads website at: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au.

5. DRIVER'S VIEW

5.1 A screen or any item attached to it must not obstruct the driver's view of the interior or exterior of the vehicle such that the movements of any passenger cannot be easily seen. In particular, rearward vision through internal and external mirrors must be preserved.

5.2 Any material proposed for the screen, excluding attachment fittings, must be compliant with ADR 8/01 Safety Glazing Material Compilation 1 Appendix A – UNECE R43, Annex 14, RIGID PLASTIC GLAZINGS OTHER THAN WINDSCREENS, (material Class VIII/A), or equivalent.

6. SECURITY CAMERA OPERATION

6.1 The screen and its installation must not adversely interfere with the clarity of images recorded by any approved taxi security camera fitted, or required to be fitted, in a taxi.

7. COMMUNICATION AND PAYMENT PROVISION

7.1 Provision for oral communication between the driver and passengers and payment of the fare, including the exchange of cash and electronic payment transactions, shall be made within the screen design without compromising ADR compliance or the driver protection objectives in this document.

8. AIR-CONDITIONING/HEATING

8.1 The installation of a screen must not adversely affect the performance of the air-conditioning system to provide hot or cold air to vehicle occupants.