

Guidance on applying for a new SPSV licence

If you want to operate a vehicle as a taxi, hackney or limousine, you must have a small public service vehicle (SPSV) licence for that vehicle. These licences are issued by the National Transport Authority to applicants who meet certain conditions and whose vehicles meet the required standards. All vehicle requirements are detailed in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual, available at www.nationaltransport.ie

The NTA is currently accepting applications for SPSV licences for the following categories of vehicle only:

Wheelchair Accessible Taxi	Wheelchair Accessible Hackney	Limousine	Local Area Hackney
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The local area hackney licence is a very specific licence relating to a small local area of operation only. Please use Form LAH1 and see the companion note, Guide for Obtaining a Local Area Hackney licence.

IMPORTANT: Do not purchase a vehicle for use as an SPSV unless you are sure that it will meet the required standards. Please read the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual carefully before purchasing any vehicle. Before purchasing a vehicle for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle licence, you must ensure the vehicle meets certain standards; this can be verified by a qualified Technical Assessor. Please note this includes test proof. A vehicle that was previously licensed as a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle may not meet current requirements.

What will you need

There are three stages in applying for and obtaining a licence for an SPSV.

Stage	You will need
Initial Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A vehicle that is suitable and properly equipped for operation as an SPSV in the category for which you are applying; ▪ A completed Form VL1. You must include proof of address which can be a copy of a utility bill, bank statement or driver's licence dated within the last 6 months; ▪ For modified vehicles the relevant Technical Assessor's Report; and ▪ The appropriate fee.
Booking your Initial Suitability Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Conditional Offer letter from NTA ▪ An NCT Roadworthiness Certificate for the vehicle ▪ An insurance policy covering the use of the vehicle as a Small Public Service Vehicle ▪ A valid electronic tax clearance certificate
Initial Suitability Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details. ▪ <i>If you are applying for a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi licence:</i> a regulation roof sign a taximeter, printer and regulation Taxi door branding

Vehicle requirements for Limousines

- **Age:** No age limit currently applies to limousines.
- **Vehicle Type:** It must be obviously suited to ceremonial, corporate or other prestigious purposes and be in excellent condition. The NTA has produced an example list to assist, please see the website for details.
- **Modified Vehicles:** Some vehicles will be "modified vehicles" (e.g. stretched cars and kit (historic replica) cars. A Technical Assessor's Basic Report is required: please contact the NTA for guidance.
- **Tinted windows:** Apart from the front windscreen and front door side windows tinted glass is permitted.
- **Advertising:** No advertising is permitted on limousines.
- **Roadworthiness:** An NCT roadworthiness certificate issued for the vehicle no more than 90 days before the date of the Initial Suitability Inspection. (Note: An NCT certificate is not required for a vehicle that is less than 90 days old **and** that has travelled less than 3,000 kilometres.)
- **Suitability:** The vehicle must meet the requirements for operation as an SPSV in the category specified on the licence application. The Initial Suitability Inspection Manual, which is available on NTA's website, gives details of the items that are inspected to verify the vehicle's suitability.
- **All vehicles** must have the required safety equipment: the relevant specifications are in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual.

Vehicle Requirements for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

All wheelchair accessible vehicles are modified vehicles, and all applications must include a Technical Assessor's Full Report complete with formal test proof.

In making their assessment of the vehicle, the Assessor will inspect some items and will rely on formal test data for others. **Without this relevant documentation, the Assessor will be unable to certify the vehicle.**

Such test proof can only be obtained from the firm that converted the vehicle originally: it is not possible to perform these (destructive) tests afterwards.

A vehicle with EC Type Approval as a Special Purpose Accessible Vehicle, as evidenced by a recognised second stage chassis plate (in addition to the original base vehicle plate) will meet the structural proof requirements. **You must still check the size of the wheelchair space etc.**

The Technical Assessor's full Report must be on the official template, see website. The qualifications required by the Assessor are on this template. This Report is not simply a visual inspection.

- **Age:** A wheelchair accessible taxi or wheelchair accessible hackney must be less than 6 years of age at first licensing.
- **Vehicle Type:** The vehicle must accommodate a person travelling in their wheelchair plus one other passenger, and, must accommodate at least three adult passengers when there is no passenger travelling in a wheelchair.
- **Tinted windows:** Vehicles are not permitted to have dark windows adjacent to a licensed seating position or a wheelchair space. Dark means less than 70% light transmission. See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details of how to check this
- **Roadworthiness:** An NCT roadworthiness certificate issued for the vehicle no more than 90 days before the date of the Initial Suitability Inspection. (Note: An NCT certificate is not required for a vehicle that is less than 90 days old **and** that has travelled less than 3,000 kilometres.)
- **Suitability:** The vehicle must meet the requirements for operation as an SPSV in the category specified on the licence application. The Initial Suitability Inspection Manual, which is available on the NTA's website, gives details of the items that are inspected to verify the vehicle's suitability.
- **Wheelchair accessible taxis** must have a regulation roof sign and a taximeter connected to a printer. These can be installed only after you have received a Conditional Offer from the NTA – see below. Note that the taximeter cannot be verified before the Initial Suitability Inspection is passed.
- **All vehicles** must have the required safety equipment: the relevant specifications are in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual.

Requirements Summary:

Criteria	Main requirements (For details and other requirements, see the <i>Initial Suitability Inspection Manual</i> .)	Documentary evidence required
Seat belts	EC approval markings or labels ('e' or 'E' marking).	Y
Wheelchair occupant seat belts	Approval markings or labels (usually ISO standard or 'e' or 'E' marking.)	Y
Wheelchair restraint (tie-down)	Approval markings or labels (usually ISO, or DIN, or FMVSS/SAE standard.)	Y
Seatbelt anchorages	Strength test reports (usually seat belt to seat connection, based on Directive 76/115 EEC, as amended).	Y
In-vehicle* wheelchair and wheelchair occupant restraint	Strength test report.	Y
In-vehicle* seat and seat belt anchorages	Strength test report (for seat-to-floor connection, usually based on Directive 76/115 EEC, as amended).	Y

Wheelchair Space	Minimum of 700mm width, 1,200mm length, and 1,350mm headroom in vicinity of wheelchair during turning and restraining.	N
Doors	Minimum one wheelchair accessible door, at least 745mm x 1,250mm, and one other door to passenger compartment.	N
External step at nearside door	If floor or integral step of passenger compartment is more than 230mm from the ground, where the door opening is bigger than 1,150mm then an access step is required. Minimum dimensions and other requirements are specified in the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual.	N
Continuous surface access ramp	Maximum slope of ramp 16° capable of supporting 300kg. If detachable, it must be suitable for handling, securely fixed when in use, safely stored when not in use, and permanently marked with the vehicle registration number	N
Seat height and legroom	Specified minimum and maximum for seat height, width and clearance. See Initial Suitability Inspection Manual for details.	N
Internal and entrance lighting	Adequate targeted or localised lighting is required at entrance steps, signage and floor areas and money slots in any dividing	N
Window glass adjacent to licensed seating positions and wheelchair spaces	Must be clear, min. 70% light transmission (no dark tints). The Roman numeral 'V' marking next to the glass approval number means the glass is too dark. See the Initial Suitability Inspection Manual.	N
Handholds	Must be provided in the vicinity of the doors, steps and central pathways. Must be in a colour that contrasts with adjacent surfaces, and approximately circular in cross-section and 35mm in diameter.	N
User Manual	Must cover the vehicle and any specialist equipment in it.	Y
Age	A Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle must be less than 6 years of age at first licensing.	N
Roadworthiness	An NCT roadworthiness certificate issued for the vehicle no more than 90 days before the date of the Initial Suitability Inspection. (Note: An NCT certificate is not required for a vehicle that is less than 90 days old and that has travelled less than 3,000 kilometres)	Y

*'In vehicle' tests are destructive tests – they cannot be performed retrospectively. They must have been performed on the same type of bodyshell and the results properly documented and certified. The suppliers of a flooring system **may** be able to provide the required test data.

Completing the VL1 Form

Form VL1 – Application for a new Small Public Service Vehicle licence is available from the NTA, it can be downloaded from www.nationaltransport.ie. Please follow the below steps to complete the form.

Section 1	Fill in your name and contact details. If you are applying as an individual, you must provide a PPSN. If you are applying in a company name you must provide the following: Company name, a tax reference number and a company number.
Section 2	Tick the box associated with the type of licence for which you are applying, and write in the total fee that you are enclosing with your application (see below).
Section 3	Fill in the vehicle registration number and tick the Yes/No boxes to indicate the type of licence you are applying for. Note that an application cannot be considered unless the Irish vehicle registration

	is provided here. If you are applying for a wheelchair accessible vehicle licence, or for a limousine licence in respect of a modified vehicle, tick the box to confirm that you have the relevant Technical Assessor's Report (and supporting test data where required).
Section 4	If the licence is for a wheelchair accessible vehicle, then you need to fill in the operational details here. They will be confirmed when you book the Initial Suitability Inspection, and you can of course update them thereafter.
Section 5	Read the Terms and Conditions set out in Section 5, sign and date the declaration to confirm that you understand and accept them.
Section 6	Tick the box to confirm how you wish to pay .

The fees payable are as follows:

Licence type	Licence fee	Initial Suitability Inspection fee	Total payable
Limousine	€1,000	€45	€1,045
Wheelchair Accessible Taxi	€125	€45	€170
Wheelchair Accessible Hackney	€125	€45	€170

You have two options for how to pay

Submit the form along with the fee (and relevant Technical Assessor's Report with test data where required) to:

SPSV Licensing Section
PO Box 436
City North Business Park
Tuam Road
Galway

OR if you tick the card payment method box on the VL1 form, you will be contacted by an advisor to take payment over the phone.

Your Conditional Offer

The NTA will process your application and respond in 10 working days. If the application is successful, the NTA sends you a conditional offer letter. The conditional offer is valid for 90 days, during which you must complete the remaining steps in the licensing process. The conditional offer provides a provisional licence number enabling the programming of a taximeter and manufacture of a roof sign (wheelchair accessible taxi) and arrangement of insurance for reward.

Documents Required to Complete the Licensing Process

NCT

Using your vehicle registration number, the NTA will check your NCT result directly with the Department of Transport at time of booking. You should allow a minimum of 48 hours for the Department's records to be updated.

To book an NCT roadworthiness test, call the NCTS SPSV booking line on 01 413 5960.

Insurance

It is the responsibility of the vehicle licence holder to obtain insurance for the vehicle. You must obtain insurance for the vehicle that covers its use as a small public service vehicle and the policy must be in your name (i.e. the policyholder name must match that on the licence application). The NTA will validate your **original** insurance certificate at the Initial Suitability Inspection. If the policy is a fleet policy then the Schedule showing the relevant vehicle is also required.

Proof of Ownership

Evidence of vehicle ownership or evidence of legal entitlement to use of the vehicle for a period of not less than 12 months will be required at the Initial Suitability Inspection and Licence Renewal Inspections for all SPSV vehicle licence categories. Original vehicle registration certificates (VRC – still commonly referred to as the logbook) will be recorded as part of all SPSV suitability inspections in the same way as insurance certificates. Where a VRC is

presented the name on the VRC must match the name on the SPSV licence.

Alternatively, where a vehicle is held under a hire purchase or lease agreement, NTA will accept written confirmation on letterhead paper from the registered owner of the vehicle stating the SPSV licence holder is legally entitled to the use and possession of the vehicle for a period of not less than 12 months.

Tax clearance - Individual

An electronic tax clearance certificate must be maintained with Revenue at all times. Using your PPSN, the NTA will check your tax status online with Revenue at the time of booking your appointment. You should allow a minimum of 48 hours for Revenue's records to be updated. The name on your licence application and the name on the electronic tax clearance certificate must match exactly. If the name on the electronic tax clearance certificate is not the same as that on the licence, you should contact the Revenue Commissioners.

Name on licence application	Name on documents	Suitable for licensing?
James Murphy	Jim Murphy	No
	James Murphy Jnr	No
	James J. Murphy	No
	James Murphy	Yes

Tax clearance - Company

An electronic tax clearance certificate must be maintained with Revenue at all times. Using your Tax Reference Number (TRN), the NTA will check your tax status online with Revenue at the time of booking your appointment. A TRN consists of seven digits followed by 1-2 letters. The name on your licence application and the name on the electronic tax certificate must match exactly.

Name on licence application	Name on documents	Suitable for licensing?
James Murphy and Sons Limited	James Murphy & Sons Limited	No
	James Murphy and Sons Ltd	No
	James- Murphy and Sons Limited	No
	James Murphy and Sons Limited	Yes

Application in Company name

If you are applying for a vehicle licence in the name of a company, the company must be registered with the Company Records Office (CRO) and you must provide a company number, also referred to as a company registration number. This number will be provided to you by the CRO upon registration. The NTA will use this number to verify that the company is registered before processing your application. If the NTA cannot verify that a company is registered with the CRO, it reserves the right to reject the application for a new vehicle licence. When making any licence booking related calls, or changing any details on file, the company director(s) will be required to undertake this role.

Booking your Initial Suitability Inspection

Book your Suitability Inspection by calling 0818 064 000.

What you need when making a booking

Security Questions	Security questions will be asked for on all booking a licence related calls. These will involve standard identification questions such as name, address, telephone number, date of birth and PPSN. This identification will be taken from the details you provided on your VL1 application form.
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Tax Clearance	You do not need to provide any additional information regarding your tax clearance when booking but you should keep your PPSN/TRN at hand in order to confirm this when requested.
VRC	You should keep your vehicle registration certificate at hand in case it is required.
Vehicle ownership	To obtain a vehicle licence, you must own the vehicle to be associated to the licence or hold the vehicle under a lease agreement or a hire-purchase agreement. You will be asked to declare vehicle ownership status at time of booking.
Insurance	You will need your insurance expiry date and be able to declare that you are insured to operate an SPSV. Your insurance information may be shared with Insurance Federation of Ireland and your insurance disc will be inspected as part of your Initial Suitability Inspection. If your disc is out of date on the day of your inspection, your vehicle will fail its inspection. It is the responsibility of the vehicle licence holder to provide insurance for the vehicle. Your name on your insurance should match your name on your licence.
WAV register update	You must confirm the following when booking your inspection appointment. Times of operation Areas of operation Drivers This information will be published in the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Register.

Roof sign, taximeter, printer and door signage (Wheelchair Accessible Taxi only)

- Both front doors must be fitted with the regulation taxi door signage, obtainable only from an Authorised Supplier (see website for details). You need to have your Initial Suitability Inspection booked before the Authorised Supplier can undertake the door signage installation.
- Until you have received the Conditional Offer Number you will not be able to obtain a roof sign or programme the taximeter.

Requirements for your Initial Suitability Inspection

When you present the vehicle for the Initial Suitability Inspection, you must bring with you:

- A copy of the User Manual in respect of a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- Where relevant a copy of Assessor's Report/test data; and
- Your original insurance certificate and, if a fleet policy, the Schedule listing the vehicle by registration number.

Operating the Vehicle as an SPSV

If your vehicle passes the Initial Suitability Inspection and the documentation is in order, the Licensing Inspector records the details on the Register of Licensed SPSVs and applies tamper-proof discs to the front and rear windows of the vehicle. You will be issued a licence certificate for the vehicle.

The vehicle may then be operated as an SPSV in the category to which the licence applies.

Operating an SPSV without a current licence and valid tamper-proof licence discs could result in a fine of up to €5,000.

For further information please visit www.nationaltransport.ie or call 0818 064 000