

FAQs on Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs)

RSA

What is a small public service vehicle (SPSV)? It is a '*small public service vehicle*' that can carry up to eight passengers and is used for hire or reward e.g. taxis, hackneys, wheelchair accessible taxis and wheelchair accessible hackneys and limousines.

Do I need a special licence to drive and operate an SPSV? Yes. Both the vehicle and the driver need a licence. You will need to contact the National Transport Authority ([NTA](#)) for more information.

How are taxis and other SPSVs regulated in Ireland? Under the [Taxi Regulation Act 2013](#), the NTA is the regulator of all SPSVs in Ireland.

Is an NCT required? Yes. SPSVs under 10 years of age must be tested every year and those 10 years or older must be tested every six months. The NTA cannot grant an SPSV licence without a valid NCT certificate less than 90 days old. A vehicle under three months of age that has travelled less than 3,000 km does not need an NCT. See NTA [website](#) for more information.

What is the difference between NCT and Suitability Test?

- The NCT is a basic check on the roadworthiness of the vehicle.
- The Suitability Test examines whether the SPSV is suitable to carry passengers e.g., if it is clean, a suitable size to carry passengers, all the relevant passenger information displayed etc.

Is a taxi driver responsible for ensuring that passengers wear seat belts? The [seatbelt regulations](#) state that a driver is responsible for ensuring that people under the age of 17 wear their seat belt. Anyone over this age is responsible for their own safety and commit an offence if they refuse to wear a seat belt where one is fitted and operating properly.

Are child restraint systems required in taxis? No. There is no legal requirement for SPSVs to carry child car seats.

Is a first aid kit required in taxis? Yes. Under [S.I. No. 190 of 1963](#) of Road Traffic Construction, Equipment and Use Regulations 1963 are required to carry a number of pieces of safety equipment. See *Forms and Guides* in Initial Suitability Inspection [Manual](#) on NTA website for further details.

Is a fire extinguisher required on SPSV's? Yes. It is a requirement under Article 79 of [S. I. No. 190 of 1963](#) of Road Traffic Construction, Equipment and Use Regulations 1963.

Are dark windows permissible in taxis? General road traffic law requires that the front windscreen and front door side glass is *clear*. For limousines the remaining glass may be dark. All other SPSV windows next to a passenger must be clear i.e. allow at least 70% light transmission. See *Forms and Guides* in Initial Suitability Inspection [Manual](#).

Safety of wheelchair accessible ramps on taxis. Wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys are SPSVs that are able to carry a person travelling in their wheelchair. Strict standards are in place in relation to the specialist equipment, the structural integrity and the space provided. Prior to licensing all vehicles must be certified by a qualified technical assessor. For more information see *Forms and Guides* in Initial Suitability Inspection [Manual](#).

Is advertising in taxis permissible? There are restrictions on advertising permitted on all types of SPSV vehicles:

- It is illegal to have any inessential object on a vehicle that is in a position where it is likely to strike any person in the event of a collision and cause injury.
- If the driver's view of the road and other traffic either to the front or side of the vehicle is limited or distorted by advertising signage that prevents them from driving safely then this is also illegal and should be removed.

See Initial Suitability Inspection [Manual](#) for further information.

What is the law on having stickers or advertising in your taxi? From a road safety perspective if the taxi driver's view of the road and other traffic either to the front or side of the vehicle is limited or distorted by an object e.g. sticker, signage etc. that prevents them from driving safely then this is illegal and should be removed.

Does an SPSV need to have a full size spare tyre? No. SPSVs are required to be fitted with whatever system the manufacturer originally supplied e.g. a spare wheel or tyre, a space saver or an inflation sealant kit.

Do all four tyres on an SPSV have to be the same? The same law applies as private cars. Under testing laws, a vehicle will fail a roadworthiness test if the two tyres on the one axle are not the same size or type e.g. radial vs. cross-ply, run-flat, winter or summer. For best performance it is recommended to fit the same type of tyre in all four wheel positions. For testing methods see NCT [Manual](#).