

Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

Land Transport Safety Division

Vehicle Operations Branch

Taxi and Luxury Hire Car Newsletter

Issue 62–January 2012

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Annual administration fees for taxi and luxury hire car licences

Taxi licences:

The Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) has recently undertaken a re-assessment of the annual administration fees, prompted by developments in the industry (e.g. additional licences on issue in some taxi areas) since the current fee system was introduced for the 2009 year. This process has determined that the level of all fees should be reduced, in order to ensure that the revenue generated by the fees continues to align with the cost of the administration and compliance activities undertaken by DIER. This re-assessment of the fees has resulted in a drop in the fee of about 13 per cent from the amount requested last year.

Fees for licences operating in respective taxi areas for 2012-13 are:

Hobart and Launceston - \$613.20

Devonport/Ulverstone/Burnie/West Tamar/Perth/George Town/New Norfolk - \$462.00

All other areas - \$254.80

Luxury Hire Car licences

In addition to the review of annual fees applicable to taxi licences, the fees for Luxury Hire Car licences have also been specifically re-assessed in regard to their suitability relative to those which apply to Hobart and Launceston taxi licences. As a result of this re-assessment, it has been determined that the fees for all luxury hire car licences should be lowered even further. This re-assessment of the fees has resulted in a drop in the fee for Luxury Hire Car licences of about 49 per cent from the amount requested last year, which contrasts with the reduction for all taxi licences of approximately 13 per cent.

This substantial fee reduction is intended to acknowledge that, in comparison to taxis, luxury hire cars generally draw upon a far lower enforcement and administrative effort by the Transport Commission, which is due in part to the seasonal or intermittent nature of luxury hire car patronage.

The Commission is of the view that there is evidence to support the setting of an annual fee that is significantly lower than that applying to Hobart and Launceston taxi licences. In previous years the fees for both Hobart and Launceston taxi licences, and Luxury Hire Car licences, were identical.

The annual administration fee for Luxury Hire Car licences for 2012-13 is \$358.40.

Notices concerning the fees for all licences will be posted to licence owners in early February. As with previous years, the fee for each licence is due on 1 April 2012.

Taxi fare review

As previously advised, the Tasmanian Economic Regulator (TER) will be conducting an inquiry into taxi fares. The inquiry will look at the methodology for the setting and indexing of taxi fares within the existing regulatory regime. That is, the TER will not be considering some of the broader issues that were initially expected to be part of the fare review. The way in which this Inquiry will be conducted will be determined by the TER, but the TER is expected to be reviewing DIER's Taxi Cost Model and undertaking consultation with the taxi industry.

The latest advice from the TER is that the Inquiry will commence in mid-2012.

Prior to the TER's work commencing, DIER will examine the tariffs that apply to wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs) and the subsidies that WAT users receive. At present, wheelchair-reliant passengers travelling in WATs pay higher tariffs (Tariffs 3 and 4) than people who are not wheelchair-reliant (Tariffs 1 and 2). Passengers are compensated for the higher fares by higher subsidies paid through the Transport Access Scheme (TAS).

There are concerns that these arrangements breach anti-discrimination legislation and, as a result, the Government has asked DIER to review the arrangements for WAT fares and TAS subsidies. As part of this work, DIER will also be looking at the high occupancy tariff (Tariff 4) that WATs are able to charge when carrying more than four passengers.

There are several ways in which the potential discrimination with the existing arrangements might be addressed. DIER will be consulting with WAT users, operators and drivers about the options. A short paper outlining the issues and options being considered is available on DIER's website at;

http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/73249/Consultation_Paper_for_WAT_Fares_December_2011.pdf

Members of the taxi industry are free to provide comments to DIER about this issue. This paper also identifies some of the aspects of the high occupancy tariff that warrant review, and stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on this matter too.

If you would like further information on what is being considered, please contact Barb Dunford on 6233 2865 or David Hope on 6233 3785, or email taxi.policy@dier.tas.gov.au

Taxi security camera systems – new model approved

Regulations to provide for an additional camera system to be used have been finalised. The new system is the Cabwatch G60 as manufactured by Mobile Witness Pty Ltd.

Enquiries regarding the Cabwatch G60 should be directed to

Nick Lycett - Combined Communications

PH: 02 9911 8412

Email: nick.lycett@combinedcommunications.com.au

Currently Mobile Witness has an agent operating in the Hobart taxi area only. Taxi operators from other Tasmanian taxi areas with an interest in the Cabwatch G60 system should contact Mobile Witness/Combined Communications to express their interest and determine Mobile Witness' intentions regarding the establishment of an agent in, or near to, their particular taxi area.

Agents for respective camera models are listed on the Transport web site at:

http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/operator_information

Previous Newsletters

These may be viewed on the DIER website, at the following link;

http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/publications/taxi_and_luxury_hire_car_newsletter2

This newsletter is also sent to all radio networks and taxi fleet managers, who will make copies available on request. Please make the Newsletter available to drivers.

NOTE: DIER issues this Newsletter to operators by email ONLY, as it is easier, cheaper and quicker to do so. If you change your email address, please advise Phil or Alan as under.

DIER Contacts



Vehicle Operations Branch

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Transport Operator Accreditation

Jeremy Gleeson (Manager) – 6233 5198

Phil Harvey - 6233 5376

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Operators should note that queries on all general operational and housekeeping matters should be directed to Phil.

E-mail:

Phil.harvey@dier.tas.gov.au

Vehicle Standards and vehicle technical matters;

6233 5214 or 6233 5314

Driver licence and ancillary certificate queries;

6233 5195

Regional Managers – Transport Compliance

South – Mark Kramer – 6233 5280

North – Pat Quarrell– 6336 2696

North-West – Harry Marshall – 6434 6486