

New National Maximum Taxi Fare Introduced Nationwide

Entire Country Declared One Taximeter Area

24th September 2006



Tomorrow (September 25th) will see a new era in the taxi service industry as the Commission for Taxi Regulation introduces a new National Maximum Taxi Fare. The new system will see the entire country become one taximeter area and a new National Maximum Fare will apply. From tomorrow passengers will have the right to have all their taxi journeys charged on the meter.

The new structure will remove the complex fare structures and diverse elements previously in place around the country, which were set by each local authority; initial charges were found to range from €2.40 to €6.00. Customers will now know how their fare is being calculated, no matter where they are in the country. The National Taximeter Area will remove the problems associated with 'off meter' fares, it will also enable a supply of taxis available for hire in areas that were previously outside taximeter areas.

Commissioner Ger Deering commented "Having consulted widely on the issue, we believe it is in the best interest of consumers and suppliers that all areas should have the potential to have a taxi service, and that fare control should be extended to all taxi fares. A more simple and more transparent fare system will make it easier for people using the service to understand how fares are calculated and will ensure that taxi operators are rewarded in a way that reflects their cost base."

The fare will consist of an initial-charge followed by a distance or time related charge, depending on the speed the vehicle is moving. There will also be a premium charge at night, Sundays and Bank Holidays as well as some extras applying for additional passengers and pre-booking a taxi. Extra charges applying to luggage and other miscellaneous charges including a charge for hiring at the rank at Dublin Airport and charges for extra stops will no longer apply.

The Commissioner added, "It is important to note that this is a maximum fare. Whilst any driver has the right to charge the **maximum** amount calculated on the meter they may also charge a lesser sum at their discretion."

In conjunction with the new fare, the country has now become one taximeter area. Previously, taxis were required to charge passengers on the basis of a fare set by the local authority in the relevant taximeter area but were not obliged to use their meters outside these areas and were prohibited from plying or standing for hire outside those areas.

Ger Deering commented, "A national taximeter area removes the restrictions placed by these antiquated boundaries. Taxi drivers continue to be restricted to plying for hire or standing for hire in the area for which their SPSV driver's licence is issued but will have greater opportunities to work within those areas. It also provides for all fares to be charged on the meter using the new national maximum taxi fare."

Finally, Ger Deering commented, "September 25th represents another step towards achieving our mission of a first class, professional, efficient, safe and accessible, customer-friendly service. It is the Commission's belief that that the new structures will work to the benefit of all parties. Notwithstanding this, the Commission will be constantly reviewing the new national maximum fare and regulatory structure. This will be given the fullest consideration in consultation with the Advisory Council and all stakeholders and interested parties."

Other changes being introduced on September 25th are a more accessible complaints system for consumers and access to more information within the vehicle. Consumer information displays in all taxis and hackneys are being introduced and from now on SPSVs will have to display customer rights and responsibilities as well as the new national maximum taxi fare chart, showing all tariffs and charges.

A final compliance date for operating the new fare structure and displaying the in-vehicle information is set at October 16th.

The Commission is also set to launch a major awareness programme to ensure that customers and service suppliers know all about the new fare and these other imminent changes. This will include national radio, television and newspaper advertising. A new consumer information line - **1890 60 60 90** has also been launched, the line will operate from Monday to Friday 8am-8pm.

Ends

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Notes for Editors

How the National Maximum Taxi Fare works

The fare structure underpinning the National Maximum Taxi Fare consists of:

- An initial charge
- A charge for further travel based on either distance travelled or the time elapsed and calculated across three graduated tariffs
- A premium at certain times and on certain days
- Extra charges, where applicable

NATIONAL MAXIMUM TAXI FARE effective from 25th September 2006

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Taxi Fare Standard Rate 08.00h to 20.00h		Taxi Fare Premium Rate 20.00h to 08.00h & Sundays / public holidays	
<i>Distance rate applies unless speed drops below 21km/h when time rate applies</i>			
INITIAL CHARGE First 1km or 170 seconds	€3.80 Fixed	INITIAL CHARGE First 1km or 170 seconds	€4.10 Fixed
TARIFF A Next 14km or 40min Up to €17.20	€0.95 per km Or €0.34 per min	TARIFF A Next 14km or 40min Up to €21.70	€1.25 per km Or €0.44 per min
TARIFF B Next 15km or 43min Up to €36.00	€1.25 per km Or €0.44 per min	TARIFF B Next 15km or 43min Up to €43.50	€1.45 per km Or €0.51 per min
TARIFF C Over 30km or 86min Over €36.00	€1.63 per km Or €0.58 per min	TARIFF C Over 30km or 86min Over €43.50	€1.63 per km Or €0.58 per min
EXTRA CHARGES (where relevant) Booking fee €2.00 Second & additional passengers €1.00 each (two children under twelve equal one adult)		Road toll charges as applicable Soiling charge €125.00	
Tips at customer's discretion		Discounts at driver's discretion	

Second & additional passengers €1.00 each (two children under twelve equal one adult)

Initial charge

The initial charge (known to date as the minimum charge) is the amount that appears on the meter at the beginning of the journey. This is €3.80 and includes an initial distance of one kilometre or a period of 170 seconds.

Further travel

After the distance or time that is included in the initial charge has been exceeded, the fare for further travel is calculated at small portions of the journey. At low speeds, or when a taxi is stationary, the fare is calculated on the basis of time. Once the taxi exceeds a certain speed, the fare is then calculated according to the distance travelled. The speed at which charges switch from being distance-related to being time-related is known as the changeover speed. It is important that the changeover speed is set at the appropriate level to compensate the driver for operating at times of congestion, or for delays encountered on request of the passenger. However, the changeover speed should not be so low as to encourage unnecessary slowing of the vehicle to generate a higher fare. The changeover speed for the National Maximum Taxi Fare is just above 21 km/h.

The time-related rate for further travel applies at speeds below the changeover speed, this charge is uniform throughout the country, and is based on a graduated structure of three tariffs. Journeys that travel beyond the initial time or distance covered by the initial charge and that are short in distance and duration are subject to Tariff A, the lowest rate. For medium length journeys, the latter stages of the trip are charged at a higher rate: Tariff B. Very long journeys will have the end of the trip charged at Tariff C, the highest rate.

The reason for the graduated fare structure is that a driver is more likely to return empty after completing a long journey as such trips often end in suburban or rural locations.

Tariffs

From 8.00h to 20.00h, the rates for Tariff A are €0.95 per km and €0.34 per minute for the next 14km or 40 minutes after the initial charge. At premium rates, travel within Tariff A is €1.25 per km or €0.44 per minute. This tariff together with the initial charge should not cost more than €17.20 (or €21.70 at premium rates) or exceed either 15km or 43 minutes.

When the initial charge and Tariff A are exceeded, the meter will record further travel on Tariff B. From 8.00h to 20.00h, the rates for Tariff B are €1.25 per km and €0.44 per minute. At premium rates, travel within Tariff B is €1.45 per km or €0.51 per minute. This tariff together with the initial charge and charges under Tariff A should not cost more than €36.00 (or €43.50 at premium rates) or exceed either 30km or 86 minutes.

Longer journeys in excess of Tariff B will be charged on the basis of the rates in Tariff C. Tariff C is not subject to any premium during unsocial hours, and is calculated on the basis of €1.63 per km or €0.58 per minute at all times.

It would not be reasonable or safe to expect taxi drivers to undertake journeys of unlimited distance, and as the current right to refuse a journey outside of existing taximeter areas will no longer apply, the Commission for Taxi Regulation will introduce new regulations giving taxi drivers the right to refuse journeys over 30km from the pick up point

Premium charge

A premium applies to taxi fares at certain times to encourage supply. These are generally known as unsocial hours rates and apply in particular to taxi operation at night and throughout the day on Sundays and public holidays. The Commission for Taxi Regulation has standardised the premium rate across as part of the National Maximum Taxi Fare. A premium of 8% will apply to the initial charge between 20.00h and 8.00h and on Sundays and public holidays. Further travel within Tariff A will incur a premium rate of 32% and within Tariff B a premium rate of 16%. No premium will apply to Tariff C.

Extras

Booking charge

When a taxi is booked by telephone, email, fax, text, (or any method other than by hailing in the street or engaging at a taxi rank), taxi drivers will be permitted to charge a maximum of €2.00 for such journeys. This charge will not apply to taxis hailed on the street or engaged at taxi ranks or at transport terminals.

Extra passenger charge

An additional charge of €1.00 may be charged by taxi drivers for each additional passenger. Two children under twelve will be charged as one adult.

Road toll charges

Where a road toll charge is necessarily incurred on a trip, the exact cost of the toll may be added to the taxi fare. Any tolls charged must be recorded in handwriting on the receipt printed by the printer attached to the taximeter.

Tips

Customers may give tips to reward good service at their discretion. Tips may be recorded in handwriting on the receipt.

Discounts

Drivers may give discounts on fares. The driver has the right to charge the maximum amount calculated on the meter or a lesser sum at his or her discretion. Customers have the right to request discounts before engaging the taxi. Any discounts given may be recorded in handwriting on the receipt. In the absence of any arrangement on discounts agreed in advance, the customer is liable to pay the amount calculated by the meter in full.

Soiling charge

A soiling charge is payable by passengers who dirty or damage a taxi to the extent that it has to be taken out of service or will incur a cost to clean or repair. Such soiling or damage can incur significant costs for drivers or operators and a loss of earnings due to downtime. To discourage such soiling and compensate drivers or operators a soiling charge of €125 applies as part of the National Maximum Taxi Fare.

Extras that are no longer charged

Luggage

The Commission for Taxi Regulation is of the view that the carrying of luggage is an integral part of an SPSV service and should be reflected in the basic charge. In addition there is now a significant diversity in the type of bags and goods carried by passengers, which lead to

disputes in relation to the interpretation of what constitutes luggage. In the interest of transparency and simplicity no additional charge will be permitted for any type of luggage or mobility aids as part of the new National Maximum Taxi Fare from September 25th 2006.

Animals

The carrying of animals will be at the discretion of the driver but no charge will apply where animals are carried. The driver will not have the right to refuse to carry an assistance (guide) dog unless on certified medical grounds.

Miscellaneous charges

Charges, which previously applied in some areas, including charges for extra stops, and charges for hiring at the rank at Dublin Airport are not permitted under the new National Maximum Taxi Fare.

Receipt details

A taxi receipt printed by the printer attached to the meter (not handwritten) must be given to all customers. This should include details of the vehicle licence number, the distance of the journey undertaken, the amount paid, the date and duration of journey.

Display of Fare information

All licensed taxis are obliged to display passenger information including rights and responsibilities and fare information, which will be supplied by the Commission for Taxi Regulation, in the front and back of the vehicle.

Customer Waiver of Rights

When a journey or series of journeys are pre-booked customers may waive their right to have the fare charged on the meter. In this situation both the driver and the passenger must sign a prior written agreement. All journeys commencing at a taxi rank, transport terminal or hailed on the street must be charged on the meter according to the new National Maximum Taxi Fare.