



Northern
Territory
Government

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

NORTHERN TERRITORY

TAXI

DRIVERS AND OPERATORS

CODE OF CONDUCT

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INTRODUCTION

What is the Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines designed to set minimum taxi industry protocol and standards of customer service.

These are service standards that can be improved upon by licensed operators, drivers and communications networks as they seek to differentiate themselves from other competitors in the commercial passenger vehicle industry. To do this the Northern Territory Taxi Industry is expected to maintain high standards and provide a high quality of service to the hirer.

The impression visitors often gain of the Northern Territory can be influenced by the quality of service received from the driver of a commercial passenger vehicle.

Why have a Code?

This Code of Conduct has been developed through consultation between the Taxi Industry and the Road Transport Division of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and other user groups. The Code of Conduct is designed to advise drivers and operators of their responsibilities and obligations to comply with the applicable legislation.

This Code of Conduct is also available to members of the general public to advise them of the minimum standard of service they can expect from the taxi industry.

Taxi drivers are expected to be professional in their approach to the industry and to drive **SAFELY AND DEFENSIVELY** in all weather and traffic conditions.

It is in the interest of owners and operators to provide professional training for all drivers to ensure a high quality of service is provided to all customers. It is essential that operators and drivers are aware of the legislative requirements applicable to their industry and that they manage any taxi operation in accordance with these requirements.

In addition to this Code of Conduct, drivers and operators are required to comply with all the conditions set out in the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Licence (CPVL).

What status does the Code have?

The Director, Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport, pursuant to section 72(1) of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*, has approved this Code of Conduct. Drivers and operators of a taxi are required to comply with this Code of Conduct when carrying passengers for hire or reward. Contravention of this Code of Conduct when carrying passengers for hire or reward, may result in fines (up to \$2000) and possible restrictions of the taxi operation.

Other relevant legislation is, but not restricted to:

- *Motor Vehicles Act*
- *Traffic Regulations*
- *Taxi Regulations*
- *Commercial Passenger (Miscellaneous) Regulations*
- *Hire Car Regulations*

Copies of the relevant Acts and Regulations are available at the Government Printing Office in Darwin and the Town Library in Alice Springs. The Code of Conduct is available from all Motor Vehicle Registry Offices in the Northern Territory.

Passenger Expectations

Conditions relating to the carriage of passengers

Passengers travelling in a taxi expect the operator and driver to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner and to comply with all the relevant legislation. Passengers expect a high level of service in accordance with the appropriate standards prescribed in this Code of Conduct.

These expectations are, but not restricted to:

- Set the taximeter in operation only at the commencement of the hiring or at the agreed pre-arranged time.
- Disengage the taximeter at the end of the hiring.
- Informed about the conditions of operation of a taxi.
- Timely response to all hirings
- Clean and presentable driver and vehicle.
- Good knowledge of local routes, major and tourist destinations.
- Friendly, courteous and helpful driver behaviour.
- Assistance with luggage and doors.
- A sense of safety while travelling.
- Road rules to be observed at all times.

If a passenger believes they did not receive the appropriate standard of service from a taxi driver or operator, they may lodge a complaint to the relevant authority. In the first instance this would be the taxi network provider which that taxi is operating for, Police or the Vehicle Standards and Compliance Branch of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The complaint will be investigated and if the allegations are proven appropriate action will be taken.

Passengers with Special Needs

Passengers with special needs are to be given all reasonable assistance based on consideration of their specific needs. Passengers in wheelchairs must be transported in accordance with all safety guidelines and recommendations specifically appropriate to the use of wheelchair restraint.

Passengers with disabilities who are members of the Northern Territory Taxi Subsidy Scheme may use approved vouchers as part payment of the prescribed fare. Passengers in the scheme are entitled to pay up to 50% of the metered fare using vouchers when travelling in either a standard taxi or a multiple purpose taxi. Drivers cannot demand that these passengers pay the full fare with vouchers only.

All States and Territories issue members of their Taxi Subsidy Schemes with special vouchers to use when travelling interstate. Conditions for the use of each of these interstate vouchers are printed on each voucher. All vouchers are green and gold in colour. The Northern Territory provides mutual recognition for these interstate vouchers and all Northern Territory taxi drivers must accept them.

The Taxi

The Traffic Regulations require all vehicles, including taxis, to be in a roadworthy and safe condition at all times. Taxis are required to be maintained to a standard, approved by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, while registered and operating as a taxi.

The Registrar, or his delegates, may inspect or require a taxi to be inspected at any time. If a vehicle is found to be unroadworthy, unsafe, cosmetically poor or dirty in appearance remedial action may be taken against the driver or operator. The operation of that vehicle may be restricted until the situation is rectified.

A driver operating a vehicle with mechanical defects may be issued with a Defect Notice and/or a summons may be issued. A vehicle under such a notice will not be able to operate for hire or reward until the identified mechanical faults are repaired and the Defect Notice removed by Transport Inspectors or Northern Territory Police in some remote areas.

A driver operating a vehicle that does not achieve the approved minimum cosmetic standard may be issued a traffic infringement notice or a summons may be issued. Vehicles that do not meet the minimum standards will not be able to operate for hire or reward until the condition of that vehicle is such that it meets the required standards.

Driver Appearance

Taxi drivers shall maintain a neat and tidy appearance. The minimum allowable standard of dress is:

Male:

1. Full covered shoes and socks.
2. Shirt with collar and sleeves.
3. Tailored slacks, shorts, full-length denim pants or tailored denim shorts.

Female:

1. Shoes with flat heel, less than 50mm.
2. Tailored slacks, skirt, full-length denim pants or denim shorts.
3. Shirt with collar and sleeves.
4. Dress.

Interpretations:

Neat and Tidy; Clean and free from stains and wrinkles. Not frayed, torn or holed, or having loose threads detracting from the original condition when new. All buttons are to be done up except for the top collar button, which is optional.

Tailored; Tailored clothing is generally designed to present a higher standard of dress. Sports or fitness clothing, standard stubby type shorts, cut off denim shorts and Lycra etc are not acceptable.

An operator or network provider may introduce a company/network uniform. The uniform must meet the minimum dress requirements and requires approval by the Director. Drivers operating within that network or company are required to wear that uniform at all times, unless that uniform is unavailable from that company or network.

General:

Individual companies may submit their uniform to the Director for approval. The Director may approve that dress standard as the minimum standard of dress for that company.

Comment:

Drivers and operators of taxis working with a company or network, which has had a uniform approved, are to comply with that company or network's uniform standard. Negotiations relating to supply and or costing of these uniforms are the responsibility of the drivers, operators and networks.

Certificate of Identity

All drivers must be appropriately licensed under the Motor Vehicles Act. That driver then requires a “h” endorsement on their licence prior to commencing work as a commercial passenger driver. Taxi drivers require a certificate of identity, commonly known as an ID Card. This card must be displayed in a prominent location clearly visible to all passengers at all times. Drivers who fail to display their ID card as required or who drive a taxi without obtaining one may be subject to remedial action.

If a driver fails to display or has not obtained an ID card, that driver will not be able to drive any taxi for hire or reward until the situation is rectified. Only the identification card belonging to the driver operating the taxi should be displayed.

Driver and Vehicle Performance

The taxi industry should endeavour to employ drivers who have the ability, maturity and high degree of professionalism, to enable them to deal with all types of people and situations.

It is expected that drivers will have a good knowledge of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act, Taxi Regulations* and Code of Conduct and observe these at all times.

The driver of a taxi is required to comply with all the relevant road rules when driving that vehicle.

The driver is also required to drive the vehicle in such a way that the passengers are afforded a smooth and stress free ride with a feeling of safety.

Comments:

This Code of Conduct is designed to assist in providing a high quality of service to all taxi passengers. The Code of Conduct is not intended to provide for all the required actions, which will ensure that the passenger leaves the taxi satisfied with the service received. All operators and drivers should strive to improve the quality of service at all times.

It should be noted that the taxi industry has an important road safety role to encourage persons who have been drinking alcohol, not to drive. They are, however, entitled to judge whether the prospective passenger is likely to cause a nuisance or hazard. An understanding of the relevant legislation will assist the driver in appropriate action.

Industry Training

Requirements

Operators are required to provide professional training for drivers, and drivers are required to undertake such training to ensure high quality of service is provided to all taxi customers.

It is essential that drivers entering the taxi industry are properly trained to provide high levels of service. Similarly it is important that drivers already in the industry are provided with regular refresher training to ensure they keep up with changing customer expectations and legislation. Shortcomings in a driver's behaviour may require that driver to undertake complete re-training or specific sections of re-training at that drivers own expense. Operators and network providers may set a training or refresher training schedule for all drivers. They may also request an individual driver to undertake full or part re-training if shortcomings are identified in that driver's behaviour or conduct.

Taxi drivers will enter the industry in one of the Gazetted taxi areas and may then relocate to one of the other gazetted areas. It is the responsibility of a taxi operator and or network provider to ascertain each relocating driver's knowledge of the local taxi area. Relocating drivers may be required to undergo location re-training to improve their knowledge of the new taxi area.

Fatigue Management

Under the Work Health legislation all employees have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace. The Commercial Passenger Industry is no different.

Employers have a duty of care to identify the hazards in the workplace, assess the risks and control the risks. In this case the hazard is the effect of fatigue which can be caused by extended periods drivers spend behind the wheel of the taxi transporting passengers and themselves from location to location. The risk assessment can be high and the control is to implement a fatigue management system in accordance with the Northern Territory Fatigue Management Code of Practice.

THE CODE

Operators and drivers are required to follow this Code of Conduct at all times when carrying passengers for hire or reward.

Driver Obligations and Behaviour:

1. Carry a current street directory for the area of operation noted on the Commercial Passenger Licence issued to that taxi.
2. A driver must display his/her own driver's identification card in a conspicuous position clearly visible to passengers sitting in all seating positions in the vehicle.
3. Be polite and courteous to passengers and provide assistance in loading and unloading luggage.
4. Be understanding and sensitive to passenger needs, including the needs of people with disabilities as noted elsewhere in this code of conduct.
5. Provide a priority service to a person in a wheelchair when driving a multiple purpose taxi (MPT). Priority service means immediately proceeding to take up a hiring by a person in a wheelchair and picking up the person before accepting any other hiring.
6. Notify the communications network when an MPT is not available for hire or reward during its shift. Notification by the driver must occur at the start and at the end of the period not for hire or reward.
7. Comply with Northern Territory and Interstate Taxi Voucher Scheme conditions as set down in this code of conduct.
8. Carry a copy of the Taxi Regulations, and Taxi Operators Code of Conduct in the vehicle for reference at the request of a passenger or intending passenger or an Inspector acting in the execution of that Inspector's duty.
9. In relation to fares and meters:
 - 9.1. Give correct change at the termination of the hiring and have sufficient change to do so to the value of \$50.00.
 - 9.2. Additional surcharges are not permitted, unless approved by the Director.
 - 9.3. For multiple hirings, the fare shall be calculated at 75% of the appropriate tariff and the driver is only to multi hire if the meter is equipped to multi-hire.
10. Whenever the taxi has more than one person (driver being one person) in the taxi, the taximeter is to be engaged, or the meter is to be switched off and the network notified that the taxi is off air and not operating as a taxi.
11. Maintain the vehicle to the approved minimum standard.

12. Drivers must maintain the minimum dress standard stated elsewhere in this document.
13. Where the taxi company or network has submitted a uniform and that uniform has been approved, it must be worn by the driver of that company or network at all times while the vehicle is being used for hire or reward. A driver that is not engaged by that company or network shall not wear that company's or network's approved uniform.
14. A driver shall not use a communication device, including a mobile phone, to coordinate or control any other commercial passenger vehicle, regardless if the driver is using a hand free device.
15. Drivers are not to use a communication device, including a mobile phone, for personal conversations when carrying passengers, this includes a hand free device (emergency situations excepted).
16. Drivers are not to hold or take any passengers' cash as credit in advance for future journeys, booked or otherwise, unless a receipt is issued and the communications network is notified.
17. Drivers are not to hold or take any form of passengers' credit/debit or savings card, or other electronic cash transaction card, for any reason other than handling a card during the process of performing a transaction for the payment of travel that has just ceased.
18. Drivers are not to hold or take any items or goods as bond until the passenger has furnished the driver with the prescribed fee as noted on the taximeter, unless a receipt for that item is issued and the communications network is notified.