Hire car drivers FAQs

Why have these changes been made?
The Point to Point Transport Taskforce found that the hire car industry is facing fundamental challenges from changing customer expectations and new technologies. Decades of increasing regulation have increased costs and restricted the industry’s ability to innovate.

Hire cars remain a crucial part of the NSW transport system, but it is unviable to keep things the way they were.

These changes were recommended by the Taskforce to bring the legislation for the hire car industry into the 21st century and to free up the industry so that it can compete more effectively in providing a great service for customers.

What has changed for hire car drivers? Have the requirements relating to a hire car driver’s conduct and presentation changed?
Customers will have much greater choice. They will be able to shop around and choose the services that they think best meet their needs, based on the quality and the price of what is on offer. We expect that industry will offer high quality services as a means of attracting customers.

It is also expected that the driver will carry out any booking punctually and take the shortest route to the customer’s destination, unless otherwise directed by the customer.

There will no longer be requirements in law in relation to a hire car driver:
• keeping the vehicle clean
• eating or drinking in the vehicle
• handling lost property.

RMS authorised officers and Police will no longer issue penalty infringement notices for the matters listed above. Service quality issues are best managed by industry participants, who have an incentive to attract and retain customers.

Where can a hire car driver accept bookings?
Hire car drivers can accept bookings for journeys anywhere in the state.

Will there be penalties for hire car drivers who are rude to customers or behave unsafely?
Hire car drivers are required to behave in an orderly manner and with civility and propriety towards any passenger, intending passenger, driver of another public passenger vehicle, or authorised officer.
The penalty if the driver does not meet this requirement has increased. The on-the-spot fine increases from $100 to $400, and the maximum court-imposed penalty increases from $1,100 to $5,500.

There are increased penalties for matters affecting the safety of hire car services. As now, drivers must move and drive vehicles carefully. However, the on-the-spot fine for failing to meet this requirement has increased from $200 to $400, and the maximum court-imposed penalty has increased from $550 to $5,500.

It is also an offence for a person to wilfully damage any part of a hire car, and the maximum court-imposed penalty has increased from $2,200 to $5,500.

**Have the fares for hire car services changed?**

As a matter of good customer service, and as a means of attracting repeat business and new customers, we expect that hire car drivers and operators will adopt fair and transparent pricing practices.

Under the reforms being put to parliament this year, companies will be obliged to provide customers with an estimate of the fare before the booking is confirmed, and customers will have to be notified of the time and/or distance rate to be charged.

In the meantime requirements about the payment of fares (for example, that the hirer must pay the fare after termination of the hiring and that fares are not charged by the service for avoidable delays) have been removed as it is a matter for the business arrangement between the hire car service and the customer. For instance, it is expected that a driver would not charge a customer for any delays that result from low fuel, tyre problems, mechanical problems or any other delays that could have been prevented by the driver.

RMS authorised officers and NSW Police will no longer be able to issue a penalty infringement notice in these circumstances.

**What is staying the same?**

The changes that came into effect on 18 December 2015 make no or limited changes to the following aspects of driving a hire car. Until legislation is passed:

- Hire cars are not able to ply or stand for hire.
- Hire car drivers still need a driver authority.
- Hire car drivers will continue to be able to use bus lanes and other special purpose lanes, provided they have HC plates, that is, they were licensed before 18 December 2015.
- Sydney Airport Corporation Limited (who controls who can access parts of the airport, including the prearranged can pick up areas) has advised that while a longer term solution is finalised, HC-plated vehicles will still be permitted into the pre-arranged pick up area of the airport.
- There will continue to be restrictions on booking a hire car in rural NSW. As is the case now, a driver or operator of a hire car must not accept a hiring outside of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast if the booking is made, or the hiring is otherwise offered, less than 30 minutes before the hiring is required.
• There will continue to be restrictions on advertising in or on a hire car. As is the case now, a person must not advertise or otherwise represent that the vehicle they are using to deliver a point to point transport service is a taxi, unless the vehicle is a licensed taxi.

• For hire cars providing services in rural NSW, that is, outside of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast, there are further advertising restrictions. As is the case now, the driver, operator or licensee of a hire car must not display, affix or install, or cause or permit another person to display, affix or install, any service advertisement within or on the outside of the vehicle.

• Additionally, the driver, operator or licensee of a hire car in regional NSW must not advertise, or otherwise represent, that the driver or operator may be booked for a hiring, hailed or otherwise accept a hiring, less than 30 minutes before the hiring is required.

You will receive plenty of notice if this changes.

**RMS fact sheets for drivers:**

**Are you a current or interested in becoming a hire car or rideshare driver?**

Please read the Roads and Maritime Services [Point to Point Transport Hire car and rideshare drivers fact sheet](#)

**Are you interested in becoming a taxi driver?**

Please read the Roads and Maritime Services [Point to Point Transport Taxi Drivers fact sheet](#)

**RMS fact sheets for operators:**

**Are you a current or interested in becoming a taxi or private hire vehicle operator?**

Please read the Roads and Maritime Services [Point to Point Transport Operators fact sheet](#)