

## Automation of Taximeters – Frequently Asked Questions

### General Information

#### 1. What is a taximeter?

A taximeter is a device that is used in taxis to record and show the fare payable for the journey.

#### 2. What are the rules about taximeters?

If a taxi is fitted with a taximeter, it must be working.

A taximeter can only be activated to start recording the fare at certain times. If the taxi has been hailed or obtained from a taxi rank, the taximeter can only be turned on when the person enters the taxi. If the taxi has been booked, the taximeter can only be turned on when the person has been notified that the taxi has arrived or at the specific time that the person booked the taxi for (for example 8am).

Regardless of how the taxi has been hired, the taximeter must be turned off when the taxi has arrived at the destination and before asking for payment.

#### 3. Where should the taximeter be visible from inside the taxi?

The taximeter should be positioned in the taxi in a way that can be seen by all passengers. The taximeter is usually positioned in the front centre of the taxi.

#### 4. Are all taxis fitted with taximeters?

No. Most taxis are fitted with taximeters but taxis operating in rural and remote parts of Queensland are not required to have one. This is because the financial viability of a taxi service in those types of areas can often be at greater risk than others, so the regulatory burden to have certain equipment is relaxed. Generally only a small number of taxis operate in these areas and equate to about 3% of the overall taxi fleet in Queensland.

#### 5. Can other vehicles use taximeters to determine the fare payable for the journey?

No. Only taxis can be fitted with a taximeter to record the fare payable for the journey. It is illegal for any other vehicle providing a public passenger service to have and use a taximeter.

#### 6. How do I know what fees and charges are recorded on the taximeter?

Taxis must display a fare sticker that shows the different rates (called tariffs), fees and surcharges that can be charged as part of the fare for the taxi journey.

#### 7. Where is the fare sticker displayed?

Generally a large sticker is displayed on the windscreen or the dashboard on the passenger side, depending on the type of vehicle. Two small stickers are generally displayed on the back side windows of the taxi. The small stickers are double sided and can be seen from the inside and outside of the taxi.

## 8. How is the taxi fare worked out?

A taxi fare consists of a number of components. There are different rates (called tariffs) that apply at different times of the day and on different days. There are also additional fees and surcharges that may apply depending on the circumstances of the journey. The Department of Transport and Main Roads (Transport and Main Roads) determines the maximum fares that can be charged. Taxi companies and operators have the ability to charge less than the maximum fares.

## 9. What are the tariffs that apply at different times of the day and on different days?

The table below outlines what tariff would apply depending on the day and time of travel.

Tariff Times	Standard Hiring (Tariff 1, 2, 3)	Multiple Hiring (Tariff 4, 5, 6)	High Occupancy, Luxury or Premium Taxi Hiring (Tariff 7, 8, 9)
<b>Tariff Applies to</b>	All taxis	All taxis	People Mover; Wheelchair; Luxury and Premium taxis
Monday to Friday - <b>Midnight to 5:00am*</b>	<b>Tariff 3</b>	<b>Tariff 6</b>	<b>Tariff 9</b>
Monday to Friday- <b>5:01am to 6:59am</b>	<b>Tariff 2</b>	<b>Tariff 5</b>	<b>Tariff 8</b>
Monday to Friday - <b>7:00am to 7:00pm</b>	<b>Tariff 1</b>	<b>Tariff 4</b>	<b>Tariff 7</b>
Monday to Friday - <b>7:01pm to 11:59pm</b>	Tariff 2	Tariff 5	Tariff 8
Saturday and Sunday** - <b>Midnight to 5:00am*</b>	Tariff 3	Tariff 6	Tariff 9
Saturday and Sunday** - <b>5:01am to 11:59pm</b>	Tariff 2	Tariff 5	Tariff 8

\* excluding ANZAC Day

\*\* including public holidays

## 10. What are the public holidays that apply?

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (Industrial Relations) website ([www.justice.qld.gov.au](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au)) provides guidance on what is considered to be a public holiday. The *Holiday's Act 1983* lists the public holidays that are shared on a national basis but there are also show holidays that only apply within a local area (like the Brisbane Exhibition (EKKA) or the Mackay Show day). These are considered to be public holidays too.

## 11. What additional fees can be added to the taxi fare?

Fees apply for booking a taxi, using toll roads, accessing airports and for soiling a taxi.


## 12. What is the booking fee?

The booking fee is currently \$1.50 and applies when a taxi is booked by the passenger to collect them immediately or at a certain time. The fee is applied to the taxi fare by the driver pressing the 'extras button' until the amount appears on the taximeter. This fee only applies if a taxi is booked. It is illegal for a driver to use the 'extras button' to charge extra fees when the

taxi has not been booked or for things like loading or unloading luggage, providing a baby capsule, using the air-conditioning or providing other assistance when asked by the passenger to do so.

### 13. What are the tolls?

Individual toll amounts are determined by the infrastructure owner and are not regulated by Transport and Main Roads. The current toll amounts for various roads in Queensland are listed below. Tolls charges are adjusted on 1 July each year, in line with the annual Brisbane Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase.

<b>Toll Charges for Queensland Taxis</b>	
As at 1 July 2015 (adjusted 1 July each year)	
	
<b>Bridge Tolls</b>	
Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge (Gateway Bridge)	\$4.32
Go Between Bridge	\$3.02
Legacy Way	\$3.00
<i>(price will change on 16/11/15)</i>	
<b>Tunnel Tolls</b>	
Clem Jones CLEM7 Tunnel	\$4.85
Airportlink- between Bowen Hills and Toombul (Full Length)	\$5.22
Airportlink- between Bowen Hills and Kedron (Short Length)	\$4.92
Airportlink- between Kedron and Toombul (Short Length)	\$3.92
<b>Road Tolls</b>	
Murrarie (Sir Leo Heilscher/Gateway Bridge)	\$4.32
Kuraby Toll Point	\$2.54
Loganlea Toll Points	\$1.64
Heathwood Toll Points	\$2.69
Paradise Road Toll Points	\$2.69

### 14. What are access fees?

Many airports charge a fee for taxis to enter their private property to collect passengers. These fees are not regulated by Transport and Main Roads. The current access fee amounts for various airports in Queensland are listed below.

#### Airport Taxi Access Fees - as at 1 July 2015

Brisbane Airport Taxi Access Fee	\$3.50
Gold Coast Airport Taxi Access Fee	\$3.00
Mackay Airport Rank Taxi Access Fee	\$3.00
Cairns Airport Taxi Access Fee	\$4.00
Townsville Airport Taxi Access Fee	\$3.00
Rockhampton Airport Taxi Access Fee	\$2.00
Sunshine Coast Airport Taxi Access Fee	\$2.00

#### 15. What is a soiling fee?

The driver can charge up to \$117 for the cleaning of the taxi if it has been soiled. The fee is considered part of the fare and failure to pay the fee may be considered fare evasion.

#### 16. What additional surcharges can be added to the taxi fare?

Surcharges apply for booking a High Occupancy, Luxury or Premium taxi or for hiring a taxi between midnight and 5am every day of the week except for Anzac Day (called the Late Night surcharge) or for using a credit or debit card.

#### 17. What is the High Occupancy, Luxury and Premium taxi surcharge?

These surcharges can only be applied for booked taxis and only if the passenger agrees to them when they are notified at the time of booking that they apply. The surcharge is not regulated by Transport and Main Roads and the amount of the surcharge varies between cab companies. For example, Black and White Cabs in Brisbane may have a surcharge of \$12 whereas Cairns Taxis in Cairns may have a surcharge of 50% of the total taxi fare. The High Occupancy surcharge cannot be charged if the passenger is in a wheelchair and neither surcharge can be charged if the taxi has been obtained from a taxi rank or from a hail. Transport and Main Roads is currently considering whether these surcharges should be regulated in line with other components of the taxi fare.

#### 18. What is the Late Night surcharge?

This is a surcharge that was introduced to provide an incentive to drivers to work the late night shifts in recognition of the sometimes difficult working environment drivers are faced with, particularly in key entertainment precincts late at night.

#### 19. What is the surcharge for using a credit or debit card?

An additional charge is added to the taxi fare for using an EFTPOS machine to process payment for the taxi fare with a credit or debit card. This surcharge is not regulated by

Transport and Main Roads. It is set by the EFTPOS provider and varies up to about 10% of the total taxi fare.

**20. How can a taxi fare be paid?**

In most parts of Queensland a taxi fare can be paid using cash, credit or debit card through an EFTPOS machine. In some rural and remote parts of Queensland, where the taxi is not required to have a taximeter, the taxi may not be equipped with an EFTPOS machine. As of 1 August 2014, a PIN number is required to authorise a credit, charge or debit card transaction rather than signing.

**21. Can a driver request a deposit or prepayment of the taxi fare?**

Yes. The driver is legally allowed to request a deposit of the estimated fare or an agreed amount before the journey begins. If the passenger refuses to do this, the driver can refuse the journey.

**22. Can a driver refuse a fare if the journey is a short trip?**

No. A driver must accept any hiring no matter how short the trip is.

**23. Can a driver refuse a fare under any circumstance?**

Yes. If a driver believes a person is causing or is likely to create a disturbance, nuisance or cause danger, the driver can legally ask the person to leave the taxi or not accept the hiring of the taxi.

## **Automation of Taximeters – Questions and Answers**

### **Specific Information**

**24. What has changed about taximeters?**

New laws were introduced on 1 July 2014 that require taximeters to do certain things and drivers to do certain things.

- Taximeters must be automated
  - for certain tariff times and public holidays
  - to change back to the standard tariff applicable for that time of day after completing a higher tariff
  - to apply tolls and access fees
  - to reset once the journey is completed and the fare paid
  - to reset once the taxi has travelled a certain distance after the taximeter has been paused or stopped
  - to restrict use of the extras button to once per journey for application to booked jobs

- Taximeters must be enabled to apply a quoted fare or a set fare
- Taximeters must be sealed
- Drivers must
  - provide itemised receipts on request
  - accept all methods of electronic payment

## 25. Why were these changes necessary?

Because tariffs and tolls are currently applied manually, this can lead to instances of overcharging. The taximeter works on a tiered system with different rates (called tariffs) applying at different times of the day, on different days of the year (for example public holidays) and in different hire circumstances (for example multiple hirers travelling to different destinations along the journey).

This means that a passenger can be charged at a rate higher than they should be if the taximeter is on the wrong tariff. It also means that a passenger can be charged an amount for a toll that is higher than it should be or even charged multiple times for a toll when they should only be charged once. There are also circumstances where extra charges, like the booking fee, have been added to the fare when the taxi has not been booked or for things like using the air conditioner or helping with luggage. All of these practices are illegal.

In addition to these, the taximeter currently can be manipulated so that it appears that the takings to be shared between the driver and operator are less than what they actually are. For example, a driver and a passenger might negotiate a fare of \$30 to be paid in cash. The taximeter can be paused or stopped at a lower amount (say \$10) to trick the operator of the full takings to be shared while the driver pockets the rest. In these sorts of scenarios, drivers prefer cash and have been known to refuse other forms of payment that are advertised on the taxi as being acceptable, for example credit card or debit card.

## 26. What will the changes achieve?

It is expected that the new laws will reduce incidences of the public being overcharged for taxi fares which may improve public perception of taxi services generally through enhanced confidence in the taxi system and greater transparency of taxi fares. This may also lead to a reduction in fare disputes and complaints. The changes are also expected to better protect earnings for operators.

## 27. Have the public and the taxi industry been consulted on these changes?

Yes. Transport and Main Roads wrote to all operators in March 2011 and subsequently released a Discussion Paper for public comment in August 2012. Feedback received through that process was used to inform the final policy position that is now being progressed as new laws. The Minister for Transport for Main Roads made a public announcement about the changes being progressed on 9 July 2013.

## 28. Who will be affected by the changes?

Operators and drivers will be affected by the changes.

Except in rural and remote parts of Queensland, operators of all other taxis must upgrade the taximeter or replace the taximeter so it meets the new requirements. An easy way to know for sure is to check conditions of the taxi service licence for the taxi. If the conditions require the taxi to be fitted with a taximeter, operators of those taxis will be affected by the changes. Drivers of those taxis will need to be aware of the changes so they understand how the taximeter will operate and their obligations in regard to providing receipts and accepting payments.

## 29. How will operators know what changes need to be made to a taximeter?

Transport and Main Roads has published programming requirements on its website. The programming requirements are not a technical specification containing code or formula. Rather, it explains the detail of what the taximeter must be able to do. In summary, the taximeter must be programmed in a way to:

- automatically set the tariff applicable to the time of day (Tariff 1, 2 and 3);
- automatically revert to the tariff applicable to the time of day at the completion of any hiring involving a higher tariff;
- automatically record the tariff applicable to public holidays;
- automatically reset at the completion of a journey;
- automatically reset when the stop or pause button is activated on completion of a journey and the taxi has travelled a distance of not more than 100 metres;
- automatically record tolls and access fees relevant to the journey;
- restrict the activation of the extras button to apply the booking fee once only during a journey;
- be able to enter a quoted or fixed fare price;
- be able to print an itemised receipt detailing each component of the fare including:
  - fleet number of the taxi;
  - the driver's Australian Business Number (ABN);
  - the driver's driver authorisation number (DA);
  - all rates and charges applicable to the fare including the fare total, any extras, including tollage (including access fees) and GST;
  - the date, journey start and end times and pick up and drop off locations;
- so that it is sealed to prevent the taximeter's program from being tampered with.

## 30. How will the tariffs be automated?

Each tariff will be programmed to switch on at certain times of the day, and on certain days (such as public holidays) via the device's internal clock.

**31. How will the taxi fare be worked out for public holidays like the EKKA, where it is a public holiday in Brisbane on Wednesday and another day in Logan, Caboolture and Redland Bay.**

In Brisbane, Redlands, Caboolture and Redcliffe the show holiday is on different days. However, each of these areas is situated within in the Brisbane Taxi Service Area. So that it is fair to everyone – passengers and drivers alike, the driver will only be allowed to charge this fee on the Brisbane show day which is the Wednesday of each year for all of these areas.

**32. How will tolls and access fees be automated?**

Taximeters will be programmed to automatically record a toll or access fee via GPS coordinates. The taximeter must display the toll or access fee amount at the time it has been incurred and add these amounts to the total fare that is displayed on the taximeter at the end of the journey. The total tollage (including access fees) must be shown as a separate item on the receipt.

**33. How will this work on toll free days?**

On some occasions, tolls can be suspended. This does not occur on a frequent or regular basis, but in extenuating circumstances, such as when a new tunnel is opened or during emergency situations like the 2011 Queensland floods. In these circumstances when tolls are relaxed taxi passengers will not need to pay the toll and taximeters will need to be programmed to not record a toll during these times. In a few instances, depending on the nature of the extenuating circumstance, operators may not have sufficient time to organise the taximeter to be re-programmed so that the toll does not register. In these situations, taxi companies will notify drivers to take the toll amount off the total fare. If a passenger believes they have been incorrectly charged for a toll, they can contact the taxi company to have the matter investigated and resolved. Transport and Main Roads has developed a process (refer Annexure 1) to manage situations where tolls are suspended.

**34. Do taxi drivers have to accept all methods of payment for the taxi fare?**

Except for rural and remote parts of Queensland, taxi drivers will be required to accept all methods of electronic payment unless the device used to process the electronic payment is malfunctioning or the device is incompatible with the electronic payment, or a system other than the device (such as the bank) is not available.

**35. What information will be recorded on the receipt?**

The receipt must include the fleet number of the taxi, ABN, driver authorisation number, all rates and charges applicable to the fare, the total amount paid, including fare total, GST, extras, tollage (including access fees), the date, journey start and end times and pick up and drop off locations.



**36. Must a receipt always be provided?**

If a passenger asks for a receipt, then one must be provided. If the electronic device that prints the receipt is not working or unavailable the driver must provide a written receipt that must record all the information specified in the response to the question above.

**37. Who do passengers contact if they believe they have been overcharged?**

Always contact the taxi company or the taxi operator to raise your concerns in the first instance. If your query is not addressed or your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you can then raise the matter with Transport and Main Roads for investigation.

**38. What are the consequences for overcharging a passenger?**

Drivers can be fined between \$471 and \$4712 for charging more than the maximum taxi fare and operators can be fined the same amounts for not programming the taximeter properly.

**39. Will Transport and Main Roads endorse or approve taximeters?**

No. Regular on-road and targeted compliance activity as well as checks through the Certificate of Inspection process will determine compliance with the laws on an ongoing basis. The responsibility to ensure the taximeter meets all relevant standards (such as the Australian Design Rules – 44/01) including the new laws about automation will reside with the operator.

**40. How long will operators have to get ready?**

As at 1 July 2014 all operators must have a taximeter compliant with the new laws. The new laws were made on 5 December 2013 and a transitional period was provided to enable sufficient time for operators to upgrade or replace their existing taximeters. Compliance activities are now underway and consist of a two staged approach. Operators and drivers interacting with compliance officers during Stage One can expect to be reminded of the new laws and penalties that apply for non-compliance. Operators and drivers interacting with compliance officers during Stage Two can expect to receive fines for identified instances of non-compliance.

**41. Is the Government subsidising the cost to upgrade or replace taximeters?**

No. The costs to upgrade or replace a taximeter will be borne by the operator.

**42. Do other parts of Australia have similar laws?**

Yes. New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria have already introduced similar requirements to what is being put in place in Queensland. Other states and territories generally only require a taximeter to be fitted and that fares charged cannot exceed the maximum allowable fare.

**43. Will there be more changes about taximeters in the future?**

Possibly. Transport and Main Roads may consider further changes to the rules about taximeters in the public interest. If this occurs, further consultation will be undertaken with the taxi industry, the public and other key stakeholders.