

# Safety in the taxi industry – for operators, networks and depots

## What is the problem?

Taxi drivers are sometimes targets for violent attacks and other assaults.

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004*, taxi operators, networks and depots are responsible for making work safer for taxi drivers. This is regardless of whether the drivers are direct employees, bailee drivers, contractors who provide labour-only services, or apprentices or trainees.

## What are the risks?

About 400 taxi drivers are injured on the job annually, mostly through assaults.

## What is a solution to this problem?

The following safety measures are simple and should be part of daily work routines. Please note that this list focuses on the main safety responsibilities for taxi operators, networks and depots, and may not cover every safety issue.

### Taxi operators

- Ensure your vehicles are roadworthy and regularly maintained.
- Install and maintain in good working condition all safety equipment required under Victorian law.

- If your taxi drivers work in high risk areas, consider additional safety equipment.
- Make sure all drivers using the vehicle know how to drive and operate the vehicle safely.
- Make sure drivers know how to use all safety systems, such as Safe Ranks, cameras and alarms.
- Make sure your drivers know the location of Safe Ranks, and encourage their use.
- Ensure drivers understand and know how to avoid potential dangers. Share your experience with new drivers.
- Allocate higher risk shifts, such as Friday and Saturday nights, to experienced drivers.
- Take action to discourage or stop drivers taking risks, such as driving while fatigued (e.g. as a result of regularly doing 12 hour shifts without sufficient breaks between shifts) or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Create a system for drivers to record any safety problems and to record actions you have taken to resolve the problem.
- Encourage taxi drivers to report assaults to the police and the Victorian Taxi Directorate, so that corrective action can be taken.

## /// The Problem



**Figure 1**

*Taxis in poor repair and unchecked security systems pose risks to driver safety.*

## /// The Solution



**Figure 2**

*Installing additional safety equipment can reduce the risk of assault to drivers.*

## What is a solution to this problem? continued

### Taxi depots or networks

- Ensure that alarm systems, cameras and radio back-up systems to support taxi drivers are in good working order, and that operators and drivers understand how to use them.
- Talk to taxi drivers and operators before making any changes to safety systems. Give all operators and drivers clear information about the changes. This can be done face-to-face and supported by printed information. Do not rely on email.
- If you know that a fare is at an identified dangerous location, you should alert or caution the driver before assigning the job.
- Consider refusing to allocate a booking to a location that is known to be unsafe and isolated.
- Ensure that taxi drivers and operators know how to use safety systems, such as Safe Ranks, cameras and alarms.
- Do not let taxi drivers work excessive hours. Monitor and evaluate the number of hours drivers are working, as well as time between shifts.
- Review drivers' understanding of the safety information provided by asking questions about safety education.
- Encourage taxi drivers and operators to report assaults to the police and the Victorian Taxi Directorate, so that corrective action can be taken.

## Further Information

### WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free 1800 136 089

Email [info@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@worksafe.vic.gov.au)

Website [worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au)

### Victorian Taxi Directorate

Telephone (03) 9320 4300 or

1800 638 802 (toll-free for country callers)

VWA Keycode – HSS0013/01/07.07

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