

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE
TAXI SERVICE (WATS)**

**TAXI DRIVER RADIO HIRING
PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

Version twelve – 1 April 2014



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1. Handbook Introduction

The purpose of this Handbook is to inform WAT drivers of the **WATS** Radio Booking Services, Procedures and Obligations when driving a WATS vehicle.

It should be noted that ***all*** Sydney metropolitan authorised taxi cab networks have given the WATS Booking Service (currently the CCN Booking Service and referred to as 0200 in this document) the authority to act on behalf of the network in all 0200 radio procedure matters. This means that any (Network approved) remedial or corrective action that may need to be applied in the case of a breach of these procedures, may be applied by the 0200 administration.

This handbook is for information purposes and does not in any way relieve a WATS taxi driver of his or her responsibilities under any other relevant Act, Regulation, Standard, Network by-law or other authorised instruction or training.

2: Definitions

Listed below are excerpts from “Definitions” of the *Passenger Transport Regulation, 2007* under the *Passenger Transport Act, 1990*.

hiring of a taxi-cab includes a hiring:

- (a) **by means of a taxi-cab booking service**, or
- (b) from a taxi zone, or
- (c) by the hailing of a taxi-cab on the street
- (d) by means of a telephone call made to the driver of a taxi-cab

Explanation: This means that a hiring offered via the communication centre is to be treated by the driver in exactly the same way as a street / rank hail.

wheelchair accessible taxi-cab means a taxi-cab that has wheelchair access

Explanation: This means that unless specifically exempted by the Director General, **any** (NSW) taxi vehicle with wheelchair access, whether or not it is an “unrestricted” licence or “WATS” licence, is bound by the conditions of **all** regulations relating specifically to WATS vehicles.

Other Definitions:

WATS means Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Service

0200 means a WATS Booking Service

Clause means a clause in the *Passenger Transport Regulation, 2007*

Authorisation Package means the NSW Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) Taxi Driver Authorisation Package dated June 2011

General Booking means a non WATS booking (or hiring)

RMS means Roads & Maritime Services

Shift means a shift as defined by the major network that the driver is driving for.

WATS Judiciary means a panel of network representatives appointed by rotation by the network members of Zero200.

3: WATS Booking Service Radio Procedures

WATS Radio Procedure 1:

WATS vehicles can only be driven as a taxi by a duly authorised taxi driver.

Reference(s) 1

Explanation: A driver who has not successfully completed the Taxicare WATS Taxi Driver Program, and has not been issued with a WATS specific Taxi Driver Authority Card by RMS, must not, under any circumstance, drive a WATS vehicle as a taxi.

In other words, an operator of a WAT must not tell a non authorised WATS driver to... *“Just take the WAT vehicle but don’t do any WAT work”* and a non WATS trained driver cannot drive a WATS vehicle and claim; *“It’s all right, I just won’t do any WAT hirings”*.

WATS Radio Procedure 2:

WATS drivers must have a driver identity number and current PIN and be signed in.

Reference(s) 2

Explanation: WATS drivers must give preference to M50 hirers. If the driver is not signed in, no preference can be given. This applies to all WATS vehicles including WATS with private hirings.

Note: The licence conditions for WATS require **minimum** hours that the vehicle is available for hire. If the driver is not signed in, the vehicle may not be identified as being available for hire.

WATS Radio Procedure 3:

WATS drivers must not refuse a WATS booking sent in accordance with the Regulation and published rules of the Booking Service to the WATS taxi they are driving.

Reference(s) 3

WATS Radio Procedure 4:

WATs drivers must give preference to a person using a wheelchair

Reference(s) 4

Explanation: Even if the driver has already **accepted** the offer of a person not using a wheelchair unless one or more intending passengers are already seated in the taxi-cab at the time the person using a wheelchair offers to hire the taxi-cab the driver must refuse the general booking and accept the WAT booking. This applies to offers for radio bookings and street hails.

WATS Radio Procedure 5:

GPS will be used to locate the closest WATS vehicle to any booking:

- 1) Where an immediate booking is not able to be dispatched;
- 2) Where a pre booked booking is not able to be dispatched in time to allow the accepting WAT to pick up at the requested pick up time.

Explanation: This means that while every effort will be made to dispatch bookings to a vehicle in the close proximity of the pick-up address, there may be times when drivers may be requested to accept a hiring that might not otherwise have been dispatched to them.

WATS Radio Procedure 6:

Incentives to complete difficult hirings will only be offered in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the 0200 administration.

WATS Radio Procedure 7:

WATS drivers must give an estimated time of arrival for all bookings accepted on cover.

Reference(s): 5

Explanation: 0200 has an obligation under the Regulation to notify hirers of the estimated pick up time.

WATS Radio Procedure 8:

WATS drivers must produce to 0200, their own network, or RMS if required, evidence of private WAT bookings as requested.

WATS Radio Procedure 9:

WATS operators/drivers must not use indecent, offensive or abusive language to 0200 staff.

WATS Radio Procedure 10:

WATS operators must ensure their WAT is operated for at least 10 hours between the hours of 7 am and 8 pm on at least two Sundays every calendar month. This is in **addition** to the licence condition that requires the WAT to be on the road for at least 10 hours every day.

Reference(s) 5

WATS Radio Procedure 11:

WATS drivers must attend WATS Judiciary meetings in accordance with instructions from 0200 at the time and date specified.

4: Penalties

WATS Radio Procedure NUMBER	PENALTY 1 ST OFFENCE	PENALTY 2 ND OFFENCE	PENALTY 3 RD OFFENCE	PENALTY 4 TH OFFENCE
1. Non authorised driver	Warning/ counselling letter sent to operator/driver / record offence/ RMS notified	Operator (vehicle) and/or driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 1 shift record offence, RMS notified	Operator (vehicle) and/or driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 7 shifts RMS notified	Operator (vehicle) and/or driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 28 shifts recommend show cause be issued by RMS
2. Signed in 3. Refuse Hiring 4. Not give Preference	Warning/ counselling letter sent to operator/driver / record offence/ RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 7 shifts RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 28 shifts recommend show cause be issued by RMS	
7. Give est. pick up time 8. Private Booking evidence	Warning/ counselling letter sent to operator/driver / record offence/ RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 1 shift record offence, RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 7 shifts RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 28 shifts recommend show cause be issued by RMS
9. Offensive Language	Warning/ counselling letter sent to operator/driver / record offence/ RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 14 shifts RMS notified	Driver referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 28 shifts recommend show cause be issued by RMS	
10. Sunday Service level requirement	Warning/ counselling letter sent to operator/driver / record offence/ RMS notified	Operator referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 1 shift record offence, RMS notified	Operator referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 7 shifts RMS notified	Operator referred to WATS Judiciary, suspended from major network 28 shifts recommend show cause be issued by RMS
11 Attendance at Judiciary meetings	Suspended from major network for 7 shifts per occasion in addition to the penalty for original offence. RMS notified. <i>Note: Failure to attend may result in penalties being issued in the drivers absence</i>			

Show cause means a SHOW CAUSE NOTICE to be issued by RMS:

Driver Show Cause:

Why Taxi Driver Authority should not be suspended or cancelled

Operator Driver Show Cause:

1) Why Taxi Driver Authority should not be suspended or cancelled

2) Why Taxi Operator Accreditation should not be suspended or cancelled

Operator Show Cause:

Why Taxi Operator Accreditation should not be suspended or cancelled

Note: Networks may impose penalties in addition to those specified in the handbook based on a drivers history or in relation to breaches of the by-laws of individual networks.

5: Appeal Mechanisms

Any Penalty issued under section 4 can be appealed by the following process:

- 1) Appeal direct to 0200 Administration
- 2) WATS Judiciary matters may be appealed to the administration of the NSW Taxi Council.

6: References

Reference (s) 1:

- 1) Clause 108: Wheelchair Accessible taxi-cabs
- 2) Authorisation Package 4.1 (j)

Reference (s) 2:

- 1) Clause 140: Use of taxi-cab network
- 2) Authorisation Package 4.2 (i)

Reference (s) 3:

- 1) Definitions: Hiring
- 2) Clause 146: Driver of taxi-cab to accept hiring
- 3) Authorisation Package 4.4
- 4) Module 3 of the Participant Manual - Taxicare WATS Open Learning Program January 2014.

Reference (s) 4:

- 1) Clause 148: Driver of a wheelchair accessible taxi-cab to give preference to person using wheelchair
- 2) Module 1 of the Participant Manual - Taxicare WATS Open Learning Program January 2014

Reference (s) 5:

- 1) Passenger Transport Act clause 31E (3) (a): Operators to comply with network service requirements