



OHS Awareness for NSW Taxi Operators

Information Guide

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NSW Taxi Industry Association

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Acknowledgement

This Information Guide has been prepared by the NSW Taxi Industry Association with assistance from WorkCover NSW under the WorkCover Assist Program.

Introduction

This Information Guide aims to help NSW Taxi Operators understand and implement their rights and responsibilities regarding Occupational Health and Safety. It especially focuses on the requirements of the OHS Act and OHS Regulation in NSW.

This Information Guide has been prepared by the NSW Taxi Industry Association with assistance from WorkCover NSW under the WorkCover Assist Program.

The direct benefits to you as a Taxi Operator in applying the procedures in this guide include:

- You will decrease the likelihood of injuries in your workplace through Risk Management
- You will know what claim process to follow should an injury occur through Claims Management
- You will know how to organise return to work procedures after an injury through Injury Management

The flow on benefits to you may also include:

- Less money lost due to workplace injuries
- Less likelihood of a substantial fine for not having OHS procedures that meet government requirements
- You have knowledge about what to do, what your rights are and where you can obtain further help
- It can assist in the NSW Taxi Industry in maintaining lowest possible Workers Compensation Premiums

Who does this Information Guide apply to?

As a NSW Taxi Operator this Information Guide applies to all Taxi Drivers working for you, including all those on Bailment Contracts.

It also applies to other people you may have working for you as employees such as a bookkeeper, office assistant, cleaners etc. Safety, of course, also affects your customers and workplace visitors.

Where does OHS apply?

OHS applies to the workplace. The Taxi is a workplace, so it will apply to your taxis. It also applies to your base, even if this is at your home. If your taxi driver trips over a crack in your driveway when arriving to pick up the taxi this is a workplace injury.

What size of taxi operation does OHS apply to?

No matter what size of your operation, from one to many taxis, the same principles must apply.

The NSW Taxi Industry Association is grateful to the Taxi Operators and Taxi Networks that have contributed their time and expertise to provide input into this Guide.

We hope you find this information useful and it contributes to a safe workplace.

OHS Awareness for NSW Taxi Operators

This information guide sets out the steps that you must take to operate within the law regarding OHS (Occupational Health and Safety) in NSW.

There are four main steps that you must take. These are shown below.

As a NSW Taxi Operator you have rights and responsibilities under the NSW OHS Act and NSW OHS Regulation.

Four Main Steps for OHS Management for Taxi Operators

Step 1. Set Up OHS System

- OHS Policy (see Appendix 1)
- OHS Incident Report Forms (see Appendix 2)
 - OHS Declaration Form (see Appendix 3)
 - OHS Suggestion Book (see Appendix 4)

Step 2. Manage OHS Risk

- Manage OHS risk using a system as described in the Manage OHS Risk section of this Information Guide

Step 3. Manage Workers Compensation Claims

- Manage any Workers Compensation Claims using a system as described in the Manage Workers Compensation Claims section of this Information Guide

Step 4. Injury Management

- Manage OHS injuries using a system as described in Manage OHS Injuries section of this Information Guide

Step 1: Set Up OHS System

OHS Policy (see Appendix 1)

The first step you should take to have an effective OHS system in your workplace is to have an OHS policy, which applies to your organisation, yourself and everyone working for you.

This OHS policy must set out your commitment to OHS and the responsibilities of people working with you regarding OHS.

In order to help you we have set up a sample OHS policy for a Taxi operation in Appendix 1. Have a look at this sample policy and use it as a basis for writing one for your own organisation. The policy you write must be made known to everyone working for you including all your Bailee taxi drivers.

OHS Incident Report Form (see Appendix 2)

In order to record any OHS incidents you must have a system for reporting and keeping a record of any workplace accidents, injuries or incidents.

In order to help you we have set up a sample OHS Incident Report Form for a Taxi operation in Appendix 2. Have a look at this sample and use it as a basis for writing one for your own organisation. The form and its use must be made known to everyone working for you including all your Bailee taxi drivers.

OHS Declaration Form (see Appendix 3)

All taxi drivers and employees must complete an OHS declaration form to show that they have read and understood the OHS policy and have read any other OHS information that you have provided them.

In order to help you we have set up a sample OHS Declaration Form for a Taxi operation in Appendix 3. Have a look at this sample and use it as a basis for writing one for your own organisation. The form and its use must be made known to everyone working for you including all your Bailee taxi drivers.

OHS Suggestion Book (see Appendix 4)

You are required by law to have input from people working for you regarding OHS.

One way that you may do this is to have an OHS suggestion book as shown in Appendix 4. You should consult with people working for you regarding OHS and where more than a few people are working for you, you should set up an OHS committee.

First Aid

You are required by law to have a First Aid Kit on your premises. Talk to your First Aid Kit supplier to ensure you purchase and display the appropriate First Aid Kit as required by the OHS regulation for your premises.

Step 2: Manage OHS Risk

Under the NSW OHS Regulation you must carry out Risk Management in your workplace.

The NSW Taxi Industry already has many detailed risk management procedures in place to ensure safety, such as inspections of taxicabs before each shift. However under the OHS Regulation you must carry out risk management for all risks in your workplace, not just those involving defective vehicles. For example, spilt oil on a driveway is a risk that must be managed, as is an office chair that is broken and dangerous!

What is risk management?

Risk management is the process of identifying and managing risks to avoid exposure to those risks.

Who is responsible for risk management?

As a taxi operator, for OHS purposes, you count as the “employer” (yes, even with Bailee taxi drivers) and you are responsible for risk management. Everyone working in the business also has a responsibility to contribute to safety.

OHS consultation with people in your business

The OHS Act requires employers also to consult with employees and take into account their views when making decisions that affect their health, safety and welfare. Consultation is required when risks are assessed and decisions are being made about risk management.

This means that you, as a taxi operator, must consult with your drivers and any staff regarding OHS. For a taxi operator with a few taxis this might involve talking with them and having a safety suggestion book for people to write in ideas (see Appendix 4: Sample OHS Suggestion Book). If you have a large organisation with many people working for you then you should set up a Safety Committee to work on OHS issues in your business.

The risk management process

The risk management process consists of three clear steps:

Step 1: Hazard Identification

Step 2: Risk Assessment

Step 3: Risk Control

We will look at these three steps in more detail and see how they apply to your work as a taxi operator.

Step 1: Hazard Identification

Hazard Identification is something that Taxi Operators and Taxi Drivers do every day. When you check your taxi's tyre pressure and find it is low you are identifying a hazard.

A hazard is a problem that may lead to some risk or harm.

So for Taxi Operations a few of the more obvious hazards might include:

Hazards (Problem)
■ Vehicle defects
■ Lifting heavy objects such as luggage
■ Traffic accidents
■ Vehicle breakdowns
■ Using a computer for long periods

You might identify hazards by using, for example:

- Your experience
- Experience of other taxi operators, Networks and the NSW Taxi Industry Association and NSW Taxi Council
- Consultation with your drivers and staff
- Hazard information which is required to be supplied with a product or equipment

Because so many Taxi Operators face the same risks, we have identified a range of common risks and these are in the tables in Appendix 5: Risk Management Tables for NSW Taxi Operators. These tables are based on experience from the NSW Taxi Industry with inputs from experienced Taxi Operators. You may use these as a guide to assist you in identifying hazards you face in your taxi operation.

When must hazard identification be carried out?

Hazard identification must be carried out regularly and as appropriate. For example vehicles must always be checked at the beginning of each shift by either the operator, the driver or the person nominated to carry out the check.

If you move to a new taxi base or have new equipment you should also carry out hazard identification. For example, if you are using a new taxi vehicle this may have safety alarm switches installed in different positions from earlier vehicles and drivers will need to be informed of this.

Step 2: Risk Assessment

We have looked at Step 1: Hazard Identification. Now we move to the second step of the Risk Management process. Step 2 is Risk Assessment. Risk Assessment is identifying the risks or harm that can be caused by the hazards we have identified.

The first hazard we have identified for our taxi operation is vehicle defects. What risks or harm can this lead to? Well it can, in some circumstances, lead to traffic accidents resulting in injuries or even death. This is obviously a major risk. So we would put it into our table as shown below:

Hazards (Problem)	Risks (Harm)
■ Vehicle defects	■ Injury or death through motor vehicle accidents

Obviously, if the brakes are not working we are aware of the risks this creates. However, even a seemingly minor vehicle defect, such as worn windscreen wiper blades, can lead to reduced visibility which can increase the danger of accidents and lead to OHS risks for taxi drivers, taxi passengers and other road users. Replacement of worn wiper blades is part of your responsibility.

Let's now look at the other Hazards we previously listed before and identify and the risks associated with them.

Hazards (Problem)	Risks (Harm)
■ Vehicle defects	■ Injury or death through motor vehicle accidents
■ Lifting heavy objects such as luggage	■ Muscle strain, back injuries
■ Traffic accidents	■ Injury or death
■ Vehicle breakdowns	■ Injury or death through vehicle accident occurring after breakdown
■ Using a computer for long periods	■ Repetitive strain injury, back injuries, eye strain

Of course there are many more hazards than these in a taxi operation. Later on we will identify many of these hazards and risks associated with them. You will also be able to add your own.

Now you understand what hazards and risks are, we can move on to Step 3 of the Risk Management process, which is Risk Control.

Step 3: Risk Control

So far we have identified some OHS hazards and risks. We know what the problems may be and the harm that may come from them. Now we move to the third step, which is Risk Control.

Risk Control is the solution that we are going to use to solve an OHS problem. The best solution is of course to eliminate the hazard completely. If we find an oil spill on the driveway, for example, we can eliminate this hazard entirely by cleaning it up.

In many cases we will not be able to eliminate the hazard entirely but we will be able to control it. For example, because vehicles are prone by nature to wear, we will never be able to totally avoid vehicle defects. However, we can control it by having regular inspections and planned maintenance of vehicles. As NSW Taxi Operators we already carry these out, but many of us don't have written evidence of the controls we use in our day to day operation.

As an example our evidence could be recorded as:

Hazards (Problem)	Risks (Harm)	Control (Solution)
■ Vehicle defects	■ Injury or death through motor vehicle accidents	■ Pre-shift vehicle inspection and report ■ Report on vehicle defects within shift made by driver ■ Approximately three weekly inspections and maintenance by licensed mechanic ■ Four monthly registration checks ■ Roadworthiness Assurance system to keep check of vehicle faults and repairs

For many of the OHS hazards in the NSW Taxi Industry there are already procedures in place with taxi operators to control the risks, such as the Roadworthiness Assurance System as required by your Operator Accreditation Standards.

On the next page we have given a few more examples of Controls for Hazards and Risks.

Sample table of Risk Management for Taxi Operators

Read this table carefully. You may want to add in other Controls for these Hazards, if so please write them in this table.

Hazards (Problem)	Risks (Harm)	Control (Solution)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vehicle defects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury or death through motor vehicle accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pre-shift vehicle inspection and report ■ Report on vehicle defects within shift made by driver ■ Approximately three weekly inspections by licensed mechanic ■ Four monthly registration checks ■ Roadworthiness Assurance system to keep check of vehicle faults and repairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lifting heavy objects such as luggage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Muscle strain, back injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver informed of correct lifting procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Traffic accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury or death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver must always obey traffic rules ■ Driver must drive safely ■ Be aware of dangers of fatigue affecting driving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vehicle breakdowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury or death through vehicle accident occurring after breakdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Breakdown Procedure Instruction in Taxi glove box

In Appendix 5 are sample Risk Management Tables.

Adapt these to suit your own organisation. Tick where relevant and cross out if not applicable. Write in your own additions.

Your tables must be updated whenever there is a change in your organisation and should be reviewed at least once a year.

Risk Management Tables for NSW Taxi Operators

Because so many Taxi Operators in NSW face the same risks and have similar control systems we have identified a range of common taxi operation hazards, risks and possible control procedures.

These are in the tables in Appendix 5: Risk Management Tables for NSW Taxi Operators. These tables are based on experience from the NSW Taxi Industry with inputs from experienced Taxi Operators. You may use these as a guide and a start to identifying hazards you face in your taxi operation.

The NSW Taxi Council is also making these tables available as a free Word document that can be emailed to you in electronic form. If you wish to receive a copy simply email the NSW Taxi Council at nswtaxi@ozemail.com.au asking for a copy of the OHS Package for NSW Taxi Operators and a copy will be emailed back to you. Further details are also available on the NSW Taxi Council website at www.nswtaxi.org.au

You will then be able to adapt these tables to plan your own particular OHS Risk Management.

When must you carry out risk management?

Risk Management is **not** something you do once and then it is finished. Generally you carry out Risk Management:

- ▶ Before
 - Using new premises
 - Installation of new vehicles or equipment
 - Making changes to your taxi operator work procedures and systems
 - Introducing hazardous substances e.g. if a taxi operator's taxi fuel system was changed to LPG
- ▶ While work is being carried out e.g. at the start of each shift for vehicle inspections, every three weeks for licensed mechanic inspections etc.
- ▶ When new OHS information is available
 - e.g. you receive information from your Taxi Network about emergency procedures in case of attack or robbery
 - e.g. you find out that using a mobile telephone near inflammable LPG can cause an explosion and so you instruct your driver that mobile phones must not be used at the garage when refuelling
 - You investigate an OHS incident (accident or near miss) and discover a hazard you had not thought of before

Taxi Driver OHS Information

In Appendix 6 we have given you a copy of the OHS Module for NSW Taxi Drivers. Make sure that all Taxi Drivers read this and confirm their reading of it by completing an OHS Declaration Form as shown in Appendix 3.

You have a duty to consult with employees on OHS

Under the OHS legislation in NSW employers must consult with employees on matters affecting their health and safety. As a taxi operator you have this duty to consult with those working for you.

What should you consult with employees and bailee drivers about concerning OHS?

You should consult about OHS related to the following:

- ▶ Changes to premises, work methods, work systems, plant or substances
- ▶ Risk assessment and review
- ▶ Risk monitoring procedures
- ▶ Facilities for employee welfare
- ▶ Purchasing
- ▶ Job design
- ▶ OHS incident reporting / investigation

How can you consult with employees about OHS?

There are three types of arrangements for consulting about OHS:

- ▶ OHS committees
- ▶ OHS representatives
- ▶ Other agreed arrangements

Even if you only have one employee or bailee taxi driver you must allow for consultation about OHS. It is a legal requirement in NSW.

Putting Risk Management plans into action for NSW Taxi Operators

WorkCover NSW has the right to audit your business for OHS procedures, particularly if a serious accident occurs. This may lead to court action and fines if you do not meet OHS legal requirements.

One of the things that the auditors look for are that the plans you have are put into action. It is not enough to have a plan in your filing cabinet if you are not using the plan.

Therefore it is a good idea to keep written records of changes you have made to improve safety in the workplace.

Step 3: Manage Workers Compensation Claims

Workers Compensation Insurance

As a Taxi Operator you must by law have current Worker's Compensation Insurance for all your Taxi Drivers and for any employees, such as office workers/mechanics/cleaners, you may have. If you don't have Insurance and your driver or any employee is killed or injured you can be responsible for payment of extremely large sums of money which may run into millions of dollars.

If you are self employed you are not required to have, and cannot obtain, Worker's Compensation Insurance for yourself. However if your organisation is a company and it pays you wages then your company must have Worker's Compensation Insurance for yourself.

There are two methods of calculating the cost of this insurance to cover taxi drivers using your taxis: 1). On a per plate per year basis, or 2). Pro Rata basis.

1). On a per plate per year basis

In general terms, a flat fee per year applies to each taxi plate that is driven by a taxi driver(s) for more than an average of 2 shifts per week.

2). Pro Rata basis (% of flat fee)

A pro rata fee per annum applies to each taxi plate that is driven by a taxi driver(s) for up to a maximum average of 2 shifts per week. This only applies to Taxi Operators who are sole traders, not to companies. WorkCover will check your application for this type of payment. (If in doubt of your eligibility for pro rata premiums, discuss with your insurer).

You must notify your insurer if you exceed the average 2 shifts per week and your policy will be amended.

For employees other than Taxi Drivers you will have their Worker's Compensation Insurance calculated on their wages.

Your insurance company will give you full details of Workers Compensation Insurance policies and procedures. Your taxi operation must be covered as appropriate by this insurance. You must keep payments up to date

If a workplace injury occurs

You must inform your insurance company within 48 hours of any significant workplace injury, i.e. likely to be off work for 7 days or more. For other, more minor workplace injuries, you must report within 7 days.

Follow procedures as specified by your insurance company for reporting any workplace injury to them.

Keep a record of any claim made against Worker's Compensation Insurance. Keep a written record of any discussions, phone calls or meetings and keep any letters, emails or faxes.

You must also have a procedure for reporting any workplace injury or OHS incident within your organization. You should have a written means of reporting and recording this. See Appendix 2: Sample OHS Report Form for a sample which you can adapt for your own requirements.

Trauma Counselling

In the case of attack or trauma to a driver or an employee offer counselling. Suitable counselling services are advertised in the NSW Taxi Council Journal.

Claims Assistance Service

WorkCover has a Claims Assistance Service that gives telephone advice and assistance to employers and injured employees about claims for workers compensation.

The telephone number is 13 10 50.

This service helps you in the following ways:

- impartial, fair, timely service to injured workers and employers
- promotes prompt processing of workers compensation claims and entitlements, including weekly payments, treatment and return to work arrangements
- ensures arrangements are made to resolve grievances over return to work issues and suitable duties, treatment and service providers

Dispute Resolution Processes

WorkCover has introduced new systems to help prevent and resolve disputes. These include:

- Claims Advisory Service to advise employers and injured workers before an issue becomes a formal dispute
- disputes will be referred to the new, independent Workers Compensation Commission headed by a President (judge)
- objective permanent impairment assessment guidelines for an expanded range of permanent impairments
- expedited assessment and resolution of disputes about medical treatment, suitable duties and return to work plans and weekly benefits
- determination of disputed medical issues by approved medical specialists, with restricted appeal processes

Should a dispute potentially arise you may obtain detailed advice from the WorkCover Claims Assistance Service or the Workers Compensation Commission about how these dispute resolution processes will apply in your case.

Provisional liability

Your insurer must now:

- Commence weekly payments within 7 days of an initial notification of injury unless there is a reasonable excuse
- Make weekly payments for up to 12 weeks
- Consider the provisional acceptance of necessary medical expense (medical/ hospital up to \$5,000)
- Make a decision within 21 days on liability for a workers compensation claim

The purpose of provisional liability includes:

- Early income support
- Expedited access to necessary treatment
- Prevention of disputes
- Control the risk of long-term work loss and disability

Step 4: Injury Management

Injury Management is the final step after Risk Management and Claims Management. Injury Management is simply a planned approach aimed to get the injured worker back into employment as soon as possible. Doing this will reduce costs of workers compensation payouts and will also ensure that the worker's recovery is as fast as possible. As a taxi Operator you should be aware of the principles of Injury Management and some issues involved.

What is involved in Injury Management?

Injury Management is the process where a worker returns to suitable employment after an injury. The worker may be able to take up the same duties before the injury or they may have to do different or limited duties. You may be approached by the worker's nominated treating doctor to work out suitable employment for them.

Three Key Steps for Injury Management for Taxi Operators

Step 1. Injured worker recovers

- Injured worker receives necessary treatment
- Injured worker recovers either fully or partially
 - Injured worker is assessed by doctor
- If fully recovered the worker returns to original work
- If not fully recovered a return to work plan is made by the doctor in consultation with you and the worker

Step 2. You agree a return to work plan

- You agree a return to work plan with the injured worker's doctor or rehabilitation provider
- If the original return to work plan cannot be agreed you can use an Injury Management Consultant to help reach agreement

Step 3. Worker returns to suitable employment

- The worker returns to work with you doing the same or different duties as before the injury

What is Suitable Employment?

It is necessary to identify and negotiate suitable employment for a worker who cannot return to their former full employment after an injury.

Suitable employment depends on:

- (a) the worker's incapacity and pre-injury employment,
- (b) the worker's age, education, skills and work experience,
- (c) place of residence,
- (d) the medical certificate,
- (e) the injury management plan,
- (f) any rehabilitation training the worker has received.

Suitable employment can be staged in accordance with a Return To Work plan:

- suitable increases in the number of hours each day or week
- suitable increases in the range of duties.

What if an employer cannot provide suitable employment?

It may provide suitable vocational training.

- at the workplace
- or elsewhere (eg: training facility).

If you are a Taxi Operator with a small operation you may not be able to provide alternative work duties or training for an injured employee. In this case you should discuss the situation with your taxi network to see if they can provide alternative work duties.

Such alternative work duties could include telephone duties, clerical work etc. If alternative work is not available in either your taxi operation or your taxi network then other work may be available in other organisations. This would be discussed with the nominated treating doctor or the rehabilitation provider as described later in this section.

Resources and help for Return To Work (RTW)

The following resources are available to the Taxi Operator and the injured worker for the development and implementation of a Return to Work plan.

1. Nominated Treating Doctor
2. Rehabilitation Provider
3. Injury Management Consultant (IMC)
4. Vocational Programs

Role of the Nominated Treating Doctor

The Nominated Treating Doctor is the treating doctor nominated by a worker for the purposes of an injury management plan for the worker. The role of the Nominated Treating Doctor includes:

- Diagnosis
- Assessment of whether the worker was a “substantial contributing factor” to the injury
- Management plans
- Assessment of fitness for employment
- Determination of the worker’s capabilities
- Review of treatment and work fitness
- Participation in the Injury Management Plan (IMP) and Return to Work (RTW) plan

Workers Compensation pays for treatment of the injured worker that is “reasonably necessary”. This means two things:

First, the intervention (speeding up the process of getting the worker back to work) must be necessary

- the worker is likely to benefit

Second, the intervention must be reasonable

- it is appropriate
- it is the most effective
- it is cost effective
- it is an accepted intervention

- Employers are required to identify duties that will meet the requirements of the medical certificate.

- Availability of suitable duties does not and must not influence the doctor’s certification.

- Doctors are encouraged to contact employers to discuss suitable duties.

- Doctors may refer workers to an accredited rehabilitation provider for a workplace assessment.

What if suitable duties are available and worker is certified “unfit to work”?

You, as the employer, can consult directly with the doctor about the demands of the duties. The rehabilitation provider will assess the worker and workplace, and negotiate a Return to Work plan with the doctor.

Role of the Rehabilitation Provider

In some, but not all cases, the worker and their doctor may use the services of a Rehabilitation Provider. Rehabilitation Providers may be found through WorkCover. This is a specialist service that helps the worker get back to work as effectively as possible after recovering from injury. The role of the Rehabilitation Provider includes:

- Work-related assessments and job-matching
- Developing Return to Work plans with defined goals, time frames and review points
- Reasonably necessary rehabilitation services
- Evaluation of effectiveness
- Consistent communication and goal setting with insurers, employers, workers, doctors and other providers.

Role of the Injury Management Consultant (IMC)

An injury management consultant is a specialist WorkCover approved doctor who may be used in managing and negotiating disputes about return to work when there is a difference of opinion between the treating doctor, employer/insurer and/or the injured worker. WorkCover can provide lists of Injury Management Consultants. Contact WorkCover on 13 10 50 or visit their website.

The role of the Injury Management Consultant includes:

- Assist nominated treating doctors with managing Return to Work plans
- Assess disagreements about fitness for employment
- Help workers to return to suitable duties
- Help prevent disputes and referrals to the Workers Compensation Commission

The cost of using an approved Injury Management Consultant is generally covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance.

Why Refer to an Injury Management Consultant?

As a Taxi Operator you would refer to an Injury Management Consultant if the following circumstances occur:

- You are unable to obtain the cooperation of the nominated treating doctor
- There is a lack of medical information to assist RTW planning
- There is disagreement about the proposed duties or the Return to Work plan
- The RTW plan is not working.

The Assessment Process

The Assessment process for injury management consists of the following:

Essential actions:

1. Review of documentation
2. Consultation with the nominated treating doctor
3. Consultation with the employer
4. Development of a report

Optional actions:

1. Assessment of the worker
2. Worksite visit
3. Consultation with other key people.

As the employer, this assessment process may involve you.

Vocational Programs

If an injured driver or employee needs to carry out different duties or a different job in order to return to work, this may involve some retraining known as a Vocational Program.

Vocational programs, if required, are generally part of the Return to Work Plan.

How would you resolve a dispute about Fitness for Employment?

If a dispute should occur about fitness for employment you should take the following steps to help resolve the dispute:

Step 1:

Make sure that workplace assessment has been conducted and a suitable Return To Work plan has been developed

Step 2:

Make sure that you or the rehabilitation provider has consulted with the doctor and worker about the workplace assessment and the Return To Work plan.

Step 3:

If necessary, refer to Injury Management Consultant to help reach a Return To Work agreement.

Step 4:

If doctor does not keep to the Return To Work agreement, have it reviewed by the Injury Management Consultant.

Step 5:

If agreement is still not reached:

All parties agree on assessment by Approved Medical Specialist

OR

Refer to Workers Compensation Commission for assessment by Approved Medical Specialist

Step 6:

Parties to the dispute act in accordance with Approved Medical Specialist outcome.

The key message is to communicate, cooperate, conciliate and so help prevent disputes happening in the first place.

We have now completed looking at the three key areas of:

1. Manage OHS Risk
2. Manage Workers Compensation Claims
3. Injury Management

Hopefully effective Risk Management will mean that you are unlikely to need Claims Management and Injury Management.

If you do need more assistance in the future consult with your Taxi Network, the NSW Taxi Industry Association and WorkCover.

OHS Awareness for NSW Taxi Operators

Information Guide

Appendices

On the following pages you will find sample documents that you can use or adapt for OHS systems within your own Taxi Operation.

These documents are also available from the NSW Taxi Industry Association in electronic format as Word Documents that you can use and adapt for your own use. Download from the website at www.nswtaxi.org.au

Appendix 1. Sample OHS Policy for NSW Taxi Operation

Use or adapt this OHS Policy to suit your own organisation. It shows that you and your people are all committed to effective OHS practices.

OHS Policy

Taxi Operation Name: _____

Date of Policy: _____

1. Our organisation is committed to occupational health and safety (OHS) in the workplace. This involves safety in our taxis as well as at our base.
2. Everyone working for our organisation is responsible for safety and must take action to ensure we have safety.
3. Our vehicles will be inspected and maintained according to our Roadworthiness Assurance Plan as required by the Department of Transport
4. All OHS incidents and / or injuries must be reported as soon as possible to the Operator using our OHS Report Form.
5. All Taxi Drivers and employees will be covered by Workers Compensation Insurance as required by law.
6. All Taxi Drivers and employees are invited to provide OHS Suggestions in the OHS Suggestion Book
7. Any OHS issues must be reported promptly
8. The drivers and nominated persons to inspect taxis must carry out the inspections carefully and follow appropriate procedures to ensure that taxis are safe at all times.

Appendix 2. Sample OHS Incident Report Form

Use or adapt this OHS Incident Report Form to suit your own organisation. It is used to report and record OHS Incidents including near misses or those that lead to injury.

OHS Incident Report Form

Operator Name: _____

Date of Incident: _____ Time: _____ Report Completed by (name): _____ Signature: _____
Details of incident:
Injuries: Who was injured? Details of injury Details of Medical / First Aid provision
Operators Comments Action Required Action Taken

Operator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3. Sample OHS Declaration Form

Use or adapt this OHS Declaration Form to suit your own organisation. An OHS Declaration Form must be signed by everyone working for you, either full time, part time or casual, including Bailee Taxi Drivers. Keep this record on file.

OHS Declaration Form

Name of Taxi Operation: _____

I understand and agree to apply the OHS Policy which I have been given.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Additional – for Taxi Drivers only

I understand and agree to follow the OHS Module from the **Certificate III in Taxi Driving – Taxicare Plus** a copy of which I have read and understood.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5. Risk Management Tables for NSW Taxi Operators

Important note: This guide is supplied as a sample only and is not to be taken as a legal document. It is the taxi operator's responsibility under the OHS regulation, to create their own Risk Management Plan. You may adapt and expand this sample to meet the requirements of your own taxi operation, if appropriate.

Name of Taxi Operator: _____ **Date Updated:** _____

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attack or robbery when driver or other staff travelling to and from workplace or in change over area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical injury ■ Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 2 Attack and Robbery ■ Make sure depot and change over area are well illuminated ■ Avoid using isolated areas for change over ■ Trauma counselling available as appropriate ■ All attacks or robbery to be reported to operator ■ All attacks or robbery to be reported to police and medical as appropriate 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attack or robbery when driver or other staff handling money or paying in at the depot ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical injury or death ■ Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure depot is well lit ■ Ensure depot layout offers maximum protection ■ Reduce stocks of valuable items to a minimum ■ Advertise your depot has security measures ■ Ensure staff limit personal valuables on the premises ■ Remove or restrict access to equipment that could be used as a weapon ■ Secure money handling procedures are in place ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 2 Attack and Robbery ■ Deposit in bank rather than leave cash left lying around ■ Beware of suspicious visitors to depot ■ Keep doors locked ■ Trauma counselling available as appropriate ■ All attacks or robbery to be reported to operator ■ All attacks or robbery to be reported to police and medical as appropriate 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attack or robbery when taxi driver driving or upon pickup or reaching destination ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical injury ■ Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 2 Attack and Robbery ■ Trauma counselling available as appropriate ■ Driver to avoid dangerous areas as appropriate ■ Driver to drive safely to avoid arguments with other road users ■ All attacks or robbery to be reported to operator ■ All attacks or robbery to be reported to police and medical as appropriate ■ Check cameras and other taxi safety devices are fully operational ■ Check driver knows operational procedure for cameras and other taxi safety equipment ■ Cash kept out of sight ■ Regular deposits at ATMs, avoid isolated ATMs ■ Avoid dangerous locations ■ Stay in cab if in doubt ■ Avoid fighting to retain cash ■ Ensure driver knows how to use safety devices 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fuel handling by taxi driver or other staff ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Burns, explosion injuries, death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to be shown how to use LPG if new to taxi driving ■ Driver to be warned not to use mobile phone near fuel filling because of danger of explosion 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Managing fatigue when driving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Motor accidents leading to injury or death. Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 3 Safe Driving and Fatigue Management ■ Driver to be counselled on taking regular rest periods ■ Staff advised of fatigue dangers when driving to and from the workplace 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lifting of luggage and other heavy objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Back injuries and other injuries. Muscle strain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 4 Safe Lifting ■ Staff aware of safe lifting procedures 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accident or Breakdown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury or death from passing traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 5 Accident or Breakdown Safety Procedures ■ Trauma counselling available after accidents as appropriate ■ Breakdown procedure written and kept in glove box of taxi ■ Driver must always obey traffic rules ■ Driver must drive safely ■ Be aware of dangers of fatigue affecting driving ■ Vehicle to be safely parked with handbrake on ■ Driver to be careful not to be distracted by equipment 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vehicle defects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury or death through motor vehicle accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pre-shift vehicle inspection and report ■ Report on vehicle defects within shift made by driver ■ Approximately three weekly inspections by licensed mechanic ■ Four monthly registration checks ■ Roadworthiness Assurance system to keep check of vehicle faults and repairs ■ Ensure that new equipment (e.g. EFTPOS or VDU equipment) is fitted correctly and is secure so it can't injure driver or passenger by falling on them in cab 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dangers to drivers or passengers at drop off or pickup points, including taxi ranks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injuries through traffic accidents ■ Injuries through slipping or falling ■ Injuries from doors and boot ■ Injuries from violent passengers on Ranks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Park in safe place ■ Beware of traffic when opening doors and driver to caution passengers ■ Try to park in safe place away from traffic danger if at all possible ■ Beware of passing traffic ■ Pull away from kerb safely having checked traffic first ■ Be careful of footpath or road dangers for pedestrians: potholes; slippery surfaces etc ■ Driver to be careful of fingers and head on doors and boot ■ Driver to use good customer service approach to avoid escalating potential conflict situations leading to abuse or attack ■ Use secure or supervised ranks where available 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ General health of drivers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Illness or poor driving due to poor health practices such as diet, lack of exercise, smoking, alcohol or drug use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 6 Health and stress management ■ Driver to seek medical advice if appropriate ■ Ensure driver eyesight is tested if required for issue of prescription glasses or contact lenses 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driving position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injuries through driving position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure appropriate driving position ■ Take regular breaks ■ Report damaged or worn seat immediately 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of Mobile phone while driving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury from vehicle accidents caused by lack of attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Drivers must obey law in NSW about use of mobile phone while driving 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extreme stress may lead to poor health or increased risk of injury through accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to study Taxicare Plus Module 7: OHS – Section 6 Health and Stress Management ■ Drivers or others to receive counselling or health professional referrals ■ Recognise Good days / Bad Days and act accordingly ■ Do not bring outside troubles into the workplace – get professional help 	
<p>Using a computer for long periods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Repetitive strain injury, back injuries, eye strain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Take 5 - 10 minute breaks every hour ■ Seating and positioning to be appropriate ■ Any problems to be reported so action can be taken to correct situation 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor maintenance of Depot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury through falls, slips or other hitting objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lighting adequate ■ Ensure no slippery surfaces ■ Ensure no uneven ground ■ No litter or rubbish lying around ■ No dangerous substances exposed but stored safely and well signed ■ Safety notices ■ Maintenance of equipment ■ Regular safety inspections ■ Area restricted to authorised persons only 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor maintenance of Garage/Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury through falls, slips or other hitting objects ■ Injury from dangerous substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lighting adequate ■ Ensure no slippery surfaces ■ Ensure no uneven ground ■ No litter or rubbish lying around ■ No dangerous substances exposed but stored safely and well signed ■ Safety notices ■ Maintenance of equipment ■ Regular safety inspections ■ Area restricted to authorised persons only ■ Safe driving procedures in Garage / Workshop area 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vehicle defects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury or death through motor vehicle accidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pre-shift vehicle inspection and report ■ Report on vehicle defects within shift made by driver ■ Approximately three weekly inspections by licensed mechanic ■ Four monthly registration checks ■ Roadworthiness Assurance system to keep check of vehicle faults and repairs ■ Ensure that new equipment (e.g. EFTPOS or VDU equipment) is fitted correctly and is secure so can't injure driver or passenger by falling on them in cab 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dangers in wash area and cleaning or tidying vehicles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injuries due to slipping ■ Injuries from cleaning equipment ■ Injuries from chemicals e.g. solvents ■ Needlestick injuries from syringes left in taxis ■ Injuries from high pressure water ■ Disease spread through contact with blood, vomit, urine or urea ■ Disposal of rubbish ■ Cuts from sharp objects such as broken glass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safety signs ■ Wear appropriate shoes ■ Wear appropriate gloves ■ Coaching in awareness of dangers and ways to avoid dangers ■ Storage and signage for dangerous substances ■ Machinery guarded/ fenced off ■ Disposal kits provided including appropriate gloves ■ Rubbish containers ■ Needle containers 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dangers from office equipment or facilities or supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injuries from fire ■ Injuries from electrical shock ■ Scalding from hot water ■ Tripping or slipping ■ Injury or trauma from robbery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regular inspections of fire alarms, equipment and fire exits ■ Staff and drivers trained in fire evacuation ■ Fire safety notices displayed ■ Regular inspection of electrical equipment, cords and plugs ■ Any spills cleaned up immediately as policy ■ Office kept free from obstacles likely to lead to injury ■ Staff aware of safe lifting ■ Regular safety inspection of office facilities and equipment ■ Any safety issues to be reported to operator 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stress from abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trauma, psychological injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policy on avoidance of abuse in workplace ■ Psychological trauma counselling available if appropriate ■ Operator to discuss issues such as passenger abuse with driver 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Specific dangers to drivers and passengers in Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WATS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver 	<p>Specific injuries caused through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lifting ■ Manoeuvring wheelchair ■ Folding wheelchair ■ Anchoring wheelchair ■ Anchoring passenger ■ Using the ramp / hoist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Driver to be coached if required in specific techniques ■ New WATS driver must complete and be assessed as competent in the NSW Taxicare Course for WATS drivers. Available through Taxi Network outside Sydney and as face-to-face NSW Taxi Council course in Sydney. 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mechanical repairs by driver ▪ Taxi driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Injury through road accidents caused by unlicensed repairer ■ Injury to driver carrying out repair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No repairs requiring a licensed mechanic to be carried out by driver or operator unless they are a licensed mechanic ■ Regular inspections and maintenance of vehicles ■ Driver only to undertake minor maintenance if trained and/or competent ■ Minimum training to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removing radiator cap safely ▪ Using a vehicle jack safely ▪ Dangers from battery acid 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Violence in the workplace from other staff and base taxi drivers ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical injury ■ Trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage good workplace relations between staff (including drivers) ■ Promote the fact that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action ■ Be aware of signs of potential violence such as constant arguing, raised voices, physical gestures ■ Promote understanding and reporting procedures of signs of violence throughout the workplace ■ Prepare procedures in response to signs of violence such as counselling, adjusting the roster 	

Hazards (Problem) (Delete if not applicable)	Risks (Harm) (Add or delete)	Control (Solution) (Tick or delete)	Control (Solution) (Add further solutions here)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working to deadlines and under extreme pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxi driver ▪ All other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inter-staff conflict and aggression ■ Stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policy on Harassment ■ Supervisor Training ■ Discipline of bullies and support of bullied employees ■ Re-organise work schedules ■ Team building ■ Drivers taught to take bad days with the good days (count personal earnings week by week – not hour by hour) 	

Copy this page for your own use.

Hazards (Problem) (Add your own)	Risks (Harm) (Add)	Control (Solution) (Enter)
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■



Occupational Health and Safety

Module 7 from

Certificate III in Taxi Driver Training -

Taxicare Plus

National Code: 13898NSW

Course Training Package

1 May 2002



NSW Vocational
Education & Training
Accreditation Board

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Module Overview

Welcome to Module 7: Occupational Health and Safety

Module Purpose

This module develops the ability to apply Occupational Health and Safety standards to the taxi work environment.

Module Duration

Nominal Duration 4 hours

Please note that the “Nominal Duration” is the estimated average time that it will take a person to complete this Module in this Open Learning Program. The actual time you may take will vary according to your previous experience and your speed of learning.

Module Sections

This Module is divided into the following Sections:

1. OH & S and Taxi Driving
2. Attack and Robbery
3. Safe Driving and Fatigue Management
4. Safe Lifting
5. Accident or Breakdown Safety Procedures
6. Managing Health and Stress
7. Insurance, Workers Compensation and Trauma Counselling

Module Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the range of Occupational Health and Safety issues associated with taxi driving
2. Identify ways to help minimise risk of attack and robbery
3. Describe ways to act appropriately in emergency situations
4. Identify correct use of fitted safety equipment for taxis
5. Identify ways to drive a taxi safely
6. Identify selected ways to reduce risk of injury from lifting
7. Identify safety procedures in the event of an accident or breakdown
8. Manage fatigue to ensure safe driving practice
9. Identify useful health and stress management strategies and techniques for taxi drivers.
10. Identify taxi driver's rights and responsibilities with regard to insurance, Worker's Compensation and trauma counselling.

1. OH&S and Taxi Driving

As a new Taxi Driver you have a very important role in Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S).

OH&S is about making sure that the workplace is a safe and healthy place to work. In the Taxi Industry our workplace includes our taxi vehicle. As a Taxi Driver you must make sure that your work is as safe as possible. This means safe for our **passengers**, safe for **Taxi Drivers** and safe for **other road users**.

Under the NSW OH&S Laws it is the responsibility of **everyone** involved in the workplace to promote health and safety for workers, customers and other members of the public. This means that taxi drivers **must** follow good health and safety practices. If you don't use good safety practices in the workplace, you not only risk injury to yourself and others but may also be driving illegally. There are severe penalties for not adhering to requirements of the OH & S Act, you may break the law and can be fined or even jailed.

Activity

What do you think are some of the risks to health and safety involved in taxi driving?

List your ideas below

Example: Danger from traffic accidents

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Occupational Health and Safety Risks

How many OH&S risks did you identify? There are many possible answers and we list some below.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) is about making sure that people in a work situation are not exposed to unnecessary risks, which may be dangerous for their health and safety.

The OH&S risks faced by taxi drivers include the following. Tick the ones you have already identified from the exercise on the last page.

- Accidents caused by vehicle failure
- Accidents caused by taxi driver driving performance
- Accidents caused by taxi driver fatigue
- Accidents caused by other drivers and road users
- Injuries, traumas or shock caused by attacks or robberies of drivers
- Abuse from passengers
- Work related stress
- Injuries caused by “handling” luggage e.g. back injuries
- Dangers from fuel handling

Taxi Industry workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control

The NSW Taxi Industry and the NSW Government have set standards for taxi operation, which help to reduce the effect of these hazards and dangerous situations.

Taxi Industry workplace procedures for hazard identification and risk control include:

- Inspections of all Taxi vehicles at the beginning of every shift
- Taxi inspection and maintenance requirements for all Taxi Operators
- Spot checks of vehicles by Taxi Networks, Department of Transport and the RTA
- Standards for Taxi vehicles e.g. age of vehicle
- Standards for drivers such as driving ability and training and assessment
- Use of emergency Radio procedures
- Use of safety screens
- Vehicle tracking devices
- Use of security cameras in taxis to deter attacks
- Reporting procedures for incidents to Police
- The availability of trauma counselling for drivers after incidents
- Ongoing training for taxi drivers

How you can take part in the management of OH&S

As a taxi driver you can take part in the management of Occupational Health and Safety. The ways you can do this include:

- Pay particular attention to what you learn through training and informational material
- Inspect your taxi vehicle thoroughly and report any problems
- Report any OH&S issues to your Taxi Operator and/or Taxi Network as appropriate
- Take due care to apply safety in all aspects of your job such as driving, vehicle inspections, and customer interactions
- Undertake trauma counseling after accidents or attack if needed. This can be arranged by your Taxi Operator
- Visit the NSW Taxi Council Website at www.nswtaxi.org.au to stay informed about OH&S issues in the Taxi Industry
- Read journals such as METER and TAXI to stay informed about OH&S issues in the Taxi Industry
- Have regular medical checkups, at least every year. Keep yourself fit and healthy as far as possible

Key OH&S Issues

Some of the main issues in Occupational Health and Safety for taxi drivers include:

- Attack and robbery
- Safe driving and fatigue management
- Safe lifting
- Accident or breakdown safety procedures
- Health and stress management
- Insurance, Worker's Compensation and Trauma Counselling

We will look at all these issues in the following Sections in this Module. Importantly we will also look at ways to reduce the risks associated with these issues.

Most of OH&S is common sense. Yet still accidents and dangers occur so we need to be well prepared.

2. Attack and Robbery

Know the Risks

The more you know about the risks of attack and robbery for Taxi Drivers the more you can take steps to reduce the dangers to yourself.

The main risks of attack and robbery you must to be aware of are:

1. Risk of dangerous passengers
2. Risk of assault
3. Risk of robbery
4. Risk of dangerous location
5. Risk of your own attitude

We will first look at what these risks are. Then we will discuss ways to reduce the risks.

1. Risk of dangerous passengers

You have little control over the type of passenger you pick up. In the course of your work you will meet a wide range of passenger types. Most passengers will cause you no trouble.

However, from time to time you may meet passengers who are hostile, argumentative, aggressive or at worst violent. You may find that these behaviours are made worse when passengers have been affected by excessive alcohol or other drugs.

2. Risk of assault

The chance of assault is not high and sensible practices by you can reduce these chances even further.

3. Risk of robbery

Taxi Drivers carry sums of cash and are in an isolated position in their taxis. They may be targets for robbery.

Most violent incidents and hold-ups involving Taxi Drivers:

- occur between midnight and 4.00 a.m.
- occur on Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights
- come from hails rather than phone bookings
- involve one or more young males under 25 years
- originate in 'unsafe' locations

4. Risk of dangerous locations

In any taxi driving area there are locations which are possibly more dangerous than others. It is important as a Taxi Driver to identify these dangerous locations.

In some cases the dangers of a location will depend upon the time of day. A location which is quite safe to work in during the daylight hours may be dangerous late in the evening or in the early hours of the morning.

Dangerous locations might include:

- areas of poor lighting
- isolated areas such as laneways
- known locations associated with excessive alcohol or drug abuse leading to aggressive and violent behaviour.

5. Risk of your own attitude

It may sound strange but in some cases a Taxi Driver's own attitude towards customers can increase the risk of assaults.

Don't argue with your customers and you will prevent small disagreements growing into full scale arguments and even violence. Stay calm and **never** lose your temper.

It is illegal in NSW to carry weapons. For a list of weapons prohibited under the NSW Fire Arms Act 1996, No 46 and NSW Weapons Prohibition Act 1998, No 127 visit the website on www.austlii.edu.au

The possession of weapons is prohibited pursuant to the NSW law.

Reduce the risks

Once you have known the risks in Taxi driving you can take steps to help reduce them.

There are several habits that the Taxi Driver should have to reduce the risks from dangerous passengers and the possibility of robbery:

1. Reduce the risk of dangerous passengers

- If someone hails you and you think they may be potentially dangerous it is wise to pull your taxi up 5 to 10 metres away. This gives you some time to assess the situation.
- Keep doors locked and your driver's window wound up.
- Look passengers in the eye as you greet them. Be very positive. This sends the passenger a message that you have seen them and could identify them.

2. Reduce the risk of assault

Take steps to control your working environment to minimise the danger of assault:

- always keep the rear door immediately behind you locked. This helps avoid the risk of being attacked from behind.
- If you are worried about the danger of assault from a passenger in the rear seat you can adjust your rear vision mirror so that you can see them. At night turning on your interior light may help stop a potential assailant. Also roll your seat forward to give maximum protection from passenger attack if you have a suspicious fare.
- Learn the exact location of all police stations in your area. Drive straight to them if you are facing a potentially dangerous situation.
- At night it is advisable to put single male passengers in the front seat and women in the back.
- Be aware of all preventative radio procedures that may be available at the Taxi Network you are driving for.
- Beware of vague directions such as "Just start driving and we'll tell you the way" (this is a classic danger signal). Insist on an exact destination before you start driving and write it down in your log. If necessary alert the base that you have a problem or inform them of the destination.
- Beware of customers asking to change destinations during a journey, particularly if they want you to go to a potentially dangerous location.
- Prominently display signs such as "This taxi is fitted with a camera" to deter attackers.

3. Reduce the risk of robbery

As a new Taxi Driver you will be handling quite large amounts of cash and need to be very careful with this. Keep your cash out of sight. Only keep enough cash in your pouch for a “float”.

During your shift:

- **Deposit** large amounts of cash in an Automatic Teller Machine or leave it at home when you are passing or having a meal break.
- **Never** have large amounts of cash visible to the passenger in the taxi. When giving change only use a small float of cash. Keep larger amounts of cash securely concealed.
- **Be wary** of passengers who show an interest in your cash position by asking seemingly innocent questions e.g. “Have you had a good day?” or “Can you change a \$100 note?” These questions may be a way of determining how much cash you might be carrying. Play poor and say something like: “It’s been really slow tonight”. Or I’ve only just come on and you’re my first passenger”.
- **Always settle your fare inside the taxi**, do not allow the passenger to pay at the driver’s window. If you do this they may snatch your cash and run away more easily.

4. Reduce the risk of dangerous locations

When you have identified potentially dangerous locations in your service area you should exercise care and caution and be alert when picking up or setting down passengers in these locations. Whenever possible try to position the taxi in a well lit area and be particularly cautious in isolated areas. If under threat drive away from the dangerous situation with door open and close it later being careful not to cause an accident.

Remember:

- Beware of passengers who give you vague directions.
- Avoid laneways and dead end streets.
- Avoid poorly lit areas
- Never follow a passenger into a building

5. Reduce the risk of your own attitude

Handle argumentative and hostile passengers carefully. Avoid getting into heated debate or confrontations with such passengers. As a general rule it is better to agree with them and remain calm and relaxed. One technique to calm people down is to speak more quietly and slowly. Don't raise your voice and don't speak rapidly.

Never chase after passengers who do a “runner”, the risk of attack is not worth the money!

Use of fitted safety equipment for taxis

Global Positioning System

All Sydney, Newcastle, Central Coast and Wollongong taxis are fitted with a Global Positioning System (GPS) that allows the Network to track the location of the Taxi. If you activate your M13 Alarm the radio operator will be able to identify your location and inform Police and other Taxis in the area that you require assistance.

Safety Screens

Safety screens may be fitted to taxis operating in Sydney, Newcastle, Central Coast and Wollongong.

Maintenance of Screens

It is important to make sure that the screen is well maintained in a condition that gives maximum protection.

- It should be cleaned only as in manufacturer's instructions.
- It **must** not be changed in any way (e.g. drilling holes or fitting items to the screen).

Checking of Screen

You should check your screens at the start of each shift to ensure that it is:

1. clean and transparent
2. securely fitted
3. there are no cracks developing.

Security Cameras

Security cameras are both a way of deterring attacks and robberies and a way of catching the criminals who carry out attacks.

Security cameras may be fitted to taxis operating in New South Wales. There are a number of different brands of cameras available, but they all work in a similar way. While much of the work of the camera is automatic, you must know how to operate the camera if one is installed in your taxi.

The six things you must know if the taxi you drive is fitted with a camera

The six things you **must** know if the taxi you drive is fitted with a camera are:

How to test that the camera is working

How to recognise the camera is not working

How to take a manual photo

How to "Block" the most recent photos

Where and how to have the camera reset or serviced

Where to have images downloaded to make a police report

1. How to test that the camera is working

To test to see if the camera is working, open any door of the taxi. The camera indicator should flash green at least ten times, indicating that it has taken a sequence of photographs.

2. How to recognise the camera is not working

If the camera indicator is flashing red or flashing red/green, or doesn't flash when you open the door or press the manual photo button, this indicates there is a problem with your camera and the taxi **must** not be operated as a taxi until it is repaired (i.e. you must not take a passenger).

3. How to take a manual photo

There is a button for taking manual photos, if you press this down once, the camera indicator should flash green once showing that it has taken a photograph.

4. How to “Block” the most recent photos

All cameras have a limit to the number of photos they can store (minimum of 300), and basically when the memory is full the camera will start recording from the beginning again overwriting the first photo and so on. If an incident occurs or you are concerned about a passenger and want to make sure the most recent photos are not overwritten, you can hold down the manual photo button for two (2) seconds and this will “block” a group of images.

5. Where and how to have the camera reset or serviced

The camera is linked to your M13 button. After you have activated your M13, the camera may fill its memory with photos, causing the indicator to flash red/green. If you accidentally activate your M13 and this occurs, the camera unit needs to be reset, and you **must** not operate the taxi until it has been reset. In the case of a genuine M13 emergency, you need to arrange for the downloading of the images from the camera. Your operator will advise where to have the camera reset or serviced.

6. Where to have images downloaded to make a police report

*If you want to make a police report about the incident, you need to arrange for the images to be downloaded from the camera. Your operator will advise where to have images downloaded. **Please note:** You cannot have photos downloaded from the camera unless you are making a police report and require the photos for evidence.*

If you are uncertain about any part of the operation of the camera fitted to your taxi, you must ask your operator for further training.

Kill Switches

All Taxis have a kill switch which stops the Taxi running. This may be used to immobilise the vehicle (stop the vehicle going) in case of robbery or assault.

You must learn from your Taxi Operator where the kill switch is on any new taxi vehicle you drive.

Interior Boot Lock

All Taxis are fitted with interior boot locks so that a Taxi Driver who is attacked and locked in the boot may release himself or herself.

You must learn from your Taxi Operator where this Interior Boot Lock is and how to operate it on any new taxi vehicle you drive.

M13 situation and M13 Alarm Switch

If you find yourself being threatened or robbed you must press the M13 alarm switch. This switch is a secret one which you must only press in case of attack or robbery.

The activation of this M13 alarm switch will give you radio priority and tell the radio operator that an M13 situation is taking place. The radio operator will alert the police and other taxis that you require urgent assistance.

Since you will have radio contact through your concealed microphone you should try to say your location while speaking to the attacker e.g. "I never thought I would be robbed outside the Casino!" or "I can't drive into Charles Street in Glebe as it's one way!" You should try to do this even though your Taxi has a GPS (Global Positioning System) fitted. Letting the radio operator know your position serves as a back up and may speed up your rescue.

You must learn the M13 procedure used by the Taxi Network you are driving for.

Before your shift always make sure you know where and how the M13 button is and how it works on your Taxi.

At all times try to remain calm and talk quietly. Your attacker may be as nervous and frightened as you are.

Never resist an attacker who has a weapon. Try to get out of the taxi and away from the assailant as quickly as possible.

Give the attacker whatever he, or she, demands including the taxi.

Your life and safety are not worth risking for a few dollars.

After an Attack or Robbery

If you have had the unfortunate experience of being attacked or robbed while driving a taxi you should, of course, seek medical help if required. As a Bailee Taxi Driver, your Taxi Operator must take out Workers Compensation Insurance, which should cover this in most cases.

Write down as soon as possible:

- a brief summary of the incident
- how it happened
- when it happened (time and date)
- where it happened
- what is your condition
- who it was reported to

Keep a copy of this report safely for yourself if you give the original to your operator or the police.

Complete an Incident Report and give to your Taxi Operator and Taxi Network as soon as possible.

You should also report the incident to the police. For serious incidents such as assault or robbery you will need to do this at a Police Station. Use the Police Assistance Line (PAL) on 121444 to report more minor incidents, such as fare evasion or persons damaging a vehicle.

Counseling after an attack

If an attack or robbery seriously affects you seek professional counseling.

Ask your Taxi Operator to advise you on this. If you have difficulty arranging this contact your Taxi Network.

Phone numbers for information about welfare, health and counseling services are available from the Victim Crime Bureau on 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063.

NSW Charter of Victims Rights

Victims of crime in NSW have a Charter of Victim's Rights to protect and promote their rights. The Charter establishes standards for the appropriate treatment of crime.

The Charter places a statutory obligation upon government agencies to ensure that a victim is at all times treated with courtesy and compassion, and that their rights and dignity are respected.

Among other things, the Charter recognises the rights of a victim to:

- information about, and access to welfare, health and counselling services
- privacy and protection
- information about the investigation of the crime, the prosecution of the accused and the trial process.

To find out more information about the NSW Charter of Victims Rights go to the Website reference given in the section on Useful Learning Resources at the end of this Module.

3. Safe Driving and Fatigue Management

In Module 5: Taxi Driving Skills we reviewed techniques for safe driving. Go back to this Module and remind yourself of the key strategies we looked at for safe driving. Safe driving is obviously a key element of OH&S for taxi drivers. At all times you must drive safely and make sure the vehicle is safe.

In addition to the ways of working we looked at in Module 5 we will look at the following topics in this Section which relate to safe driving:

- Use of seat belts
- Fuel handling
- Fatigue management

Seat Belts.

When considering the risk from attack by a passenger using the seat belt worn by the driver, drivers must also take into account the risk of injury by not wearing a seat belt in the event of a road accident. The risk of road accident injury is especially significant if the vehicle is fitted with a driver side air bag.

Fuel Handling

Fuel is very dangerous, whether using LPG, petrol or diesel.

At all times, for safety's sake:

- Always read and follow the fuel handling procedures as specified. If in any doubt seek guidance from fuel station staff.
- Never smoke or use a flame in the vicinity of fuel
- Do not use mobile phones when fuelling a vehicle – there is a possibility that this could cause an explosion
- Avoid direct contact with fuel and wash off skin immediately
- Avoid breathing in fuel fumes
- In the event of any incident seek medical and/or other emergency help as appropriate

Managing Fatigue

As a Taxi Driver you will be driving for long periods of time on your shifts. Taxi driving can be very tiring and it is important that you prevent becoming fatigued while driving.

Fatigue or over tiredness can be dangerous or even deadly for a Taxi Driver! You may fall asleep at the wheel. You may simply lose concentration.

Fatigue is one of the most common contributing factors to motor accidents.

Some tips for avoiding fatigue are:

- take regular amounts of sleep—**don't** drive all night and then stay up all day!
- if you feel fatigued stop and take a break
- take regular breaks **before** you get fatigued
- don't drive if you're taking medications that specifically prohibit driving—read the labels carefully
- take exercise to help you get fitter—you're less likely to get fatigued.

Fatigue symptoms

Watch out for fatigue symptoms:

- restlessness
- boredom
- lazy steering
- aches and pains
- sore or tired eyes

and take action **before** there is danger of an accident caused by fatigue.

Fatigue Management

Several useful fatigue management strategies for Taxi Drivers are listed below. Write notes on how you can apply them in your role as a new Taxi Driver.

1. Always take regular breaks when driving, every two hours is generally recommended
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

2. Be careful of any drugs or medications that may affect your driving ability
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

3. Make sure you sleep appropriately
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

4. Discuss any fatigue problems or issues with your Taxi Operator or Taxi Network, vary your shifts if needed
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

5. Take regular exercise
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

6. Drink plenty of water
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

7. Seek medical advice regarding fatigue if appropriate
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

8. Pace yourself by taking breaks and relaxing
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

9. If affected by fatigue (you feel very tired or are losing concentration) stop driving immediately and rest and recover
Write your notes here on how you can use this strategy

4. Safe Lifting

Back injuries are unfortunately one of the most common forms of workplace injury.

As a taxi driver you are involved in long periods of sitting and in sometimes stressful situations. This is not good for your back so try to stand up as often as you can and do gentle stretches.

One major source of back injuries is lifting incorrectly. As a taxi driver you often have to lift heavy luggage. Some useful tips are:

- Never twist as you lift or carry, always turn your whole body
- Never attempt to lift a load that is too heavy or too large, always test the weight of the load before lifting, sometimes a suitcase may be overweight and you cannot tell just by looking at it! If needed get assistance for heavy loads.
- Always lift loads close to your body, never with your arms stretched out as this puts more strain on you (There is a saying “Lift like a forklift not like a crane” which is useful advice as to how you should position your arms).
- Never jerk loads, always lift smoothly
- Always keep a straight back, bend your knees not your back when lifting
- Exercise properly to keep fit
- Try to avoid putting on too much body weight as this puts extra strain on your back
- Always seek professional health advice from qualified professionals if you have any back problems. Chiropractors specialise in back problems.
- If required, seek professional training and advice on your lifting

Note that for Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Service (WATS) drivers the Taxicare WATS Training Course provides specific practical information on safely maneuvering passengers in wheelchairs.

5. Accident or Breakdown Safety Procedures

In the event of an accident or breakdown always put the safety of yourself, your passengers and other road users first.

- Make sure everyone is clear from the scene unless they are injured and should not be moved.
- Always call emergency help in the event of injuries.
- Make sure other traffic is warned of road blockages, never endanger yourself or others in doing this.
- Never attempt to repair a vehicle if you are exposed to traffic danger e.g. don't change a tyre on a road with traffic passing close by.
- Call for breakdown help immediately the site is safe.
- Follow breakdown or accident procedures as specified by your operator or Taxi Network. If you don't know what they are find out immediately.
- Carry safety equipment such as warning signs and torches for use in emergency.
- Always record details of breakdowns or accidents in your diary including names and licence numbers of other parties and details of witnesses.
- Get an accident report form from the vehicle's insurance company and always keep in taxi. Learn how to fill it in.
- Do not admit liability (don't say "It's all my fault" or "I am to blame" to another party or your Taxi Operator's insurance company may refuse to pay claims).
- Report any incidents immediately to your Taxi Operator and Taxi Network.
- Arrange for alternative transport for your passengers through your Taxi Network.

6. Health and Stress Management

Looking after your health and managing your stress

There are many things that affect the health and stress of Taxi Drivers. Some of these may be beyond our control, but many can be controlled by sensible self-management. It is these things you **can** control that affect your health and stress which are focused on in this Section. They include:

- diet
- weight
- exercise
- smoking, alcohol and medication
- fatigue
- stress management.

In all of these areas this Section provides general information for educational purposes only. If you have, or suspect you may have, any health problems you are strongly advised to seek professional medical guidance.

Diet

Taxi Drivers have to be very careful that they do not rely only on 'convenience' type foods or take-aways while they are working. Often these foods are high in fat and sugar which may not be good for you over a long period. Generally it is better to have regular nutritious meals and avoid unplanned snacking.

Most Taxi Drivers' diets can be improved by eating more high fibre breads and cereals (preferably wholegrain) and vegetables and fruit. Cutting down on fats and sugars may not only help reduce weight but may reduce your blood cholesterol levels. Reducing salt in your diet may also be good for your health if you are having too much of it.

Weight

Healthy weight range charts can be obtained from your doctor or health department. If you are overweight you should consider losing weight as obesity can be related to many health problems, such as heart attacks. Your doctor, dietician or local health authority can give you professional advice on diet.

Weight is reduced by diet and exercise. Since most taxi drivers' working time is spent sitting it's important to get adequate exercise to balance this.

Exercise

Since taxi drivers spend most of their working time sitting, their opportunities for exercise while working are limited. It is therefore important that drivers balance this with regular exercise. Exercise, if carried out properly, can increase health and fitness.

Regular exercise can be of many forms —walking, jogging, going to the gym or playing sport. It helps keep you fit and you may find you feel a lot better when driving. Aerobic exercise such as fast walking or running increases your heart rate. It can also help you lose weight when taken with an appropriate diet.

It's best to find the exercise that suits you most. It doesn't have to be an exercise or sport that is over strenuous.

It's also a good idea to get out of the taxi-cab when you take regular breaks and walk around and stretch.

Gyms and health clubs can be useful sources of information in organising a fitness program.

Before undertaking any new vigorous exercise program you should get a medical check-up from your doctor.

Smoking

Smoking can affect the length of your life and it's quality. Smoking has been implicated as a factor influencing heart disease and stroke. It can also contribute to lung cancer and emphysema.

As a Taxi Driver it may be particularly tempting to smoke to while away the time between fares. Apart from health reasons it's also an expensive habit.

Cutting down or giving up smoking is not always easy if you're addicted. Most doctors and local health authorities can give you advice. There are now many programs run by hospitals to help you give up.

Remember that you must not smoke at any time in the taxi, even if you have no passengers in the cab, it is against the Regulations. Passengers must not smoke in the taxi and you are entitled to ask them to put out their cigarettes.

Alcohol

It is illegal to drive if your blood alcohol exceeds the prescribed limit. For Taxi Drivers this limit is **lower** than that for the general public.

For drink driving offences you may lose your driving licence. If you lose your driving licence you also lose your source of income so be very sensible.

Remember that alcohol levels can stay in the blood for many hours so you shouldn't go out drinking late at night and then drive early next day.

Alcohol, even within legal limits, slows your reflexes and can be a contributing factor in causing drivers to become drowsy.

Medications

When alcohol is taken in combination with certain medications this can affect driving ability. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist and always read the labels carefully.

Some medicines should not be taken at all when driving.

Obviously illegal drugs can affect driving performance and relations with passengers and should be avoided by the professional taxi driver.

Fatigue

Earlier in this Module we discussed the problems caused by fatigue for Taxi Drivers. Fatigue is a major contributing factor in motor vehicle accidents. As professional Taxi Drivers we must be careful to reduce fatigue as far as possible.

You will remember that earlier in this Module we also discussed some tips for avoiding fatigue. Since this topic is so important for safety let us review them here:

- take regular amounts of sleep—**don't** drive all night and then stay up all day!
- if you feel fatigued stop and take a break
- take regular breaks **before** you get fatigued
- don't drive if you're taking medications that specifically prohibit driving—read the labels carefully
- take exercise to help you get fitter—you're less likely to get fatigued.

If you have problems with fatigue you must take action. Change your habits, change your shifts or consult a doctor as appropriate.

Stress Management

Stress and the Taxi Driver

Being under stress can have different symptoms for different people. Being worried a lot, getting irritable, feeling tense can be signs of stress.

Some stress isn't always a bad thing. A small amount actually keeps us alert. For instance, when we play sport some stress can be enjoyable and help us go on to win. Problems come when we get so stressed it affects our performance.

Factors affecting stress

Taxi Drivers are prone to stress just like any other group, but certain elements of the job can make it particularly stressful for some people.

Exercise



Exercise

Stress and Taxi Driving

What are some things to do with taxi driving that might make you stressed? List your ideas below.

Write your ideas here.

Example: Not knowing a location

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



Review of Exercise

Stress and Taxi Driving

Here are some things to do with taxi driving that might make Taxi Drivers stressed. Check your answers with the ideas below.

- difficult customers
- other road users who are thoughtless
- worry about money
- tiredness
- being new to the work of a Taxi Driver
- not knowing routes or locations
- not understanding all the Regulations
- driving in heavy traffic
- bringing stress from your home life to the workplace

You have probably identified several other things that might make you stressed.

Ways of dealing with stress

There are many ways of dealing with stress. Some approaches suit some people better than others. Here are a few approaches:

- be aware of your attitude to things in your life
- talk things over
- keep fit and healthy
- get help if you need it
- relax.

Be aware of the way you see things

Some Taxi Drivers get very stressed by other drivers' or customers' behaviour. Taxi Drivers must learn to control their stress levels by not getting too upset. Remember that how upset you become depends on **your** attitude.

If a driver cuts in front of you suddenly there's little point in getting furious. If you don't agree with a passenger don't get involved in an argument, just let it go. One of the important skills of the professional driver is the ability to keep an emotional 'distance' between you and the passenger while still giving pleasant and helpful service. If a passenger is annoying there will probably be a really pleasant one next time.

Friendly approach

Remember that if you can keep a pleasant, friendly approach you're less likely to get involved in arguments. Create a pleasant, friendly atmosphere in your taxi and you're more likely to have pleasant, friendly conversations with passengers. Of course there may be some situations where being pleasant doesn't help but generally speaking the driver who sets the tone of friendly and helpful service is less likely to have problems.

Money

A Taxi Driver will sometimes have a day when she or he doesn't make much money. Try not to worry about the day's takings. Focus on the weekly or monthly average and try to build that up.

Talking things over

Sometimes when you get stressed about something you can ease the stress by talking about the problem with a friend or colleague. Often just talking about something can help relieve the pressure that builds when you "bottle up" your feelings.

Keeping fit and healthy

Being unfit, sick, tired or on a poor diet can all contribute to a high stress level. Make sure you keep fit. Always be aware of your level of fitness and well-being. Plan to keep as fit and healthy as possible.

Getting help if you need it

If you feel very stressed over a period of time it may be a good idea to get some help. Your doctor, hospital, health authority or a stress counselor may be able to advise you how best to manage stress. It's better to seek help rather than let the situation get to an explosive level.

Relax

The best way for you to relax is your choice. Sometimes people find sports, hobbies or being with friends the best way to relax. Some people prefer relaxation exercises or meditation. Whatever suits you is probably best for you.

Take the time to find the methods of relaxation that you are comfortable with.

7. Insurance, Worker's Compensation and Trauma Counselling

As a new Taxi Driver you must be aware of your responsibilities and rights regarding insurance, Worker's Compensation and trauma counselling.

Insurance

Your Taxi Operator **must** take out appropriate insurances to indemnify you (e.g. cover you) against all claims that come about if the taxi you are driving is **involved in a motor accident**. This means that whether you are at fault or not, all costs for the Taxi, other vehicles, property or persons who are injured must be covered.

Your Taxi Operator:

- must maintain insurance policies and provide evidence of their currency
- must indemnify the taxi driver in relation to any damage, **including any excess payable** on a claim, arising out of the use of the taxi cab.

As a taxi driver you

- must be aware of the insurance policy indemnifying the driver
- must know that the policy **is current and is always carried in the taxi- cab at all times**.

If you are aware of the responsibilities of your taxi operator, it is easier in claims settlement, should the taxi you are driving be involved in an accident.

Your responsibilities include:

- You must report all motor vehicle accidents to your Taxi Operator
- You must not admit liability to other parties in the case of an accident
- You must co-operate with the police
- You must drive in a safe way with due care and concern
- You must drive with due care for the comfort and safety of passengers.

Public Liability Insurance

Public liability insurance covers you against claims for costs for accidents that are not caused by a motor accident.

Such items may include:

- Damage to luggage when put down by the roadside
- Damage caused when you carry luggage into a property e.g. you knock over a valuable vase when helping someone by carrying a suitcase into their hall
- Damage to a frail person as they are getting out of a Taxi

Your Taxi Operator is not obliged to have this insurance. However it is cheap to add to an insurance package (less than \$100 per year usually) and may prove very valuable if you or your Taxi Operator is sued. You may wish to discuss this with your Taxi Operator.

Worker's Compensation

Your Taxi Operator must take out Worker's Compensation Insurance if he or she has Bailee Taxi Drivers.

Worker's Compensation Insurance covers your injuries or health problems caused as a direct result of something that happens in the workplace, such as back injuries caused by lifting luggage.

(Note that Workers Compensation Insurance does not cover injuries caused by motor vehicle accidents that occur while driving the taxi. These are covered by separate motor vehicle insurances as described earlier)

Your responsibilities include:

- You must report **all** accidents, injuries or safety related incidents to your Taxi Operator
- You must seek appropriate medical treatment or assessment
- You must co-operate with your Taxi Operator in following up any Worker's Compensation claims

Trauma Counselling

In the event of an attack, robbery or accident you may suffer from not just physical harm but also psychological trauma. Symptoms may be sleeplessness, anxiety, lack of concentration or many other forms of psychological disturbance. This is quite common in situations of extreme trauma.

You should not be ashamed of this and you are advised to seek trauma counselling. This is a professional and confidential service that helps you deal with problems you may experience as a result of a traumatic situation. If you feel that you may benefit from trauma counselling following an attack, robbery or accident ask your Taxi Operator to arrange for Trauma Counselling for you. The cost of Trauma Counselling is paid through Worker's Compensation Insurance in genuine workplace related trauma situations, so you should not have to pay in these circumstances.

If your Taxi Operator cannot or does not help you with Trauma Counselling suggest they contact the NSW Taxi Council for contact numbers of Trauma Counsellors. If you still do not receive help with Trauma Counselling from your Taxi Operator contact your Taxi Network for help and advice. Hopefully, you will never need trauma counselling, but it is useful to know about it if a traumatic situation should occur for you or a colleague.

If any passengers are involved in a situation that may involve trauma, such as a vehicle accident, you should pass on details to your Taxi Operator.

Useful Learning Resources for this Module

The following list of learning resources will help your study in this Module.

Health brochures

Your doctor or medical centre will have many brochures available on health and stress management issues

WorkCover brochures

Your local WorkCover office will provide brochures and other information on workplace OH&S

Your doctor and/or health professional

Your doctor and/or health professional is a valuable source of advice and information. Have regular medical checkups and seek advice on any aspect of health that concerns you. Most health professionals also have brochures available.

Library and/or bookshop

Your local library and/or bookshop will have a wide range of books on health. Remember to seek qualified advice if you have a particular problem

If you have access to the Internet you will find the list of useful Website links for this Module on the next page particularly useful.

There may be people or organisations in your area that may help you with advice or information in the topics covered in this Module.

List below any people, organisations, books, magazines or Internet sites you think may help you in your study for this Module.

My list of useful resources for this Module

(For example people, organisations, books, magazines or Internet sites)

Useful Website Links for this Module

Some of the useful Websites for this Module include:

www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

WorkCover NSW manages the State's workplace safety, injury management and workplace compensation systems.

Victims of Crime Bureau

To get to this site:

Go to the NSW Government Website at www.nsw.gov.au

Select "Law & Justice" box on home page

On the "Law & Justice" page look for 'Safe Communities' heading and then click on "Victim of Crime"

When page with list comes up click on Victims of Crime Bureau.

Health NSW

To get to this site:

Go to the NSW Government Website at www.nsw.gov.au

Select "Health" box on home page

You then have a wide range of health topics available.

www.nswtaxi.org.au

The NSW Taxi Council Website updates items relating to driver safety and health.

www.taxicareprofessional.com

An updated list of current relevant Websites is provided on the TAXICARE Professional course Website

www.taxi-l.org

This taxi Website has a section containing "Noteworthy Taxi Industry Contribution to TAXI-L Discussion Group". These include at the time of writing:

- *A driver's best weapon* on taxi driver tips to reduce chance of robbery (Sven Nilsson, 18 January 2000)
- *Night driver concerns and sleep* on tips for managing sleep (J. Lanigan, 29 July 1999)