

Information Bulletin

PT 301 (09.20)

Driver Authorisation

What is driver authorisation (DA)?

The *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* requires drivers of motor vehicles used to provide particular public passenger services to hold DA.

The purpose of DA is to maximise public confidence in relation to the drivers of motor vehicles used to provide public passenger services. This purpose includes ensuring drivers of public passenger vehicles are suitable persons, having regard to the safety of children and other vulnerable members of the community, the personal safety of passengers and their property, public safety and the reputation of public passenger transport.

Categories of DA

A driver must hold a DA that authorises the holder for the kind of public passenger service being provided.

From 1 September 2018 there are two types of DA:

1. Booked Hire/Taxi DA, (BHTX DA), which authorises the holder to drive a vehicle being used to provide any kind of public passenger service for which DA is required. This means that holders of BHTX DA are automatically authorised to provide services under General DA.
2. General DA, (Genr DA), which authorises the holder to drive a vehicle being used to provide any public passenger service other than a booked hire service or a taxi service.

Note: This information bulletin does not cover Restricted DA which is issued by an accredited operator of a community or courtesy transport service. For information about Restricted DA, please refer to the following information bulletin: [PT305 Restricted Driver Authorisation for Drivers](#).

Transitional arrangements for existing DA holders

Holders of DA issued prior to 1 September 2018 are automatically transferred to the new DA category as set out below and their DA card will be updated to reflect this when they renew it.

| New DA category | DA code (before 01/09/2018) | Services permitted under DA from 01/09/2018 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Booked Hire/Taxi (BHTX) | BHTX Taxi* Limo* | <u>Any</u> public passenger service for which DA is required including services provided under General DA. Required by drivers of taxi and booked hire services (incl. services provided under a limo service licence). |
| General (Genr) | Genr Sche* TrMc* | Any public passenger service for which DA is required <u>other than</u> a booked hire service or taxi service. |

* These codes are being phased out and DA cards will be updated at the time of next renewal.

Requirements for obtaining DA

Entitlement to work in Australia

Before an application can be accepted, a person must provide evidence that they are—

- an Australian citizen; or
- a permanent resident of Australia; or
- a New Zealand citizen who is the holder of a special category visa as defined by the *Migration Act 1958* (Commonwealth), section 32; or
- entitled under a visa granted under the *Migration Act 1958* (Commonwealth) to work in Australia.

If you are an Australian citizen, permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen holding a special category visa, any of the following documents will be accepted as evidence of an Australian work entitlement—

- current green Medicare card
- full Australian birth certificate
- Queensland birth extract
- Australian citizenship certificate or extract
- Australian naturalisation certificate
- Australian passport (which cannot be expired for more than two years)
- Repatriation Health Card - for all conditions (Gold Card)
- New Zealand passport
- evidence of Australian permanent residency.

If you are not an Australian citizen, permanent resident or New Zealand citizen holding a special category visa, you must present your overseas passport or identity document such as your ImmiCard at the time of application and upon renewal. You must also complete the Department of Transport and Main Roads' [Authority to Check a Visa Holder's Work Entitlement](#) (form F4595) so the department can verify your entitlement to work in Australia before your application can be accepted.

Driver licence requirements

Booked Hire/Taxi DA applicants must –

1. Hold a current Australian open or restricted driver licence.
2. For at least 3 years in total, have held an open, restricted, provisional or probationary driver licence (Australian or overseas).
3. Have held for a continuous period of at least 1 year any of the following licences or a series of the following licences:
 - an Australian open, restricted, provisional or probationary driver licence;
 - a corresponding foreign licence issued by an *experienced driver recognition country* or a *recognised country* listed on the Austroads website. (These are countries recognised as having similar driver licensing standards to Australia.)

General DA applicants must –

1. Hold a current Australian open or restricted driver licence.
2. For at least 3 years in total, have held an open, restricted, provisional or probationary driver licence (Australian or overseas).

Suitability requirements

DA applicants and holders must satisfy various suitability requirements, including medical fitness, satisfactory criminal history, and satisfactory traffic history. Failure to maintain these requirements can result in an application being refused or a current DA being cancelled, suspended or amended.

Medical fitness

DA applicants and holders must demonstrate medical fitness to drive a motor vehicle used to provide a public passenger service. Applicants for grant and renewal of DA must provide a medical certificate issued for a commercial vehicle driver on [Form F3712 Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver](#). The medical assessment must be conducted by a medical practitioner in accordance with the commercial medical standards set out in the *Assessing Fitness to Drive – For Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers* publication issued by Austroads and the National Transport Commission.

A medical certificate must be no more than six months old when presented to the department. For the purposes of DA, once a medical certificate has been presented to the department it may remain valid for up to five years from its date of issue unless an earlier expiry date is specified on the certificate.

Applicants are required to meet any costs associated with obtaining a medical certificate.

Criminal history checks

DA applicants and holders must have a satisfactory criminal history having regard to the safety of children and other vulnerable members of the community, as well as the personal safety of passengers and their property.

Criminal history checks are undertaken by the department on all DA applicants before an application can be approved. Applicants cannot provide their own criminal history check, because the criminal history check information provided to the department for DA purposes contains more historical information than is normally released. Under the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*, a conviction is defined as including a finding of guilt or the acceptance of a plea of guilty by a court, whether or not a conviction is recorded.

DA holders are subject to ongoing monitoring of any changes to their criminal history.

For more information, please refer to information bulletin [PT17 Driver Authorisation – Effect of a Driver Disqualifying Offence](#).

Traffic history check

An applicant must have a driving history considered suitable to hold DA. For more information refer to information bulletin [PT16 Driver Authorisation - Effect of a Driving History](#).

Refusal, amendment, suspension, and cancellation of DA

Grounds for refusal, amendment, suspension, or cancellation of DA include—

- Unsuitable criminal history such as a conviction for a driver disqualifying offence or being charged with a driver disqualifying offence and the charge has not been heard or finally discharged.
- Unsuitable traffic history.
- Driver licence suspension, cancellation, disqualification or expiry.
- Failure to comply with a standard or other requirement applicable to DA.
- Provision of false or misleading documentation or information, in relation to an application for DA.
- Failure to meet medical fitness standards.
- If the chief executive considers it necessary in the public interest.
- Previous cancellation or suspension of a DA.

Period of issue

Applicants for grant or renewal of DA can apply for a term of one to five years for their authorisation. Generally a minimum period of one year is required unless a special circumstance exists. DA may be issued on a part year basis for the purpose of aligning the expiry date with other industry authorities issued by the department.

The term of a DA cannot exceed the expiry of the medical certificate provided. For visa holders, the maximum term of DA cannot exceed the expiry date of the Australian work entitlement.

Fees

DA fees are set in the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018* and are usually subject to change from 1 July each year.

As at 1 July 2020:

- A criminal history check fee of \$45.70 applies to all new DA applicants.
- Booked Hire/Taxi DA applicants (new and renewal) must also pay a fee as set out in the table below.

| <i>Term of Booked Hire/Taxi DA</i> | <i>Fee payable</i> |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 year | \$156.85 |
| 2 years | \$243.80 |
| 3 years | \$324.95 |
| 4 years | \$406.10 |
| 5 years | \$487.35 |

How to apply

- Obtain a [Driver Authorisation Application form \(F2978\)](#) and relevant information bulletins.
- Complete the application form and lodge it with evidence of your identity and your Australian work entitlement at a Department of Transport and Main Roads customer service centre or at a selected QGAP. Locations can be accessed at: www.qld.gov.au/transport.
- All applicable fees must be paid at the time of lodgement.
- The medical certificate can be lodged together with the DA application or after criminal and driving history checks have been completed.
- All requirements of an application must be finalised within three months otherwise the application will lapse and a new application will need to be lodged before a DA can be issued.

Decision on application

The majority of applications are finalised within 2 to 4 weeks. Some applications can take longer while national traffic and criminal history checks are being sourced from other agencies. Applicants will be notified of the approval or refusal of their application. If an application is approved, an Industry Authority card will be sent to the applicant's postal address within 7-14 days of the approval. Upon approval of an application, an interim industry authority can be used as evidence of DA until the industry authority card is received. Applicants can elect to receive their interim industry authority by email. This can be done by signing up for e-reminders prior to, or at time of application. Once signed up, DA holders will also receive

a range of emails when applicable, including when their industry authority card is posted and 3 days before their industry authority expires. Please refer to www.qld.gov.au/transport/enotice/ to sign up for e-reminders or more information.

Authorised Driver - Booked Hire and Taxi Display Card

Successful applicants for Booked Hire/Taxi DA will be issued an Authorised Driver - Booked Hire and Taxi Display Card. This card must be displayed in a **taxi** that is available for hire in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, Redcliffe, Toowoomba, Bribie Island, Gympie, Bundaberg, Cairns, Yeppoon, Gladstone, Hervey Bay, Innisfail, Mackay, Maryborough, Mt Isa, Rockhampton, Townsville and Warwick.

Drivers of taxis outside of the above areas and drivers of other public passenger vehicles, (for example, a booked hire vehicle) may voluntarily display the card if they wish. For more information, refer to information bulletin [PT330 Authorised Driver - Booked Hire and Taxi Display Card](#).

Responsibilities of DA holders

Holders of DA must conduct themselves responsibly, be responsible in the act of driving, be capable of safely operating a public passenger vehicle, and be accountable for complying with appropriate standards. For more information refer to information bulletin [PT307 Driver Responsibilities](#).

Non-compliance with requirements may result in a fine or the amendment, suspension or cancellation of DA.

DA holders must notify the department if charged with a driver disqualifying offence and furthermore must notify the department about the result of the charge. For more information refer to information bulletin [PT17 Driver Authorisation - Effect of a Driver Disqualifying Offence](#).

DA holders must notify the department if there is any change in their medical fitness that makes them continuously unfit to safely operate a vehicle for more than one month.

Reviews of decisions affecting DA

If a person is dissatisfied with a decision regarding DA (for example, refusal to grant) they may request an internal review of the decision. If the person is not satisfied with the outcome of the review, the person may appeal to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal for an external review. For more information, refer to the information bulletin [PT18 Reviews of Decisions affecting Operator Accreditation and Driver Authorisation](#).

Note: If a person has been convicted of a *category A driver disqualifying offence* there is no provision to appeal against the ineligibility to apply for, or hold, DA.

Additional information

This bulletin has been produced as a guideline and is not a reference to a point of law. Clarification of any information in this bulletin may be obtained by contacting your local passenger transport office. Details of passenger transport locations can be accessed at www.translink.com.au/contact-us.

Customer service centre locations can be accessed at www.qld.gov.au.

The *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*, *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018* and *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010* can be accessed on the internet at www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

Additional information about public passenger services is available on the Department of Transport and Main Roads internet site at www.tmr.qld.gov.au/information_bulletins.