

# Taxi Subsidy Scheme

## Information for Taxi Industry - Booking Entities and Drivers

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## 1. Taxi Subsidy Scheme - Overview

The Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) is a Queensland Government program that provides access to affordable taxi transport through subsidised travel for people with severe disability.

TSS membership is approved following assessment by Queensland Health (QH) against strict eligibility criteria.

Approved members are issued with a TSS Smartcard which includes a photograph of the member and an expiry date. The TSS smartcard will not work after the expiry date.

The TSS member must have their smartcard with them and must travel in the taxi for the entire trip for the subsidy to apply. Other people can travel in the taxi with the TSS member, and the subsidy can be applied, but the smartcard cannot be given to someone else to use.

To apply the TSS subsidy, the smartcard is processed once only per continual trip, at the start of a trip.

The value of the subsidy is calculated on the total metered fare for a continual trip, i.e. from Point A to Point B. A TSS member presenting a current TSS Smartcard is entitled to receive a 50% subsidy with a maximum claimable amount of \$30.00.

For example:

- If the fare is \$15.00 TSS subsidise \$7.50 and the passenger pays \$7.50
- If the fare is \$60.00 TSS subsidise \$30.00 and the passenger pays \$30.00.

TSS members can use any taxi service throughout Queensland. Members also have access to subsidised taxi travel in other Australian states and territories that is paid by the Queensland Government. See Section 6 for more information about interstate travel vouchers.

At no time is a driver allowed to retain a TSS membership card. If a member suggests this, you are not at any time permitted to retain a member's card.

## 2. Trip processing and management

Data from all TSS trips must meet strict validation criteria prior to approval. If the trip data doesn't meet the criteria, it is either flagged to the TSS team for further assessment or returned to the Booking Entity for review.

The Booking Entity is required to respond to trips for review via the TSS portal by attaching supporting trip data, documentation or comments to verify the trip details.

Once the additional information has been uploaded into the TSS portal, the TSS team will undertake an assessment and the trip will be processed accordingly.

Trips are also Not Approved when the Booking Entity has agreed to reject a trip via the TSS Portal.

Trips in Review remain on the Booking Entity's TSS Portal for 3 months.

After 3 months, unactioned trips will be returned to TSS and appear on the next Detailed Invoice Report as 'Not Approved' \$0.00.

#### NOTE

If a driver contacts the Booking Entity to advise they haven't received payment for a trip, the trips in review in the TSS portal should be checked before contacting the TSS.

## 2.1.1 Smartcard and Trip FAQ's

### What is a TSS smartcard?

A TSS Smartcard is an electronic membership and identity card that is issued to approved members. It includes the members photograph and an expiry date.

### How does the Smartcard work?

The TSS member must advise the driver at the start of the trip that they are a TSS member and present their Smartcard.

The TSS smartcard allows the driver to assess the members eligibility for the subsidy by inserting the card into the reader. The card reader then accesses the TSS CRM to inform the driver if the passenger pays the subsidised fare or the full fare.

1. If the reader displays that the Smartcard is EXPIRED or CANCELLED the card is not valid and the passenger must pay full fare.

Note: you will occasionally get a message for the Smartcard to be inserted, this is normal and is done to validate membership.

2. If the card is valid and you receive a message as per attached Quick Reference for the Terminal Messages guide you must complete a RUS docket (See RUS Dockets – Information for Drivers).
3. Finalise payment and hand the Smartcard back to the TSS member.

The TSS smartcard will not work after the expiry date.

The TSS member must have their smartcard with them and must travel in the taxi for the full trip for the subsidy to apply.

Other people can travel in the taxi with the TSS member, and the subsidy can be applied, but the smartcard cannot be given to someone else to use.

## What is the smartcard reader?

The smartcard reader is the Cabcharge EFTPOS terminal which is used in taxis throughout Queensland.

It is a legal requirement that the approved card reader must be interfaced with the taxi meter so that the fare is automatically calculated. ([see TOPT Regulation Section 130\(2\)](#))

It is also a legal requirement that the operator of the service must ensure a connection is kept between the taximeter and the approved card reader while the taxi is in use so that the electronic transmission of information is enabled. ([see TOPT Regulation Section 130\(3\)](#))

## What needs to be verified when the passenger presents a TSS Smartcard?

Check the photo on the Smartcard. If the photo does not match with the passenger in the taxi do not accept the card.

Check the expiry date on the Smartcard. If the card is out of date do not accept the card.

## How do drivers process the subsidy?

1. Tap the card on the Smartcard Reader (Cabcharge EFTPOS terminal) at the beginning of a continual journey.

The reader must be interfaced with the meter and **the card must only be processed once per continual trip.**

2. If the reader displays an error message that the Smartcard is EXPIRED or CANCELLED, the card is not valid, the passenger must pay the full fare.

Note: Drivers may get a message requiring them to insert the Smartcard in the EFTPOS machine. This is normal and is done to validate membership.

3. At the end of the continual journey the card reader will display the:

- total fare
- TSS subsidy amount
- amount the TSS member is required to pay.

4. If the card is valid and the driver receives one of the following messages as per the Quick Reference Guide for Terminal Messages (see section 9), the driver must complete a Restricted User Slip docket. (See Attachment 2 - RUS Dockets for more information). RUS dockets are also known as 'TSS Voucher'.

- Cannot read card. Try again or use TSS voucher
- CRD valid problem. Try again or use TSS voucher.
- Card not yet valid. Use TSS voucher.

5. Finalise the payment and hand the Smartcard back to the TSS member.

### **Does TSS pay for waiting time?**

No. The TSS provides a subsidy for transport for members of the scheme. The subsidy does not extend to waiting time charges if the member is not in the taxi.

When the taxi reaches the destination, the driver must complete the trip and the transaction is processed.

If the driver agrees to wait, the passenger must pay the full fare for the waiting time. The driver must not start another TSS transaction until the passenger returns to the taxi to begin the next trip.

### **A passenger has asked a driver to retain their TSS membership card, what should the driver do?**

At no time is a driver allowed to retain a TSS membership card. If a member suggests this, you are not at any time permitted to retain a member's card.

### **Are there any instances where the TSS subsidy claim will not be paid?**

Yes.

- For the second journey if the driver has split a trip where the fare is going to be more than \$50.00.  
Members may ask you to do this so they pay less, however TSS will only pay a maximum subsidy of \$25.00 per continual trip.
- If you are claiming for waiting time and the subsidy being claimed is more than the calculated metered fare.
- If the trip information doesn't meet the TSS validation criteria.

### **Will payments be processed at the same time each week?**

The TSS process payments every week excluding the Qld Government compulsory shut down period over the Christmas break, usually from 25 December to the first business day in January. Payments are made weekly to the Booking Entity who then distribute the payment to drivers.

TSS aim to process payments on the same day each week.

Delays may be experienced due to unavoidable issues such as Public Holidays.

### **NOTE**

Payment may not be made for all claimed trips during a week at the same time. Some of the trips may be under Review and TSS is waiting for information from the Booking Entity.

If that happens, please check the next payment batch and if the payment still isn't there, contact the Booking Entity.

Any questions relating to the above should be raised with the Booking Entity

### **3. Restricted User Slips (RUS)**

Restricted User Slips (RUS) are manual paper TSS vouchers processed by drivers in exempted taxi service areas (rural)\* or if a TSS membership Smartcard cannot be processed electronically and is not showing as EXPIRED or CANCELLED on the TSS Smartcard reader.

RUS voucher books and imprinter machines are provided by Cabcharge Australia.

RUS dockets must always be carried in the taxi as stated under Section 131 (1) of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018.

Trips processed through RUS dockets aren't received electronically. Therefore, TSS require documentation to indicate that the trip has occurred or that the driver has attempted to process the Smartcard.

#### **3.1.1 RUS Dockets FAQ's**

##### **When should I complete a RUS docket?**

- When the Smartcard reader is faulty (this must be addressed urgently to remain compliant with legislation); or
- When the Smartcard system is unavailable; or
- If the Smartcard isn't working for reasons other than the card is expired or cancelled.
- If the card is valid and the driver receives one of the following messages:
  - Cannot read card. Try again or use TSS voucher
  - CRD valid problem. Try again or use TSS voucher.
  - Card not yet valid. Use TSS voucher.
- If you are a taxi in an exempted taxi service area (rural)\*

\* More information about exempted taxi service areas can be found here: [Taxi fares, service areas and maps \(Department of Transport and Main Roads\) \(tmr.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/taxi-fares-service-areas-and-maps)

##### **How do I use the RUS dockets?**

- Imprint the TSS member's Smartcard onto the RUS using the imprint machine (do not hand write)
- Fill out the RUS docket with the required information.
- Ask the TSS member to sign the docket if possible, if not, write 'UTS' for 'unable to sign'.

- Give the Smartcard back to the member
- Retain a copy of the receipt if one was produced

### **What supporting documentation is required?**

This is dependent on the reason for the RUS docket being used:

- The receipt showing the error message; or
- The fare receipt; or
- Booking system trip data; or
- Fault report.

### **How do I submit RUS dockets?**

- Attach the supporting documentation to the RUS.
- Submit the documents to the Booking Entity.
- The Booking Entity will forward the RUS to TSS for processing and payment.

### **Are all RUS dockets automatically accepted by TSS?**

No.

If the TSS receive a RUS docket which does not comply with the above requirements, it will be returned to the Booking Entity with a request to provide appropriate supporting information.

### **Are there reasons why a RUS docket cannot be paid?**

Yes.

- When the submitted RUS docket is incomplete. All details must be provided.
- When an expired or cancelled Smartcard has been processed.
- When the RUS is duplicated with an electronic trip.
- Where Smartcard details have been handwritten not imprinted onto the RUS.

### **Will I still receive the Lift Payment when I've used a RUS?**

Yes.

Your Lift Payment will apply to the trip and be processed in the same way as an electronic trip.

You will receive your payment once the RUS has been processed by TSS.

**Any questions relating to RUS dockets should be raised with the Booking Entity.**



## 4. Lift Payments

TMR pays a lift payment of \$20 (inclusive of GST). This is paid to the taxi company for each eligible Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) trip.

Trips eligible for a lift payment are those completed in an approved wheelchair accessible taxi, to transport a Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) member, who has provided health professional certification that they are dependent on a wheelchair outside of their home.

Note that some TSS members may use a wheelchair but have not provided health professional certification that they are dependent on a wheelchair outside of their home. These members will not attract a lift payment.

This payment applies to each eligible trip by electronic transaction or Restricted User Slip (RUS).

The incentive does not apply to mobility scooters for TSS members who have not provided health professional certification that they are dependent on a wheelchair outside of their home, or for trips in taxis that are not an approved wheelchair accessible taxi.

### Note:

- The incentive is separate from TSS subsidy payments and **must not** be added to the fare under any circumstances.
- Drivers are only eligible for one lift payment per trip. They **must not** process the Smartcard more than once per continual trip i.e. from Point A to Point B.
- Drivers cannot charge for loading time i.e. the driver must not turn the meter on until the passenger has been loaded and secured in the taxi. Penalties apply.
- The Lift Payment can only be applied to approved TSS trips.

The Lift Payment is included in the weekly TSS subsidy payments to:

- a) Booking Entities in metered areas, or;
- b) Owner/operators in exempt areas.

### The Lift Payment will be paid for eligible trips when:

- The passenger is a current TSS member and is recorded in the TSS system as eligible.
- The vehicle is a WAT.
- The trip is logged into a taxi company booking system. (does not apply for exempt taxis)
- The driver processes the Smartcard belonging to the member who is in the wheelchair.
- Quoted and fixed fares are processed through the taximeter at the start of a journey. (taximeter does not apply for exempt taxis)

### The Lift Payment will not be applied if the:

- Smartcard is processed more than once during a continuous trip.
- passenger is not a current member of the TSS.
- passenger is not eligible for the lift payment.

- smartcard processed doesn't belong to the TSS member who is loaded into the WAT in their wheelchair.
- TSS member has not provided health professional recommendation that they always use a wheelchair for travel or they choose uses a mobility scooter or other mobility device.
- taxi isn't a WAT.
- Trip or Lift Payment does not meet the validation criteria.

#### **4.1.1 Lift Payment FAQ's**

##### **Why hasn't the Lift Payment been paid for a wheelchair trip?**

- The TSS member isn't recorded on the TSS system as requiring a wheelchair.
- TSS hasn't been advised of the WAT vehicle fleet number and T-plate number.
- The driver hasn't processed the Smartcard of the TSS member who is in a wheelchair.
- The driver has processed the Smartcard more than once on a continual trip.
- The TSS trip relating to the Lift Payment has been not approved by TSS.

##### **What to do if you consider the Lift Payment should have been paid.**

1. The Taxi company should contact TSS by e-mail on [tssu@translink.com](mailto:tssu@translink.com) and provide the trip date, time, and taxi fleet number or Tplate number, along with the receipt and MT data for the trip.
2. TSS will review the CRM to verify the members wheelchair status, If TSS can confirm from the original application that the TSS member is dependent on a wheelchair, the CRM will be updated, and Lift Payments will be applied retrospectively to a maximum of 3 months.
3. If unconfirmed, the Lift Payment won't be applied.
4. You will receive a reply e-mail advising of the outcome for each query.

##### **How do I claim the lift payment?**

Administering the Lift Payment is the same process used to administer TSS payments. There are no additional steps to claim the Lift Payment.

The Lift Payments must be logged through the taxi company booking system to enable the payment to be reconciled against an eligible trip and distributed.

Subject to automatic confirmation through the TSS system, payment for the Lift Payment trip is expected to be paid at the same time as the TSS payment for the same trip.

##### **Do I just receive one lift payment per trip?**

Yes. This means that the passenger is loaded and unloaded at the commencement and end of the trip. If the same taxi takes the customer on their next trip, this will be a new trip requiring them to be loaded and unloaded.

### **If I also do the return trip, am I entitled to another lift payment?**

If the member has been categorised as requiring to travel in a wheelchair outside their home, then you may be eligible for each trip that was completed.

The driver is required to have loaded and unloaded the member at the start and finish locations. All trips will then be reviewed by TSS.

### **My passenger has asked me to retain their TSS membership card, what do I do?**

At no time is a driver allowed to retain a TSS membership card.

If a member suggests this, you are not at any time permitted to retain a member's card.

### **If my passenger has just become more dependent on their wheelchair, how can I ensure I receive the lift payment?**

Under legislation, a driver is to ensure that they always transport someone in a wheelchair, regardless of whether they are a TSS member or not.

If a TSS member has not been categorised as requiring a wheelchair upon application, then a lift payment will not apply to the trip.

If a member's health has deteriorated and they are now required to travel in a wheelchair the member can contact TSS on 1300 134 755.

They will be provided with information about the process to support a change to their membership.

### **The passenger said they prefer to use their mobility scooter, and they don't use a wheelchair, am I eligible for the TSS lift payment?**

No. A mobility scooter is not a wheelchair and therefore a lift fee will not be applied.

### **Can a driver contact TSS if they want to know if a TSS member is approved as being in a wheelchair?**

No. TSS cannot disclose any personal information regarding members.

If a TSS member has been approved as being in a wheelchair, then driver will be eligible to a lift fee, and this will automatically be paid, along with the trip payment.

### **Important Note:**

It is the responsibility of the Booking Entity to advise TSS of any changes to WAT vehicles  
TSS can only review the Lift Payments for trips dated 3 months or less.

Where TSS haven't been notified of a new/changed WAT, TSS can only back pay Lift Payments to 14 business days.

If you have any questions, please email your query to TSS at [tssu@translink.com.au](mailto:tssu@translink.com.au)

## **5. Exempted taxi service areas (rural)**

Certain taxi service areas have been declared exempt to enable the establishment of a taxi service, which would not be viable if metered taxi license conditions were to be met.

The existence of these taxi services, albeit at differing levels of provision compared to metropolitan areas, is considered to be a valuable transport means in communities where transport options are limited.

If the taxi is exempt from having a meter, drivers are required to use Restricted Use Slips (RUS dockets/TSS vouchers) for all TSS trips.

The TSS member is still required to present their card and the driver needs to check the photograph and expiry date.

## **6. Interstate Travel Vouchers**

Each state and territory have their own Taxi Subsidy Scheme.

All schemes provide their members with paper vouchers for use in taxis in other states.

Drivers will be required to process the interstate vouchers for TSS members travelling in Queensland from other states and territories.

The interstate travel vouchers are processed manually.

Drivers need to read and complete the voucher carefully to ensure all required information is recorded and the correct subsidy is applied.

## **7. Misuse**

Misrepresentation or fraudulent use of the TSS is an offence under the Transport Operations (passenger Transport Act 1994 and the Transport Operations (passenger transport) Regulation 2018.

Any misuse of the TSS smartcard is viewed as a serious offence and will result in legal action or other penalties imposed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

All suspected incidents of dishonest use of the TSS should be reported immediately to the Department of Transport and Main Roads by phone on 1300 134 755 or emailing [tssu@translink.com.au](mailto:tssu@translink.com.au)

## Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018

The full Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018 is available at [www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2018-0119](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2018-0119).

Specific regulations governing the Taxi Subsidy Scheme are addressed under Division 7 of the Regulation and include the following:

### **Section 81**

*the driver of a taxi available for hire must not refuse to provide a booked hire service by an approved relevant person (a TSS member), unless the driver has a reasonable excuse*

*Maximum penalty – 40 penalty units.*

### **Section 125**

*a person must not misuse, or tamper with, a membership card or approved card reader.*

*Maximum penalty—40 penalty units*

### **Section 129 (2)**

*the operator must ensure the approved card reader appears to be working when the operator makes the taxi available to the driver.*

*Maximum penalty – 40 penalty units.*

### **Section 130 (2)**

*the operator of the service must ensure the approved card reader interfaces with the taximeter to enable the automatic calculation of the benefit under the TSS for a journey*

*Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.*

### **Section 130 (3)**

*the operator of the service must ensure a connection for the electronic transmission of information is kept between the taximeter and the approved card reader while the taxi is in use*

*Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.*

### **Section 131 (1)**

*the operator of a booked hire service or taxi service must ensure that, while a taxi used to provide the service is available for hire, both the following are carried in the taxi –*

*(a) a manual card reader;*

*(b) a sufficient number of restricted use slips for the period that the taxi is available for hire.*

*Maximum penalty – 20 penalty units.*

## 8. Smartcard Terminal Messages Reference Guide

### Quick reference for the Terminal Messages for Smartcard Processing Errors

Pinpad display	Message on receipt	Situation
TRANSACTION APPROVED	APPROVED 00	The transaction has been approved by the terminal.
CARD EXPIRED DO NOT PROCEED WITH VOUCHER PMENT	DECLINED XP CARD EXPIRED CONTACT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS	The member's card has expired, the passenger must pay the full fare.
CARD CANCELLED DO NOT PROCEED WITH VOUCHER PMENT	DECLINED 04 CARD CANCELLED CONTACT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS	The member's card has been cancelled/disabled, the passenger must pay the full fare.
CANNOT READ CARD TRY AGAIN OR USE TSS VOUCHER	DECLINED YD CANNOT READ CARD USE TSS VOUCHER	The member's card cannot be read by the terminal, the terminal may need cleaning or servicing.
CRD VALID PROBLEM TRY AGAIN OR USE TSS VOUCHER	DECLINED TW CANNOT PROCESS CARD USE TSS VOUCHER	The member's card cannot be authenticated by the terminal, the terminal may need cleaning or servicing.
CARD NOT YET VALID USE TSS VOUCHER	DECLINED XU CARD NOT YET VALID USE TSS VOUCHER	The member's card is not yet valid.