

ROAD TRANSPORT DIVISION

**Northern Territory Private Hire Car and  
Limousine Requirements and  
In-Service Maintenance Standards**

Endorsed by the  
Commercial Passenger Vehicle Board

## Introduction

The principle purpose of this document is to detail the acceptable vehicle, technical, comfort and aesthetic standards applicable to prospective and in service Private Hire Cars & Limousines.

This document is intended for the use by Owners/Operators of Private Hire Cars & Limousines, Commercial Passenger Vehicle Inspectors, Transport Inspectors and approved Authorised Inspectors. This document has been approved as the minimum standards for Private Hire Cars & Limousines, for the purposes of sections 33(5) and 37R(5) of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*, section 4A(2) of the *Private Hire Car Regulations* and Section 6(2) of the *Limousine Regulations*.

Private Hire Cars & Limousines operating in the NT must ensure they continue to comply with this standard at all times. They must also be serviced and maintained in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's recommended periodic maintenance schedule, and comply with all applicable Australian Design Rules (ADR's) and roadworthy standards.

Many of the comfort and aesthetic standards require subjective assessment and precedents, which have been established over many years. Where such an item on an existing Private Hire Car (PHC) / Limousine does not apparently meet the subjective criteria provided, comparison should be made with other previously accepted Private Hire Cars & Limousines and the item only deemed not to comply if clearly not to the same standard.

Director Road Transport  
Registrar of Motor Vehicles  
Delegate of the Director of Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport.

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## 1 Definitions

**ADR** – the Australian Design Rules for road vehicles

**Director** – the Director of Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport

**GVM** – the manufacturer's Gross Vehicle Mass. The value is usually located on the vehicle's compliance plate and/or in the operator's manual.

**Limousine** – an approved vehicle that –

1. is fitted, equipped or constructed to carry not more than 8 passengers;
2. purchase price meets or exceeds the current Australian Taxation Office (ATO) luxury car tax threshold.
3. is used, with the services of a driver, to carry passengers for hire or reward on pre-booked journeys at pre-arranged fares;
4. is not fitted with a meter that either calculates or indicates the fare payable; and
5. does not stand or ply for hire;

**Luggage** – any container for a person's belongings or any individual item.

**MVR** – the Northern Territory Motor Vehicle Registry

**OEM** – Original Equipment Manufacture

**Private Hire Car** – an approved motor vehicle that –

1. is fitted, equipped or constructed to carry not more than 8 passengers;
2. purchase price meets or exceeds the current Australian Taxation Office (ATO) luxury car tax threshold.
3. is used, with the services of a driver, to carry passengers for hire or reward on pre-booked journeys at pre-arranged fares determined in accordance with a rate of hire calculated by reference to the period of time the vehicle is hired or by reference to the distance to be travelled in the vehicle;
4. is not fitted with a meter that either calculates or indicates the fare payable; and
5. does not stand or ply for hire except in accordance with section 37B;

**Regulations** – the Northern Territory of Australia Private Hire Car Regulations.

**SUTI** – a Single Uniform Type Inspection. This is the national standard listing the minimum specifications a vehicle must comply with to operate for hire or reward.

**Standard Vehicle** – any vehicle as listed in Attachment A, table A.1.1.

**Sedan** – for the purpose of this standard means a closed automobile having four doors and front and rear seats.

## **2 Vehicle Type (Refer Attachment A)**

The vehicle must be of a type that has been approved by the Director and meets the intent of all relevant ADRs.

For vehicles types (make & model) to be approved for use in these categories in the NT they must first be assessed for compliance with the intent of all applicable ADRs. This assessment is termed a Single Uniform Type Inspection (SUTI), and involves checking the vehicle's interior and access dimensions to a consistent national standard. SUTI's are carried out by Motor Vehicle Registry staff, on various makes and model of vehicle either when new models are released or on request by an owner or operator.

## **3 Vehicle Age Requirements (Refer Attachment A)**

### **3.1) Entry Maximum Age - Luxury Vehicle.**

A vehicle registered for the first time as a PHC or Limousine must not be older than 4 years of age from the date of manufacture as indicated on the vehicle's Compliance Plate.

### **3.2) In service Maximum Age - Luxury Vehicle.**

Any in service PHC or Limousine must not be older than 7 years of age from the date of manufacture as indicated on the vehicle's Compliance Plate. This age limit does not apply if the vehicle has not exceeded 320,000 kms. In any case, the vehicle must not be older than 10 years of age.

### **3.3) Entry and In service Maximum Age – High Luxury Vehicle.**

Any high luxury vehicle, which is assessed as acceptable as a PHC or Limousine, has a maximum entry and in-service age of 15 years (may be extended subject to assessment.)

### **3.4) Entry and In service Maximum Age - Stretched Vehicle.**

Stretched luxury vehicles must not be older than 12 years of age and stretched high luxury vehicles must not be older than 20 years of age when operating as a PHC or a Limousine from the date of manufacture as indicated on the vehicle's Compliance Plate.

## **4 Inspection Requirements**

All in service PHCs and Limousines must be inspected at an interval, not exceeding 6 months, by a person authorised to perform such inspections. *Note: Refer to MVR for details of current inspection arrangements.*

## **5 Communications**

5.1) Limousines are **NOT** permitted any form of two-way radio or dispatcher system but may utilise a mobile / car phone for communications.

5.1.1) If the mobile phone is fitted to the vehicle, it must be installed in such a manner as to maintain the aesthetics of the vehicle and must not be located in a position that is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident.

5.1.2) Passengers must **NOT** be able to hear any component of any incoming call i.e. the phone ring or the caller's voice.

5.2) PHCs may have one or more of the following communication devices.

5.2.1) **Mobile/car phone.**

If the mobile phone is fitted to the vehicle, it must be securely attached, in such a manner as to maintain the aesthetics of the vehicle and must not be located in a position that is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident;

5.2.2) **Restricted (selective call only) two-way radio.**

Two-way radio systems must NOT be mounted in a position that permits the case to be visible from any passenger seating position or is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident i.e. a radio that is installed in the dash would be acceptable.

5.2.3) **Dispatcher system.**

Dispatchers (if fitted) must **NOT** be mounted in a position that is visible from any passenger seating position or is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident.

**NOTE**

- a) Passengers must **NOT** be able to hear any component of any incoming call i.e. the dispatcher / radio / phone incoming alarm or incoming caller's voice.
- b) Northern Territory and Commonwealth Legislation regarding the usage of communication equipment must be complied with at all times.

**6 Equipment**

All PHCs and Limousines must comply with the following minimum equipment requirements. Unless stated otherwise, the equipment detailed below must be fitted to all PHCs and Limousines, must not be located in a position that is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident and be maintained in a serviceable condition at all times:

- 6.1) A securely attached fixture designed to clearly display the driver's identification card must be fitted in a conspicuous position inside a PHC, (but not a Limousine) which is clearly visible from all passenger-seating positions (refer Attachment B).
- 6.2) A current vehicle inspection record label that has been supplied by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, which must be affixed to the left side of the windscreen (outside of the field of view of the driver) or a window, that does not hide from view, on the left hand side of the vehicle.
- 6.3) A fire extinguisher must be fitted, which has been certified within the past 12 months, is fully charged and meets the requirements of Australian Standard AS2444. It shall be securely mounted and not be a hazard or cause annoyance to the vehicle occupants. It must be easily accessible and must not be obscured.
- 6.4) A roadworthy spare tyre/wheel assembly and a minimum of the tyre changing equipment and tools supplied by the vehicle manufacturer must be fitted and secured to the vehicle.

**7 Exterior**

- 7.1) All vehicle exterior body panels must be in a sound condition correctly aligned, free of dents, scratches, accident damage, corrosion and dirt.
- 7.2) All exterior paintwork must be of the same colour and lustre, and must also be free of scratches, chips, blemishes and dirt.
- 7.3) All exterior fittings and accessories must be in an undamaged, sound condition and correctly secured. Body mouldings and mud flaps must be correctly aligned and secured.

- 7.4) All vehicle glazing must comply with the relevant ADR's, be free of excessive chips, scratches, cracks or other blemishes. Any window tint film fitted must comply with the NT standard (refer to MVR Information Bulletin V51) and must not be scratched, bubbled or deteriorated in any way. All glazing must be free of dirt and where applicable must operate as originally designed.
- 7.5) All doors are to be correctly aligned, are to open and close without undue effort or noise. Hinges, catches and check links must not be excessively worn. All door seals must be correctly secured and undamaged.
- 7.6) Bumper bars are to be securely attached, correctly aligned and free of dents, scratches, accident damage and dirt.
- 7.7) Wheels and wheel trims must be of a type that are fitted as standard equipment, or a manufacturer's option for the make model of the vehicle. All wheels (other than alloy wheels) must be fitted with matching wheel trims, which cover the wheel nuts. Wheel rims and trims must be maintained in an undamaged and clean condition.
- 7.8) Tyres must conform to the placarded tyre list affixed to the vehicle and be maintained in a roadworthy condition. Retread Tyres are acceptable for use on a PHC/Limousine, including the spare wheel. However the speed rating of the remanufacturer must be adhered to.
- 7.9) All mechanical components that contain fluids must be maintained to prevent oil (engine, transmission, differential, steering etc), brake fluid and greases from leaking on to the road surface.

## **8 Interior**

- 8.1) All vehicle interior surfaces including seats, head rests, floor coverings, trims and seatbelts are to be in a sound condition, free of dirt, stains and damage. Original seat and head rest coverings (if not fitted with removable covers) or any removable seat and head rest covers fitted, are to be non-absorbent. (i.e. Scotchguard or similar treatment).
- 8.2) Seats shall be of high quality with individually contoured seating positions. Seat coverings shall be non-absorbent. (i.e. Scotchguard or similar treatment) or, leather or similar quality covering. Additional seat covers, if fitted, shall only be tailored premium grade sheepskin. Access to seating positions shall be through the side doors (and isles, as applicable) and shall **NOT** be via a fold up, rotating or swing seat.
- 8.3) All seats (including the drivers seat), with particular reference to seat cushions (the part a person sits on), must provide adequate support as originally designed.
- 8.4) All seating positions shall be adjacent to a door (stretch vehicles and people movers excepted).
- 8.5) Courtesy lighting shall be provided at every entry door. The lighting shall be capable of illuminating the area near the door entry.
- 8.6) All interior lighting (dome and courtesy lights) must be operational as originally designed. The fitment of interior novelty lighting or the carriage of ornaments in the vehicle is prohibited.
- 8.7) All PHC's and Limousines must have an OEM factory fitted climate controlled air conditioning system installed in the vehicle with appropriate ducting for the front and rear seating positions. The air conditioning, heating and ventilation system must operate as originally designed and deliver sufficient quantities of cool or hot air to maintain acceptable cabin temperatures for passenger comfort.
- 8.8) All interior fittings and accessories must be in an undamaged sound condition and match the colour, shade and type of the existing trim / upholstery.

- 8.9) Carpet that matches the rest of the vehicle trim, shall be fitted throughout the vehicle floor areas.
- 8.10) Headlining shall be high quality cloth, leather or other similar quality material.
- 8.11) Windows shall be incorporated in all doors. Wind down windows shall be electrically operated.
- 8.12) The interior cabin space of the vehicle must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition, free of rubbish, loose objects and odours.

## **9 Luggage Compartment**

- 9.1) The luggage compartment must be in a sound condition, free of dirt, stains and damage. The boot lid / door seal must be correctly secured, aligned and not be damaged.
- 9.2) Carpet that matches the rest of the vehicle trim, shall be fitted throughout the luggage area.
- 9.3) The spare wheel assembly, tools and equipment must be correctly located, secured and covered in line with the vehicle manufacturer's requirements. If a spare wheel is relocated as a result of an approved vehicle modification such as the fitting of a LPG system, the wheel must be adequately secured and also covered in carpet that matches the rest of the vehicle trim.
- 9.4) Luggage must NOT be carried in a location or manner that may cause an injury in the event of an accident or emergency braking manoeuvre e.g. luggage carried in the isle of a vehicle is NOT acceptable due to it potentially becoming a missile. One way to minimise the problem is to utilise a trailer to carry the luggage.

## **10 Accessories and Modifications**

- 10.1) Tow bars, bull bars, driving lights and any non-safety related vehicle accessory / option must **NOT** be fitted unless approved by the Director in writing. e.g. a safety option such as ABS (Antilock Braking System) does not require written approval, whereas a non safety accessory such as a boot spoiler does require written approval.
- 10.2) Tow bars are an acceptable vehicle accessory. However they must be of the type that allows removal of the tow tongue (that part of the tow bar that the tow ball is attached to), which must be removed when not in use i.e. no trailer attached. The tow bar must comply with all relevant NT legislation including the ADRs.
- 10.3) Any approved accessory fitted must be maintained in a sound condition, at all times meeting the manufacturer's or approved installation requirements.
- 10.4) Any aftermarket DVD players may be installed providing the screens that are in the view of the driver do not display any images, other than geographic or vehicle data information, once the vehicle is in motion. The installation must comply with the requirements of the ADRs and ARRs (other legislative requirements that may apply to the content of material being viewed must be complied with).

### **NOTE:**

The Director may instruct the operator to remove the accessory / option if any other accessory / option has been fitted without PRIOR written approval.

## 11 Ride Quality and Comfort

The vehicle's ride quality and comfort must be maintained to an acceptable standard without excessive vibrations, squeaks, rattles and noises from the vehicle's steering, suspension, drive line or body. Where the vehicle is loaded to maximum capacity (manufacturer's GVM) the suspension must be able to carry the load without "bottoming out" under normal driving conditions i.e. driving in/out of driveways etc.

The above is to be adhered too specifically when towing a trailer.

### NOTE:

Any modification to the original vehicle manufacturer's specification (excluding optional systems) will require approval from the vehicle standards section of MVR.

## 12 Dimensional Specifications

The wheelbase of a PHC or Limousine shall not be less than 2800mm and the following measurements are absolute minimum requirements based on National Standards (SUTI) for vehicles used for hire or reward:

Height over seat	850mm minimum
Seat width	400mm minimum per person
Shoulder width	400mm minimum per person
Width of door opening:	
-Above cushion	550mm minimum
-Below cushion	280mm minimum
Height –top of seat cushion to top of door opening	670mm minimum
Height-floor to top of seat	300mm minimum
Seat depth	350mm minimum
Leg room	180mm minimum
Entry door step height from ground	410mm maximum
Top of entry door height from ground	1300mm minimum
Distance between opposite facing seats:	
-Above cushion	1200mm minimum
-Below cushion	400mm minimum

## 13 Advertising

13.1) Advertising of any kind (eg brochures, pamphlets, business cards etc) must **NOT** be displayed inside a PHC or Limousine.

13.2) The operator of a PHC or Limousine may attach to the vehicle company decals to the exterior of the vehicle. No other form of advertising will be permitted.

For the purpose of this requirement "advertising" means:

*Any advertisement, statement or representation of any kind displayed on a Private Hire Car, such as lettering, maps, plans, drawings or pictorial images and includes bumper stickers.*

## **14 Trailers**

The towing of trailers are not allowed as a 'right', however the Director will accept written applications from operators requesting authorisation to use a trailer within their operation. A trailer approved for use in a PHC or Limousine operation:

- 14.1) Must be NT Registered and in a roadworthy condition;
- 14.2) will be fully enclosed to prevent dust ingress;
- 14.3) will have the interior carpeted throughout in a similar quality carpet as the vehicle;
- 14.4) will have the exterior finished and maintained to a similar level as the vehicle; and
- 14.5) must not exceed the towing capacities (with /without brakes) of the vehicle and tow bar as determined by the manufacturers and must comply with all relevant NT legislation including the ADRs.

## ATTACHMENT A

The following list contains examples of common vehicle types that have been previously assessed or are potentially suitable for use as a Private Hire Car or Limousine in the NT. Vehicles not on this list may be acceptable subject to assessment.

However sports, coupes or cabriolet variants of sedan vehicles are **NOT** acceptable for assessment.

For 4WD and People Movers, only full luxury vehicles as determined by the ATO Luxury Car Tax Threshold in a given model, will be acceptable for assessment.

### A.1.1) Luxury Vehicles

Make And Model	Maximum Age (Years)	Maximum Age At First Registration As A PHC / Limousine (Years)
Ford Fairlane	7*	4
Ford LTD	7*	4
Holden Statesman	7*	4
Holden Caprice	7*	4
Toyota Tarago Ultima	7*	4
Chrysler Grand Voyager Limited	7*	4
Other People Movers (models on assessment)	7*	4
4WD (models on assessment)	7*	4
Chrysler 300C	7*	4

\*The maximum 7 year age limit does not apply if the vehicle has not exceeded 320,000kms. In any case, the vehicle must not be older than 10 years of age.

### A.1.2) Vehicles

Make And Model	Maximum Age (Years) *
Mercedes Benz	15
Jaguar	15
Cadillac	15
BMW	15
Lexus	15
Rolls Royce	15
Bentley	15

\* Maximum age may be extended subject to assessment.

## **A.2) Stretch Vehicles**

**A.2.1)** Stretch Vehicles may be five (5) years older than the figures stated in table A.1.1 and two (2) years older than the figures stated in table A.1.2. However if an in service standard vehicle is stretched after market, the finished product must be of the same level of luxury appointments THROUGHOUT the whole vehicle as the equivalent Standard or other type vehicle.

**A.2.2)** Any vehicle that is modified will require individual approval. Modifications that affect the vehicle's compliance to ADRs will require:

**A.2.2.1)** In service vehicles:

Engineering certification describing all the vehicle modifications and affected ADRs, and contain details of how continued compliance with ADRs will be maintained.

**A.2.2.2)** Factory new vehicles:

Second stage manufacturer's approval and the subsequent fitting of a second compliance plate to the vehicle.

## **A.3) People Mover Vehicles**

People mover type vehicles may be acceptable as a PHC/Limousine subject to assessment. The quality, number of and style of fitments must meet the intent of this standard.

## **A.4) 4WD Vehicles**

4WD vehicles are **NOT** generally acceptable for use as a private hire car however the Director may consider the use of a 4WD provided there is a special requirement to operate a 4WD, i.e. remote localities. Only luxury 4WD vehicles will be considered and the quality, number of and style of fitments must meet the intent of this standard.

## **A.5) Vehicles not listed**

Other suitable vehicles not listed as approved for use as a PHC or Limousine may be considered provided they meet the appropriate vehicle standards.

To arrange to have a vehicle assessed as suitable for a PHC or Limousine contact your Transport Inspectors by calling 1300 654 628.

## ATTACHEMENT B

