

SOV (Special Occasion Vehicles) – Easy Guide for Operators

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TOPIC: SOV (Special Occasion Vehicles) – Easy Guide for Operators

1. What does SOV mean?

SOV stands for **Special Occasion Vehicle**.

An SOV vehicle is authorised to provide eligible **pre-booked passenger transport services** in accordance with the applicable requirements.

2. Can an SOV vehicle operate through Bolt, Uber, eCabs or another intermediary booking platform?

No. SOV vehicles **cannot operate through intermediary booking platforms**.

SOV vehicles may only provide eligible pre-booked passenger transport services arranged through permitted booking channels.

3. Can I accept bookings directly from customers?

Yes. SOV operators may accept bookings directly from customers, provided that the service is **pre-booked before the journey starts**.

SOV vehicles cannot accept street hails or operate as an on-demand passenger transport service.

4. Can I accept bookings from hotels, travel agencies and tour operators?

Yes. SOV operators may accept pre-booked services from hotels, travel agencies, tour operators and online tour-booking services, such as **Viator and GetYourGuide**.

Operators may also accept bookings through their own website and directly from customers.

5. Can I provide airport and hotel transfers with an SOV vehicle?

Yes. SOV vehicles may provide **pre-booked airport and hotel transfers**.

The service must be booked before the journey starts and must comply with the requirements applicable to SOV operations.

6. Can I provide transport for weddings and corporate events?

Yes. SOV vehicles may provide transport for **weddings, corporate events and other eligible special occasions**, provided that the service is pre-booked.

7. Can I provide sightseeing tours with an SOV vehicle?

Yes. SOV vehicles may provide **pre-booked sightseeing tours and private tours**.

The service must be arranged before the journey starts and must comply with the requirements applicable to SOV operations.

8. Can I provide transport for cruise passengers, school groups or private groups?

Yes. SOV vehicles may provide transport for **cruise passengers, school groups and other private groups**, provided that the service is pre-booked and complies with the requirements applicable to SOV operations.

9. How long can I park my SOV vehicle when it is not in service?

An SOV vehicle may be parked on the road for up to **three (3) hours** when it is not in service.

The official **Transport Malta parking clock** must be clearly displayed and correctly set to indicate the time when the vehicle was parked.

10. Can I park while my clients are visiting Valletta, Mdina or another attraction?

Yes. If your clients are on a walking tour or visiting an attraction, you may park your SOV vehicle for up to three (3) hours.

The official **Transport Malta parking clock** must be clearly displayed and correctly set to indicate the time when the vehicle was parked.

11. Can I wait near a white taxi stand?

Yes. An SOV vehicle may wait within 100 metres of a white taxi stand.

However, the vehicle cannot park or wait inside the taxi stand itself.

12. Can an SOV vehicle accept a passenger without a pre-booking?

No. Every SOV journey must be pre-booked before the journey starts.

An SOV vehicle cannot accept street hails or pick up customers seeking an immediate on-demand service.

13. Can I advertise my SOV services?

Yes. SOV operators may advertise their services through their own website, social media, hotels, travel agencies, tour operators and other permitted marketing channels.

Any passenger transport service provided by an SOV vehicle must still be pre-booked before the journey starts.

14. Do SOV drivers need a Transport Malta Driver Permit Tag?

Yes. Every driver operating an SOV vehicle must hold a valid Transport Malta Driver Permit Tag and satisfy the applicable driver requirements.

The driver must also be legally employed or commissioned by the operator and registered with Transport Malta.

15. Can another licensed driver drive my SOV vehicle?

Yes. Another driver may drive the SOV vehicle provided that the driver holds a valid Transport Malta Driver Permit Tag, is legally employed or commissioned by the operator, and is registered with Transport Malta under the Operator Licence.

16. Can an SOV vehicle be more than 22 years old?

Yes. An SOV vehicle may be more than 22 years old, provided that it satisfies the applicable Transport Malta technical, safety and licensing requirements.

17. Can I change a vehicle from Y-plate to SOV?

Yes. A vehicle may be changed from Y-plate to SOV, subject to Transport Malta approval.

The vehicle must be authorised under an SOV Operator Licence, the applicable SOV registration plates must be issued, and the vehicle records and Vehicle Registration Certificate (Logbook) must be updated accordingly.

18. Can I change a vehicle from SOV back to Y-plate?

Yes. A vehicle may be changed from SOV to Y-plate, subject to Transport Malta approval.

The vehicle must be authorised under the applicable LPTV1 or LPTV2 Operator Licence, the appropriate Y registration plates must be issued, and the vehicle records and Vehicle Registration Certificate (Logbook) must be updated accordingly.

19. Do I need a separate Operator Licence for SOV vehicles and Y-plate vehicles?

Yes. SOV vehicles must be authorised under an SOV Operator Licence.

Y-plate vehicles must be authorised under an LPTV1 or LPTV2 Operator Licence, depending on the number of vehicles authorised under that licence.

An operator may therefore hold an SOV Operator Licence and, at the same time, a separate LPTV1 or LPTV2 Operator Licence.

20. Can I have more than one SOV vehicle under the same SOV Operator Licence?

Yes. An SOV Operator Licence may have one (1) or more authorised vehicles.

Where five (5) or more vehicles are authorised under the SOV Operator Licence, the additional requirements applicable at the five-vehicle threshold must also be satisfied.

21. Can passengers carry luggage in an SOV vehicle?

Yes. SOV vehicles may carry passengers' luggage as part of a pre-booked passenger transport service.

The luggage must be carried safely and must not compromise the safe operation of the vehicle or exceed the vehicle's permitted capacity.

22. Do I need insurance for an SOV vehicle?

Yes. An SOV vehicle must be covered by valid insurance appropriate for its use in providing passenger transport services.

The insurance cover must remain valid while the vehicle is authorised and operating as an SOV vehicle.

23. Can I use any vehicle as an SOV vehicle?

No. A vehicle must first be approved and authorised by Transport Malta for use as an SOV vehicle.

The vehicle must satisfy the applicable registration, technical, safety and licensing requirements before it may operate as an SOV vehicle.

24. Can an SOV vehicle be used every day?

Yes. An SOV vehicle may operate on any day, provided that the services are pre-booked and all applicable SOV requirements are complied with.

Drivers must also comply with the applicable working and rest requirements, including the maximum working hours and required weekly rest.

25. What happens if I use an SOV vehicle like a Y-plate vehicle?

An SOV vehicle must only operate in accordance with the conditions applicable to SOV services.

It cannot operate through an intermediary booking platform, accept street hails or provide on-demand passenger transport services.

Operating an SOV vehicle outside the conditions applicable to its licence may result in enforcement action.

26. Can I issue receipts or invoices for SOV services?

Yes. SOV operators may issue receipts or invoices for the passenger transport services they provide.

Operators must comply with all applicable fiscal and legal requirements relating to receipts, invoices and business records.

27. What are the benefits of being an SOV Operator?

- Operate within a dedicated category for pre-booked passenger transport services.
- Accept pre-booked services directly from customers, hotels, travel agencies and tour operators.
- Accept bookings through permitted online tour-booking services, such as Viator and GetYourGuide.
- Park for up to three (3) hours when not in service, subject to the applicable parking requirements and correct use of the Transport Malta parking clock.
- Wait within 100 metres of a white taxi stand, without parking or waiting inside the taxi stand.
- Operate with distinct SOV registration plates.
- Use vehicles over 22 years old, subject to Transport Malta approval and the applicable technical and safety requirements.
- Operate independently without connecting vehicles to intermediary ride-hailing platforms.
- No platform API integration requirements apply to SOV operations.
- Receive the official Transport Malta parking clock free of charge.
- Change a vehicle between SOV and Y-plate registration, subject to Transport Malta approval and the applicable requirements.
- Benefit from a clear and dedicated operating category for independently arranged, pre-booked passenger transport services.

28. How do I obtain a Transport Malta parking clock for my SOV vehicle?

The official Transport Malta parking clock is provided **free of charge**.

Before collecting the parking clock, the operator must complete the applicable online form to update their contact details.

QR Code link to form



Once the form has been completed, the parking clock may be collected from the Transport Malta offices in Paola.

A parking clock is required for each authorised SOV vehicle.