

ACSA clamps down on fake taxi operators at its airports

Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) has noted with concern media reports about the presence of unauthorised taxi operators in and around Cape Town International Airport, OR Tambo International Airport as well as King Shaka International Airport.



In a statement, ACSA said that it was recently made aware of the proliferation of illegal taxi operators, many of who are reportedly posing as e-hailers, in and around the airports. While this negatively impacts the business of legitimate ride hailers, it also compromises the safety of unsuspecting people (or commuters/travellers?) who choose to use their transport services.

ACSA spokesperson Refentse Shinnars confirmed that these fake operators are not affiliated with an e-hailing service, but instead operate independently. She adds that these unauthorised taxi operators have been able to access the terminal building, where they actively solicit business from arriving passengers.

"Official e-hailing service providers may only operate via an approved app and are not authorised to directly solicit business from people. Hence, we know that these fake operators are not legitimate hailing service drivers but independent drivers who are soliciting business illegally," says Shinnars.

Broadening communication

She says that ACSA is broadening its communication to passengers to ensure that authorised taxi and shuttle operators are identifiable, and to highlight that e-hailing services are pre-booked through an online app service.

"ACSA does not condone this informal practice and has been working with various security agencies, particularly the South African Police Service (SAPS), to address the issue. We are concerned that the safety of our passengers may be compromised if they continue to use illegal operators who do not have the requisite licences or permits to operate," says Shinnars.

While permission has not been granted to unauthorised transport providers to operate in any area of the airport, the areas outside the terminal are "landside" areas that are open to the general public. The airport terminal is open to all and, as such, operators sometimes enter the terminal under the guise of collecting a passenger, friend or family member, or needing to use the airport facilities.

"Our security and operational teams with the support of SAPS will respond immediately to an unauthorised operator soliciting business inside the terminal building, being reported. Licensed e-hailing service providers have been engaging with ACSA around the problem of independent operators posing as legitimate e-hailing drivers. Together with our stakeholders, we are confident we will find a lasting solution to dealing with illegal and unauthorised taxi operators," noted Shinnars.

ACSA is urging the public to strictly use taxi operators that are registered with the local airport, and a list of those is available at all help desks at ACSA operated airports.

In the past couple of days, ACSA has also clamped down on illegal taxi operators and together with law enforcement agencies we have managed to see a huge decline in illegal taxi operators touting for clients in the airport landside.

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