

Criteria for drivers:

All Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers licensed by Three Rivers District Council have to pass a stringent knowledge test covering all areas of the District, the Highway Code, along with Conditions and Bylaws. They also have to be medically fit (a Group 2 medical will need to be completed by their GP) and undergo a criminal records check to ensure passenger safety as much as possible.

Please be aware that it is very dangerous to get into an unlicensed vehicle for a journey that you pay for. You could not guarantee the safety of the vehicle or driver and the driver will not be insured in the event of an accident. If a Private Hire Vehicle picks you up without a booking, they will also not be insured and are acting illegally.

Potentially any vehicle-and-driver that can be hired to carry up to 8 passengers for reward will be required to be licensed, subject to a small number of exemptions. The majority of chauffeur driven hire cars, executive hire vehicles, stretch limousines, and small school transport vehicles are generally required to be licensed, in addition to vehicles used for more general taxi work.

Any Hackney Carriages (taxis) that wish to operate within Three Rivers District Council must hold a Three Rivers District Council Hackney Carriage Driver Licence. A Separate Vehicle Licence for Hackney Carriage will also be required.

Any Private Hire vehicles (minicabs) that wish to operate within Three Rivers District Council must hold a Three Rivers District Council Private Hire Driver Licence. A separate Vehicle Licence for Private Hire will also be required, along with working under a Licensed Private Hire Operator.

The purpose of licensing is to ensure the safety of the public, by checking that the drivers are fit and proper, and that the vehicles they drive are safe, suitable and reliable.

What's the difference between a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire?

Hackney Carriages

Hackney Carriages are public transport vehicles which are licensed to "ply for hire".

They can:

- carry passengers for hire or reward
- be hailed by prospective passengers in the street
- park on a rank to await the approach of passengers

A Hackney Carriage must be driven by a driver who holds a Hackney Carriage driver's licence.

Private Hire:

Private Hire vehicles (or minicabs) are public transport vehicles. However, a Private Hire vehicle cannot ply for hire or stand in a rank. **It must be pre-booked** with a Private Hire operator e.g. through the operator usually by telephone.

A Private Hire must be driven by a driver who holds a Private Hire driver's licence.

Drivers of both types must wear their licence 'badge' while working. The information on the plates and badges is very important if you wish to make a complaint as it's the best way to identify a particular driver or car.

Applying for a licence:

To drive Hackney Carriages (taxis) or Private Hire vehicles, you must hold a Driver Licence from the local authority.

To apply for a licence in Three Rivers, you must:

- Have a minimum of 2 years driving experience. This must include holding a full U.K. Driving Licence, for at least 12 months. An equivalent driving licence from E.U. Country will also be considered.
- Be over 21 years of age
- Satisfy the council that you are a 'fit and proper person' to hold a driver's licence.

The 'fit and proper' requirement is wide ranging, but may take into account any previous criminal convictions or cautions, any motoring offences or endorsements, your health and physical condition, the right to undertake employment in the UK, and other such matters as we consider suitable to being fit and proper.

The first step to obtaining a Drivers Licence is to complete the relevant application forms and to arrange an interview with a member of the Licensing team at which you will be able to submit your application. In addition to the application form, we will ask you to provide:

- Your current driving licence
- Two recent passport photos
- Evidence of your National Insurance number
- A completed enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service application along with 3 pieces of identification as set out in the guidance notes provided with that form.
- A completed DVLA mandate form, allowing us to confirm your driving licence details using a verification service
- A Three Rivers Group 2 medical completed by your GP
- A completed Private Hire Operator form from a licensed Private Hire operator, showing an offer of employment (**Private Hire applicants only**)
- Payment of the [application fees](#) (including those for the DBS check, and the driving licence check)
- Upon receipt of your application, we will arrange for the necessary checks to be undertaken on your behalf. Please note that these checks may take up to 12 weeks to complete, and you will not be entitled to work as a taxi driver during this period.

Knowledge test:

At the appointment where you hand in your application you will be booked onto the Council's knowledge test. You will need to pass the test with in three attempts. This ensures that prospective applicants have a good knowledge the Three Rivers District, and an awareness of the rules and regulations that apply to licensed drivers.

Tests are held every two weeks on a Wednesday at 11am, and must be pre-booked. The fee for the first test is included in your application fee, if you are retaking your test there is a non refundable fee of £15.

Once you have passed the knowledge test, and we have received all of the required documents, and the results of the various checks have been received, your application will be determined.

Generally, licences are likely to be granted if the applicant:

- has no previous criminal convictions, cautions, motoring offences or endorsements
- has never had a car driving licence refused, suspended or revoked
- has not previously had a taxi licence refused, suspended or revoked
- has been certified as satisfying DVLA's Group 2 medical standards by their GP
- has the unrestricted right to work in the UK
- is not subject to any other concerns about whether they are fit and proper to hold a licence

If one or more of the above points cannot be satisfied, it does not necessarily mean that the application will be refused, but we will need to consider your circumstances more carefully. You may be asked to attend an interview with the Licensing Officer to clarify certain aspects of your application.

If we are not satisfied that an applicant is fit and proper, then we may refuse your application. You will have a right of appeal against the decision, and details will be provided to you at the appropriate time.

Issue of a licence:

If your application is granted, we will contact you to let you know, and to make an appointment for you to collect your new licence and a driver's badge.

You must wear the badge at all times while working as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire driver. If you are working for an operator, you must provide them with a copy of your licence. If you move house, or receive a criminal conviction, caution or motoring endorsement during the period of your licence, you must tell us.

Licences will be valid for three years (one year in certain cases), and we will send you the forms to renew your licence towards the end of this period. While we will send renewal forms it should be noted that the Council is not legally bound to and we do this as a courtesy. The onus to renew a licence on time falls with the Licensee, and therefore if you have not received renewal forms you will need to request them. Renewal applications must be received before your licence expires to ensure your right to continue working. We will not accept any renewals after the License expiry date, if you wish to continue as a Private Hire/ Hackney Carriage driver you will need to reapply as a new applicant.