

Requirements relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (“The 1976 Act”)

1. Applications

All applications will only be acceptable if they are in the form provided by the Council, such form must be completed and signed by the applicant. An application will only be considered after production of the vehicle registration document, MOT (when required by law), Certificate of Compliance, (European whole vehicle type approved, if required), insurance certificate, calibration certificate (for taxi meter) and fee.

2. Renewal

All applications will only be accepted if they are produced and provided by the Council,

An application for renewal will only be considered upon receipt of the correct fee, the Vehicle Registration document, and any additional documents that are due to expire within the renewal period. This may include: Insurance, MOT, and compliance certificate. In addition, the expired vehicle plate must be returned to the Council in order to collect your replacement.

All fees must be paid at the time of renewal. Only full applications will be accepted, any missing documents or elements will mean your application will not be processed.

Licences will be issued following processing within 28 days of a full application.

All applications for the renewal of a licence must be made at least four weeks prior to the expiry of the existing current licence. Applications received less than 28 days prior to the expiry of the licence may not be issued prior to the expiry of the current licence, and in these cases the licensee will not be able to work as a licensed driver until the new licence is issued.

3. Fee

The appropriate fee, paid in full, as prescribed from time to time by the Council, must accompany all applications.

4. Duration of vehicle licence

All licences shall remain in force for a maximum of one year only, commencing from the date of the granting of the licence.

5. Dual plating

No licence shall be granted where the proposed vehicle is already licensed by another Council. Such vehicles may be licensed following the surrender of the existing licence. Providing they meet the criteria of this policy and a full application is made.

6. Change of vehicle or transfer of licence

An application by the licence-holder for a change of vehicle or an application to transfer the licence will only be considered after production of the vehicle registration document, MOT, certificate of compliance, (European whole vehicle type approved, if required), insurance certificate, valid taximeter calibration certificate and the relevant fee. In the case of a transfer application a dated letter stating that the vehicle and the plate are being transferred from the current holder to the new owner. This letter must include addresses, plate number, vehicle type and registration.

Please note a change of vehicle application, and a transfer of a vehicle licence cannot take place at the same time.

7. Type of vehicle

The Transport Act 1985 allows licensing authorities to regulate vehicle standards. Circular 8/86 accompanying the Transport Act, states that authorities will wish to ensure that vehicles are mechanically sound, roadworthy and safe. The following will be applied:

- The vehicle must not be left hand drive

- All newly licensed private hire vehicles must be no more than 7 years old as defined by the registration date on the vehicle V5 document and meet Euro 5 standards for emissions
- Only vehicles holding or built to the standards required by the M1, M2 and M3 European whole vehicle type approval and meet Euro 5 standards for emissions will be licensed.

Any converted vehicles will be required to hold the appropriate low volume type approval certificate in the M classification or the enhanced single vehicle certificate together with the original M type approval.

- The vehicle must be maintained throughout the term of the vehicle licence, to a high standard of appearance to the complete satisfaction of the Council, and kept in the condition stated in the standards for conditions of appearance of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.
- The vehicle shall have at least four road wheels and a spare wheel or a canister of tyre inflator/repair kept in the vehicle. The tyres shall be of an approved rating as specified by the manufacturer and not more than 10 years old.
- No vehicle shall be licensed which would require any passenger to climb over any luggage in the vehicle or climb into any boot space
- All seats, front and rear must be fitted with seat belts
- The vehicle must be submitted for a mechanical test at a garage authorised by the Council and may be inspected for suitability by the Council's licensing officer. A certificate of compliance with the standards required under the Road Traffic Act 1972, Sections 43 and 44 must be provided by the garage. In addition to those standards required by the MOT the items detailed in the attached form are required
- The Council's licensing officer may direct the vehicle to be inspected in accordance with the certificate of compliance at a specific testing station
- A certificate of compliance and MOT will be valid for 1 year from date of issue.
- The vehicle should contain a portable dry powder 1kg capacity fire extinguisher. The extinguisher must conform to BS EN3 1996 Standard, and should be mounted in a convenient position in the vehicle. The extinguisher shall be marked with the hackney carriage/private hire vehicle registration number
- A first aid kit complying with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 should be carried in the vehicle. The kit to be marked with the hackney carriage/ private hire licence number
- Vehicles that have been converted to use liquid petroleum gas and/or Compressed Natural Gas, require compliance with the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association's Code of Practice No.11
- That a valid certificate certifying compliance with the standards of the Code of Practice No. 11 be submitted with all new applications in respect of converted private hire and hackney carriage vehicles unless such vehicles were factory converted from new

8. Seating capacity

The seating capacity of any hackney carriage/private hire vehicle shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 44 of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002, (SI 2002 No. 2742) and the Council's decision shall be binding.

9. Testing of vehicles

A licence shall not be granted in respect of any vehicle unless such vehicle has a current certificate of compliance as detailed below, and a valid MOT certificate (where required).

10. Insurance and road fund licence

All hackney carriage and private hire vehicles must be licensed and insured for hackney carriage or private hire use. Such insurance must be continuous and include full legal liability for passengers and luggage. Proof of insurance must be submitted with each application for a licence and where it expires during the term of the licence a new certificate or cover note must be supplied to the Licensing team.

11. Certificate of compliance

- A certificate of compliance will only be granted where a vehicle complies in all respects with the detailed standard set out in the main policy document.
- A certificate of compliance shall be valid for one year only from the date of issue.

- A certificate of compliance may only be issued by a vehicle testing station authorised and designated by the Council.
- A current list of designated vehicle testing stations is available from the Council.

12. Examination of vehicles

The licensing officer may request that the vehicle is presented at the Council's offices at Three Rivers House Northway Rickmansworth Hertfordshire WD3 1RL at a time and date agreed for the purpose of establishing that the vehicle complies with the Council's requirements.

13. Smoking

It is prohibited for anyone (driver or passenger) to smoke within the vehicle at any time. Appropriate signage must be displayed inside the vehicle in accordance with the Health Act 2006. An international no-smoking symbol at least 70mm in diameter must be displayed in the front passenger window or on the dashboard, and in the rear passenger window. The signs must be clearly visible from inside and outside of the vehicle.

14. CCTV in vehicles

The licensee shall ensure that their licensed vehicle does not contain any facilities to record visual or audio sources without first obtaining authorisation from the Council. Any proposed CCTV system must satisfy the requirements of the CCTV conditions section.

15. Appeals procedure

Any person aggrieved by refusal to grant a licence may appeal to the Magistrate's Court within 21 days of a decision being made.

16. Standards for conditions of appearance of vehicles

The vehicle must comply with the following:-

Rust Any vehicle presented should be free from any significant areas of visible rusting. Although minor blemishes should not constitute a failure, the following general criteria should be followed; any vehicle with visible rust patches should be failed

Dents Any vehicle with minor dents on one or more panels where such dents are more than 5cms in diameter/length should be failed

Scratches Any vehicle with un-repaired scratches down to bare metal on three or more panels, of 5cms in length, or a single scratch of more than 20cms in length, should be failed

Paintwork All panels on all vehicles shall be painted in manufacturer's colour; panels with unmatched colours or in primer should be deemed as failures

Seats In conventional vehicles where it is intended that the licence be for four passengers, the rear seat must be at least 1220mm (48 inches) in width. All seats shall have a minimum of 410mm (16 inches) per person and in respect of seating comply with the Road Vehicle (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002. All seats, including the driver's must be free from repaired cuts, tears or cigarette burns, except of a very minor nature. Any repairs must have been carried out in a professional and neat manner. All seats must be kept clean and tidy and free from all extraneous matter

Carpets/floor covering - All carpets and floor covering shall be complete and free from cuts, tears, staining and soiling

Headlining and other trim - All interior trim, including headlining shall be clean, complete, properly fitted and free from cuts, tears or soiling

Boot/luggage compartment - This should be empty, except for spare wheel, essential tools and first aid kit (to comply with Health and Safety and First Aid Regulations). The compartment should be clean and any covering free from major cuts, tears or other damage or staining

Interior The interior must be kept clean, tidy and free of any water penetration or litter or other rubbish

Vehicle emissions - The vehicle must comply with the Motor Vehicle (Emission Test) Regulations for Euro 5 standard for emissions.

Glazing All vehicles will be tested with a light meter. Any vehicle with a reading lower than the following will not be licensed. Front Windscreen 75%, Front Side Windows 70%, All other Windows 30%. The lower the number the darker the tint.

Roof Boxes and Roof Racks

The use of roof boxes and roof racks is strictly prohibited unless there is roof space or storage already integrated into the vehicle.