

Non-standard private hire vehicle conditions for stretched limousine, and novelty vehicles

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

1. General

- 1.1. A limousine, or other novelty vehicle capable of carrying no more than 8 passengers for hire or reward is a private hire vehicle, and all other interpretations, policies and conditions relevant to licensed private hire vehicles also apply, except where described below:-
- 1.2. For the purposes of this policy and licence conditions, a stretched limousine is defined as a luxurious vehicle that has been modified (stretched) to extend the length of the vehicle. The stretch shall not exceed 120 inches (measured between the rear edge of the front door and the front edge of the rear door). The vehicle shall be capable of carrying up to, but not exceeding eight seated passengers. Each passenger seating area will be at least 400mm wide.
- 1.3. For the purposes of this policy, a novelty vehicle shall be defined as follows:-
 - a) any vehicle that has been specially constructed, adapted or converted by a low volume specialist vehicle manufacturer or modifier;
 - b) any vehicle that has been specially modified from its original design specification;
 - c) that is capable of carrying up to but not exceeding 8 passengers;
 - d) vehicles intended for the carriage of fare-paying passengers that, prior to the introduction of this policy/conditions, would not be licensed by the authority as a private hire vehicle because they did not comply with one or more of the standard conditions relating to private hire vehicles
 - e) any vehicle that, in the opinion of the licensing officer, because of its specialist design/styling or origin or age is required to be classed as a Novelty Vehicle.

2. Age of vehicle

- 2.1 Stretch limousines and other novelty vehicles are not subject to an age limit and will be licensed provided the vehicle presented meets all of the Council’s other criteria in terms of appearance and maintenance.

3. Licence plates

- 3.1. The vehicle licence plate must be kept in the boot of the vehicle at all times whilst the vehicle is licensed as a private hire vehicle. The internal plate must be displayed in the front windscreen at all times so that the details are clearly visible.

4. Driver

- 4.1. Only a licensed private hire driver is permitted to drive the vehicle whilst it is licensed. The driver must ensure that they wear or clearly display their Council-issued identity badge in a prominent position at all times whilst working or driving the vehicle.
- 4.2. The driver shall at all times be clean and respectable in their dress and behave in a civil and orderly manner.

5. Signs etc.

- 5.1. No sign, notice, advertisement or emblems shall be used or displayed on, in or from the vehicle other than those legally required, those contained within these conditions, or any authorised company details.
- 5.2 Approval of the type of advertising should be sought from the Licensing team and written authorisation must be obtained prior to use. No signs or advertising containing the word “taxi” or “cab” will be permitted on any private hire vehicle.

6. Application Procedure

6.1 In relation to stretch limousines and novelty vehicles the following must be provided on application (this is in addition to the requirements for a standard Private Hire vehicle):

- a) Single vehicle approval certificate
- b) Documentation to confirm the overall weight of the vehicle
- c) The vehicle identification number (VIN) plate must display '1L1' to confirm that the conversion has been completed by an authorised dealer. This will be confirmed by inspection prior to any licence being issued.
- d) Completed importation document (where applicable)
- e) V5 vehicle registration

The licence shall remain in force for one year.

7. Passengers and passenger safety

1. The proprietor shall not permit the limousine/novelty vehicle to be used to carry a greater number of passengers than the number prescribed in the licence.
2. Passengers will not be carried in the front of the vehicle.
3. All passengers must remain seated at all times when the vehicle is in motion.
4. The proprietor of the vehicle must:
 - i) Provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver;
 - ii) Ensure that the interior of the vehicle is kept wind and watertight.
 - iii) Ensure that the seats in the passenger compartment are kept properly cushioned and covered;
 - iv) Ensure that the floor in the passenger compartment is provided with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering;
 - v) Provide at least two doors for use of persons conveyed in limousine/novelty vehicle and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver;
 - vi) Ensure that the interior and exterior of the limousine/novelty vehicle is kept in a clean condition;
 - vii) Ensure that seatbelts are fitted to all forward and rear-facing seats and, in accordance with Construction and Use Regulations, where seat belts are fitted they must be worn by passengers at all times when the vehicle is in motion;
 - viii) Ensure that no seat is required to be moved to allow any passenger to enter or exit the vehicle;
 - ix) Ensure that an approved first aid kit will be carried in the vehicle at all times;
 - x) Report to the Council any alteration in the design of the vehicle, whether to the machinery or to the body. The Council may require the proprietor to submit the vehicle for further examination.

8. Interior lighting

8.1 There shall be maintained in the vehicle adequate internal lighting to enable passengers to enter and leave the vehicle with safety.

9. Maximum stretch

9.1 The maximum length of a limousine "stretch" shall not exceed 120 inches [3048 millimetres].

10. Left and right hand drive vehicles

10.1 Both left- and right-hand drive vehicles will be considered for licensing as private hire vehicles.

11. Tyres and road wheels

11.1 The vehicle shall be equipped with a minimum of 4 road wheels and 1 full-sized spare wheel. The tyres shall be of an approved rating as specified by the manufacturer and not more than 10 years old.

Vehicles with a 'space-saving' wheel are to comply with the manufacturer's specifications as to use. When so used, the vehicle must **not** be used for plying for hire, or private hire. Any change in the type or size of the tyres fitted to the vehicle must be reported to the licensing officer at once.

Tyres must have a minimum tyre tread depth of 3 mm over the central 3/4 of the tread pattern (including spare tyre).

12. Windows

12.1 The front windscreen shall allow a minimum level of 75% light transmittance and the front driver and passenger windows shall allow a minimum level of 70% light transmittance.

13. Decommissioned vehicle markings

13.1 Novelty Vehicles based on decommissioned Military or Emergency Response vehicles must have all official marking or lights removed. Any colour scheme must be of a contrast to the original colour scheme and to that of any previous or current military or emergency response vehicles.

14. Roof racks

14.1 A roof rack or any other device for storing luggage shall not be installed or maintained on any part of the vehicle except with the approval of the Council.

15. Exemption notice for displaying a licence plate / door stickers

15.1 A certificate exempting the vehicle from displaying a licence plate and Council-issued door stickers will be issued by the Council. This certificate must be carried in the vehicle at all times and be available for inspection on request by an authorised officer of the Council or a Police constable.

16. Insurance

16.1 The Council will require proof that the vehicle is insured during the period of the licence and, on request by an authorised officer, the proprietor shall produce within 5 working days a current insurance certificate/cover note for private hire purposes. Failure to produce proof of insurance as detailed above may result in the suspension of the licence.

16.2 The proprietor is advised that they should, following the expiry of an insurance certificate/cover note, provide a current insurance policy to the Council

17. Alcohol

17.1 Alcoholic drinks provided in the vehicle shall be available only under the terms of an appropriate licence relating to the sale and supply of alcohol.

17.2 Alcohol shall only be consumed while the vehicle is stationary and the bottle shall immediately afterwards be placed in a secure receptacle.

17.3 If all of the passengers are below the age of 18, there shall be no alcohol in the vehicle for consumption or otherwise.

17.4 Any glassware used in the vehicle must be made of shatterproof glass or plastic.

18. Licensing Act 2003

18.1 The driver shall not play or permit the performance of any media that, given its age classification or content, are unsuitable for the age of the passengers in the vehicle.

18.2 The limousine operator shall ensure that a performing rights licence is held where appropriate.

18.3 A Premises Licence will be required for the provision of any form of regulated entertainment within the scope of the Licensing Act 2003 when the vehicle is parked.

19. Vehicle condition

19.1 The vehicle shall be maintained in pristine condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim or seating.

19.2 The Council reserves the right to vary, delete or waive any of the foregoing Conditions.

20. Driver and operator licensing requirements

20.1 In addition to the limousine being licensed as a private hire vehicle with Three Rivers District Council, the limousine operator is required to hold a private hire operator's licence with Three Rivers District Council.

20.2 All bookings for a limousine licensed as a private hire vehicle must be booked through the licensed private hire operator. Once licensed as a private hire vehicle the limousine can only be driven by a licensed private hire driver who is also licensed by Three Rivers District Council.

20.3 Details in respect of applications for private hire drivers' licences and private hire operators' licences can be obtained from the Licensing team.

21. Rights of appeal

21.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 sections 48 and 77 detail an applicant's right of appeal. In general terms where an applicant is aggrieved by the Council's decision to refuse to grant a private hire vehicle licence or by any conditions imposed on a private hire licence the applicant has a right of appeal to Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the Council's decision.

22. Vehicle testing stations

22.1 Licensed stretch limousines must be submitted for testing at six-monthly intervals, to the appropriate Class MOT standard from a testing station nominated by the Licensing team.