

Policy for licensing Private Hire Vehicles

Pre- Licensing requirements

The vehicle must be, in the opinion of the Head of Central Services, or any other authorised officer, in such overall condition as to be suitable for use as a private hire vehicle. The general policy is not to accept vehicles exceeding nine years of age on initial registration, or on subsequent renewals, with the following exceptions:

- Where vehicles are specially adapted to carry wheelchair-bound passengers the age limit on initial registration shall be ten years with no renewal limit providing the vehicle passes the certificate of compliance test requirements and the Council's licensing conditions continue to be complied with.
- In the case of specialist vehicles that are purpose built specifically to carry wheelchair-bound passengers (i.e. with a mechanical wheelchair tail lift) there shall be no age limit on initial registration or subsequent renewals providing the vehicle passes the certificate of compliance test requirements and the Council's licensing conditions continue to be complied with.

Operators should be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that tail lifts and ramps are inspected and conform to BS 6109

However, where adapted vehicles are over ten years old, the following matters may be taken into consideration to determine the fitness of the vehicle:

- Mileage of vehicle
- Service history of vehicle
- Body work and condition of vehicle

General conditions of licensing

- 1 The vehicle shall be fitted with two independent brakes, each capable of holding the vehicle under all conditions.
- 2 The vehicle shall be kept in good order, the inside clean and the braking machinery efficient.
- 3 The council shall be notified if any alteration is proposed to be made to any part of the vehicle, before such alteration is carried out.
- 4 A fire extinguisher of an approved type - current standard is BS EN3 (1996), in satisfactory working order, shall be fitted to the vehicle at all times.
- 5 The floor of the vehicle shall be covered with mats of a suitable material.
- 6 A fully paid up insurance in respect of the vehicle covering passenger risks, shall be in force during the currency of the licence and this certificate of

insurance shall be produced at such times and such places as may be reasonably required

7 A plate listing the following details, shall be issued by the Licensing Authority, annually:

- plate number
- vehicle registration
- make and model of vehicle
- number of passengers the vehicle is authorised to carry
- licence expiry date

Such plate must be permanently affixed to the rear of the vehicle (the licensing Authority will provide a bracket for this purpose).

8 The vehicle shall at all times display a crest issued by the Council showing the number of the licence on both sides of the vehicle. Such crests shall be permanently affixed to the vehicle. There must also be a sticker below each crest stating "This vehicle must be pre-booked"

9 The vehicle shall have a watertight roof and a means of opening and closing the windows.

10 No purpose-built hackney carriage shall be accepted for testing as a private hire vehicle.

11 Any vehicle capable of carrying front seat passengers shall be fitted with inertia seat belts in good working order.

12 The vehicle shall be equipped with satisfactory arrangement for quickly replacing any punctured or damaged tyres.

13 The vehicle shall be presented for testing on at least one occasion each licensing year, at such places and on such dates as may be notified by the Council.

14 No vehicle shall display an illuminated roof sign. **(The Transport Act 1980, does not allow the words 'taxi', 'cab' or 'hire', whether alone or as part of another word, to be used)**

15 The fee for this licence shall be that currently specified by the Council.

16 The licence holder shall be responsible for the conduct of any driver employed by him/her and for any offence committed by such employed driver in breach of the conditions of the Private Hire Licence.

17 Advertising will be allowed on the front doors only of private hire vehicles. All advertisements must be approved by the Head of Member and Legal Services or an authorised officer. If an approved advertisement is displayed on the front doors then the Council's private hire crest must be displayed on the rear doors of that vehicle.

The name and telephone number of the licensee may be displayed on the rear of the vehicle with the approval of the Head of Member and Legal Services or an authorised officer.

Name of Company and Insignia may be displayed on the bonnet of the vehicle provided *prior* approval by the Head of Legal and Member Services is obtained

- 18 No operator shall invite or accept a booking for a private hire vehicle or control or arrange a journey to be undertaken by such a vehicle without first making available in writing or given orally to the person making the booking information as to the basis of charge for the hire of a vehicle.
- 19 The valid certificate of compliance shall be carried within the vehicle to which it is issued at all times and shall be produced to a police officer or other authorised officer on demand.
- 20 All vehicles shall display a notice attached to the dashboard, or other prominent position at the front of the vehicle, bearing the plate number, vehicle registration number and passenger carrying capacity of that vehicle.
(To avoid a proliferation of notices on or around the dashboards of vehicles, a new tariff card will be produced, for those fitted with meters incorporating the required information).
- 21 All vehicles shall, at all times, carry a copy of the Council's Conditions of licensing booklet, which shall be available for inspection on request.
- 22 No private hire vehicle shall tow a trailer unless the design of the trailer has been approved by the Council and a certificate of road worthiness has been issued by the Council's authorised testers.
- 23 Private Hire operators may, subject to the written approval of the Council, install and use a visible closed circuit TV surveillance camera in their vehicles for the purposes of personal safety and as a deterrent only. If an approved camera is fitted, a sign must be displayed both inside and outside the vehicle, visible to passengers, stating 'Closed Circuit TV Surveillance in Operation'. The Operator will remain responsible for and ensure the proper use of equipment and proper disposal of taped recordings.