

Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions

No vehicle will be authorised as a Hackney Carriage Vehicle unless it conforms with the requirements as set out within this document unless; where justifiable reasons exist the committee may decide to approve the vehicle.

Hackney carriage vehicles are subject to comply with the conditions attached to a licence and to the council's bylaws in respect of hackney carriages.

Vehicles offered for Hackney Carriage approval must be constructed in a way as to allow the carriage of disabled persons and must accommodate as a minimum, a disabled person in a Department of Transport reference wheelchair in the passenger compartment.

No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made once a vehicle has been inspected and a licence granted, at any time while the licence is in force and at all times the vehicle shall comply with the conditions of the Council for a licensed Hackney Carriage. (Vehicles which have been modified in any way from the manufacturer's standard of construction may not be considered suitable for licensing purposes depending upon the nature of the modification).

The vehicle must meet the criteria set out in the Council's Vehicle Age and Emissions Policy. Please see Appendix A.

Every vehicle must be maintained in a safe and clean condition at all times and is subject to such examinations as are required by the Council.

General Construction

Every new type of Hackney Carriage Vehicle must comply with the requirements of any Acts and Regulations relating to motor vehicles in force at the time of approval including the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) Regulations 1980, and the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1984.

Every new type of Hackney Carriage Vehicle offered for approval must comply in all respects with British and European vehicle regulations and be "type approved" to the requirements of the M1 category of European Whole Type Approval Directive 70/156/EEC as amended. Those Hackney Carriage Vehicles which have not been "type approved" to the M1 category (e.g. conversions) must be presented with approved certification that the specific vehicle meets the requirements of those categories.

No equipment and/or fittings, other than those approved by the Local Authority may be attached to, or carried on the inside or outside of the vehicle.

No modification may be carried out to a Hackney Carriage Vehicle without prior approval from the Licensing Authority.

Steering

The steering wheel must be on the offside of the vehicle.

Tyres

All tyres must comply with the relevant legislation and be marked accordingly.

Tyres must be of the designated size, speed and weight rating for that make and model of vehicle as prescribed by the vehicle manufacturer.

Spare Wheel

A spare wheel shall be fitted and carried at all times the vehicle is licensed

The spare wheel must comply with the vehicle manufacturers' specification.

All tyres, including the spare where one is provided, must be kept to "MOT standard" at all times.

Re-cut tyres are not permitted.

The spare wheel shall be stored in accordance with the original design of the vehicle in its purpose-designed carrier and in all cases outside of any contact with passenger(s) travelling in the vehicle.

Brakes

An anti-lock braking system is to be fitted.

Interior lighting

Adequate lighting must be provided for the driver and passengers.

Separate lighting controls for both passenger and driver must be provided. In the case of the passenger compartment, an illuminated control switch must be fitted in an approved position. This must be within reach of wheelchair passengers. Lighting must also be provided at floor level to each passenger door and be activated by the opening of the doors.

Fuel Systems

Any engine powered by liquid petroleum gas (LPG), compressed natural gas (CNG), liquid natural gas (LNG), petrol or any combination of these fuels must be fitted with an automatic inertia fuel cut off device.

An applicant applying for a licence involving a vehicle which has been converted will be required to produce prior to a licence being granted a certificated issued by the relevant association confirming that the conversion is safe.

Exhaust emissions standards

New taxi models must meet the current and relevant EC Directive for exhaust emissions, i.e. the respective Euro standard. Licensed Hackney Carriages must meet prescribed emissions standards. Please see Appendix A for Emission standards.

Body

The body must be of the fixed head type with a partially glazed partition separating the passenger from the driver.

A vehicle should not be of such a length which takes up excessive space on a rank and in any case the vehicle must not be in excess of 5 metres in length.

Bodywork and wheel trims

The body work shall be in good condition and shall be as originally fitted by the manufacturer. Wheel trims where fitted must be fitted to all road wheels.

The body work must be maintained to a good condition, paintwork must be sound and well maintained and free of corrosion, inferior respray work and 'cover up' temporary repairs.

All rust spots and scratches/dents and repairs with a measurement in excess of 10mm must be prepared and repainted with matching colour to ensure they are returned to as near original condition as possible so that no visible evidence of repair or restoration is detectable.

No panels to have dents, tears, or creases or be of odd colour.

Decals or stickers or any other means must not be used to cover bodywork defects or damage. The vehicle tester reserves the right to ask that any such material be removed if he/she has reason to believe that any attempt has been made to cover up vehicle damage, so the vehicle bodywork can be properly inspected.

Facilities for the disabled

Every taxi must be equipped to approved standards in order that wheelchair passengers may be carried.

The vehicle shall have a designated space capable of accepting a reference wheelchair
The reference wheelchair has a:

- total length of 1200mm, including extra-long footplates
- total width of 700mm
- sitting height (from ground to top of head) of 1350mm
- height of footrest above floor of 150mm

The space for a wheelchair shall be immediately adjacent to a vehicle door.

Approved anchorages must be provided for wheelchair tie downs and the wheelchair passenger restraint. These anchorages must be either chassis or floor linked and capable of withstanding approved dynamic or static tests. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other.

Anchorages must also be provided for the safe stowage of a wheelchair when not in use, whether folded or otherwise, if carried within the passenger compartment. All anchorages and restraints must be so designed that they do not cause any danger to other passengers.

The vehicle shall have a minimum of 2 means of exit from the passenger compartment.

The door and doorway must be so constructed as to permit an unrestricted opening across the doorway of at least 750 mm (75cm). The minimum angle of a hinged door when opened must be 90 degrees.

The clear height of the doorway must be not less than 1.2 metres.

Grab handles must be placed at door entrances to assist the elderly and disabled. All grab handles must be in a high visibility contrasting colour and be of non-slip finish.

The top of the tread for any entrance should normally be at floor level of the passenger compartment and comply with the following requirements:

- a. be not more than 380mm (38cm) from the ground, (measured at the centre of the tread width);
- b. the surface shall be covered in a slip-resistant material;
- c. have a band of colour across the entire width of the edge which shall contrast with the remainder of the tread and floor covering.

Should any entrance be more than 380mm (38cm) from the ground, an external interim step must be made available when the associated passenger door is opened and comply with the following requirements-

- a. not be more than 380mm (38cm) in height from the ground, (measured at the centre of the step width);
- b. not be less than 250mm (25cm) deep;
- c. the surface shall be covered in a slip-resistant material;
- d. have a band of colour across its leading edge which shall contrast with the remainder of the step and floor covering;
- e. not be capable of operation whilst the vehicle is in motion;
- f. if automatic or powered, be fitted with a safety device which stops the motion of the step if the step is subject to a reactive force not exceeding 150N in any direction and if that motion could cause injury to the passenger;
- g. can fold or retract so that it does not project beyond the side face of the vehicle and the vehicle is not capable of being driven away unless the step is so folded or retracted.

The vertical distance between the highest part of the floor and the roof in the passenger compartment must not be less than 1.3 metres.

Where seats are placed facing each other, there must be a minimum space of 350mm between any part of the front of a seat and any part of any other seat which faces it, provided adequate foot room is maintained at floor level.

Where all seats are placed facing to the front of the vehicle, there must be clear space of at least 66cm in front of every part of each seat squab, measured along a horizontal plane at the centre of the cushion.

A ramp for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for use, as a minimum, at the nearside passenger door on all new vehicles presented for licensing. The ramp must be 700mm (70cm) wide, as a minimum, and comprise a single non-slip surface. It is desirable for this facility to be available at the offside passenger door also. An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramp does not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramp to be stowed safely when not in use.

Rear loading of wheelchairs is not permitted.

A mechanism shall be fitted that positively holds the access door in the open position whilst in use particularly if the vehicle is on a slope and such that requires a deliberate effort to close.

Passenger compartment

The vehicle shall have a minimum seating capacity of 4 passengers up to a maximum of 8 passengers and be capable of accommodating at least one passenger confined to a wheelchair.

Occasional seats must be at least 400mm (40cm) in width and the distance from the back of the upholstery to the front edge of the seat must be not less than 350mm (35cm).

Occasional seats must be so arranged as to rise automatically when not in use. When not in use, they must not obstruct doorways.

All passenger seats shall be permanently fixed to the vehicle.

The near-side occasional seat must be of swivel type in order to accommodate the needs of passengers with physical disabilities.

The rear seat dimensions must be adequate to carry the appropriate number of adult passengers comfortably.

Suitable means must be provided to assist persons to rise from the rear seat with particular attention to the needs of the elderly and disabled.

Lap and diagonal seatbelts must be fitted on all seats (including rear facing seats).

Colour contrasting sight patches are required on all passenger seats.

Head restraints must be fitted for all (forward and rear facing) seats. The design of headrests should maximise rear sightlines for the driver when any of the passenger seats are not occupied.

An induction loop system (or equivalent) must be fitted.

Driver's compartment

The driver's compartment must be so designed that the driver has adequate room, can easily reach, and quickly operate, the controls.

The controls must be so placed as to allow reasonable access to the driver's seat and, when centrally placed, controls must be properly protected from contact with luggage.

Every vehicle must be provided with an approved means of communication between the passenger and the driver. If a sliding window is fitted on the glazed partition, the maximum width of the opening must not exceed 115mm (11.5cm).

Where a single-piece glazed partition is fitted, a facility must be provided for making payment to the driver.

Visibility – Driver

A single-piece, full width rear window must be fitted. The design of headrests should maximise rear sightlines for the driver when any of the passenger seats are not occupied.

Visibility – Passenger

The windows should maximise passenger visibility into and out of the vehicle.

The vehicle shall have windows fitted throughout on both sides of the vehicle and to the rear of the passenger compartment.

The bottom of the window line for front and side windows must be low enough to afford passengers adequate visibility out of the vehicle.

Passenger windows must be capable of being opened easily by passengers, including those in wheelchairs, when seated. The control for opening a window must be clearly identified to prevent it being mistaken for any other control.

A proportion of the window area in the passenger compartment must be available for opening by the seated passenger.

Windows must permit maximum visibility into, and out of, the vehicle.

Only original manufacturers approved glazing shall be permitted. The light transmitted through the windscreen must be at least 75%.

The front side windows must allow at least 70% of light to be transmitted through them.

There shall be no restrictions regarding levels of tint of the rear passenger windows and rear windscreen of vehicle, however windows must be of manufactures specification and must not be changed or have extra tinting applied. Tinted films or spray coatings applied to the vehicle windows are not permitted.

Heating and ventilation

An adequate heating and ventilation system must be provided for the driver and passengers and means provided for independent control by the driver and the passengers. All switches must be within easy reach of seated passengers, including those in wheelchairs.

Door fittings

An approved type of automatic door securing device must be fitted to passenger doors to prevent them being opened when the vehicle is in motion.

When the vehicle is stationary, the passenger doors must be capable of being readily opened from the inside and outside of the vehicle by one operation of the latch mechanism.

The door must not open from the inside if the driver has the foot brake depressed.

The interior door handle must be clearly identified to prevent it being mistaken for any other control.

Rear doors must not obscure any mandatory rear lights when luggage is being loaded or unloaded.

Rear doors when in the open position must not be a hazard to other road users.

Table of Fares

The current Table of Fares shall be displayed in the vehicle so as to be easily and clearly read by any passenger.

Licence Plates

A Hackney Carriage vehicle shall have fitted in a visible and securely fixed position to the rear exterior of the vehicle, a licence plate issued by the council. An additional smaller licence plate shall also be securely fitted to the front windscreen so that the information can be viewed both internally and externally.

Any external licence plate issued by the council will include the following information:

Licence Number
Registration Number
Licence Expiry Date
Number of passengers

A plate provided by the Council identifying the vehicle as a Hackney Carriage vehicle must be securely fixed to the outside the vehicle at the rear in such a manner that the plate is not obscured from view by any fixtures or fittings.

The plate shall be capable of being removed by a constable or authorised Officer of the Council should the Licence be suspended or revoked. Drivers are reminded that it is an offence to drive a licensed Hackney Carriage vehicle whilst not being in possession of a current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver's licence.

Safety equipment

All licensed vehicles must have a suitable and efficient fire extinguisher and first aid kit containing appropriate first aid dressings and appliances. Such equipment must be in date and carried in such a position in the vehicle as to be readily available and visible for immediate use in an emergency.

The fire extinguisher must be a 1kg or 2kg Multi-Purpose dry power fire extinguisher to BS EN3 standard. It should be readily accessible without delay and the responsibility of the driver to ensure that they are able to use the fire extinguisher in their vehicle.

The vehicle must have emergency equipment within the vehicle which is available to the driver that is maintained and working. This must include as a minimum requirement:

- a torch
- a warning triangle that meets European Standards
- Florescent and reflective tabards which are for use at night and in poor visibility which meets European Standards, one must be available for the driver and one for each passenger the vehicle is permitted to carry.

The vehicle and all its fittings and equipment must, at all times when the vehicle is in use or available for hire, be kept in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition and all relevant statutory requirements must be fully complied with.

Floor covering

The flooring of the passenger compartment must be covered with a slip resistant material, which can be easily cleaned.

The floor covering must not impede the movement of wheelchairs. The colour of the floor covering must contrast with any up-stand areas around it and with the colour of the seats.

All floor areas shall be free of steps, encumbrances or trip hazards.

Luggage

Suitable dedicated provision for the secure carriage of luggage must be made, separated from the passenger compartment and proportionate in size to the number of passengers carried.

There shall be a luggage compartment situated at the front or rear of the vehicle. If at the front it must be forward of a bulkhead/safety screen and on the opposite side of the driving compartment. The luggage compartment must be divided off by a barrier capable of preventing any luggage from entering the driving compartment or rear passenger compartment.

A suitable restraint system shall be provided so as to minimise any movement of luggage whilst in transit.

Taximeter

The vehicle shall be provided with a taximeter which must be so constructed, attached and maintained as to comply with the requirements of the Council:-

- all taximeters must be calendar controlled, approved and sealed.
- the taximeter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof are at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the vehicle and for that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring;
- the taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the vehicle with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances;
- the taximeter affixed to the vehicle shall be appropriately set to the Council's hackney carriage fare scale currently in force.
- a copy of the Table of Fares shall be displayed within the vehicle and visible to all persons conveyed within the vehicle.

Taxi Roof Sign

A "Taxi" roof sign approved by the council must be fitted and be clearly visible daytime and night time when the taxi is available for hire.

Radio Equipment

Where equipment for the operation of a two-way radio system is fitted to a taxi, no part of the apparatus may be fixed in the passenger compartment or in the rear boot compartment if LPG tanks or equipment are situated therein.

Any other radio equipment, either in the passenger or driver compartment, must be approved by the council.

Electrical Equipment

Any additional or non-standard electrical installation to the original vehicle must be installed and tested by a professional installer and be protected by a suitably rated fuse. Any additional installation must comply with all relevant regulations.

The licensing authority must be notified prior to installing CCTV in a vehicle.

Licence Period

Hackney Carriage vehicle Licences shall be granted for a period of 12 months or such other period as the Council may determine from time to time. Expired plates must be returned to the council or retained by the appointed testing station upon renewal.

Dual Plating

The council does not allow dual plating of licensed vehicles.

Change of Address or Ownership of vehicle

The proprietor shall notify the Council in writing of any change of address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place. The proprietor must also complete and submit the required application with fee, as soon as practically possible, and in any case within 14 days, if they transfer ownership of the vehicle.

Vehicle Documentation

The proprietor of a Hackney Carriage vehicle licensed by the Council shall at the request of an authorised Officer or any Police Constable produce for inspection the following documentation within 7 days from the time the request is made at a place notified to the driver by the authorised Officer or Police Constable:

- (a) a certificate of the policy of Insurance or security required by Part IV of the Road Traffic Act 1988 or other enactment in respect of such Hackney Carriage vehicle;
- (b) the Hackney Carriage Licence issued by the Council;
- (c) a current Ministry of Transport Test Certificate (where applicable)
- (d) the vehicle registration documents; and
- (e) the driving licence issued by DVLA or acceptable equivalent defined by DVLA

Alteration of Vehicle

No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made without the approval of the Council at any time while the licence is in force.

The colour of the vehicle must not be altered during the period that the vehicle is licensed.

No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made once a vehicle has been inspected and a licence granted, at any time while the licence is in force and at all times the vehicle shall comply with the specifications of the Council for a licensed hackney carriage vehicle. (Vehicles which have been modified in any way from the manufacturer's standard of construction may not be considered suitable for licensing purposes depending upon the nature of the modification).