

PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE CONDITIONS

No vehicle will be authorised as a Private Hire 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.

The following are conditions attached to the Private Hire vehicle licence. These conditions are additional to the requirements imposed upon proprietors/drivers and vehicles by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Equality Act 2010 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. Breach of any of these conditions may lead to suspension or revocation of the licence and/or prosecution.

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, Appearance, Design, Signs, Notices etc

1. The vehicle shall have at least four doors. All passenger doors must be capable of being opened from inside the vehicle. The vehicle must have adequate seating accommodation for not less than four persons in addition to the driver.
2. No person entering or exiting the vehicle should have to remove or dismantle any seat or other obstacle, or to climb over any person being carried in the vehicle, or have any other person leave their seat to facilitate them entering or exiting the vehicle.
3. The vehicle must not be equipped with any sign or notice such as the word "CAB" or "TAXI" or be of such design or appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage.
4. Floor coverings must not be unduly worn and present no trip hazards. Household carpeting or similar is unacceptable and must not be used. Upholstery (headlining and side panel coverings) must be free of ingrained grime, fractures and maintained in the manufacturers original style.
5. Luggage and storage areas must be kept as free space for passenger's luggage.
6. The head lining shall be intact, clean and free from holes, tears, stains or any other damage.
7. Door lining/ handles shall be secure, complete and be capable of being operated both from inside and outside the vehicle. The door linings shall be clean, free from holes, stains or any other damage.
8. The boot shall be kept clean and free of large stains and spills. Matting, if fitted must be in one piece and be capable of being cleaned. The boot must be kept clear for the use of passenger's luggage except for the storage of the spare wheel and jack.
9. The luggage compartment shall have sufficient capacity to accommodate a reasonable quantity of luggage such as a 20kg suitcase for each of the maximum number of passengers that can be carried.
10. 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 as to minimise any movement of luggage whilst in transit.

11. All windows must be clear of any obstruction damage or signage which will impede the view of the driver. All windows must be capable of being operated.
12. Fascia/switches gauges shall be correctly illuminated. All interior and passenger lights where fitted shall be secure and operate. All switches and fittings shall be secure and operate correctly. There shall be no exposed wires, large holes or sharp edges in the fascia.
13. The trims where fitted should be secure, with no protruding edges.
14. Bodywork 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.
15. 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.
16. No panels to have dents, tears, or creases or be of odd colour.
17. 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.
18. The vehicle must be right hand drive (exemption is applicable to limousines or speciality vehicles).
19. The seating capacity will be determined by the Council based upon the manufacturer's specification as stated on the vehicle registration document, the orientation of the seating and the dimensions of the seating.
20. The vehicle must be of such design to enable any person in the carriage to communicate with the driver;
21. The vehicle must be fitted with a roof or covering which can be kept watertight;
22. The proprietor/driver employed to drive the vehicle must ensure that the licensed vehicle has a daily safety check. As a minimum this must be a visual check on all lights, oil, water, tyres, mirrors and seat belts. A written record must be made of each safety check, details of faults recorded and remedial action taken. The record must be signed by the person undertaking the safety checks and kept in the vehicle for a minimum of 30 days and then for a further six months by the proprietor. On being so required by a Police Officer or Authorised Officer or Vehicle Examiner the driver must produce, to that officer, the recorded daily checks kept in the vehicle and the proprietor, on request by that officer, must produce those recorded checks in his possession and/or those kept in the vehicle.
23. Where application is made for a vehicle wishing to carry less than 4 passengers and have less than a minimum of 4 doors, this will be determined on its own merits. Vehicles that have been determined by the Council that can only accommodate 1 passenger but must have a minimum of 2 side opening doors.

Radio, Microphone, PDA, mobile phone etc

24. Any radio, microphone, PDA, mobile phone etc. installed in the vehicle shall be fitted in such a position that its use by the driver would not impair his control of the vehicle when it is in motion.

Use of Taximeter

25. Private Hire vehicles may have a taximeter fitted. If the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter, that taximeter must be so constructed, attached and maintained as to comply with the following requirements:
- (a) all taximeters must be calendar controlled, approved and sealed
 - (b) 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;
 - (c) 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.
 - (d) Private hire vehicles that are fitted with a taximeter must display inside the vehicle a statement of maximum fares of the operator. This shall be displayed inside the vehicle in such a position that is clearly visible to passengers. Operators and / or drivers cannot demand a fare greater than that recorded on the taximeter.

Maintenance of Vehicle

26. Private hire vehicles fitted with a tail lift for wheelchairs, must provide a valid LOLER (Lifting Operations Lifting Equipment Regulations) certificate of compliance to prove that the tail lift has been tested and checked to the required standards and must be retested every six months as per HSE (Health and Safety Executive) requirements

Seating

27. All seats within the vehicle, front and rear, must be fitted with working seatbelts.
28. All seats must be properly cushioned or covered. They must still be fully 'sprung', free of stains, tears and not threadbare. There must be no sharp edges which could cause injury or damage. Seat coverings must be sound, intact and clean. There shall be no loose rugs, blankets, cushions or other articles on the passenger seats.
29. All seating within the vehicle must be forward or rear facing.
30. Each seat must be fitted with fully operational seat belts, compliant with British Standards, except where the law specifically provides an exemption from providing seatbelts.
31. The proprietor must not allow a greater number of passengers to be carried in the vehicle than the number specified in the licence.
32. Where the seating in the licensed vehicle can be rearranged, the proprietor must ensure that no more seats than are stated on the licence, including wheelchair(s) are fitted in the vehicle whether occupied or not. Once the vehicle has been tested and approved, the seating layout must not be altered without further approval except for the temporary accommodation of a wheelchair in vehicles approved for such purpose.
33. Seats can be mounted on tracking fastened to the floor of the vehicle using Unwin Safety Systems seat fixings or similar approved make to the satisfaction of the Council. These seats can then be removed or reinstalled as necessary to allow space for one or more wheelchairs. Any tracking system utilised must be correctly aligned and spaced to allow easy removal of the seat. Fastenings for the tracking must in accordance with the manufacturer's specification and approved for use.

Seating Dimensions

Seats (Width)

34. The seat width size requirement is a minimum of 406mm (40.6cm) per person. All measurements are taken across the front of the seat cushion.
35. The width for 3 persons of a minimum of 1219mm (121.9cm) shall be measured by taking the actual distance along the front of the seat cushions or between the arm rests.

Height (Inside)

36. There must be sufficient space between the lowest part of the seat cushions and the lowest part of the roof to safely accommodate the driver and passengers in reasonable comfort. This must be at least 840mm (84cm).

Knee Space Front and Rear passengers

37. From the squab of the front seat in its rear most position to the nearest obstruction in front must be at least 910 mm (91cm).
38. From the squab of the back seat to the back of the front seat in its rear most position the measurement must be at least 650 mm (65cm).
39. All front passengers must be able to sit squarely and without causing physical contact with the dashboard or with the driver whilst driving and using the controls.

Doors and Windows

40. All vehicles must comply with the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, which requires the following:-

Motor vehicles first used before 1 April 1985: The windscreen and front side windows must allow at least 70% of light to be transmitted through them.

Motor vehicles first used on or after 1 April 1985: 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 applied to the vehicle windows are not permitted.

41. The vehicle must have windows on all sides of the vehicle and also along the whole of the rear of the vehicle.
42. A device for demisting the rear window must be fitted and in working order.
43. The vehicle must have a minimum of 4 side opening doors.
44. Multi-Purpose Vehicles (MPV) must have a minimum of 3 doors, the rear door not being accepted as one of the 3 doors. 2 of the doors must be on the nearside of the vehicle.
45. All doors on MPVs must be easily accessible to passengers entering or exiting the vehicle. A passenger should not be required to have to climb over any seat or obstacle in order to enter or exit the vehicle.
46. All vehicles must have doors that open sufficiently wide to allow easy entering and exiting of the vehicle by passengers. Seating Access from the doors to the seats must be direct, without having to manoeuvre other seats or obstructions.
47. All vehicles must have doors that open sufficiently wide to allow easy entering and exiting of the vehicle by passengers.
48. All doors must be fitted with reflectors/reflective strips or lights, which are clearly visible from the rear of the vehicle when the door is open.

49. All doors must be capable of being readily opened from the inside and outside of the vehicle by one operation of the latch mechanism or door handle. Such mechanism or handle must be clearly visible and easily accessible to passengers.
50. Any back doors which may be used for entering or exiting the vehicle must display a notice on the inside of the vehicle advising passengers how to open the doors.
51. The doors and windows must be maintained in good working order at all times, and must be capable of being opened or closed by passengers from within the vehicle unless the window was designed by the manufacturer not to open.

Wheels and Tyres

52. The vehicle must have at least 4 road wheels. A full size spare tyre must be carried in the vehicle or Space-saver spare tyres, where fitted as standard equipment to the vehicle, will be accepted. Provision must be made for the defective standard road wheel to be secured in the vehicle should a space saver tyre be used in an emergency or the vehicle must meet the approved manufacturer's method of dealing with punctured tyres. A wheel brace and jack to enable the effective change of a tyre and wheel must be carried.
53. All tyres, including the spare tyre, must comply with the vehicle manufacturers' specification.
54. All tyres, including the spare where one is provided, must be kept to "MOT standard" at all times.
55. Re-cut tyres are not permitted

Safety Equipment.

56. 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.
57. 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.
58. 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.
59. 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.

Fuel Systems

60. 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.

61. 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.

Licence Plates

62. A private hire 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.
63. Any external licence plate issued by the council will include the following information:
Licence Number
Registration Number
Licence Expiry Date
Number of passengers
64. The vehicle to display on the rear passenger doors in a prominent position, Private Hire door stickers, as issued by the Council. These stickers must be permanently affixed to the vehicle. Magnetic door signs are not permitted.
65. Vehicles are permitted to advertise the name and telephone number of the Operator employing the vehicle, as long as words "Taxi" or "Cab" are not featured.
66. A plate provided by the Council identifying the vehicle as a Private Hire 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.
67. 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 Private Hire vehicle whilst not being in possession of a current hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence.

Roof Signs

68. The council will not permit a private hire vehicle to be fitted with a roof mounted sign of any kind.

Licence Period

69. Private Hire 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

70. The council does not allow dual plating of licensed vehicles.

Change of Address or Ownership of vehicle

71. 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

69. The proprietor of a Private Hire 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 Private Hire vehicle;
 - (b) the Private Hire vehicle 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

70. 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.
71. The licensing authority must be notified prior to installing CCTV in a vehicle.
72. The colour of the vehicle must not be altered during the period that the vehicle is licensed.
73. 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 private hire 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).