

Executive Vehicles

It is not intended that a significant number of private hire vehicles should be exempt from the council's requirement to display an external vehicle identification plate, however the council recognises that there may be circumstances when it would be appropriate for vehicles operating the type of service to be considered suitable for such an exemption.

The Council does not seek to provide a definite list of vehicles it considers to be suitable (subject to use) for exemption from the requirement to display external vehicle identification plates.

This section provides guidance to potential applicants on the standards of vehicle, comfort and equipment that the council considers should be the minimum standard of comfort and vehicle type before the Authority would consider such an application.

The exemption from displaying external identification plates (vehicle licence plates) may be in respect of individual vehicles only. Applications for exemptions relating to a fleet of vehicles will not be permitted.

Each application will be assessed on its own merit and each vehicle will be inspected by an authorised council officer to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

The council will allow an exemption for "executive vehicles" to operate without displaying external identification plates (private hire vehicle licence plate) and the requirement for a driver not to wear a driver's badge.

Applications for the exemption from the requirement to display an external identification plate on the rear of a private hire vehicle may be considered where the following requirements are met;

- a) Vehicle models must be either four door saloons, or five door estates or five door hatchbacks. Applications will not normally be accepted in respect of people carrier type vehicles.
- b) Vehicles must be of a standard of comfort and equipped to a level equal to or above luxury brands of vehicles such as "S" and "E" Class Mercedes- Benz, 7 Series BMW, Lexus "GS" or "LS" models, Audi A8 Series, Jaguar, Rolls Royce and Bentley saloons. (The highest specification executive type cars from other manufacturers may also be considered).
- c) The vehicle will be in pristine condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim and seating.
- d) The type of work is "executive" in nature. This means that the vehicle is used specifically and exclusively to provide transport under a written contract to a company or person, or by the type of clients who for security or personal safety reasons would not want the vehicle to be identifiable.

Applications may only be made by a person holding a private hire operator's licence issued by the council.

Where an operator wishes to make an application for a vehicle to be exempt from displaying an external identification plate they will be required to complete the appropriate application form. The application must be accompanied by supporting documentation and a non-refundable fee.

The council may require applicants to provide additional documentation as reasonably necessary to allow the council to make an informed decision. Where such documentation is not provided to the satisfaction of the council the application will be refused.

Where an application is granted, an exemption notice will be issued as soon as practical after the decision is made.

Irrespective of when an exemption notice is granted the initial exemption notice will expire on the same day as the expiration of the vehicle's current private hire licence, unless it is otherwise surrendered or revoked. Thereafter any renewed exemption notice will last for the same period of time as that vehicles private hire licence unless either the licence or notice is otherwise surrendered or revoked.

Exemption notices may be renewed annually subject to the vehicle undergoing an inspection by a licensing officer to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose for an exemption.

Applicants have the right to appeal a decision where a grant of a notice is refused or revoked; appeals must be in writing and will be reviewed by the licensing committee.

All vehicles granted an exemption notice must in addition to this policy also comply in accordance with the requirements of the council's standard private hire conditions.

Where there is any inconsistency between the standard private hire conditions and these conditions, then these conditions shall prevail.

Executive Vehicle Conditions

- a) The internal vehicle licence plate and exemption notice issued by the council in accordance to the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 shall remain the property of the council.
- b) In the event of loss or damage rendering the internal plate or notice unserviceable the operator shall make immediate application for a replacement which a fee is payable.
- c) The exemption notice issued by the council must be carried in the vehicle at all times and must be produced upon request to an authorised officer of the council or any police officer on request.
- d) When issued an exemption notice, the vehicle will not be required to display door signs which the council require private hire vehicles to display.
- e) When issued an exemption notice a taximeter must not be installed in the vehicle.
- f) The operator will not display in, on or from the vehicle any advertisement, signage, logos or insignia advertising the operating company or the vehicle's status as a private hire vehicle.
- g) The operator will not display in, on or from the vehicle any advertisement, signage, logos or insignia advertising third party companies, products or services.
- h) During the period of the exemption notice the driver will not be required to wear a private hire drivers badge but must have it available for immediate inspection by an authorised officer of the council or any police officer on request.
- i) During the period of exemption notice the driver of the vehicle whilst engaged on private hire work will be smartly dressed in either a formal chauffeur's uniform or business suit with collar and tie. Female drivers must follow an equivalent dress code but will not be required to wear a tie. The dress code shall be followed at all times the vehicle is being used to undertake a booking.

- j) The operator will notify the council immediately of any change of use of the vehicle.
- k) The vehicle must not be used for private hire purposes other than for executive use (i.e. not for "normal" airport journey's or daily private hire use).
- l) The driver and passenger front side window glass and front windscreen must be clear. However tinted windows can be fitted to the rear side and rear window glass of the vehicle as long as they are factory fitted, comply with current legislation and comply with any current private hire vehicle conditions.
- m) The exemption will cease to have an effect on the sale or transfer of the vehicle to another party. The person to whom the exemption is granted must inform the council of the sale or transfer of ownership immediately and in writing. The exemption notice must be returned to the council along with the private hire vehicle internal licence plate.