

Appendix B

Vehicle and Trailer Conditions

All vehicle licence proprietors

All vehicle licence proprietors must;

- Report any change of name or address, to the Licensing Service, in writing, within 7 days.
- Report any damage to the licensed vehicle, that prevents it from complying with the appropriate vehicle condition standard, to the Licensing Service at the next reasonably convenient opportunity, and in any case not later than 7 days after the damage is caused (whether or not the vehicle is taken off the road, or is not still being used as a taxi).

All Vehicles

All vehicles must

- comply with both
 - vehicle mechanical standard, and
 - vehicle visual standard, and
- compliance must be evidenced by a valid Vehicle Condition Certificate ('VCC') (formally a 'Roadworthiness Certificate') issued by an approved testing garage.

Vehicle mechanical standards are the same standard that would be required for that vehicle to pass an MOT test.

- Be in a clean condition when presented for inspection.

Vehicle Documents

(a) Certificates of Insurance

All classes of vehicle require insurance cover which must include cover for the carriage of passengers for 'hire and reward'.

(b) M.O.T. Certificates

All vehicles require a M.O.T. certificate in accordance with Road Traffic Regulations. Hackney Carriages additionally require a M.O.T. certificate 1 year after the date of first registration. and then annually.

(c) Vehicle Condition Certificate ('VCC') (formally a 'Roadworthiness Certificate')

All vehicles require a VCC to be issued 1 year after the date of first registration. All classes of vehicle require an annual roadworthiness certificate until the vehicle reaches 7 years of age. Between the ages of 7 and 10 years, both classes of vehicle require a 6 monthly roadworthiness certificate. After 10 years, vehicles require a VCC every 4 months.

- For all vehicles over the age of 10 years from date of first registration, these tests are enhanced to the standard used at the Public Carriage Office (Metropolitan Police).

Signs and Advertisements

The two forward door panels may be used to advertise the taxi company details and the rear door panels can be used for other advertising. Sun strips and 'All over' advertising on London style taxis will not be approved.

Standard Conditions that apply to all licensed Hackney Carriage and Standard Private Hire vehicles.

Vehicles must:-

- Be capable of carrying at least four passengers and not more than eight passengers.
- Have a brake horse power of greater than 89 bhp or an engine size greater than 1600cc's.
- Be right hand drive.
- Be less than 5 years of age when first licensed, except for purpose built taxis, which will be licensed for the first time until they are 7 years old. Except: If the vehicle has been inspected by a council taxi licensing officer and issued with a certificate that it complies with the Vehicle visual standard before it is presented to a garage for a VCC inspection.
- Have a minimum of four opening doors, two on each side of the vehicle (except London style taxis, which need only have two doors for passenger use).
- Have a minimum internal cabin width of 52" (132 cm) in vehicles with the capacity to carry three passengers across the width of the vehicle.
- Be finished in a manufacturer's standard colour.
- Comply with all current legislation, ie Road Traffic Acts, Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, Vehicles (Excise) Act etc.
- Carry an approved First Aid kit and fire extinguisher to BS EN3: 1996 Standard fitted in such a position that it does not interfere with the driver's controls, and
- Comply with the vehicle visual standard.
- Display the taxi plate correctly at all times when working, fixed to the outside of the vehicle, facing to the rear, and clean so it is legible.
- Equipment fitted for use with mobile phones, radio microphones etc must be capable of 'hands free' operation.

Vehicle visual standard for Hackney Carriage and standard Private Hire Vehicles is:

- Clean internally (usually the car should have been professionally valeted or cleaned carefully before presentation for a VCC inspection and before relicensing by a Licensing Officer)
- Of a high standard of appearance. This means;
 - Externally, and inside door reveals, free from visible rust, dents, scratches, peeling, discolouration, cracks, chips and impact damage, except where this is insignificant, isolated and superficial.
 - Internally, free from dirt, staining, excessive wear, free from tears, cuts, burn marks and other damage to seat coverings, trim and linings except where the fault(s) is/are insignificant, isolated and superficial.

Several faults that could each on their own be considered 'insignificant, isolated and superficial' may detract sufficiently from the overall appearance to prevent the vehicle reaching a 'high standard of appearance'.

'Visible' means, apparent to a vehicle inspector or licensing officer standing next to the vehicle, getting in or out of the vehicle, or sitting in any one of the passenger seats in the car.

'Isolated' means no more than two defects visible when the car is viewed from any angle, or from a seated position in any one of the passenger seats in the car.

'Insignificant' means,

in relation to an internal fault; not affecting the passenger seats, or not clearly noticeable from a seated position in any of the passenger seats.

in relation to an external fault; not clearly noticeable from a distance of 1.5 metres;

'Superficial' means, in relation to internal faults; On the surfaces.

'Superficial' means, in relation to external faults;

Rust; Surface rust that should be easily removed with light, non abrasive surface pressure (e.g.- by wiping with a cloth) and that does not leave visible pitting in the metal underneath.

Scratches, peeling, chips and cracks; affecting the surface layers of paint. The scratch, chip, peeling or crack should not have penetrated the primer coat of paint.

Discolouration; this is always superficial if it is discolouration of the existing surface (e.g. faded paint), and this type of discolouration should usually only be considered in terms of whether it is insignificant and/or isolated.

Where the change of colour is not a feature of the original finish (e.g. is caused by graffiti or paint splashing), this is not superficial.

Dents and impact damage; These are superficial if they do not;

- Cause any sharply defined changes in the surface contours, and
- Are not excessively deep.

Shallow dents may still create a failure if they are not insignificant, isolated and superficial, and there is a clearly defined margin between the original surface contours, and the contours of the damaged surface.

Hackney Carriage additional conditions.

Hackney Carriages must be:-

- Fitted with an approved and correctly calibrated meter.
- Fitted with an approved 'for hire' sign.
- Fitted with the Council-provided roof top light.
- Display the Council provided taxi plate on the outside of the rear of the vehicle.
- Have the current "Table of Fares" available to passengers and authorised persons for inspection.

Private Hire vehicle additional conditions.

Private Hire vehicles must not give the appearance of being a Hackney Carriage, in particular it cannot have any sign with the words 'taxi' or 'for hire'.

Private Hire vehicles must:-

- Display a sign in the front window 'hirings must be pre-booked'.
- Display a sign approved by East Herts Council on the exterior of each rear passenger door 'You are not insured unless your journey was pre-booked'.
- Display the Council-provided private hire plate fixed on the outside of the rear of the vehicle.

Private Hire vehicles may, but need not be, fitted with an approved and calibrated meter.

Approved licensed private hire vehicles which have been approved as "Executive Style", by the Licensing Manager, may be issued with a windscreen licence disc – these vehicles do not need to display the private hire plate, but the licence plate must be carried in the boot at all times and produced, on demand, to a police officer, traffic warden or any authorised licensing officer.

Trailer conditions

Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles may be licensed to tow an approved trailer. A taxi vehicle must not be used to tow a trailer unless the vehicle proprietor's licence specifies this is permitted.

A taxi driver must not drive a taxi vehicle towing a trailer, unless their DVLA licence includes authorisation to tow a trailer.

The taxi vehicle insurance must specifically include cover to tow a trailer for hire or reward.

When a trailer is towed by a licensed taxi, a currently valid East Herts rear taxi trailer copy of the licence plate must be correctly displayed and fixed to the outside of the trailer, facing to the rear.

The trailer licence plate must be kept clean, so that it is clearly legible.

The trailer must be presented for the VCC together with the towing vehicle.

Taxi trailers must not be left unattended on the public highway.

Trailers must comply with all current legislation, and with the visual standard for the towing vehicle.

Trailers must be fitted with a secure weather tight and waterproof lid or cover.

Non standard but substantially VOSA compliant Private Hire Vehicles

Vehicles that do not comply with the standard vehicle conditions, but are substantially compliant with VOSA standards (for example a minibus, previously licensed by VOSA to carry 11 passengers, but that no longer complies because VOSA required signage and tachograph have been removed), may be licensed as a Private Hire Vehicle for up to 8 passengers, notwithstanding it does not have passenger doors on both sides of the vehicle.

First consideration of an application to licence these vehicles (which may be an application for a decision in principle), will be made by Licensing Sub Committee. Sub Committee may delegate authority to approve subsequent renewals of the vehicle licence.

Two Wheeled Motorcycle Private Hire Taxi Bikes

Two wheeled motorcycles may be licensed as private hire taxis for one passenger, subject to stringent conditions relating to all three licences.

Two wheeled motorcycles conditions;

Condition 1: A motorcycle must be suitable for the role of carrying passengers and, if required, luggage. It must be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications in all respects. Motorcycles must be fitted with additional advanced safety systems including brake assist (enhanced braking system), brake assist (combined braking system) and full fairings.

Condition 2: Motorcycle PHVs must meet appropriate motorcycle design and construction standards as set out in category L3e (equivalent to M1 standards for four-wheeled vehicles)

Condition 3: All motorcycle PHVs must meet current exhaust emission standards

Condition 4: All motorcycle PHVs must be fitted with ABS brakes

Condition 5: PHV licensing discs must be displayed. Signage must not interfere with the safety or operation of the vehicle. Licensing disc holders must be weatherproof with holders and fixing points to prevent theft. Licensing certificates should also be displayed on the operator's website.

Condition 6: Any vehicle licensed as a PHV must be able to maintain stability in an emergency situation and in high side winds (However please note that it is a separate condition of operators and drivers licences that they must elect not to carry passengers if the environmental conditions make it unsafe to do so.

Condition 7: If luggage is carried, it must be securely held so as not to affect the stability of the vehicle or the visibility of the driver.

Condition 8: The vehicle must be able to accelerate and maintain a road speed appropriate to the traffic conditions in which it operates. Vehicles are permitted on motorways provided they can travel at speeds over 50 kph (31 mph).

Condition 9: The motorcycle with all fittings for its use as a PHV, including any additional fittings such as backrests, luggage racks or container, must receive endorsement by the company providing insurance.

Condition 10: Drivers must undertake inspections of the motorcycle on a daily basis and before each journey to ensure the vehicle remains safe.

Condition 11: Motorcycles must undergo maintenance and servicing in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and industry standards and by qualified mechanics.

Condition 12: There must be a driver/pillion passenger intercom system linked through the safety helmets.

All Special Event Vehicles

Special event vehicles are vehicles provided primarily for novelty entertainment, and secondarily as a means of transport. The standard conditions for Private Hire Vehicles apply to these vehicles by default, but may be waived on a case by case basis.

First consideration of an application to licence these vehicles (which may be an application for a decision in principle), will be made by Licensing Sub Committee. Sub Committee may delegate authority to approve subsequent renewals of the vehicle licence.

Special Event HGV

Where a special event vehicle is also an HGV or former HGV vehicle, the approved garages for the VCC are limited to those garages approved for HGV.

Special Event Stretched Limousines

Consideration will be given to licenses for 'Special Event' vehicles (stretch limos) which are capable of carrying more than 8 passengers, and cannot be adapted to carry fewer. These vehicles will be licensed to carry a maximum of 8 passengers.

There must be seat belts or lap belts fitted to the same number of seating positions as the number of licensed passengers.

There must be signage that persons under the age of 16 may not use side facing seats, unless the operator ensures on every occasion that a person under the age of 16 uses a side facing seat, that the seat belt is worn the whole time that the vehicle is in motion.

The approved garages for the VCC are limited to those garages approved for stretch limousines.

