

Taxi and private hire vehicle: best practice guidance

Introduction

We are seeking views on updated best practice guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities and any evidence that supports those views.

Closing date is 20 June 2022.

View all the questions

This survey provides questions based on user choice, a [full copy of the questions is available \[opens in a new window\]](#).

Print or save a copy of your response

At the end of this questionnaire, you will be offered the chance to either print or save a copy your. This appears after you 'Submit your response'.

Save and continue option

You may 'save and continue' your response at any time and you will be sent a link via email to allow you to continue your response where you left off.

You must enter your correct email address if you choose to save and continue, a mistake in the email address you get the link.

Accessibility statement

Read our [accessibility statement for SmartSurvey forms \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Confidentiality and data protection

This consultation is seeking views on a new best practice guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities and any evidence that supports those views.

We are asking for:

- your name and email address, in case we need to ask you follow-up questions about your responses (you do not have to give us this personal information, but if you do provide it, we will use it only for the purpose of asking follow-up questions)
- whether you are representing an organisation or yourself

From individuals we are also asking if you are a licenced taxi driver, private hire vehicle driver or both, to ascertain your relationship to the topic.

For organisations we are asking for:

- the name of your organisation, for identification
- the type of organisation being responded on behalf of, to better understand your work

- if a trade bodies or representative group
 - the number of members, to weigh your response in analysis
- if a private vehicle operator, taxi intermediary or another type of organisation
 - the number of vehicles in your fleet, to better understand the effect to your business

Your consultation response and the processing of personal data that it entails is necessary for the exercise of our functions as a government department. DfT will, under data protection law, be the controller for this information. [DfT's privacy policy \(opens in new window\)](#) has more information about your rights in relation to your personal data, how to complain and how to contact the Data Protection Officer.

Your personal data is processed on behalf of DfT by Smartsurvey, with respect that they run the survey collection software only, your personal data will not be shared with any other third parties, even those employed for the purpose of analysis.

Any information you provide will be kept securely and destroyed within 12 months after the closing date. Any information provided through the online questionnaire will be moved to our internal systems within 2 months of the consultation period end date.

Personal details

1. Your (used for contact purposes only):

name	<input type="text" value="Robert Smith"/>
email	<input type="text" value="Robert.smith@runnymede.gov.uk"/>

2. Are you responding: *

- as an individual? (Go to 'Individual details')
- on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation details

3. What is the name of your organisation?

4. You responding on behalf of:

- a licensing authority? (Go to 'Proposals')

- a taxi or private hire vehicle trade body?
- taxi drivers?
- private hire vehicle drivers?
- both taxi drivers and private hire vehicle drivers?
- a private hire vehicle operator or taxi intermediary? (Go to 'Number of vehicles')
- a body that represents passengers and the public?
- another type of organisation? (Go to 'Number of vehicles')

Trade bodies and representative group members

5. How many members does your organisation have?

- 1 to 50 members?
- 51 to 100 members?
- 101 to 500 members?
- another amount above 500 members?

[After answering go to 'Proposals']

Number of vehicles

6. How many vehicles are there in your fleet?

- 0 vehicles
- 1 to 10 vehicles
- 11 to 20 vehicles
- 21 to 50 vehicles
- 51 to 100 vehicles
- 101 to 500 vehicles
- 501 to 1,000 vehicles

1,001 to 10,000 vehicles

Above 10,000 vehicles:

[After answering go to 'Proposals']

Individual details

7. Are you a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle driver?

Yes

No (Go to 'Proposals')

Don't know (Go to 'Proposals')

8. You are:

a taxi driver?

a private hire vehicle driver?

both a taxi and a private hire vehicle driver?

a dual licensed driver?

Proposals

The focus of the best practice guidance is on how licensing authorities can best use their existing powers to ensure that:

- taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers
- taxi and PHV vehicles
- PHV operators

provide a safe, inclusive, accessible and attractive service for the passengers they carry.

While the safety of the public is paramount, licensing authorities, as regulators, also have a duty to ensure that they carry out their activities in a way that supports the people and businesses that they regulate.

The best practice guidance aligns with overarching principles in the [Regulators' Code \[opens in a new window\]](#) that unnecessary burdens should be avoided and that regulators should choose proportionate approaches.

The best practice guidance focuses on issues outside of the scope of the [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards \[opens in a new window\]](#) that are focused on safeguarding.

The draft best practice guidance published as part of this consultation should be read before responding.

Accessibility

Disabled people are particularly reliant on taxi and private hire vehicle services, either because:

- they may not have access to a private car
- they are unable to use public transport
- the built environment is insufficiently accessible to meet their needs

This can mean that the availability of an accessible, affordable taxi or private hire vehicle service can make the difference that allows them to live their life the way they want to, and ultimately, to fulfil their potential.

We want disabled people to be able to travel easily, confidently and without additional cost, and it is important that all transport services play their part in making this a reality. The best practice guidance identifies barriers that disabled people might face when using taxis and private hire vehicles and ways that licensing authorities can help to mitigate these.

We are suggesting that all licensing authorities should develop and maintain an Inclusive Service Plan (ISP), either as a standalone document or as an integral element of their Local Transport Plan. The ISP should describe:

1. the demand for accessible services in their area, from wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users, and from people with both visible and less-visible impairments, and an assessment of the extent to which that need is currently being met.
2. the authority's strategy for making transport more inclusive generally, and specifically in relation to taxi and private hire vehicle provision.
3. the steps that the authority will take to improve the inclusivity of the taxi and private hire vehicle services it supports, including timescales for their completion.
4. how the courses or assessments authorities require applicants to undertake are suitable for a range of participants, for example older drivers.

ISPs should be developed collaboratively with organisations representing the interests of:

- disabled people
- people with other protected characteristics

This should be based on accurate and up-to-date evidence of need and usage.

To support the production and updating of an ISP, authorities should:

1. Survey existing and potential disabled passengers at least once every 3 years.
2. Build an understanding of the extent to which the vehicles and services provided by taxi and private hire vehicle fleets adequately support the needs of all passengers and whether driver training needs are being met.

ISPs should be policy documents first and foremost, intended to demonstrate publicly authorities' commitment to improving accessibility continually. They may, however, also serve to demonstrate to passengers the steps being taken to improve services. Authorities should consider how the content can be made more accessible to the public. They should in any case always be made available on authority websites and in alternative accessible hard copy formats, consistent with authorities' legal equalities duties.

ISPs are covered in section 4 of the best practice guidance.

9. In your view should licensing authorities introduce Inclusive Service Plans for taxi and private hire vehicles?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Why?

No, however the prospect of all 300+ licensing authorities in the Country having their own ISP is going to be confusing for users and an exercise which reinvents the wheel many times. We feel this shouldn't a matter which is decided upon by a licensing authority through its taxi licensing Committee. While this could be a Council function a more workable solution would be to make this County Council based as part of an integrated transport plan.

10. Do you agree that licensing authorities should introduce the accessibility measures proposed in the best practice guidance?

- Yes
- No

Don't know

Why?

We should all be making accessibility a priority and we have included all measures mentioned in the Guidance 4.22 -4.26 within our policy apart from the item at 4.25. However, this will be included in the near future.

11. In your view are there any other measures licensing authorities should take to improve accessibility of taxis and private hire vehicles?

Yes

No (Go to 'Points based enforcement systems')

Don't know (Go to 'Points based enforcement systems')

Other accessibility measures

12. What other measures should licensing authorities take to improve accessibility of taxis and private hire vehicles?

Points-based enforcement systems

Some licensing authorities operate a points-based system, which allows minor breaches of the rules to be recorded and considered in context, while referring those with persistent or serious breaches to the licensing committee (or other bodies charged with reviewing).

This has the benefit of consistency in enforcement and making better use of the licensing committee's time.

To ensure that all past behaviour is taken into account when considering whether to grant a new licence we recommend that points should remain on the record for:

- 3 years for drivers from the date of the incident

- 5 years for private hire vehicle operators from the date of the incident

These reflect the usual duration periods of a driver and operator licence respectively.

Licensing authorities should however consider whether a review is undertaken in situations where points are incurred within a shorter period; for example, 12 months as this may

indicate rapidly deteriorating standards or unsatisfactory conduct.

Reaching a points limit however must not result in an automatic action but should be used to trigger:

1. A review of the conduct of the licensee.
2. Whether further action is necessary to address any concerns with such action including undertaking additional training and not just a suspension or revocation.

Greater detail on points-based enforcement systems are covered in section 5 of the best practice guidance.

13. Do you agree that any points incurred through a points-based enforcement regime should remain on the record for 3 years for drivers from the date of the incident?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Private hire vehicle operator')

Driver enforcement

14. Why, providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

This is similar to DVLA points so it will be familiar to drivers.

Private hire vehicle operator

15. Do you agree that any points incurred though a points-based enforcement regime should remain on the record for 5 years for private hire vehicle operators from the date of the incident?

- Yes
- No (Go to 'Driver licensing: driver proficiency')
- Don't know (Go to 'Driver licensing: driver proficiency')

Private hire operator enforcement

16. Why, providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

Operators should be expected to show the highest levels of professionalism and this period of time reflects the seriousness with which licensing authorities view even minor discretions.

Driver licensing: driver proficiency

The [Road safety statement 2019: a lifetime of road safety \[opens in a new window\]](#) published in 2019 stated that:

"The need to improve road safety does not end with the driving test; nor does it exclude those who drive or ride professionally or as part of their job."

Licensing authorities should require taxi and private hire vehicle drivers to evidence a higher degree of driving ability as would be expected of a professional driver.

The application of a higher standard than a private motorist is, in our view, considered to be:

1. Appropriate and proportionate.
2. Consistent with other elements of taxi and private hire vehicle driver licensing, for example medical and vision assessments.

Greater detail on driver proficiency assessments are covered in section 6 of the best practice guidance and the consultation document.

17. Do you agree licensing authorities should require taxi and private hire vehicle drivers, as professional drivers, to evidence a higher degree of driving ability than is required for a private motorist?

- Yes
- X No
- Don't know [Go to 'Driver licensing: vocational training and assessment']

Driver proficiency viewpoint

18. Why, providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

DVLA used to carry out a specific taxi driver test but abandoned it some years ago, clearly the DVLA did not think it important. There is no evidence in our Borough or indeed nationwide which demonstrates taxi and private hire vehicle drivers require a higher degree of driving ability than is required for a private motorist. They have passed a driving test and as such are deemed fit to be let loose on the roads, they have to obey the rules of the road as would any other driver and pay the penalty if they don't.

HGV and PSV drivers have extra training as they have large vehicles which require different driving skills.

Emergency service drivers do also have additional training due to the type of driving they are asked to carry out.

Driver licensing: vocational training and assessment

The [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards \[opens in a new window\]](#) is clear that all drivers should be required to undertake safeguarding training to understand policies and guidance relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults to identify and act on signs of exploitation.

Whilst the minimum recommended requirements for safeguarding and disability awareness training could be met by requiring drivers to undertake vocational qualifications, it does not have to be delivered through this route.

Vocational qualifications are awarded based on the curriculum of the course at that time and provide a 'snap-shot' of learning. The training required of drivers will naturally evolve over time and so a vocational qualification may need to be supplemented with further training and assessment. An example of this is the inclusion of 'county lines' awareness as part of safeguarding. Though the potential benefits of increased customer service are noted, licensing authorities should not, in our view, require applicants for a licence to have obtained a vocational qualification.

Greater detail on vocational training and assessment are covered in section 6 of the best practice guidance and the consultation document.

19. Do you agree that licensing authorities should not require drivers to obtain a vocational qualification?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Topographical knowledge tests')

Vocational qualification

20. Why, providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

We will be asking them for degrees next! This is another barrier to those entering the trade, if there are any of course, we have a severe shortage of drivers in this Country and expecting them to have vocational qualifications will not address this. Standards yes but they must be proportionate.

Topographical knowledge tests

Taxi drivers need a good working knowledge of the area for which they are licensed because taxis can be hired:

- immediately
- directly with the driver
- at ranks or on the street

and so drivers are not able to prepare a route.

Licensing authorities should therefore require prospective taxi drivers to pass a test of local topographical knowledge as a pre-requisite to the first grant of a licence.

Our view is that the stringency of the test should:

1. Reflect the complexity or otherwise of the local geography.
2. Be in accordance with the principle of ensuring that barriers to entry are not unnecessarily high.

Private hire vehicles are not legally available for immediate hiring. To hire a private hire vehicle the prospective passenger has to go through an operator, so the driver will have an opportunity to check the details of a route before starting a journey and plan or enter the route in a navigation system. Local authorities may set private hire vehicle drivers a topographical test, but are not required to do so.

21. In your view should a private hire vehicle driver be required to pass some form of topographical knowledge test?

- X Yes
- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Driver licensing: vehicle condition check')

Topographical knowledge tests view

22. If a PHV driver is required to pass a topographical test do you think the topographical knowledge test requirement for private hire vehicle drivers should be:

- to pass the same topographical test as taxi drivers?
- to test the candidate's ability to plan a route or safely use a navigation system?

X another requirement?

23. Why, providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

A lower standard of knowledge test than for hackney drivers to demonstrate they know where key locations are and have sufficient level of knowledge to assist them in planning a route or diverting from a chosen route due to unforeseen circumstances.

Driver licensing: vehicle condition check

The driver of a vehicle is always legally responsible for its condition while in use; therefore, licensing authorities should require drivers to conduct a daily walkaround check as part of a driver's core role. A driver or responsible person should undertake a daily walkaround check before a vehicle is used.

These checks should be carried out:

- before the vehicle is driven on the road each day
- when more than one driver will use the vehicle during the day's running, the driver taking charge of a vehicle should make sure it is roadworthy and safe to drive by carrying out their own walkaround check

Drivers should be required to retain the vehicle checklist as proof that they have undertaken the required vehicle check. Drivers should be made aware that they may be subject to sanctions if they are unable to produce this. Further sanctions may result against them as well as vehicle proprietors, if they are found using a defective vehicle, especially if the condition of the vehicle is such that it is obvious no routine checks have occurred over a number of days.

An example checklist is provided within the best practice guidance.

24. Do you agree licensing authorities should require drivers to conduct daily checks on their vehicle similar to the checklist provided?

- Yes
- X No
- Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: vehicle safety ratings')

Daily vehicle check

25. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

This is well intentioned but in reality, it will not be carried out and licensing officers will not have the resources to enforce this. Licensing officer should not be tasked with micromanaging drivers, there must be a degree of trust in some aspects of this business.

26. What, if any, comments do you have on the vehicle condition checklist?

It is unrealistic to expect drivers to carry this out but it may be something PH operators would be interested in using.

Vehicle licensing: vehicle safety ratings

The increasing ability of a car to reduce or prevent injury during an impact is reported as having had the most significant effect on road casualty totals in recent years. Although numbers have remained broadly consistent since 2010, they still indicate [30% fewer fatalities in 2018 than a decade earlier](#).

Euro NCAP is an independent, not-for-profit, organisation which is widely recognised by the motor industry and road safety professionals as providing motorists with objective information on the crash-safety of passenger cars. Its 1 to 5 star rating helps consumers compare the safety potential of different models and is based on assessment in 4 areas of:

- adult occupant protection, for the driver and passengers
- child occupant protection
- vulnerable road user protection, pedestrians and cyclists

safety assist, which evaluates driver-assistance for example lane keeping and autonomous emergency braking and occupant status technologies such as seat belt reminders and driver monitoring

Evolving vehicle regulations and consumer information have supported this trend and a [2019 research paper from Sweden \[open in a new window\]](#) considered differences in real-world injury outcome for occupants in cars rated by Euro NCAP. It concluded that the risk of fatal injury was reduced by 40% for occupants of a 5-star rated car when compared with an equivalent 2-star rated car.

Licensing authorities should consider the safety benefits to passengers, drivers and pedestrians of vehicles which have received a higher NCAP rating where these have been assessed when setting its vehicle requirements.

Greater detail on vehicle safety ratings are covered in section 8 of the best practice guidance.

27. Do you agree licensing authorities should consider the safety benefits to passengers, drivers and pedestrians of vehicles which have received a higher Euro NCAP rating (where these have been assessed) when setting its vehicle requirements?

Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: seating capacity')

Euro NCAP

28. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

If we want to protect the public then this is a good step, problems will arise of course with older specialist vehicles such as limousines which would require some allowances and the trade may find it difficult to replace good quality older vehicles with those of a higher NCAP rating, again there may have to be some allowances for these. A gradual introduction would seem the way forward.

Vehicle licensing: seating capacity

Licensing authorities are responsible for deciding how many passengers a taxi or private hire vehicle is licensed to carry. Whilst the [Vehicle Registration Certificate \(V5C\) issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \[opens in a new window\]](#) states the seating capacity of a vehicle, licensing authorities are entitled to restrict the passenger carrying capacity in the interest of convenience and comfort.

However, authorities should consider the principles set out in the [Competition and Market Authority's guidance \[opens in a new window\]](#). It may be unreasonable, undesirable or even a safety risk for passengers to have to operate folding seats to exit the vehicle, the ease of this in an unfamiliar vehicle in an emergency situation should be considered.

When considering the carriage of children, [The London Cab Order 1934 \(applying to hackney cabs in London\) \[opens in a new window\]](#) states:

"in computing such number [i.e. the maximum number of passengers that can be carried], an infant in arms shall not count as a person and two children under 10 years of age shall count as one person."

While this matter is not addressed in other taxi and private hire legislation, some local authorities have used this approach when assessing if an excess number of passengers have been carried.

The [Motor Vehicles \(Wearing of Seatbelts\) Regulations 1993 \[opens in a new window\]](#) also contain relevant provisions when considering passenger numbers. For instance, in taxis and private hire vehicles where:

- there is no fixed partition between the rear seats and the driver
- children aged over three years must use an adult seat belt in the rear of the vehicle if an appropriate seat belt is not available

This would therefore impose an upper limit on the number of such children that could be carried by these vehicles.

Given the implications for the safety of passengers, we consider a practical solution would be for taxis and private hire vehicles to carry no more people than the number of seats and seatbelts available, regardless of passenger age.

Though rear-facing seats do not require a seatbelt, they often are equipped with one.

Greater detail on seating capacity of vehicles is covered in section 8 of the best practice guidance.

29. Do you agree that each person, regardless of age, should be counted as a passenger?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: seating capacity')

Passenger count

30. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

It is a matter of fact that anyone is a passenger regardless of age. Any question of this fact should be a matter for primary legislation not local decision making.

Vehicle licensing: seating capacity

31. Do you agree taxis and private hire vehicles should not be licensed to carry more people than the number of seats and seatbelts available?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: tinted windows')

Seating capacity

32. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

No this is not safe; it would undoubtedly be abused.

Four seats for example means 4 persons, not 4 persons plus.

Vehicle licensing: tinted windows

The [rules for tinted vehicle windows are available \[opens in a new window\]](#).

For most cars on the road today, the minimum light transmission for windscreens is 75% and for front side windows 75%. Vehicles may be manufactured with glass that is darker than this fitted to windows rearward of the driver, especially in:

- luxury vehicles
- estate vehicles
- people carrier style vehicles

If the objective of the authority's prohibition of tinted windows is to address a concern that illegal activity is taking place in a vehicle, the evidence for this should be established and alternative options should be considered, for example, CCTV in vehicles. When licensing vehicles, authorities should be mindful of this as well as the significant costs and inconvenience associated with changing glass that conforms with the requirements of vehicle construction regulations.

In the absence of evidence to show that a requirement for the removal of factory fitted windows is necessary and proportionate, we are suggesting licensing authorities should not require their removal as part of vehicle specifications. However, authorities should carefully consider the views of the public and the trade when considering the acceptance of 'after-market' tinting.

Greater detail on tinted windows in vehicles is covered in section 8 of the best practice guidance and the consultation document.

33. Do you agree that licensing authorities should only require the removal of 'factory fitted' tinted windows as part of vehicle specifications if it can evidence that this is necessary and proportionate?

Yes

- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: vehicle testing')

Tinted windows

34. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

Vehicle licensing: vehicle testing

Licensing authorities must only license vehicles that are safe. It is therefore appropriate and proportionate that authorities require vehicles to pass rigorous safety checks. There is considerable variation between local licensing authorities on vehicle testing, including the related but separate question of age limits. Our suggested best practice is that licensing authorities should monitor diligence and should, where possible, obtain details of vehicle tests, including failures. This means that frequent failures can be raised with the proprietor and authorities can consider whether they are content that the proprietor is taking sufficient action to monitor and maintain the safety of their vehicles.

Greater detail on vehicle testing is covered in section 8 of the best practice guidance.

35. Do you agree licensing authorities should, where possible, obtain details of vehicle tests, including failures?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: vehicle testing')

Details of vehicle tests

36. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

Yes, we already do this, MOT results are available online and give a good indication of the care and maintenance of a vehicle.

Vehicle licensing: vehicle testing

37. Do you agree licensing authorities should require testing stations to provide the outcomes of all examinations carried out, including where vehicles were subject to advisory notices?

X Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: vehicle age limits')

Testing stations to provide outcomes

38. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

Yes, we already do this, MOT results are available online and give a good indication of the care and maintenance of a vehicle.

In our view it is not acceptable to licence any vehicle with advisories on tyres, brakes, steering or suspension.

Vehicle licensing: vehicle age limits

We believe the setting of:

- an arbitrary maximum age limit at first licensing or
- maximum age limits beyond which an authority will not licence a vehicle

is inappropriate and counterproductive and will result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers.

For example, a maximum age for first licensing may have adverse unintended consequences, for example a five-year-old used electric vehicle will produce less emissions than a new Euro 6 diesel or petrol fuel car. Not setting an age limit for vehicles will enable the trade to make use of previously owned vehicles which would help enable a more rapid transition to zero emission vehicles and improved air quality.

Greater detail on vehicle age limits are covered in section 8 of the best practice guidance and the consultation document.

39. Do you agree licensing authorities should not impose age limits for the licensing of vehicles?

X Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: vehicle identification and signage')

Vehicle age limits

40. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

We agree with there being no age limit, this is especially important for those with wheelchair accessible vehicles and purpose-built luxury limousines.

The quality of the vehicle is what matters although any introduction of a condition on NCAP safety standards may reduce the age of vehicles being licenced.

Vehicle licensing: vehicle identification and signage

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage requirement will help the public to distinguish between the 2 elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to minimise the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

Licensing authorities should not permit roof signs of any kind on private hire vehicles. Regardless of the wording required on such a sign, it is likely to increase awareness of the vehicle and the likelihood of it being mistaken for a taxi. This increases the success of those illegally standing or plying for hire and may lead to confrontation when private hire vehicle drivers refuse a request for a journey that has not been pre-booked.

41. Do you agree licensing authorities should not permit roof signs of any kind on private hire vehicles?

Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Private hire vehicle livery')

Roof signs

42. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

The public need to have a clear indication of what a taxi is, a roof light is one such indication which stands out particularly well.

Private hire vehicle livery

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage requirement will help the public to distinguish between the 2 elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to minimise the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

Licensing authorities should not impose a livery requirement (an identifying design on a vehicle) on private hire vehicles. The more distinctive a private hire vehicle is made to appear, the greater the chance that this might be confused with a taxi. To assist the distinction further, licensing authorities should prevent private hire vehicles from being the same colour as its taxis, unless they are easily identifiable for example they are purpose-built vehicles as is the case in many of our cities.

43. Do you agree that licensing authorities should not impose a livery requirement on private hire vehicles?

Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: door sign')

Livery requirement

44. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

This would make a PHV appear more like a taxi and should be discouraged and with most PHV's having 'the words PRE-BOOKED ONLY' on the doors this may be lost amongst advertising.

Vehicle licensing: door sign

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage requirement will help the public to distinguish between the 2 elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to minimise the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

Licensing authorities' private hire vehicle signage requirements should be limited to the authority licence plate or disc and a "pre-booked only" door sign.

This approach enables passengers to be given the clear and consistent message that you should only get in a vehicle that 'looks like a taxi' unless you have pre-booked a private hire vehicle and have received information from the operator to identify it.

45. Do you agree that private hire vehicle signage requirements should be limited to the authority licence plate or disc and a "pre-booked only" door sign?

X Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Displaying private hire vehicle operator details')

Door sign

46. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

Yes, this is sufficient.

Displaying private hire vehicle operator details

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage requirement will help the public to distinguish between the 2 elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to minimise the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

A private hire vehicle driver and proprietor are free to work with more than one operator and licensing conditions or requirements that effectively tie a vehicle or driver into an exclusive relationship with an operator should not be implemented or should be discontinued where these are currently imposed.

Examples of such policies are a requirement for the private hire vehicle to display the name of the operator under which it is operating by means of a permanent or semi-permanent sign or to require a driver to advise the operator who they intend to work for and require notification in advance of any change.

Where an exclusive relationship exists between the vehicle proprietor, driver and operator a licensing authority should consider permitting the display of operator details in a discrete manner so as to not undermine the overall objective of enabling the public to easily differentiate between taxis and private hire vehicles; this might for example be through small branding on the rear of the vehicle.

47. Do you agree that licensing authorities should not require the displaying of private hire vehicle operator details on vehicle?

X Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Displaying private hire vehicle operator details')

Displaying operator details

48. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

We already allow operators to place their name on PHV's in conjunction with the 'pre booked only' sign. Not all operators or drivers want this but where it suits them both they can.

Displaying private hire vehicle operator details

49. Do you agree that when an exclusive relationship exists between the vehicle proprietor, driver and operator, licensing authorities should permit the display of private hire vehicle operator details in a discreet manner?

Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Using the term 'taxi' on private hire vehicles')

Vehicle operator details

50. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

This is something we already allow as it promotes the operators name and gives the customer additional information.

Using the term 'taxi' on private hire vehicles

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage requirement will help the public to distinguish between the 2 elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to minimise the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

Restrictions on the use of terms that might lead to confusion among the public are detailed in [section 64 of The Transport Act 1980 \[opens in a new window\]](#) in respect of roof-signs. To assist the public in differentiating taxis from private hire vehicles, where operator details are displayed on a vehicle, similar restrictions should be applied to all signage on private hire vehicles. This means the word "taxi" or "cab", whether singular or plural or any word of similar meaning or appearance to any of those words, whether alone or as part of another word, should not be permitted.

51. Do you agree with our suggested practice regarding the use of the words "taxi" or "cab", as well as similar meaning words, for display on private hire vehicles?

X Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Vehicle licensing: environmental considerations')

'Taxi' display

52. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

Clearly this will lead to confusion about

Vehicle licensing: environmental considerations

Taxis and private hire vehicles that operate predominantly in urban areas can be significant contributors to poor local air quality, if not properly maintained and regularly checked, due to the higher usage.

We are therefore suggesting that emissions testing for vehicle that use petrol and diesel (including hybrids and range extenders) should be carried more frequently than the annual MOT vehicle test and inspection.

Greater detail on environmental considerations are covered in section 8 of the best practice guidance.

53. Do you agree that taxis and private hire vehicle with internal combustion engines should be tested more frequently than annually?

X Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Taxi rank provision')

Environmental considerations

54. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

We currently have a requirement for two test per year once a vehicle is over 4 years old and believe this is an appropriate timescale.

Taxi rank provision

Taxi ranks can provide a useful interchange between modes of transport and a focal point for taxis and passengers at peak periods. There are a number of aspects that should be considered when assessing the number and location of taxi ranks, including how ranks contribute to a wider transport policy and its success in delivering accessible transport as disabled users are less able to seek alternatives.

When providing new taxi ranks or redesigning areas of the built environment in which existing ones are located, authorities should seek to:

1. Locate ranks as close as possible to transport interchanges and other key destinations that they serve in order to minimise walking distances for passengers.
2. Follow our [Inclusive Mobility guidance \[opens in a new window\]](#) and other sources of best practice in accessible street design

The provision of taxi ranks should be subject to regular review. This will assist local authorities to establish if a change in the current provision is required and how to make necessary amendments to ranks for the benefit of the travelling public. Our view is that a review every 3 years strikes the right balance between the burden placed on licensing authorities and being responsive to changes in passenger uptake or changing patterns in people flow.

Greater detail on the taxi rank provision is covered on section 11 of the best practice guidance.

55. Do you agree that taxi rank provision should be reviewed every 3 years?

Yes

No

Don't know (Go to 'Model Byelaws for Hackney Carriages')

Renewal reasoning

56. Why providing any relevant information to support your view or alternative proposals?

Comments:

As a starting point every three years is fine but provision of ranks should be kept under constant review and new ranks introduced as and where necessary.

Model Byelaws for Hackney Carriages

Licensing authorities may introduce byelaws for hackney carriages to assist them in the regulation of the sector.

We have provided an example set of byelaws for licensing authorities to consider which are stated at Annex B of the best practice guidance.

57. What, if any, comments do you have on the model byelaws?

They are very similar to our current bylaws.

Sample notices between taxi, private hire vehicle driver and passenger

We have created a sample notice for private hire vehicle drivers and passengers stating what they can expect from each other.

The driver will:

- drive with due care and courtesy towards the passenger and other road users
- use the meter within the licensed area, unless the passenger has agreed to hire by time, and as long as this is less than the metered fare
- if using the meter, not start the meter until the passenger is seated in the vehicle
- if travelling outside the licensed area, agree the fare in advance. If no fare has been negotiated in advance for a journey going beyond the licensing area then the driver must adhere to the meter
- take the most time-efficient route, bearing in mind likely traffic problems and known diversions, and explain any diversion from the most direct route

The passenger will:

- treat the vehicle and driver with respect and obey any official notices (for example in relation to eating or drinking in the vehicle)
- ensure they have the means to pay the fare before travelling. If wishing to pay by credit or debit card or to stop en route to use a cash machine, check with the driver before setting off
- be aware of the fare on the meter and make the driver aware if it is approaching the limit of their financial resources
- be aware that the driver is likely to be restricted by traffic regulations in relation to where they can stop the vehicle

The sample notice for PHV passengers says what you can expect from the PHV driver and what the PHV driver can expect from you.

The driver will:

- ensure that the passenger has pre-booked and is aware of the estimated fare before setting off
- drive with due care and courtesy towards the passenger and other road users
- take the most time-efficient route, bearing in mind likely traffic problems and known diversions, and explain if requested any diversion from the most direct route

The passenger will:

- treat the vehicle and driver with respect and obey any notices (for example in relation to eating or drinking in the vehicle)
- ensure they have the means to pay the fare before travelling. If wishing to pay by credit card or debit card or to stop en route to use a cash machine, check with the driver before setting off
- be aware that the driver is likely to be restricted by traffic regulations in relation to where they can stop the vehicle

58. What, if any, comments do you have on the sample notices?

This idea has some merit but may be impractical, I can envisage many drivers disagreeing with this. It may be that having this available to operators and Councils for circulation would be a better way forward.

Staying safe: guidance for taxi drivers

We have produced a guide to help taxi drivers think of things that they can do to stay safe.

The guide:

- contains guidance on what they should do if they are concerned that a child may be at risk of harm
- sets out advice relating to hate crime, cash management, and several other areas of practice

- as well as individual guidance which includes:
 - hate crime
 - cash management
 - adjustments to their vehicle
 - things to carry with them

The full guidance is provided at annex G to the best practice guidance.

59. What, if any, comments do you have on the staying safe guidance for taxi drivers?

This is good advice and can be circulated to the trade quickly and easily, it could be added to the current information we give out to prospective drivers and when drivers renew their licence.

Staying safe: guidance for the private hire vehicle trade

We have produced a guide to help the private hire vehicle trade think of things that they can do to stay safe.

The guide:

- contains guidance on what they should do if they are concerned that a child may be at risk of harm
- sets out advice relating to hate crime, cash management, and several other areas of practice
- as well as individual guidance which includes:
 - hate crime
 - private bookings
 - cash management
 - adjustments to their vehicle
 - things to carry with them

The full guidance is provided at annex H to the best practice guidance.

60. What, if any, comments do you have on the staying safe guidance for the private hire vehicle trade?

This is good advice and can be circulated to the trade quickly and easily, it could be added to the current information we give out to prospective drivers and when drivers renew their licence.

Useful questions when assessing taxi quantity controls

Our view is that quantity controls should be removed unless a specific case can be made that such controls will benefit the consumer. Those that continue to limit the number of taxis should consider these questions.

Those relating to the policy of controlling numbers which are:

- have you recently reviewed the need for your policy of quantity controls?
- what form did the review of your policy of quantity controls take?
- who was involved in the review?
- what decision was reached about retaining or removing quantity controls?
- are you satisfied that your policy justifies restricting entry to the trade?
- are you satisfied that quantity controls do not:
 - reduce the availability of taxis?
 - increase waiting times for consumers?
 - reduce choice and safety for consumers?
- what special circumstances justify retention of quantity controls?
- how does your policy benefit consumers, particularly in remote rural areas?
- how does your policy benefit the trade?
- if you have a local accessibility policy, how does this fit with restricting taxi licences?

Those relating to setting the number of taxi licences, which are:

- when last did you assess unmet demand?
- how is your taxi limit assessed?

- have you considered latent demand, for example potential consumers who would use taxis if more were available, but currently do not?
- are you satisfied that your limit is set at the correct level?
- how does the need for adequate taxi ranks affect your policy of quantity controls?

Those relating to consultation and other public transport service provision which are:

- when consulting, have you included:
 - those working in the market?
 - consumer and passenger (including disabled) groups?
 - groups which represent those passengers with special needs, children and other vulnerable groups?
 - local interest groups, for example hospitals or visitor attractions?
 - the police?
 - a wide range of transport stakeholders for example rail, bus, coach providers and traffic managers?
- do you receive representations about taxi availability?
- what is the level of service currently available to consumers (including other public transport modes)?

61. What, if any, comments do you have on the questions for assessing taxi quantity controls?

They are unnecessary.

Final comments

62. Any other comments?

The draft guidance is welcome although long overdue, we would suggest this guidance is reviewed at regular intervals such as with the Licensing Act 2003 guidance.