

Taxi and private hire

Spring 2012 newsletter



Welcome to the spring 2012 newsletter. Please take a few minutes to read this as it is important you are kept informed and updated of all relevant taxi and private hire matters. We would be grateful to receive your consultation replies or feedback on any articles contained within this edition. Please return the feedback form at the end of the newsletter or email the licensing team at licensing@basingstoke.gov.uk with your comments.

Operator licence

Officers have received reports from drivers alleging use of citizen band (CB) radios in licensed private hire vehicles. This is prohibited and contravenes the private hire operator conditions which state:

'..The use of citizen band radio transmitter/receiver will not be permitted in a licensed vehicle.'

Officers will suspend any vehicles found to be using CB radios until satisfied the equipment has been removed.

Inside this issue

- Did you know?
- Equality Act 2010 update
- DVLA licence update
- Licensee duties
- Late renewals
- Awareness test update
- Enforcement update
- Conditions
- Consultation feedback
- Fees
- Fare increase
- Taxi reform update
- Committee updates
- Liquid

.....plus much more



Driver awareness tests

New driver applicants are required to demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of the licensing legislation, local conditions, general driving and geographical knowledge of the borough as part of their initial application process.

Officers have reviewed pass and failure rates of tests and concluded that repeated test failures are occurring due to lack of applicants' research, revision and regard to advice provided as opposed to the difficulty levels of the test.

Officers were spending an unnecessarily amount of time processing tests of applicants repeatedly failing to meet the pass mark. The Licensing Committee have now approved waiting times on a sliding scale which is now a six month wait following three failed tests, nine months following a further three failed tests, 12 months following a further three failed tests and so on. We hope this will result in applicants preparing better for tests and not repeatedly failing them through lack of research.



Liquid Update

Following the insolvency of Luminar Ltd, Liquid Nightclub closed last year. In January of this year 'We are Dance Ltd' successfully applied to transfer the premises licence. At the time of writing this newsletter, the club remains closed but officers are currently awaiting a reopening date. In the meantime, the nighttime hackney carriage rank adjacent to Churchill Way remains open daily from 11pm until 4am.

Licensing Committee update

The Licensing Committee meets almost every other month to consider all policy matters relating to licensing functions and receive updates on changes to the law and Licensing Team work undertaken. These are public meetings which licensees are welcome to attend and speak at. If you wish to speak about any agenda items, please register in advance with our committee services team either by phone 01256 844844 or alternatively by emailing committee.services@basingstoke.gov.uk

The council's website www.basingstoke.gov.uk shows future committee meeting dates, which are scheduled in 2012 for; 13 March, 12 June, 10 July, 4 September and 20 November.

Since the last newsletter, the following taxi and private hire related matters have been determined or noted at Licensing Committee:

- Update on the Equality Act 2010
- Removal of private hire vehicle school run exemptions
- Proposed penalty points system – consultation (now deferred)
- Amendment to private hire driver conditions of licence re carriage of passengers
- Hackney carriage and private hire enforcement and inspection statistics update
- Licensing fees and charges 2012/2013
- Update on hackney carriage vehicle numbers following delimitation hackney carriage fare increase request
- Hackney carriage fare increase



School run vehicles

Previously, vehicles licensed to be used only for school contracts were exempted from displaying the council's signage and also from the initial vehicle age requirements. These vehicles were not subjected to an entry age limit and displayed a tax disc sized windscreen licence sticker only.

Officers consulted with the trade in our spring 2011 newsletter and proposed that school contract PHVs be subjected to the same conditions as vehicles licensed for general work, this proposal was supported by Hampshire County Council. No responses were received to this consultation exercise.

In the interests of public safety and awareness, the Licensing Committee approved the proposal and resolved that private hire vehicles licensed for school contracts only be subjected to the same age and corporate identity requirements as those private hire vehicles licensed to perform general private hire work.

Any vehicle licensed for the first time to perform school contracts will need to be newer than three years of age and to display front and rear licence plates and the 'No Booking No Ride' door stickers in accordance with the standard vehicle licence conditions. Vehicles already licensed will continue to be but on renewal will be required to display full corporate livery by way of the front and rear plates, door stickers and internal signs.



back to
School

Reporting accidents

In line with the vehicle conditions, proprietors are required to report licensed vehicles which have been involved in an accident as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case within seventy-two hours of the accident occurring where the accident has caused damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of passengers. Officers frequently notice vehicle damage resulting from accidents which have not been reported.

It is important to report accidents and any damage sustained to the council. Officers must be satisfied licensed vehicles remain fit for purpose at all times in terms of passenger and driver safety and also cosmetic appearance so will check the vehicle is fit for use. The public do not expect to be carried in damaged vehicles and the council's vehicle standards, specification and licence conditions are to ensure a high quality appearance to the licensed fleet.



Hackney Carriage fare increase

A fare increase request made by the Basingstoke Hackney Carriage Federation was considered and approved by the Licensing Committee at the November 2011 meeting. Two objections were received and considered at the February 2012 committee meeting, the revised fares came into effect on 15 February 2012.

Carriage of children

Licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are not expected to have the right child seats or boosters to carry all ages and sizes of children (unless parents have brought them with them). There are some exceptions where children can travel without the correct child restraint in a licensed hackney carriage or private hire vehicles (if a correct child restraint is not available).

If child seats or boosters are not available in a licensed vehicle, under 3's can travel unrestrained in rear only. Those 3 years and above must use an adult belt and travel in the rear seat only. This is the position for practical as opposed to safety reasons.

Drivers should note section 40A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (as inserted by the Road Traffic Act 1991) creates the offence of using a motor vehicle in a dangerous condition. It provides:



'40A A person is guilty of an offence if he uses, or causes or permits another to use, a motor vehicle or trailer on a road when:

- (a) the condition of the motor vehicle or trailer, or of its accessories or equipment, or
- (b) the purpose for which it is used, or
- (c) the number of passengers carried by it, or the manner in which they are carried, or
- (d) the weight, position or distribution of its load, or the manner in which it is secured, is such that the use of the motor vehicle or trailer involves a danger of injury to any person'.

So, although the traffic act allows under 3's to travel unrestrained in the rear, if someone 'looking in' (i.e the police) take the view that this puts any person in danger, this is an offence under the section above and a penalty charge notice can be issued. The offence also carries penalty points. We recommend drivers perform a passenger risk assessment to ensure they can safely transport all passengers before commencing each journey.

Renewal licence applications on time

Previous newsletters have included articles concerning renewal licence turnaround times. We make every effort to provide licensees with renewal papers well in advance of the licence expiry date to allow time for applications to be prepared, received and processed in good time. All licensees should be aware of their licence expiry date which is displayed on licenses, badges and plates and must plan to have all renewal documents in good time.

The issue of the submission of a late renewal application was considered in a stated case (Exeter CC V Sandle) which judged that an application received two to three days later than the expiry date would require very good reasons for the delay for it to be entertained by the licensing authority. Delay beyond that would require exceptional circumstances. It is for the applicant to demonstrate good reasons exist for any late application to be considered.

If you know in advance that you will not be able to renew on time, please notify us in advance explaining why.

Despite numerous reminders to renew on time, it is very disappointing that we continue to receive late renewal applications on a regular basis. This is frequently down to poor organisation on the behalf of the licensee. Applicants who submit late applications then frequently chase their licence by telephone causing further delays. Please make every effort to ensure you submit your renewal applications in good time and where possible ask the front line officers to copy your original documents so you can take them away with you. Late applications will not be prioritised regardless of how many chasing calls we receive.

In exceptional circumstances and only when notified in advance, officers are able to schedule designated time where there is a justified reason for an application coming in late. Losing paperwork, forgetting to renew on time and lack of planning to provide full renewal licence applications do not constitute exceptional circumstances.

It is proposed reception staff will acknowledge hand delivered applications by providing a receipt slip to assure the licence will be renewed within ten working days. We will continue to turn licenses around as soon as we possibly can and frequently work to shorter timescales. The acknowledgement slip will include a reminder not to call to chase and call back requests will not be responded to. This will free up more time to process the licence quicker. Thank you to all licensees who submit renewal applications in good time.

Operator conditions

Operators are required by licence conditions to record specific details of passengers who book with them. During recent inspections officers have had cause to take action against operators for not complying with this condition which is essential for driver and passenger safety reasons.

To illustrate the importance of this, a licensed driver was the subject of an assault by passengers who also damaged his vehicle before taking off without paying. The incident was reported by the police but their investigation was hindered by the lack of passenger details recorded by the operator who had recorded a first name only. Recording full details would have assisted the police to identify the perpetrators immediately. Not recording sufficient passenger details offers no protection at all.

In contrast with this, a private hire driver who was punched by a passenger during a prebooked

journey reported the assault to the police. Following an investigation the police were able to identify the passenger who was subsequently charged with assault. We recommend any driver who is assaulted by passengers reports the matter to the police for their investigation.

Operators are also required to keep up to date copies of all licenses of drivers and vehicles they operate. To assist your operator to do so, please ensure you provide them with an up to date copy of your licence after collecting from the council, failure to do so could result in you being 'locked out' and unable to work. It would also be helpful if you provide them with vehicle test certificate copies so they can keep their records up to date. The purpose of this is to enable the operator to make sure all licensed drivers and vehicles are suitably licensed and insured so to protect the safety of travelling customers.



Insulin controlled diabetes

Rules relating to insulin dependent diabetics being able to comply with the DVLA Group 2 licence requirements have recently changed. From 15 November 2011, insulin dependent diabetics can now meet this medical standard which are the requirements adopted by this council. This means that diabetics on insulin can now apply for a taxi licence but must satisfy the following criteria:

- No episode of hypoglycaemia requiring the assistance of another person has occurred in the preceding 12 months.
- Has full awareness of hypoglycaemia.
- Regularly monitors blood glucose at least twice daily and at times relevant to driving using a glucose meter with a memory function to measure and record blood glucose levels.
- Have an annual examination by an independent Consultant Diabetologist, 3 months of blood glucose readings must be available.
- Must demonstrate an understanding of the risks of hypoglycaemia.
- There are no other debarring complications of diabetes such as a visual field defect.

Our suggested actions for insulin dependent diabetics considering applying for a licence are:

- The individual obtains a suitable meter for recording and storing blood glucose measurements. It is likely that the taxi driver will need to buy the machine.
- The individual records blood glucose levels twice daily for 3 months.
- At the end of the 3 months they are seen by an independent specialist in diabetes.
- The specialist report and blood results are submitted to the licensing authority for assessment and issue of a certificate from the medical adviser.
- The taxi driver goes through this process annually.

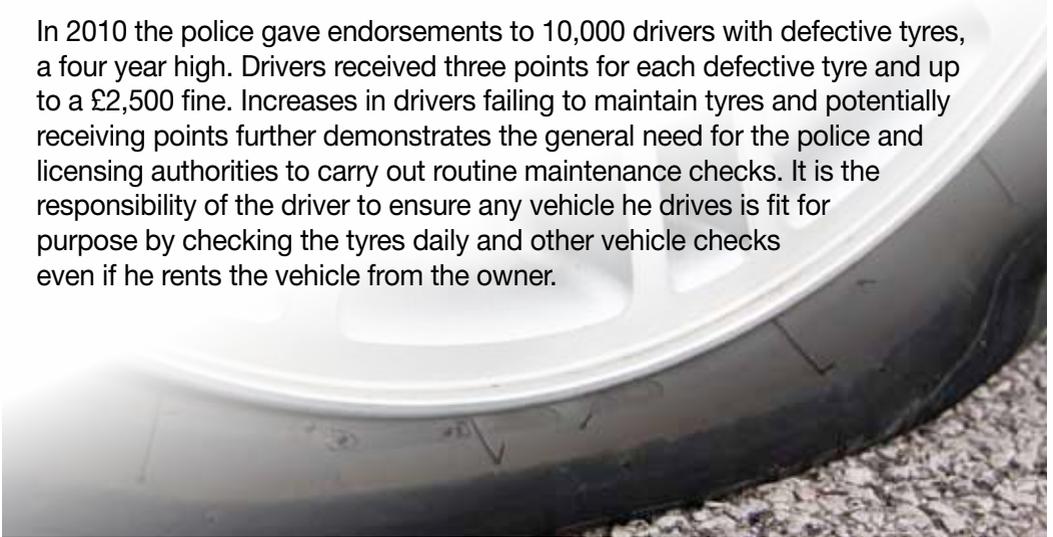


BBC One Show article

This show highlighted the increased risks to drivers who fail to check and maintain their tyres. In 2010 there were 1200 road casualties attributed to poorly maintained tyres and in the last five years there have been 164 fatalities.

Many drivers wait longer to carry out routine vehicle maintenance in order to save money. However, defective tyres increase stopping distance resulting in much worse accidents and significantly higher costs to repair a vehicle.

In 2010 the police gave endorsements to 10,000 drivers with defective tyres, a four year high. Drivers received three points for each defective tyre and up to a £2,500 fine. Increases in drivers failing to maintain tyres and potentially receiving points further demonstrates the general need for the police and licensing authorities to carry out routine maintenance checks. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure any vehicle he drives is fit for purpose by checking the tyres daily and other vehicle checks even if he rents the vehicle from the owner.



Did you know?

- All licensed drivers are required to wear their licence badges in a position which is plainly visible.
- Hackney carriages are required to proceed to another rank if the one they arrive at is already fully occupied. Failing to do so is an offence under the hackney carriage byelaws. Licensing officers and the council's parking officers will be increasing enforcement at ranks to monitor this to ensure ranks are utilised and to prevent roads being blocked by excessive numbers of taxis waiting off the official rank.
- Drivers are required to search their vehicle after every journey and take any lost property to the Police station within 48 hours unless the property is claimed by the owner beforehand.



New fees

The Licensing Committee has approved the licensing fees for 2012/13. The amended fees are effective from 1 April 2012 are as follows:

Application Photos

The council's front line officers can now issue passport sized photographs in reception at a cost of £5 for 4 photos. These photos can be used for our driver licence but not passport applications. This service does not need to be prebooked, however licensees wishing to use this service would be required to take a ticket upon arrival and wait in the current queuing system.



Licence Type	Fee 2012/13
Driver's licence 1 year	£110.00
Driver's licence 3 year	£276.00
Operator licence 1 year	£169.00
Operator licence 3 year	£394.00
Private hire vehicle licence	£235.00
Hackney carriage vehicle licence	£235.00
Hackney carriage meter test	£18.00
Hackney carriage driver knowledge test/retest	£33.00
Private hire driver awareness test/retest	£33.00
Vehicle plate fixing bracket	£10.00
Vehicle replacement plate – front	£9.00
Vehicle replacement plate – rear	£22.20
Private hire vehicle plate deposit – front	£8.85
Private hire/hackney carriage vehicle plate deposit – rear	£22.20
Vehicle ownership transfer	£27.50
Vehicle replacement door signs	£6.00
Replacement licence fee	£15.50
Replacement driver badge	£17.50
Temporary Vehicle Licence	£52.00

Note: The Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) sets the fee for CRB checks which we collect on their behalf. This remains at £44 for 2012/13.

Enforcement corner

The council follows a structured enforcement policy and investigates all complaints, allegations, incidents and non compliances thoroughly before action is taken.

Those persons subject to an allegation are always given the opportunity to state their case. This may be by informal discussion or interview or in serious cases where there are grounds to suspect an offence may have been committed, a formal interview under caution is required to ensure that legal rights are protected.

Any enforcement action is not taken lightly and must be appropriate and proportionate to the matter under investigation. Interviews and other actions are carried out in line with the council's policy and the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act codes. The main consideration is the impact on public safety and the seriousness of the allegation or offence.

Taxi and private hire driver's occupation means they are subject to the police notification scheme. The police Central Vetting Unit will notify us where a licensed driver has been arrested or interviewed

about any offence. You are advised to always notify the council if you have been the subject of a police investigation and if you are convicted of any offence during the term of your licence. This question is asked on application forms so any relevant instances must be declared.

Officers work in partnership with the police and other enforcement agencies and conduct daytime and evening enforcement sessions.

Since our spring 2011 newsletter the licensing team has refused four new private hire driver applications and successfully defended an appeal against one of the refusals at a sub committee hearing and the Magistrates Court.

We successfully prosecuted a former hackney carriage driver who continued to drive a hackney carriage without a hackney carriage licence which resulted in significant fines and costs to the driver.



We have also had cause to suspend several driver and vehicle licenses and taken other action in line with our enforcement policy against licence holders for various reasons including:

- using ranks unlawfully
- inconsiderate parking
- DVLA driving convictions
- driving standards
- unsuitable driver conduct
- smoking in licensed vehicles
- non compliance with conditions
- employing an unlicensed driver
- failure to wear licence badge
- use of mobile phone whilst driving
- expired plates displayed
- poor communication with passengers
- damage to vehicles
- failure to notify officers of change in circumstances
- failure to report vehicles involved in accidents
- Non display of vehicle livery or not in accordance with conditions
- no awareness of insurance provider
- late renewals
- failure to display current tax disc in vehicle
- criminal history
- driving without insurance

It was particularly disappointing to find several drivers working without displaying their driver badge. Passengers must be sure drivers are licensed and your badge is your means of identifying yourself as such. All drivers must wear their licence badges in a plainly visible position at all times whilst working.

Any driver found to be working but not displaying badge in line with requirements will be immediately suspended until they produce their badge. We provide lanyards and badge holders to make it easier for drivers to wear their badges.

A number of other matters are also currently under investigation. We are very pleased to say however, that overall number of licensees involved in the above matters is relatively low and the vast majority of drivers comply with all licensing requirements.

During inspection sessions, several drivers have been unable to confirm their insurance details or provider. Drivers must ensure insurance is in place at all times and be aware of the cover they drive under. If you are renting a vehicle, please ensure you are aware of the provider and the type of cover in place. This protects you and your passengers. Should any accidents occur, you will need to be aware of and able to provide the insurance details, especially if you are unable to contact the vehicle proprietor for any reason.

Details of the team's enforcement work is presented to the Licensing Committee and Community Safety portfolio holder. Both are keen for the team to increase inspection sessions across all licensing functions. Further inspections and checks are scheduled.

Updated checks

Amendments have been made to our licensing case management system to streamline automated reminder letters for medical and CRB checks that are due.

From now on all licensees will receive one reminder when these checks become due. Failure to arrange appointments will result in licenses being suspended pending satisfactory completion of that appointment. If your licence is suspended and you do not appeal the decision you will not be able to drive or use a vehicle with a suspended licence after the three week appeal period expires.

DVLA licence update

A new offence of 'causing serious injury by dangerous driving' has been announced by the Justice Secretary. It will carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison and allow the courts to impose tougher punishments on dangerous drivers who devastate the lives of others. At present, just under 6,000 drivers every year are charged with dangerous driving.



Transferring your vehicle?

If so, you have a duty to notify the licensing team within 14 days in writing. The new proprietor must apply to transfer the licence into their name and pay the relevant fee.

Passenger numbers

The Licensing Committee recently approved the officer recommendation to amend private hire driver licence conditions which previously allowed two children under the age of 10 to count as one person for passenger transportation purposes. Officers did not consider this safe and placed drivers in a vulnerable position when risk assessing the safe carriage of parties including children.

This change was made in line with advice from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents for public safety reasons. Importantly, it removed ambiguity that previously placed licensed drivers in difficult positions when assessing whether they could safely carry parties which included young children. It is now clear that drivers can only carry the number of persons as detailed on the licence plate regardless of their age.



Penalty points system

In our spring 2011 newsletter we consulted about a proposed penalty points enforcement scheme. The primary objective of the proposed scheme was to improve levels of compliance within the trade and improve standards and the safety and protection of the travelling public.

Officers felt this offers a fair and transparent scheme and a more efficient method in which to deal with proven misdemeanours.

Consultation replies were received from the Hackney Carriage Federation and members of the licensing committee. It has been agreed enforcement activities will continue to be monitored and further discussions regarding the need for and content of the scheme will take place between officers, the Basingstoke and Deane Hackney Carriage Federation and members of the Licensing Committee.



National taxi reform update

The Transport Select Committee published its long awaited report on the 19 July 2011 calling for taxi and private hire legislative reform entitled 'Taxis and private hire vehicles: the road to reform'.

The report highlighted the '...rules for taxis date back to 1847 and still refer to horse-drawn carriages. The rules for PHVs were set down in 1976 and are now out-of-date due to the growth of mobile phones and the internet. The age of this legislation and the complexity of case law accumulated in this area make the need to overhaul the law on these matters irresistible.'

The report called upon the Government to set out its policy proposals before the end of 2011, with a view to holding a consultation exercise in 2012, introducing draft legislation in 2013-14 and taking an act or legislative reform order through Parliament before the next general election.

The committee recommended that the following principles should underpin new legislation. These are to listen to the views of users, keep it simple, keep it local, permit tighter restrictions on cross border hire, increase the potential for local authorities to work together to create larger licensing districts and develop national licensing standards on certain issues which relate to public safety.

At the same time, the law commission also published their report on taxi and private hire reform. It said that they aim to publish proposals for law reform in April 2012 to be followed by a three month consultation period where the public be invited to respond to proposals with the aim to publish a final report with recommendations and draft bill by late 2013.

We support the need for legislative reform regarding the regulatory framework controlling the licensing of taxis and private hire. We will provide further updates about this in due course.



Seats and upholstery

It's very pleasing that the vast majority of licensees keep their vehicles in excellent condition. Licensed vehicles must be safe mechanically and presented in good cosmetic condition for passenger use at all times. During recent inspections however, we have seen an increase of instances where seat upholstery was split or had holes in. These are rejection reasons within the vehicle compliance testing criteria. Passengers who book licensed private hire vehicles should not be provided with vehicles showing cosmetic damage such as this. Upholstery must be clean, undamaged and matching.

Replacement/ new type vehicles

If you are considering replacing a licensed vehicle or purchasing a new one which is not currently licensed as a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle, please contact the licensing team first to ensure it meets with the required specification. Officers will need to ensure proposed vehicles comply with the required standards. Any additional vehicle type not currently authorised for use as a hackney carriage vehicle will need licensing committee approval before it can be licensed. We strongly advise therefore you contact us before you commit to purchase any vehicle not already on the licensed 'fleet'.

This could prevent spending money on a vehicle that will not be licensed.



Advertising on vehicles

A reminder that any advertising on hackney carriages must meet with the approval of the council before being applied to the vehicle. If any advertising is deemed unsuitable and has been applied without prior agreement the vehicle licence will be suspended until the advertising has been removed.

Advertising on private hire vehicles is limited to the relevant operator name and number only.

Railway station parking

South West Trains has asked us to highlight an issue they have with private hire vehicles blocking access to their premium parking spaces by the railway station. They have received complaints against different operators whose vehicles have caused problems. Their customers pay premium prices for 24/7 access to these spaces and they regularly arrive to find licensed vehicles parked in their bays.

Taxing your vehicle with a certificate of compliance

Two drivers have reported problems they have experienced when renewing their road tax with a certificate of compliance at post offices. When doing so, proprietors should also complete a V112 form with their vehicle details. These forms are available at the Post Office or downloadable from www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

Licensing efficiencies and savings review

The licensing team has commenced its efficiencies and savings review. As you will know, we administer and enforce many licensing functions. The review involves the licensing team and a panel of three non licensing council officers assessing our current practices and workload. The panel will then present their findings and make recommendations to the council's senior management team. We should learn of the outcome of this review by autumn of this year.

Part of the review process will involve the review team speaking to our customers so some of you may receive a phone call and be asked a few questions about the service we provide.



Have your circumstances changed?

Please remember to notify the licensing team in writing if after the issue of your licence you:

- suffer from a change in your medical condition which may affect your fitness to drive
- are convicted of a criminal or motoring offence
- receive a warning or caution
- move address
- change your name

Calls are frequently received from licensees advising us their licence will shortly expire but they haven't received their renewal paperwork. Renewal letters are always sent at the start of the month before licenses are due to expire to the latest address provided to us. Some licensees claiming not to have received the renewal papers have not updated us of a recent house move. As the licensing authority we need to ensure we have your correct contact details at all times. If you move during the term of your licence, you will be required to pay for a replacement licence at £12.50.

We also need to be satisfied about licensees' fitness and propriety hence the reasons we also need to be updated about any changes regarding medical fitness, criminal or motoring convictions, warnings etc.

Please remember to tell us if your circumstances change since the grant of your current driver and/or operator licence which may affect your suitability to hold that licence. If you receive DVLA driving endorsements, you are convicted or any criminal or motoring offences, subject to any police investigation or your medical condition changes please let us know.



Consultation matters

We consult stakeholders and the licensed trade about matters which directly affect you and/or your work so please take the time to participate in these exercises. Some recent consultations have received low response levels. If you do not respond to our proposals, we will assume you support them. We value your experience and feedback and strongly encourage you to let us know your views.

Be assured that we consider all valid comments and matters raised to support or oppose proposed changes and updates so please provide your written response, either by email to licensing@basingstoke.gov.uk or by post to the Civic Offices address. Your views can then be considered as part of our review into these areas.

In this newsletter, we are consulting about a suggestion raised by two separate operators regarding the private hire vehicle No Booking No Ride door signs. Both operators felt the door sign should also include details of the operator to improve public safety so passengers can be assured they getting into the vehicle provided by the operator with whom they booked. This may reduce the number of 'no shows' caused by passengers getting onto the wrong vehicle. Most private hire vehicles carry separate operator signs in addition to our door signs. This proposal would mean these signs could be merged so the vehicle would only be required to carry the single sign.

This would also mean however door signs would need to be updated if the vehicle changed from one operator to another.

Officers also propose to undertake a review of the vehicle testing standards and testing provision. Please provide your feedback about the current vehicle testing criteria and the provision of vehicle testing stations

we currently offer, good or bad. Please let us know your thoughts about the above matters by 31 May 2012.



Southampton Airport

Southampton Airport have written to the Licensing Team advising of recent changes made to their passenger drop off and collection areas. The area in front of the terminal building has now been closed to unknown vehicles with new drop off and pick up bays now in place within the short stay car park in a dedicated area on the ground floor. This is an easy access area and provides an undercover facility in a safe position just a short distance from the terminal building. A 10 minute free period is available to users of this facility. Vehicles staying longer than this will be subjected to the car parking charges at the prevailing tariff. Please note there is a height restriction of 2.2m for vehicles entering the short stay car park. Any vehicles exceeding this height should use the long stay car park where a 30 minute free period will be provided upon verification of height by airport car park staff.

Whilst using the designated area for drop offs and pick ups, vehicles must not be left unattended. If you need to leave your vehicle unattended, you must use the parking bays of the main car park area.

The airport has explained the adjustments have been made for safety and security reasons and vehicles are now prohibited from stopping on any of the airports roadways.

Should you require any further details or alternatively wish to provide any comments about this, please do so on www.southamptonairport.com/feedback

No booking no ride door signs

Since the door signs were introduced into the vehicle conditions, proprietors have been required to apply them onto the top panel of either the front or rear doors. This requirement is not always being followed and many signs are being placed lower where they cannot be seen well and leaves them subject to damage from road grit etc. Please ensure you position your door signs appropriately. Failure to do so, will result in you having to

purchase replacement signs and reposition these in accordance with the conditions. Testing stations will be reminded of their obligation to ensure the correct position of door signs at the compliance test.

As we have recently found door signs attached by a magnetic strip all vehicles issued with replacement door signs will be inspected to ensure the signs and plates are secured in accordance with the licence conditions.

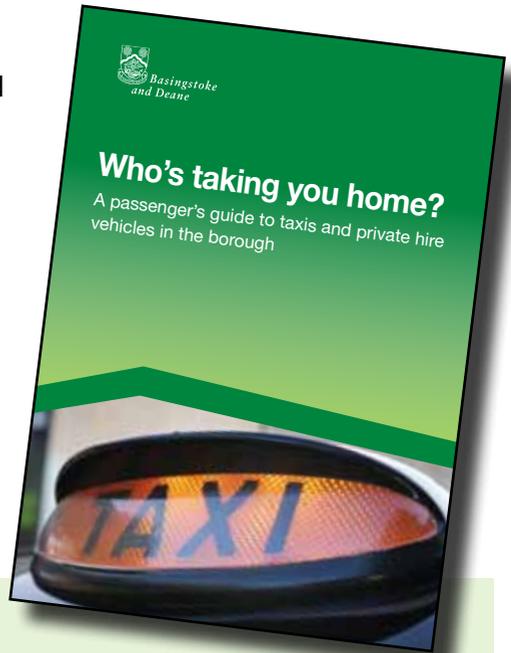
Public awareness roadshow

In the run up to Christmas, in partnership with the Hackney Carriage Federation, the licensing team participated in a 'Who's Taking You Home?' public safety awareness campaign urging people to check the car they are getting into is suitably licensed.

Although we have not had reports of bogus drivers in the borough, reports from London and other areas have led to the team warning residents of the need to stay vigilant.

At our roadshows in Festival Place, Basingstoke College of Technology and Queen Mary's College, information and advice was provided to students and members of the public about getting home safely after a night out and using licensed services.

Feedback from people highlighted a lack of understanding about licensed vehicles and what passengers should look for before they get into a car. Most people thought that both vehicle types are simply 'taxis' so can be hired immediately by asking the driver.



Travel tokens

Hampshire County Council (HCC) now process travel token claims and have assured officers all claims are promptly processed. There may be a slight delay however if you submit a claim but still have to set up your operator details with them which takes about a week.

HCC advertise a list of operators in the Borough which accept the vouchers. Details of the participating operators in Basingstoke and Deane can be found online at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/concessionary-travel/disabledtravel/travelvouchers/cfbasingstoke.htm> HCC propose to undertake a review of the scheme shortly so please pass any feedback to their Concessionary Team at (address to be confirmed).

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brought together in one Act several pieces of legislation concerning discrimination including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. It includes many of the taxi and private hire provisions which were in the DDA 1995 and also some important changes.

The duties on drivers relating to carrying assistance dogs with their owners in the passenger compartments plus associated exemptions certificates came into effect on 1 October 2010, these remain the same as previously under the DDA Act 1995.

The Equality Act 2010 proposes to place duties upon drivers of 'designated' wheelchair accessible licensed vehicles to provide physical assistance to passengers in wheelchairs. At the time of writing this newsletter, central government are still considering a commencement strategy for these duties. We will continue to update you when further announcements are made.

As a general guide wheelchairs must never face sideways and must be secured using the correct straps. Once in position, the wheelchair brakes must be on. If it is a powered wheelchair, the power unit must be switched off and should never be left in freewheel mode.

The Department for Transport has urged licensing authorities to maintain a list of 'designated vehicles' which is a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed in the area.

The consequence of being on this list is that the driver must undertake the duties detailed under section 165 of the Act in relation to the carriage of passengers in/with wheelchairs.

Hospital spaces

Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital have recently altered the provision of parking spaces they provide for licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. We regret we were not aware any amendments were being made. We hope the revised provision is working well and are happy to pass on any feedback you may have following these amendments.



Your views matter



If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please complete the slip below and return it to the address at the end of the form.

Name

Address

Licence number

Contact number

Email address

Comments, questions or suggestions

Please return this form to the Licensing team at:

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Civic Offices, London Road,
Basingstoke RG21 4AH

Alternatively, email your comments, questions or suggestions entitled taxi and private hire feedback to licensing@basingstoke.gov.uk

©Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council June 2011

www.basingstoke.gov.uk

customer.services@basingstoke.gov.uk 01256 844844

Follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/BasingstokeGov

**For a large print copy of this
leaflet please call 01256 844844**

