



Basingstoke
and Deane



working together

Trade Newsletter Autumn 2020

Welcome to our latest trade newsletter. Please take a few minutes to read through to keep up to date with taxi and private hire matters. The Covid restrictions have been very hard on the trade, and a number of drivers have been volunteering their services to work with local charities to delivery support packages or transport key workers. It is understood that the effects of the lockdowns will continue to be felt for some time, the Licensing team is aware of this. We will continue to keep the trade updated with all the relevant guidance.

Split Fee payments

To help with fee payments, renewal fees for drivers, vehicles and operators have been allowed to be paid in two instalments. The first instalment is required at renewal, and the remaining instalment will be required within six months for vehicle licenses and within a year for driving licenses. This is currently in place until 11 December 2020.

Licence Renewals

Licence renewals are continuing to be posted out to drivers, and drivers may submit their renewal paperwork to the council by email or post. You may hand in paperwork at the council however you must post it into the post box at the entrance to reception. Please do not post any original documents to the council, if we need to see original documents we will contact you and make arrangements for those to be viewed.

When submitting your documents via email, please try to submit all your relevant documents on one email.

Compliance Certificates

We have agreed with our authorised vehicle testing stations for compliance tests certificates to be emailed directly to us. This means when your vehicle has passed its test, you don't need to drop the certificate into us separately.

Medicals

The Licensing team understands that a number of GPs are still not doing, or have stopped doing, appointments to complete medical forms. If this is the case with your GP, you can arrange an appointment with another surgery, however you must ensure that the surgery have access to your medical records. To do this, please request a medical history summary from your current GP and provide that to the doctor who completes your medical. The licensing team is looking into other options for the medicals as well, and if there are any changes the trade will be notified.

If you have had a change in your medical status you must let the licensing team know as soon as possible, as you may have to complete another medical to ensure you still meet Group 2 DVLA standards. Following a change to your medical status, you must submit any relevant documentation with your medical report, such as hospital discharge notes or letters from consultants.

Adhesive Vehicle Plates

The Licensing Team has been exploring options of providing adhesive plates for licensed vehicles. This involves providing the plate details to a third-party supplier to print and post the plates and other vehicle signage to our licence holders.

The benefits of this new system will be:

- a reduction in price for drivers,
- one less trip into the offices to collect plates,
- easier to produce for the licensing team,
- can be produced whilst working remotely,
- removes requirement for vehicles to carry plate holding kits, and
- the plates will have additional security features

The security features are a hologram on the vehicle plates and a QR code which customers can scan to provide the registration number of the licensed vehicle which can be checked against the vehicle the plate is attached to. Once the plate is peeled off the vehicle, it cannot be re-used.

We shall update you when the system has been finalised and adhesive plates will start to be issued.

DfT Face covering guidance

The DfT has issued further advice and guidance in regards to the use of face coverings in taxis and PHVs. The DfT advises that:

1. It is a legal requirement for passengers to wear a face covering when using taxis or private hire vehicles, unless they are exempt.
2. Passengers can be refused travel if they do not wear a face covering.
3. Passengers should follow the advice of the operator and driver.
4. Use contactless payment if possible
5. Passengers should sanitise their hands when they have finished their journey.

The licensing team have provided Covid guidance for drivers on the below page, which includes guidance on sanitising your vehicle and other reasonable precautions to take to keep yourself and your passengers safe:

[Covid -19 advice for licensed drivers](#)

Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training

The Blue Lamp Trust has been identified as an external provider of safeguarding and disability awareness training. This will be complimented by a specific guidance page for the trade on the council licensing website on safeguarding. This system has been tested by the licensing team and new drivers are starting to go through the training.

All drivers will eventually need to have received this training, and we will be contacting licence holders separately to arrange this. Currently this is being delivered by e-learning, but face to face training may become available again when the Covid restrictions are lifted.

Guidance on safeguarding, and details of the blue lamp training, can be found on the on the below link:

[Safeguarding Guidance and Training](#)

Wheelchairs

We have received a number of requests for clarification about the carriage of passenger using wheelchairs. All drivers who drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle have passed the DSA or Bluelamp Assessment to demonstrate safe loading and securing of a wheelchair. If you feel you need to be refreshed, then please contact Blue Lamp Trust to arrange to retake this training.

Drivers need to be aware of their duties and their taxi vehicle layout and capability, how to safely secure, load and unload customers, maintain high standards of interaction with customer to ensure the customer is safe and comfortable, and to provide customers with reasonable assistance as required.

Passengers occupying wheelchairs must not be transported unless their wheelchair is securely restrained using restraints to the flooring and wheelchair frame and the passenger is secured by seat belt fitted to the taxi and which has been properly adjusted and fastened. Wheelchairs must be correctly positioned within taxis and located between the appropriate restraint attachment track/points on the floor with the wheelchair brake applied. The wheelchair must be positioned so it is not facing sideways during transportation. Wheelchairs must be rear or front facing.

Pushchairs in taxis

Further clarification has been requested about transporting children and pushchairs in taxis and private hire vehicles. The guidance from ROSPA states that it is not considered safe for a child to travel in a pushchair or buggy in a vehicle. If you carry a child in a pushchair, and are in an accident, you may not be covered by your insurance.

The safest way for a child to be carried is to be secured in an age appropriate child booster seat until they are 12 years old. A number of buggies or pushchairs allow the seat to be removed and strapped into the vehicle to act as a car seat.

For more information please see the below online resources:

[RoSPA child car seats](#)

[Taxi Leaks blog - carrying pushchairs](#)

[Pushchair expert - Taxis](#)

Drivers are expected to have conversations with passengers and conduct a risk assessment with customers who wish to travel with children and a pushchair.

Payment types

It is strongly advised that drivers display signage in their vehicles to advertise what payment types are accepted. Particularly under Covid conditions, members of the public are being encouraged to make payment by card/contactless payment where possible.

If card payments are accepted, card payment must be accepted for all journeys. Following a change in legislation in 2016, drivers and operators are unable to add any surcharges to customers paying by card. In the case of hackney carriages, drivers must not charge customers more than the metered fare.