

LICENSING OF WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

VEHICLE SPECIFICATION

New Applications

From 1st April 2012 only those vehicles which comply with the specification detailed below can have licences granted by Licensing Officers. Should you wish to proceed with an application in respect of a vehicle, which does not comply, to the specification, then it will be referred to the Licensing Committee of Swindon Borough Council for decision.

Age of Vehicle

Wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages that meet the Public Carriage Office Conditions of Fitness must be under 5 years old to be eligible for licensing.

All other newly licensed wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage vehicles which meet the Swindon Borough Council Hackney Carriage vehicle specification must be no more than 12 months old from the date of first registration to be eligible to be licensed.

Vehicles which are wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages and conform in all respects to Swindon Borough Council Hackney Carriage vehicle specification may be licensed until they are 10 years old, subject to the following conditions:

Once a vehicle reaches 10 (ten) years of age consideration will be given to licensing the vehicle for a further two years subject to the following conditions the vehicle must be presented each a year, by prior arrangement, to the Licensing Officer for a detailed inspection. At this time the full service history for the vehicle must be presented. To satisfy the inspection the vehicle must be in an exceptionally well maintained condition, both in regard to external bodywork, interior fitments and ancillary equipment. Providing the inspection is satisfactory the vehicle will then be required to undertake two MOT tests per annum (normally at six monthly intervals) at one of the garages contracted by the Council to carry out such tests. The vehicle proprietor shall meet the costs of all such tests and inspections. The Hackney Carriage must be presented prior to the expiry of the licence, if the licence expires the vehicle will no longer be eligible for licensing.

No vehicle which has not been exceptionally well maintained shall be eligible for relicensing under these Conditions

Existing arrangements will continue for saloon vehicles which are licensed as Hackney Carriages, subject to the following conditions:

Once a vehicle reaches 5 (five) years of age consideration will be given to licensing the vehicle for a further two years subject to the following conditions the vehicle must be presented each year until it reaches five years of age, by prior arrangement, to the Licensing Officer for a detailed inspection. At this time the full service history for the vehicle must be presented. To satisfy the inspection the vehicle must be in an exceptionally well maintained condition, both in regard to external bodywork, interior fitments and ancillary equipment. Providing the inspection is satisfactory the vehicle will then be required to undertake two MOT tests per annum (normally at six monthly intervals) at one of the garages contracted by the Council to carry out such tests. The proprietor shall meet the costs of all such tests and inspections.

A vehicle, which has failed to satisfy the Licensing Officer that it has been exceptionally well maintained, or has failed to pass both MOT tests as required, shall not be eligible for re-licensing.

No vehicle which has not been exceptionally well maintained shall be eligible for relicensing under these Conditions.

Accident Damage

If a Hackney Carriage is involved in a motor accident causing damage to the vehicle, the driver must notify the Council's Licensing Officer within three working days and must present the vehicle for inspection, by prior appointment, within 10 working days.

1. General Construction

- a) All vehicles must comply in all respects with the requirements of the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) Regulations 1980 (SI 1980 No.1182) and or the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) Regulations (Great Britain) 1984. (SI 1984 No 981) or the Motor Vehicles (EC Type Approval) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998 No. 2051) or the Road Vehicles (Approval) Regulations 2009 (SI 2009 No.717). Every new vehicle offered for approval must comply in all respects with the British and European vehicle regulations and be covered by a valid "type approval" to the requirements of the M1 category of European Whole Type Approval 70/156/EEC as amended. Or Directive 2007/46/EC (as amended) .
- b) All vehicles must have separate driver and passenger compartments.
- c) All vehicles must be so constructed as to facilitate the carriage of disabled persons and be capable of accommodating a disabled person in a wheelchair in the passenger compartment, provided that the wheelchair fits within the dimensions specified in the relevant paragraphs below. Rear loading disabled access vehicles are not permitted all disabled access should be from the nearside of the vehicle.
- d) Every Hackney Carriage must be so constructed so as to facilitate the carriage of persons with disabilities and must be capable , as a minimum, of accommodating a disabled person in a Department of Transport reference wheelchair either in a forward or rearward facing position.
- e) Vehicles presented for approval, and while in use, must comply with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and any subsequent amendment or re-enactment thereof.
- f) No fittings, other than those approved, may be attached to, or carried on, the inside or outside of the vehicle.

2. Body

- a) The body must be of the fixed head type with a partially glazed, full height, partition separating the passenger(s) from the driver.
- b) The overall width of the vehicle excluding driving mirrors must not exceed 2 metres.
- c) The overall length of the vehicle must not exceed 5 metres.

- d) Running boards will only be allowed where they are fitted by manufacturers and the vehicle must have European whole type approval with running boards. All running boards must conform with construction and use regulations, meaning boards must not exceed the width of the widest part of the vehicle (mirrors are not included as part of the vehicle). The board must be a minimum five inches in width, all of which must be available as a step.

NB These overall dimensions are essential for determining the size of taxi ranks, other pick up points, and for the free access and flow of other vehicles on the streets.

3. Steering

Must be right hand drive.

4. Turning circle

- a) The wheel turning circle kerb to kerb on either lock must not be less than 7.62 metres in diameter.

5. Driver's compartment

- a) The driver's compartment must be so designed that the driver has adequate room, can easily reach, and quickly operate, the controls and give hand signals on the offside of the vehicle.
- b) Controls must be so placed as to allow reasonable access from the driver's seat and, when centrally placed, must be properly protected from contact with luggage.
- c) A serviceable device for demisting the windscreen must be fitted.
- d) All vehicles licensed must be fitted with an intercom type system to permit the driver and passenger(s) to communicate verbally. Vehicles must have appropriate signage in passenger compartment.
- e) A suitable sliding window, or similar feature to facilitate payment, shall be fitted in the glazed partition.
- f) Space shall be provided on the nearside of the driver compartment for the carriage of luggage. Access to this luggage space shall be by way of the nearside front door. The nearside front door must be locked and only be capable of being unlocked, from either inside or outside the vehicle, by the driver.

6. Passenger compartment

6.1 General

- a) The vertical distance between the highest part of the floor and the roof must be not less than 1.3 meters.
- b) Suitable provision must be made for the seating of not less than 4 and not more than 8 passengers.

6.2 Doorways

- a) The clear height of the doorway must not be less than 1.2 meters.

- b) The nearside door and doorway must be constructed so as to permit an unrestricted opening across the centre of the doorway of at least 75 cm.
- c) Grab handles must be placed at door entrances, to aid passenger ingress and egress from the vehicle. These should be of a high visibility colour different from the interior colour scheme of the vehicle.
- d) The outer edge of the floor at each entrance must be fitted with non-slip treads.
- e) The top tread for any entrance must be at floor level of the passenger compartment and, except as detailed in 6.2 f) below, must not exceed 46 cm above ground level when the vehicle is un-laden.
- f) Where the top tread for the entrance exceeds 40 cm, a moveable intermediate step must be provided at each entrance into the passenger compartment. The intermediate step shall be encased beneath the vehicle and be power operated to extend outwards. When not in use and whenever the vehicle is in motion, the step must not extend outwards beyond the vertical line of the bodywork. The step must be operated from within the driver's compartment and must have a failsafe device linked to the handbrake mechanism to prevent the possibility of the vehicle being driven while the step is extended. The step must be covered with a suitable non-slip surface with the edges of the step highlighted in Yellow.

Petrol, LPG or CNG tanks or pipes shall not be located in close proximity to any part of the electrical components of the steps.

Explanatory note

In vehicles where fuel tanks are located in the vicinity of an electric step, the tank and fuel lines will have to be relocated.

As vehicles do load and unload passengers at the offside and where passengers are entering or leaving the vehicle at the offside without the added height of the kerb then the intermediate step becomes more important.

6.3 Hinged doors

The minimum angle of the door when opened must be 90 degrees.

6.4 Sliding doors

- a) The interior door handle must be clearly visible and easily accessible to passengers.
- b) There must be approved reflective strips on both the front and rear edges of the door.
- c) There shall be a clearly visible sign displayed across the top rear of the vehicle bearing the words "Door Open". This sign must be automatically linked to the passenger doors in order that when either door handle is activated to open the door the sign is illuminated. The sign shall be so positioned so as not to impair rear vision.

6.5 Seats

- a) Occasional seats must be at least 40 cm. in width and the minimum distance from the back of the upholstery to the front edge of the seat must be 35.5 cm.

- b) Occasional seats must be so arranged as to rise automatically when not in use.
- c) Occasional seats when not in use, as well as fixed seats, must not obstruct doorways.
- d) Where seats are placed facing each other, there must be a minimum space of 42.5 cm between the two seats.
- e) Where all seats are placed facing to the front of the vehicle, there must be a minimum space of 66 cm in front of each seat.
- f) Where the rear seat is of the bench type the overall width of the seat must not be less than 119 cm.
- g) Suitable means; must be provided to assist persons to rise from the rear seat with particular attention to the needs of the elderly and disabled.
- h) Where seat covers are used they must be properly affixed to the seat so as not to become loose during use. They must be clean and devoid of damage of any kind.

6.6 Seat belts

All seats must be fitted with approved seatbelts.

6.7 Floor

The floor of the passenger compartment must be covered non-slip material, which can easily be cleaned.

7. Facilities for the disabled

- a) Approved anchorages must be provided for the wheelchair and wheelchair disabled person. These anchorages must be either chassis or floor linked and capable of withstanding approved dynamic or static tests. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other. Anchorages must also be provided for the safe stowage of a wheelchair when not in use, whether folded or otherwise, if carried within the passenger compartment. All anchorages and restraints must be so designed that they do not cause any danger to other passengers.
- b) A ramp, or ramps, for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for use at the nearside rear passenger door. An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramp(s) do not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramps to be stored safely when not in use.
- c) The vehicle should be equipped with a manufacturer's user manual/guide on the safe egress and ingress and security of wheelchair passengers.

8. Condition

- a) The vehicle must have no signs of any significant accident damage, which affects the safety, or appearance of it.
- b) The paintwork must be of a "professional" finish and consistent with the colour scheme of the vehicle.
- c) All parts of the passenger compartment must be clean and free of any damage, which

may affect its suitability for the carriage of passengers.

9. Windows

- a) Windows must be provided at the sides and rear of the passenger compartment.
- b) A window on either side of the passenger compartment must be capable of being opened easily by passengers when seated. The control for opening a window must be clearly marked.
- c) Licensed Hackney Carriages must allow at least 75% light transmission through the front windscreen and no less than 70% light transmission through all other windows. No vehicle shall be fitted with any form of additional film to darken or tint the glass on any part of the vehicle.
- d) A serviceable device for demisting the rear window must be fitted.

10. Interior lighting

Adequate lighting must be provided for the driver and passengers. Separate lighting controls for both passenger and driver must be provided. In the case of the passenger compartment, an illuminated control switch must be fitted, marked and in such a position that it is clearly visible to the passengers and is not easily confused with any other control.

11. Door fittings

An approved type of automatic door locking device must be fitted to passenger doors. The interior door handle must be clearly identified, to prevent it being mistaken for any other control.

12. Fuel system cut off

A device must be provided whereby the supply of fuel to the engine may be immediately cut off. A manually operated device must have its location together with the means of operation and "off" position, clearly marked on the outside of the vehicle. In the case of a vehicle fitted with an automatic inertia fuel cut off switch, no external switch or markings are required.

Any engine powered by liquid petroleum gas, compressed natural gas, petrol or any combination of these fuels, must be fitted with an automatic inertia fuel cut off device. They must also have a manually operated fuel cut off device externally mounted which is easily visible and readily accessible at all times from the outside of the vehicle, with its location and means of operation clearly marked.

13. Tyres

- a) Vehicles must have four wheels, all tyres, including the spare tyre, must comply with the vehicle manufacturer's specification. The vehicle must have a serviceable wheel brace and jack. If a vehicle is fitted with a "space saver" spare tyre or similar emergency repair system, it may only be used to get the vehicle to a location for the tyre to be changed for a full sized tyre. No new fares must be taken when a "space saver" tyre is used.
- b) Remoulded tyres will not be permitted, except where the remoulded tyre is clearly

marked "TAXI".

- c) Tyres fitted to the vehicle must have a minimum 2mm tread depth.

14. Electrical equipment

Any additional electrical installation to the original equipment must be adequately insulated and be protected by suitable fuses.

15. Heating and ventilation

An adequate heating and ventilation system must be provided for the driver and the passengers, and means provided for independent control by the driver and the passengers.

16. "Taxi sign"

A roof mounted "Taxi" sign of an approved pattern, clearly visible both by day and night when the vehicle is available for hire, must be fitted.

17. Taximeter

- a) A taximeter of an approved type must be fitted within the driver's compartment in such a position that the face of the meter is clearly visible in the passenger compartment and it does not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
- b) The taximeter shall be fitted with an approved form of sealing which will prevent non approved or accidental alteration to the calibration of the meter.

18. Radio apparatus/communication systems

- a) Where apparatus for the operation of a two-way radio system is fitted to a vehicle, no part of the apparatus may be fixed in the passenger compartment or in the rear boot compartment if LPG or CNG tanks or equipment are situated therein.
- b) Any radio apparatus shall be so positioned and properly secured so as not to interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
- c) No other radio equipment, either in the driver or the passenger compartment, is permitted without the prior approval of the Council.

19. Table of fares

Facility must be provided for the display of the table of fares in such a position that the table of fares is clearly visible to the passengers.

20. Interior licence plate

A plate bearing the licence number of the vehicle shall be displayed within the vehicle in such a position that it is clearly visible to the passengers.

21. Exterior licence plate

Provision shall be made for the display of the exterior licence plate on the rear of the vehicle in an approved position.

22. Fire extinguishers and first aid kit

- a) An appliance for extinguishing fire must be securely fitted to the vehicle within the drivers compartment where it is within easy reach of the driver and does not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.
- b) The fire extinguisher must comply with the requirements of BS EN3 1996 and have a minimum fire rating of 5a and 34b.
- c) The fire extinguisher must contain not less than 0.9 litres AFFF foam or 1 KG dry powder and must have seal or gauge mechanism.
- d) The fire extinguisher must be regularly maintained and annually inspected by a competent person. Details of the inspection must be recorded on the extinguisher.
- e) The vehicle registration number shall be permanently and legibly marked on the extinguisher.
- f) A suitable first aid kit containing appropriate first aid dressings shall be carried in the vehicle to be available for immediate use in an emergency. The vehicle registration number shall be marked thereon. The driver is not expected to render first aid unless he/she holds a current First Aid Certificate.

23. Maintenance

Vehicles, including all fittings, advertisements etc., must be maintained to approved standards. The vehicles must be kept clean and in good working order. Vehicles will at all times be subject to test and inspection. Should it be found that a vehicle is not being properly maintained or kept in good working order, a notice will be served on the licensee prohibiting the use of the vehicle until the defect(s) have been rectified.

24. Auxiliary equipment

Any auxiliary equipment that is fitted to a vehicle must not impede the driver in any way, or hinder his/her view, or impede, or cause hazard to passengers or other road users.

25. Identification

To aid easy identification of taxis by the public, newly licensed vehicles, which are not of the traditional style i.e., do not comply with the Public Carriage Office conditions of fitness, shall display, on both sides of the vehicle the word "TAXI". The word "TAXI" must be permanently marked; in a colour contrasting with the colour scheme of the vehicle in letters not less than 10 cm high. The wording shall be located in such a position that it is easily seen and may be repeated along the side of the vehicle.

- 26. Swindon Borough Council reserves the right to review and amend these Conditions at any time as and when the Council's Licensing Committee feels it necessary.