



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 Basingstoke council offices by email or post. You may hand in paperwork at Basingstoke council offices 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.

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 vehicles. This involves providing the relevant data to a third party supplier to print

and post the plates to our licence holders. This also includes printing badges, and larger internal badges to display in your vehicle.

The benefits of this new system will be:

- a reduction in price for drivers,
- easier to produce for the licensing team,
- can be produced whilst working remotely 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 and will provide the registration number of the licensed vehicle so it can be checked against the vehicle the plate is attached to. Once the plate is peeled off the vehicle, the plate is destroyed so it cannot be attached to another vehicle, and it shouldn't cause any damage to the paintwork.

Once the system has been finalised with the third party supplier, the trade will be updated 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 PHV. 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 web page, which includes guidance on sanitising your vehicle and reasonable precautions to take to keep yourself and your passengers safe:

<https://www.hart.gov.uk/taxis> (see 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) related advice')

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:

<https://www.hart.gov.uk/taxis> (see “**How to become a taxi driver**”)

Touting

The Licensing Team have received complaints about Hart Hackney Carriages touting. Touting is described under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, s167, as an offence to ‘in a public place, to solicit persons to hire vehicles to carry them as passengers’. In action this means that Hackney Carriages cannot call out to passers-by to solicit their custom.

The Hart District Council Hackney Carriage byelaws further state:

7. The driver of a hackney carriage shall, when plying for hire in any street and not actually hired,
 - (a) proceed with reasonable speed to one of the stands fixed by the byelaw in that behalf;
 - (b) if a stand, at the time of his arrival, is occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, proceed to another stand;
 - (c) on arriving at a stand not already occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, station the carriage immediately behind the carriage or carriages on the stand and so as to face in the same direction;
 - (d) from time to time when any other carriage immediately in front is driven off or moved forward cause his carriage to be moved forward so as to fill the place previously occupied by the carriage driven off or moved forward.
8. A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage, when standing or plying for hire, shall not, by calling out or otherwise, importune any person to hire such carriage and shall not make use of the services of any other person for the purpose.

To act in a manner contradictory to these byelaws is an offence, and could result in a complaint investigation and a review of your fitness and propriety to hold a hackney carriage drivers licence.

Please ensure you are aware of the byelaws, and any other conditions relating to your licence. A copy of the byelaws will have been issued with your driver badge, but they are available on the below website:

<https://www.hart.gov.uk/taxis> (see the ‘**Licences**’ section)

Payment types and journey refusals

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 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.

You cannot refuse a journey because you consider it to be too short. Refusing a journey is an offence under the **Town Police Clauses Act 1847, s53**. A journey can only be refused with a reasonable excuse, such as the driver feeling that their personal safety is at risk. Any complaint made to the council about refusing a fare will be investigated and could lead to formal enforcement action being taken.

DBS Update Service

We require all new and existing drivers to join the update service.

The DBS update service is an online subscription service that lets you keep your enhanced DBS certificates up-to-date. It also allows Hart District Council to check a certificate online, with your consent.

You can use your certificate again when you apply for a position within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required.

Registration lasts for one year. The service costs £13 per year and starts from the date your DBS certificate was issued. The £13 fee is payable by debit or credit card only.

The benefits of joining are:

- saves you time and money
- you can take your DBS certificate from role to role (if within the same workforce, where the same type and level of check is required)
- employers can carry out instant online status checks on DBS certificates that are linked to your subscription
- the service enhances safeguarding processes

More details regarding joining the DBS Update service can be found on the [gov.uk webpage](#).