

Taxi Trade Updates

Due to the current climate in relation to Covid-19 and social distancing, self-isolation etc. please be aware of the following changes to our services:

- New private hire and hackney carriage vehicle and driver licences will not be issued. New vehicle licence applications will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Principal Officers/Assistant Director, for example processing a new vehicle licence, for an existing licenced driver.
- All business will be conducted via phone and email. There will be no face to face provision (Call 01204 336584 option 1, or preferably email licensing.unit@bolton.gov.uk).
- All existing private hire and hackney carriage vehicle and driver licences due to expire before 30th June 2020:
 - Will have the option to extend their existing licence until the 30th September 2020
 - Extensions will be approved upon completion and return of a Council online self-certification statement form (attached)
 - The form is now available on-line on the Council webpages or by emailing the licensing unit address above
 - Upon completion and approval, drivers and vehicle owners will receive a PDF confirmation via email that their licence has been extended without prejudice
 - Drivers will need to print the confirmation and keep it with them when working or be able to show a copy on their mobile phone.
- However, should a driver decide not to extend their driver licence, there will be a temporary extension of the 6 week grace period until 30th September 2020. This will allow any existing driver to reapply for a licence.
- Replacements/duplicates the individual licence holder is required to email the licensing team with their request.
- A new farecard form has been sent to all private hire operators. The operator will complete the form and request the farecard by emailing the form back to the licensing team. The new farecard will then be emailed to the operator for them to print.
- There will be no committee meetings until further notice. Any licence holder due to attend committee will be contacted to make alternative future arrangement.
- Any complaints against drivers, vehicle owners or operators will be dealt with by an Enforcement Officer by email or phone.
- The hackney carriage vehicle meter checks are cancelled until further notice.

MOT and Mid-Year Tests

We've received the notification from DVSA about new rules for MOT testing on 'light vehicles'. DVSA have confirmed that a private hire and hackney carriage vehicles are 'light vehicle' for the purposes of the new rules:

- MOT expired before the 30th March 2020 - then the vehicle needs to be submitted for test at one of the Councils authorised garages. The vehicle must pass both the MOT and vehicle licence test. A licence cannot be extended on a vehicle where the MOT expired before the 30th March 2020.

- MOT due to expire on or after 30th March 2020 – DVSA have confirmed the MOT will be extended for 6 months and by the end of this period you will need to have a new MOT, for example:
 - a vehicle whose MOT expires on 3rd April 2020 will have it extended to 3rd October 2020
 - the vehicle will however have to pass its MOT by 3rd October 2020
 - in these circumstances the vehicle licence can be extended

As outlined above if the MOT expired before 30th March 2020, then the vehicle will need to be submitted for test and pass both the MOT and vehicle licence test to continue to be used on the road as a licensed private hire/hackney carriage vehicle. Not all of the approved garages are currently open – please contact them directly to find out their opening arrangements.

If a vehicle is due its mid-year test you should apply the same rule as for the MOT. Any deposits already paid for a mid-year vehicle test will be deducted from the next vehicle test fee.

Please note that if you do extend your MOT, you are required to submit your vehicle for MOT at one of the approved garages within a month of the restrictions being lifted. This is to ensure both your safety and that of the travelling public. This will also assist in managing the backlog of vehicles which will require testing in 6 months time.

If the vehicle is being used, you must be certain that it meets the requirements of Part II of Road Traffic Act 1988 (Construction and Use Regulations) if it doesn't you may be committing an offence and putting your licence at risk.

Covid-19 Precautions

In this response is guidance in relation to transmission of the coronavirus *'it is also crucial that all parts of the transport sector ensure that their services do not contribute to the transmission of coronavirus, so I hope you can help us in reiterating the key Government advice to all your members about the need for robust cleaning regimes for vehicles, and of course for immediate self-isolation for drivers who suspect that they may have contracted this awful disease'*. We ask you to share this message across the whole network of drivers and vehicles.

Everyone has a role to play in limiting the spread of coronavirus. Licence holders, including taxi and private hire car drivers, are reminded to follow government advice when it comes to hand washing, including advice on isolation if you have symptoms.

The following information is advice for 'taxi' drivers from GMRCE:

Guidance for taxi drivers during the coronavirus outbreak

Ask about symptoms before a passenger is picked up.

In line with current guidance people with a new persistent cough or high temperature should stay at home. If potential passengers have symptoms, direct them to NHS 111 and advise them not to make the journey.

Where possible, ask passengers to sit in the back of your vehicle.

Keep your vehicle clean:

- *Regularly clean surfaces, such as card payment devices, steering wheels, handbrake, door handles, and seat-belt buckles with normal cleaning products after picking up each customer;*
- *Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20-seconds or use a sanitiser gel. If hand sanitiser is not available, a wash station can be set up in your car with basin, soap, water, kitchen towels and plastic bags for waste.*

Payments:

Where possible, cashless payments should be set up to avoid cash/change exchange – BACS, telephone or internet card payment, or similar is suggested. These could be taken over the phone or internet when taking the booking. We recognise that this may be more difficult for hackney carriages and if cash is exchanged – hand washing (above) in-between customers is even more important.

Further guidance/links:

Public Health England guidance on Coronavirus, including links to the package of support available to businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

Government support and how to access it: <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/>

*How your business might be helped with the response to coronavirus:
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-support-from-business>*

The Business Growth Hub has developed a range of free resources and advice to support businesses, including webinars below - www.businessgrowthhub.com/coronavirus

We know the trade are facing a very challenging and difficult time and the licensing team will do everything possible to support you.