**GUIDANCE ON HOW TO LICENCE A NEW PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE**

This guidance is designed to support an application for a new private hire or hackney carriage vehicle licence and provides information on the criteria applied by Bolton Council.

Please ensure you read the guidance before completing the online renewal application form. Links to the individual sections are below

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14. **Private Hire Vehicle Specification**

There are currently no restrictions on the age, make, model, or engine size for a private hire vehicle.

However if the vehicle does not meet the specification outlined below, a written request asking for the vehicle to be considered must be submitted to the Licensing Team. The written request must also include the proposed vehicle specification, supporting evidence and the reason for the request.

* The vehicle must not be a vehicle approved as a hackney carriage by Transport for London or a similar vehicle
* The vehicle must not be a left hand drive vehicle
* The vehicle must not be a convertible i.e. have a soft top
* The vehicle must carry a fire extinguisher to the following specification - two litre AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) this must display the British Kitemark symbol and be in full working order
* The vehicle must not have been modified from the original manufacturer’s specification
* The vehicle must not tow a trailer
* Private hire vehicles may be licensed to carry up to eight passengers excluding the driver e.g. mini-buses and people carrier, but only if the following rules are followed:
	+ All passenger seats are front facing and positioned to ensure the comfort/safety of the passenger
	+ There are at least two separate means of exit for passengers seated to the rear of the driver's seat
	+ The exits and paths to the exits must not be obstructed
	+ The vehicle is ‘type approved’ - the **Vehicle Registration Certificate** (V5/log book) must confirm that the vehicle is M1 ‘type approved’. This is identified on the certificate under the vehicle category at line ‘J’
	+ If the vehicle was manufactured as an M2 vehicle (a minibus with more than 8 passenger seats and the vehicle has then been modified by removing ONLY the rearmost seats to reduce the seating capacity) the V5/log book must reflect this reduction in seating capacity. M2 will appear on the certificate in the vehicle category at line ‘J’ and category line ‘S1’ will confirm the amendment to the number of seats permitted which includes the driver
	+ An imported vehicle or a vehicle converted from a van requires a Single Vehicle Approval (SVA/IVA). Contact the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) for further information on SVA/IVA - enquiries@vosa.gov.uk or telephone: 0300 123 9000
1. **Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specification**

There are controlled numbers of hackney carriage vehicle licences in Bolton. The Council is required to complete an ‘Unmet Demand’ survey, to maintain control of the number of licences issued.

There are currently no available new hackney carriage vehicle licences. If you wish to plate a new vehicle you must already have hackney carriage vehicle licence in your name to put on the new vehicle.

All new vehicles must be approved by the Licensing Unit. Requests must be emailed to licensing.unit@bolton.gov.uk before submitting.

All vehicles licences for hackney carriages in Bolton must comply with the Councils vehicle specification:

* The vehicle must be a vehicle approved as a hackney carriage by Transport for London
* The vehicle maybe specially converted to a hackney carriage subject to M1 or low volume approval and the Councils agreement
* The vehicle must meet wheelchair accessibility requirements set out in legislation and by the Council
* The vehicle should not exceed a length of 4660mm
* The vehicle is not a “Q” registration
* The vehicle must not be a left hand drive vehicle
* The vehicle must carry a fire extinguisher to the following specification - two litre AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) this must display the British Kitemark symbol and be in full working order and be securely fixed to the vehicle and in easy reach of the driver at all times
* The vehicle must not have been modified from the original manufacturer’s specification except where specially converted to a hackney carriage
* The vehicle must not tow a trailer
* A passenger carried in the front of the vehicle next to the driver must have sole use of a seat fitted for this purpose by the manufacturer
* No passenger shall be carried to the rear of the driver unless a seat is available for their sole occupancy
* Hackney carriage vehicle age policy:
	+ Any replacement vehicle must be under ten years of age at the point of application
	+ Renewal of licence the vehicle must be fifteen years or under at the point of application

If the vehicle does not meet the specification detailed above, then a written request asking for the vehicle to be considered must be submitted to the Licensing Team. The written request must also include the proposed vehicle specification, supporting evidence and the reason for the request.

1. **Application Form**

All questions on the application form **must** be completed by the vehicle owner, leaving **no** questions unanswered.

It is your responsibility to complete the form in full.

For an application in the name of a Limited Company, only a Director of the company may complete the application form.

1. **Fees**

A list of fees is available on the Councils website here: <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/taxi-private-hire/taxi-licensing-fees>.

We accept payment by debit and credit card.

Once the online form has been submitted you need to call our Customer Service Team on 01204 366584 and choose option 1 to make the payment.

You’ll need the online form reference number to make payment:

* This number starts ‘NVL’ and is provided at the end of the online process once the online form has been submitted.
* This reference number is also provided on the acknowledgement email sent to you on completion of the online form.

Online forms will not be processed and are not valid until the payment has been received.

If payment is not made within 3 working days from the date the online form is submitted, then the application will be rejected as incomplete and you’ll be required to start the application process again.

1. **Certificate of Insurance**

Section 48(1)(b) Local Government Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 - The ‘*Council shall not grant a’* private hire vehicle ‘*licence unless they are satisfied that there is in force in relation to the use of the vehicle a policy of insurance or such security as complies with the requirements of Part VI of the Road Traffic Act 1988’.*

Section 50(4) Local Government Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976 - *The proprietor of any hackney carriage or of any private hire vehicle licensed by a district council shall at the request of any authorised officer of the council produce for inspection the vehicle licence for such hackney carriage or private hire vehicle and the certificate of the policy of insurance or security required by (Part VI of the Road Traffic Act 1988) in respect of such hackney carriage or private hire*

The certificate or cover note must:

* be in date and not expired – the application for a licence may not be processed immediately, so you must ensure that there is sufficient insurance cover to allow for any delay in processing times
* be in the name of the applicant(s) including correct spelling of names
* state the ‘Limitation As To Use’ is for hire and reward:
	+ for private hire or pre-booked journeys for private hire vehicles or;
	+ for public hire for hackney carriage vehicles.

We will not accept your application if the certificate or cover note has not been attached to the online application.

1. **Vehicle History Check**

Every private hire and hackney carriage vehicle licensed by the Council is subject to a **Vehicle History Check** (VHC). The VHC ensures that the vehicle meets the Councils current vehicle standards.

Upon receipt of an application for a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle licence a VHC will be carried out by the Licensing Team.

The VHC is accessed electronically and confirms the vehicle status e.g. if the vehicle has been stolen or ‘written off’ due to accident damage.

1. **Category S & N (previously C & D) Classifications and Engineer’s Vehicle Inspection Report**

A vehicle that is classified Category S (C) ‘write off’ following accident damage can no longer be licensed by the Council.

A vehicle classified Category N (D) needs a written engineer’s vehicle inspection report. This report must be completed by an engineer qualified to assess accident damage. You must submit the engineers report with a wheel alignment check alongside your application. The engineers report must confirm the vehicle’s roadworthiness to the satisfaction of the Council.

Please see the Council’s **Vehicle Licensing Test Manual** for further information about engineer report’s. A copy of this manual can be viewed online at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/download/317/taxis-and-private-hire-licensing>.

Accident damage to licensed private hire and hackney carriage vehicles is covered under Section 50 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 subsections (3) & (5) which are duplicated below:

*(3) Without prejudice to the provisions of [section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988], the proprietor of a hackney carriage or of a private hire vehicle licensed by a district council shall report to them as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case within seventy-two hours of the occurrence thereof, any accident to such hackney carriage or private hire vehicle causing damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the hackney carriage or private hire vehicle or the comfort or convenience of persons carried therein.*

*(5) ‘If any person without reasonable excuse contravenes the provisions of this section, he shall be guilty of an offence’.*

1. **Vehicle Examination**

The vehicle must pass a vehicle examination carried out by one of the Council’s authorised testing stations. New Hackney Carriage vehicles must be approved by the Licensing Unit before being taken for examination.

A list of the Councils authorised testing stations and Vehicle Testing Manual are available at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/download/317/taxis-and-private-hire-licensing>.

If the vehicle passes the vehicle examination then the **Vehicle Examination Pass Certificate** is only valid for 10 working days and this includes the date of the test.

You must submit your new vehicle licence online application before the **Vehicle Examination Pass Certificate** expires. If the certificate expires a further full vehicle examination will be required and a further payment for an examination.

As part of the vehicle examination the authorised testing station will carry out a Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA formally VOSA) MOT and issue you with a **MOT Test Certificate**.

* 1. **Initial Vehicle Examination**

The ‘initial vehicle examination’ ensures the vehicle meets the Council’s vehicle standards and enables you to renew the vehicle licence. Once the vehicle has passed the ‘initial vehicle examination’ the licence can be renewed in the usual way (outlined within these guidance notes).

* 1. **Mid-year Test (Vehicle Examination)**

After passing the ‘initial vehicle examination’ you will be required to book a ‘mid-year test’. This must be booked with the same authorised testing station that completed the ‘initial vehicle examination’ and be within six months of the ‘initial vehicle examination’. You are required to pay a deposit of 50% of the examination fee for the ‘mid-year test’

You are required to provide an e-mail address to the authorised testing station, so they can send you a reminder for the ‘mid-year test’.

You must submit your vehicle for the ‘mid-year test’ at the authorised testing station on the date and at the time agreed and pay the remaining 50% of the ‘mid-year test’ fee.

If for any reason you cannot make the ‘mid-year test’ you must contact the authorised testing station giving at least 7 days’ notice and ask for the test to be rearranged. This rearranged date must be within the initial six month period.

If your vehicle does not meet the Council’s vehicle standards then a **Fail Certificate** will be issued and your private hire or hackney carriage vehicle licence may be suspended

* 1. **Failing to attend the ‘mid-year test’**

If you fail to submit the vehicle for the ‘mid-year test’ on the date and time agreed or you have not rearranged the test as outlined above, then you will lose the 50% deposit paid and the private hire/hackney carriage vehicle licence will be suspended.

If the licence is suspended you will not be able to use the vehicle as a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle and must return the livery to the Licensing Unit as soon as possible. To lift the suspension you will be required to rebook the ‘mid-year test’ and pay a full examination fee.

Once the vehicle has passed the ‘mid-year test’ the licence suspension can be lifted.

If the licence is suspended and a **Vehicle Examination Pass Certificate** is not issued within two months of the suspension, the vehicle licence will be revoked and you will need to apply for a new vehicle licence.

1. **V****ehicle Registration Document**

The vehicle registration document (V5/log book) needs to be attached when submitting your online first grant vehicle application.

If the vehicle registration document (V5/log book) has not been updated into the new proprietor details; you may still apply and will be issued a short licence for 2 months until you are able to provide the new updated document.

Once you have the new vehicle registration document (V5/log book) you can email it to Licensing.unit@bolton.gov.uk and we will issue the remainder of the licence.

1. **Fare Card Notification Form**

To notify the Council of who you are working for, your operator will need to email the Licensing Team with the required vehicle & driver notification form.

If you work for more than one private hire operator, then they are both required to provide a vehicle & driver notification form.

Hackney carriages that intend to work for a private hire operator will also need to arrange for a farecard form to be submitted.

The first grant cannot be issued without the required vehicle & driver notification form.

1. **Vehicle Livery**

For examples of the private hire/hackney carriage livery (vehicle plates, stickers and identification) and how to fix the livery to your vehicle please see the Councils **Vehicle Licensing Test Manual** which can be viewed on our website. <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/download/317/taxis-and-private-hire-licensing>.

Guidance can also be obtained from the approved testing stations. <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/download/317/taxis-and-private-hire-licensing>.

1. **Hackney Carriage Meters, Fare Cards and Advertising**

The Council set the maximum fare (tariff) that can be charged to passengers and will issue you with a fare card which displays the maximum fare.

If the meter fitted to your hackney carriage vehicle malfunctions, or is replaced, a further meter inspection will be required. This is to ensure the calibration is correct and that the necessary Council seals are applied. This inspection can be arranged by emailing the Licensing Team at licensing.unit@bolton.gov.uk.

The Councils policy on commercial advertising, on a licensed hackney carriage vehicle, allows all over full livery, subject to the approval of the Council. All over livery includes all or part of the body shell, internal tip up seats and rear window. However the rear window is by way of two way membrane and not solid lettering.

1. **Privacy Policy**

The information you supply will only be used to process your request. Information will be passed to third parties where they are providing a service on behalf of Bolton Council or if we are required to do so by law. Find out more about our privacy policy online at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notices/1>.