

Licensed Vehicle Age Policy

Introduction

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles are often one of the first points of contact for the travelling public and visitors generally and a smart and modern fleet enhances the character of the Borough and makes hackney carriages and private hire vehicles more attractive and comfortable to the fare paying public.

With this in mind Test Valley Borough Council will facilitate continuous vehicle fleet improvement and efficiency (whereby new vehicles are generally required to meet extant and increasingly stringent environmental, performance and safety standards) and improve vehicle standards and maintenance (by ensuring that vehicles are not already “tired” before being licensed and therefore more likely to withstand the rigours of use) by way of this policy.

Emissions

In recognition of the Council’s wider role, the licensing authority will normally seek to promote and encourage vehicle proprietors to invest in vehicles and related technologies that offer the best environmental standards in terms of emissions, the use of cleaner fuels, fuel and engine efficiency (i.e. performance) and end-of life recycling etc. By way of encouraging a well-maintained more sustainable, environmentally friendly and efficient fleet and subject to all other requirements being met, vehicles will only be licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle where on both first time application and subsequent renewal, the vehicle meets current emission standards as those required for a MOT.

Alternative Fuels

In recognition of their comparatively clean emissions, any vehicle that runs or has been suitably adapted to run on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) or Biomethane will normally be exempt from the European emission standards requirements. However, for reasons of safety and environmental efficiency, this exemption shall only apply to vehicles converted from diesel to one of the three alternative fuels given above (petrol conversions will not be eligible).

Vehicle age

It is proposed that when a vehicle is first presented for licensing it will be under five years old – taken from the DVLA first vehicle registration (as shown on the vehicle registration document V5) or, in the case of a vehicle first used outside of the UK, when first used on any other roads of any description. The vehicle will be inspected annually and licensed for a period of 12 months. When the vehicle reaches 6 years old – taken from the first date of the DVLA registration (as shown on the vehicle registration document V5) – it will be inspected by the Council’s Vehicle Inspector and licensed twice a year. When a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle is approaching its’ 6th birthday and it goes for a Council Inspection the following will apply. Example - A vehicle test is at the end of January and the vehicle becomes six years old during April of that same year; the Inspector will issue a certificate for a further 12 months, but at the vehicle’s

next test (January of the following year) when the vehicle is actually 6 years old, tests will become six monthly, together with the licensing of said vehicle.

Initially the vehicle may be licensed up until the age of 13 years old – taken from the first date of the DVLA Registration (registration document V5) and will then be reduced by a sliding scale down to the age of 10 years – taken from the DVLA first registration (registration document V5) date over a period of 4 years as follows:

1 October, 2014 vehicle over the age of **13** years will no longer be licensed

1 October, 2015 vehicles over the age of **12** years will no longer be licensed

1 October, 2016 vehicles over the age of **11** years will no longer be licensed

1 October, 2017 vehicles over the age of **10** years will no longer be licensed.

The one exception to the above will be in respect of purpose built (i.e. not converted) wheelchair accessible vehicles which because of their specific construction are appropriate to be licensed until they are twelve years of age. This relaxation also recognises the substantial financial investment made by the owners of such vehicles. Introducing an upper age limit for licensed vehicles will assist in removing from the fleet older vehicles which do not meet more recent vehicle safety standards as set by the European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP). By way of an example, a 1997 Ford Mondeo has an adult occupancy safety score of 17 whereas the 2007 version of the same car has a score of 35. Ensuring the licensed vehicle fleet comprises more modern vehicles with higher safety standards reduces the potential for serious and fatal injuries resulting from vehicle accidents.

Vehicle standards

As Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles provide a service to the public **all vehicles regardless of age** will undergo the following inspection in conjunction with their annual/bi-annual test:

Exterior of vehicle

1. The exterior paintwork on the vehicle should not:

- a) show signs of rusting/corrosion of any size
- b) be dull or faded or show signs of mismatched paint repairs.
- c) stone chips of any size anywhere on vehicle that have not been “touched up”
- d) have any scratches, cracks or abrasions where the top layer of paint has been removed
- e) have evidence of poor repairs and/or paint finish to repaired bodywork including runs and overspray to adjoining panels that detract from the overall appearance of vehicle
- f) have heavy scuffing, abrasion or deformation to front or rear bumpers.

2. The exterior bodywork of the vehicle should not:

- a) have a single dent of more than 80mm
- b) have 3 or more dents of not more than 20 mm
- c) have more than 4 scratches or abrasions provided that the base coat has not been penetrated

- d) have body panels or fittings which are missing, broken or damaged. Vehicles will not fail on stone chips if there is evidence of “touching up”.
3. Have wheels and wheel trims that have significant damage or corrosion which detracts from the overall condition of the vehicle.
4. The vehicle must be submitted for inspection in a clean condition inside and out. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the test being aborted.
5. The engine compartment must not be in a dirty condition or have evidence of leaks including water, oil or hydraulic fluids.

Interior of the vehicle

6. The seating, carpet and headlining areas of the vehicle **shall not** show signs of:
 - a) staining
 - b) damp
 - c) fraying or ripping of the material
 - d) seat covers that are loose or badly fitted.
7. The seats should provide sufficient support for comfortable travel and **should not** demonstrate excessive compression of the seating or wear within the support mechanism.
8. Interior panels and fittings within the vehicle **should not** be broken, missing or damaged, nor show excessive wear or staining.
9. The interior of the vehicle **should not** have damp or other obnoxious smells.

These matters are set out in a sample inspection sheet that is attached as an annex to this document.

Summary

The Borough Council believes that introducing a vehicle age policy will result in a smart modern fleet which enhances the character of the Borough and makes hackney carriages and private hire vehicles more attractive to the fare paying public. Having a fleet of more modern vehicles will reduce the potential for driver and passenger injuries and address environmental concerns by ensuring that stricter emission level standards are achieved. In summary the Borough Council is proposing that as from 1 October 2014:

- Newly licensed vehicles must be no more than five years old
- Newly licensed vehicles must meet the current European emission standards in force at that time
- There will be an upper age limit for vehicles beyond which they will not be licensed starting with vehicles aged over 13 years reducing to vehicles aged over 10 years (except purpose built wheelchair accessible vehicles which may be licensed until 12 years of age)
- Once a vehicle is more than 6 years old it must be inspected and licensed twice a year, not just annually (no change from the current policy)

- All vehicles when inspected will need to meet the bodywork and other standards detailed above.

Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Inspection Report

Vehicles must be submitted for test in a clean condition inside and out. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the test being aborted immediately.

1. The exterior paintwork:

Signs of rusting/corrosion of any size	Yes / No
Dull, faded or mismatched paint repairs	Yes / No
Stone chips of any size anywhere on vehicle that have not been “touched up”	Yes / No
Scratches, cracks or abrasions where the top layer of paint has been removed	Yes / No
Evidence of poor repairs and/or paint finish to repaired bodywork including runs and over-sprays to adjoining panels which detract from overall appearance of vehicle	Yes/ No
Heavy scuffing, abrasion or deformation of front or rear bumpers	Yes/ No

2. Exterior bodywork:

A single dent of more than 80 mm	Yes / No
3 or more dents of not more than 20 mm	Yes / No
More than 4 scratches or abrasions provided that the base coat had not been penetrated	Yes/ No
Body panels or fittings which are missing, broken or damaged	Yes / No
Wheels and wheel trims - any significant damage or corrosion which detracts from the overall condition of the vehicle?	Yes / No

Engine compartment - clean condition?	Yes / No
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3. Vehicle Interior – Seating, carpets and head-linings

Staining	Yes / No
Fraying or ripping of the material	Yes / No
Seat covers - loose or badly fitted	Yes / No
Seats - provide sufficient support for comfortable travel Excessive compression or wear within the support mechanism	Yes / No
Interior panels and fittings - broken, missing or damaged, excessive wear	Yes / No
Interior - damp or other obnoxious smells.	Yes / No

PASS		FAIL	
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All vehicles are **expected to meet the above criteria at EVERY Council Inspection.**