



Taxi and Private Hire News February 2017

New Guidance Notes and Conditions

The new Guidance Notes and Conditions booklet is enclosed. This document takes immediate effect and is also available on our website at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/taxilicences. We would suggest that you take some time to read the booklet to ensure that you are fully aware of the conditions attached to your licence(s).

The key changes are as follows:

- New applicants for private hire operator licences, who do not hold a driver licence, must pass the theory section of the knowledge test before a licence will be issued.
- Amend the current condition to allow any vehicle to be licensed up to 5 years from the date of first registration (previously wheelchair accessible vehicles were required to be less than 4 years old, and all other vehicles less than 5 years old).
- Amend a current condition to specify that no new operators shall be permitted to use a trading name containing the words 'Taxi' or 'Cab' [unless the firm uses predominantly hackney carriages to fulfil bookings].

Safeguarding

From 1 April 2017, all new applicants for a driver or operator licence must complete safeguarding training prior to the issue of a licence. Existing drivers and operators must complete the training prior to the next renewal of their licence. Once passed, the training must be retaken by all licensed drivers and operators within a 3 year period. Full information in relation to this training will be sent to licence holders in due course.

Immigration Act 2016

From 1 December 2016, we are required to check and retain proof of the right to work in the UK for all drivers and operators applying for new licences or to renew existing licences. When you bring in your application, you must provide evidence of your right to work even if you have previously submitted evidence; we cannot use documentation submitted with previous applications. This evidence must be provided by the applicant in person, and nobody else can submit on your behalf. Such evidence may be a British passport, EC passport with the right to stay and work in the UK or other permanent residence or work permit. The full list of acceptable documentation to prove right to work in the UK can be found at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/taxilicences.

CCTV in licensed vehicles

CCTV is not mandatory in private hire or hackney carriage vehicles, however should you wish to install such a system, there are conditions that you must follow. These conditions are outlined in Appendix H of the Guidance Notes.

Taximeters

From 5 January 2017, we will no longer be carrying out meter tests over the measured metre mile. All applications for vehicles which are fitted with a meter must include a calibration certificate, issued by the meter installer, confirming that the meter has been calibrated to our tariff.

Parking at the bus station

Complaints have been received regarding licensed vehicles parked at the bus station and the service bay for the Goose pub. Vehicles parked at the bus station can prevent buses from manoeuvring and the service bay is reserved for deliveries to the pub. Please be advised that vehicles may be issued with parking tickets if they are found to be parked in contravention of signage, and penalty points may also be issued on driver licences.

Disabled Passengers

Please do not assume that your vehicle cannot take a passenger due to their type of wheelchair. Some larger wheelchairs can be taken apart for ease of transport. You should ask the passenger whether this is possible rather than simply refusing to take them. Please also note that it is an offence to charge more to transport a disabled passenger than you would normally charge. Drivers are expected to give such assistance as may be reasonably required to enable passengers to get into or out of the vehicle.

Please also find enclosed an advice leaflet published by the Guide Dogs charity.

Criminal Convictions Policy

The Council's Criminal Convictions Policy was updated in October 2015. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the criteria taken into account by the Council when determining whether or not an applicant or an existing licence holder is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. This can be found at Appendix A of the Guidance Notes.

Penalty Points

Penalty points are issued for a range of licence breaches as per Appendix D of the Guidance Notes. During 2016, by far the largest reason for the issue of penalty points was for licence holders failing to notify this department of cautions, convictions or fixed penalties. As a reminder, all licensed drivers and operators are required to notify this department in writing with 28 days of receiving a conviction, caution or fixed penalty. A form for this notification is available on our website, <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/taxilicences>, or from the Customer Service Centre.

Town Centre Works

In the run up to the opening of The Lexicon, the new Bracknell town centre development, news on traffic and roadworks around the town can be found on our website at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknelltowncentreworks>.

Future Consultations

Drivers can make comments on proposed changes to our Guidance Notes and Conditions booklet and policy via the public consultation. These consultations are carried out via the Council's online portal. To ensure that you are notified of future consultations, please ensure that you provide us with a valid email address on your next application.

Shared Service

Bracknell Forest Council has agreed to enter a shared service with Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils, called the Public Protection Partnership; this includes Licensing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards. Officers are looking into ways in which the joint services can benefit the trade, the public and the Council. This does not affect where you can work or ply for hire, so Hackney Carriages can still only use ranks and ply for hire within the Bracknell Forest area.

Licensing Team

01344 352000

licensing@bracknell-forest.gov.uk