

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Newsletter

February 2018

Equality Act 2010 Update

Letters were sent out to all drivers on 1 February 2018 notifying them of the requirements to obtain a medical exemption form if due to medical reasons, they are unable to carry out the following duties:

- to carry the passenger while in the wheelchair;
- not to make any additional charge for doing so;
- if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat to carry the wheelchair;
- to take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in Safety and reasonable comfort; and to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- if the passenger wishes to remain in the wheelchair, to enable the passenger to get into and out of the vehicle while in the wheelchair;
- to load the passenger's luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- if the passenger does not wish to remain in the wheelchair, to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle.

Just a reminder that all completed medical exemption forms will need to be received by 29 March 2018.

Full details of the changes can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593350/access-for-wheelchair-users-taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles.pdf

Appropriate Behaviour

Our staff are here to carry out a service that includes responsibility for enforcement and are carrying out a process on behalf of the Council.

Any rude, aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated towards our staff.

Any applicant witnessed doing so will be dealt with accordingly. Initially this will be through the penalty points scheme. However, persistent offenders risk suspension/revocation of their licence or refusal to grant or renew.

If you have a complaint about the service you should put this in writing to: fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk or speak to a taxi trade representative. Details of trade representatives can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

Parking Issues

Drivers are reminded that licensed vehicles should not be left unattended on taxi ranks, should not be parked or wait in designated loading bays, park in restricted time parking zones for longer than the time permitted and should not cause obstruction to other road users or pavements.

Enforcement action will be taken against drivers that fail to comply with this.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Inspections

Please note when wheelchair accessible vehicles come in for inspection they must pass both the 6 month vehicle inspection and the wheelchair accessible inspection. If the vehicle is failed on the wheelchair accessible inspection and is unsafe to carry wheelchairs the plates will be removed and a section 68 issued. The plates will only be returned once the vehicle has passed both inspections. If you require us to complete a LOLER test certificate this will need to be booked in as a separate appointment at least a week prior to the WAV/6 month or renewal inspection.

Driver Medicals

Due to ongoing problems with drivers not being able to get medicals carried out by their own GP/GP surgery we have amended our medical process and medical form.

Drivers are now able to go to any GP to have their medical carried out but will be required to complete a declaration regarding any health issues prior to having their medical carried out. Drivers are reminded that making a false declaration is a serious matter which can lead to a review of their hackney carriage and/or private hire drivers licence.

The new medical form is available on our website and will be sent to drivers when their medicals are due.

We would advise that prior to making an appointment, you check that the GP concerned will be willing to complete the form and the GP declaration to state whether you are fit or unfit to drive a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle.

MOT Failures

Where vehicles have failed an MOT on general maintenance items. i.e. tyres below legal limit. Penalty points will be issued to driver and/or vehicle and/or proprietor.

Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Operators

Operators are reminded that as per Wiltshire Council guidelines for hackney carriage/private hire vehicles under section **T5/P5 Vehicle type**:

Operators must ensure that 1 in 10 of their licensed fleet is:

- Wheelchair accessible from the nearside or rear, including a ramp or lift to enable loading.
- Has space to carry at least one passenger while using a wheelchair.

Example:

If you own nine vehicles irrespective of whether they are a mixture of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and wish to purchase a 10th vehicle for use as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, this vehicle must be wheelchair accessible.

It is the operators responsibility to ensure that this is adhered to, if vehicles are licensed outside of this requirement the operator will be required to rectify this so that only a total of 9 vehicles are licensed unless they licence a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Taxi Ranks - Litter

Can drivers please be aware that they should not leave litter on taxi ranks, this includes cigarette ends. All litter should be disposed of in an appropriate receptacle, if none available litter should be taken away and disposed of appropriately.

Fees & Charges 2018/19

The licensing fees and charges for the 2018/19 financial year are currently being reviewed. Before full approval is given the proposed fees and charges will be advertised in the local newspapers to allow comments on the proposals. If objections are received these will be considered as part of the process and if necessary referred to the Licensing Committee for consideration.

Fit & Proper Policy review update

As advised in previous newsletters we are in the process of reviewing The Council's Fit & Proper Policy for licensed drivers. There are currently two policies in place, one for new applicants and one for existing drivers. We are proposing to change this to one policy that covers all drivers.

Melksham Taxi Rank

The following proposals have been put forward:

1. The area in front of Lloyds Bank to be formally adopted as a taxi rank to accommodate 5 vehicles with appropriate markings and signage indicating same. This will, in effect, become the front of the rank.
2. The current area is extended front and back within the existing area to accommodate 5 taxis, as was initially planned. This will be the back of the rank and when space becomes available in front of Lloyds, taxis will move forward to fill that space as if it was one continuous rank.

The proposals were given full support by Melksham Town Council at their meeting on 9th October 2017. These proposals have been put forward to Wiltshire Council to consider and we have been advised that budget approval has been given to start the legal procedure in April 2018.

In the meantime taxis must only use the existing taxi rank and spaces currently available after 4pm in the loading bay in Market Place. The area in front of Lloyds Bank should not be used as a rank. Enforcement action will be taken against any taxis witnessed plying for hire outside of these designated areas.

Joint Enforcement Checks

On Friday 9th February the compliance team took part in a multi-agency enforcement operation covering the Warminster and Salisbury area. During this operation we were joined by our colleagues from Wiltshire Police and DVSA.

Thirty seven drivers and vehicles were checked at ranks across this area, ten drivers and vehicles were also stopped at the roadside. From these checks one vehicle was issued with a Prohibition order, a section 68 notice and licence plates were removed, one vehicle was found to have tyres below the councils limit of 1.8mm. Appropriate action is now being taken against the owners and drivers of these vehicles.

We would also like to remind all drivers that it is a legal requirement that you wear the badge issued to you, failure to do so will likely result in penalty points being issued. If lanyards or badge holders are mislaid or broken it is the drivers responsibility to ensure a replacement is acquired to ensure their badge can be worn at all times when working.

We will be carrying out more of these enforcement checks as part of our overall enforcement plan, where possible these will include Wiltshire Police and DVSA.

Temporary Vehicles

We are currently dealing with high numbers of temporary transfer vehicles, please remember that for temporary plates to be issued we require the return of both the internal and external plate of the licensed vehicle.

Trade Representatives

Details of the current Trade Representatives and contact details:

Paul Carter (West)
Email: pjcarter@blueyonder.co.uk
Tel: 07986 517319

Adrian Berridge (West)
Email: adrian@starlinetaxis.co.uk
Tel: 07824901751

Mike Henley (West)
Email: aanddtaxis@googlemail.com
Tel: 01225 751332

Glenn Sharp (East)
Email: glenn@devizestaxis.co.uk
Tel: 07855 416738

As we have had no trade representatives come forward in the North and South zones, we are still open for nominations in these areas.

The role involves liaison between the Compliance Team and the Taxi and Private Hire Trade. Quarterly meetings are held in Devizes to communicate and discuss items with the trade. You will be expected to attend at least 50% of these meetings. This is your chance to have your say and put forward the views of the Taxi and Private Hire Trade within your area.

If you wish to be considered for this role please send us an email at: fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk. The email will need to contain the following information:

Your Full Name:
Contact Details: (an email address is essential for this role)
Company you work or are associated with:
Reason for applying:
Name, Badge number & contact number of person nominating you:
Name, Badge number & contact number of person seconding that nomination:

You must be nominated and seconded by a licensed driver that is not connected in anyway to you or your business.

Link to interactive roadworks map

There is a direct link from the Wiltshire Council website to the interactive roadworks map for Wiltshire, this shows where roadworks are being carried out and who is responsible for them should you have any queries. This can be found at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/parkingtransportandstreets/roadshighwaysstreetcare/roadsandtraffic/roadworks.htm>

Road Closures

South

Salisbury - Footpath 66 (The Market Place), Charter Markets, Tuesdays / Saturdays 2018

Salisbury - Footpath 66 (The Market Place) and Queen Street, Car Boot Sundays, Various Dates 2018

Next Licensing Committee Meeting

12 March 2018 – 10.30am County Hall, Trowbridge

01225 770271

fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk
www.wiltshire.gov.uk