



Town Hall  
Station Road  
Clacton on Sea  
Essex CO15 1SE

November 2024

### **Increase of Disclosure and Barring Service Fee**

We have been notified by e-Safeguarding, the company who carry out our DBS checks, that the DBS Service will be increasing the fees for the enhanced checks and update service required by the Licensing Team as part of the application process.

Please note that any driver renewals that are due from 01/12/2024 will be required to pay the increased fee for the Enhanced DBS check, this will be rising to £61.50 per check and the Update Service will be rising to £16 per year.

If you have recently had your DBS check carried out, please sign up to the Update Service within 30 days of your certificate issue date, if you have not already done so and forward these details to the Licensing Team so this information can be added to your record.

### **Vehicle application request**

Vehicle photos are now required with any vehicle applications, grants, renewals, change of vehicle and change of owner. Please submit front, rear, both sides of vehicle and in photos needs to display the top light (where applicable). These photos need to be up to date and give us an accurate representation of the vehicle as it currently stands. Please do not send us a photo from 6 months ago as this is not an accurate picture of what the vehicle may currently look like.

### **Vehicles in an accident/off the road**

We are finding increased numbers of vehicles off the road due to an accident or other reasons that we are not being informed of. If your vehicle has been involved in an accident you must report this to the Licensing Authority as soon as possible. Return the taxi plate to us to hold whilst the vehicle is in for repair and where necessary, this may result in an additional mechanical test needing to be carried out and passed before we can return the plate for the vehicle to be back on the road. If a temporary vehicle is required, your insurance company need to contact us for the relevant information.

## **Documentation**

Regarding the penalty points system above, a large number of the points given out since the introduction of the new policy have been due to documents being provided after their expiry date, such as mechanical test certificate, MOT certificates and insurance documents.

We ask you to please keep track of these dates pertinent to your vehicles and to please let us know in advance (as soon as you can) if documents are going to be provided late, as if there is an acceptable reason for this then penalty points can be avoided.

In regard to all documentation, drivers are given until midnight on the date of the document expiry to get documents to us before points are given. Anything received after this time is considered late and invalid.

***For example, if an MOT expires on 01/01/2024, then drivers will be given until 23:59 on 01/01/2024 to get the updated MOT certificate to us.***

## **Vehicle Inspections**

Our Licensing Enforcement Officer, Alfie, has been doing routine rank inspections consistently over the last few months and while he has spoken to many licence holders, there are still some that have not yet an inspection.

Therefore, we will be contacting licence holders who have not recently been inspected by officers requesting that they bring their vehicle to Clacton Town Hall for this to be carried out.

If you are contacted, we will try our best to accommodate a date and time which is convenient for the licence holder and we would ask you to look at the August 2024 newsletter available on our website, as this gives you a detailed run through of what will be looked for during the inspection.

## **Vehicle Plates**

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy brought in a new requirement for a front licence plate to be displayed in addition to the one which is located at the rear of a licensed vehicle.

It has been noted that a few vehicles are not displaying both plates. Please ensure that if you have a front plate that this is attached to the vehicle correctly.

The plate may be affixed by use of cable ties or a bracket beneath the registration plate, or if this is not practical, by attaching the plate platform to the bodywork of the vehicle just above the bumper.

It is not acceptable to have the plate located in the front windscreen of the vehicle and if a licence holder is seen to be either displaying the plate incorrectly or not at all, then they may be given enforcement penalty points in accordance with the Policy.

## **Private Hire Vehicles**

We would like to remind licence holders that if you are operating a private hire vehicle, then in accordance with s.48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 your vehicle should not be *of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage*". This means that your private hire vehicles cannot have any signage which states "taxi" or any other signage which may lead members of the public to reasonably believe that a private hire vehicle is a hackney carriage.

This is also covered on Page 23, Subsection 22.6 of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

## **Body Worn Cameras**

We take this opportunity to inform you that with immediate effect our officers may be wearing body worn cameras when undertaking any vehicle, driver or operator inspections. The cameras will record any footage and may be used to document any evidence, for example, conversations between licence holders and officers, footage of vehicle inspections etc.

**The reason for this action is to:**

- 1) Provide evidence when inspections are completed.**
- 2) Increase transparency by recording the actions of our officers when enforcing the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy.**
- 3) To assist licensing officers when generating written reports of incidents or encounters after they occur.**

**Body worn camera's will be used:**

- 1) When undertaking any vehicle, driver or operator inspections.**
- 2) When officers are working on their own, in order to ensure their safety and keep a record of all actions taken.**
- 3) Whilst conducting any inquiries or investigations while dealing with a complaint or potential breach of the Taxi Licensing and Private Hire Policy.**
  
- 4) Any conversation which officers deem substantial in line with the enforcement of the Taxi Licensing and Private Hire Policy.**

Please be assured that any footage will be subject to Data Protection rules and regulations and officers will only continue to record until it is no longer 'proportionate and necessary' to do so. If the footage is not required, this will not be saved.

Formal interviews will not be conducted in this way.

## **Applications/Documents/Payments**

Applications should be submitted via e-mail ([licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk) or [taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk)) payments can be made over the telephone using either a credit or debit card.

Please ensure that the email document is no larger than 25mb as these are unable to pass the Council's email security system.

## **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy**

As you will be aware, the new comprehensive taxi and private hire policy has been adopted and has been in effect for some months now. It is important that you read through and familiarise yourself with this policy.

The policy can be found on the council website <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/content/taxi-private-hire-policy> or by scanning the QR code below.



## **Covid/Flu Update**

Due to increase of Covid and Flu this time of year, with the services you are providing by transport, deliveries etc, it is important to stay safe, here are some steps you can take to reduce contact and transmissions:

- Leave-at-the-door drop offs
- Regular disinfecting of the vehicle
- Hand sanitation for every person entering the vehicle
- Discourage cash payments
- Passengers sitting in back seats
- If you show any symptoms to not work until fully recovered

If you have carried a passenger who is displaying possible symptoms of Covid/Flu it would be best practice to carry out the following between each journey:

- clean those parts of your vehicle that you or passengers may have touched, for example, door handles, payment devices, protective screens, buttons, seats
- open doors / windows to ventilate the car for 5 minutes
- wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser if this is not possible

## **Driving in adverse weather**

We want everyone to keep themselves and their passenger's safe over the winter so we hope that the tips shown below might help a little in that regard.

Driving in adverse weather conditions requires additional care and attention and you should ensure your vehicle is adequately prepared. Below are just some general notes intended to help you prepare for the winter.

We are sure that your vehicles are regularly inspected, serviced and in good working order, but in adverse weather, particular attention should be given to the following –

- \* Car batteries last approximately five years, and extra demand placed on them during adverse weather from the use of heaters, lights, and wipers can decrease their lifespan.
- \* Check the tyre pressure in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- \* Check the tyre treads depths. For winter driving it is recommended they have 3mm of tread and certainly not less than 2mm.

- \* Ensure that there is an adequate amount of anti – freeze, in both the windscreen washer bottle and radiator.
- \* Keep lights clean and check bulbs regularly so you'll be prepared for lower visibility and shorter days.
- \* Make sure wiper blades aren't worn and the vehicle has sufficient windscreen washer fluid in the reservoir so you can keep your windscreen as clean as possible.
- \* Dirty windows and mirrors can make it hard to see as the low winter sun hits. Make sure they are kept clean and free of ice and snow in colder weather. Ensure windows are clear and de-misted before setting off.
- \* Ensure the taxi plate and registration plate are kept clean and legible.

### **Christmas Closure**

Please note that the Council Offices will be closed to the public from Wednesday 25 December 2024 and will re-open on Thursday 02 January 2025.

Any documents can still be emailed to [taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk), which will be dealt with once the team are back in the office.

Thank you for reading this edition of Taxi News. In the meantime, please keep safe, drive safe and always pay extra attention to the weather conditions during these dark winter months.