



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Vehicle Licensing Policy 2019 – 2024

Summary Document

Additional Requirements for Taxis and Private
Hire Vehicles

Introduction

This is a summary document. The details listed below do not replace the clause or conditions contained in the Vehicle Licensing Policy 2019-2024. This document lists the basic requirements in order for potential applicants to make an initial decision concerning the licensing of a particular vehicle. It is not comprehensive and should not be relied upon as such.

Additional requirements, conditions and further information are available to read in separate documents, particularly the Vehicle Licensing Policy 2019-2024, and we strongly advise you to read these documents before purchasing any vehicle and before submitting an application for a vehicle licence.

Equipment

Hackney Carriage Meter

A meter must be fitted to all hackney carriages and must be fitted securely

Proprietors must only use a taximeter of a type, and secured in a position, approved by the Council's officers.

The meter must be visible from the rear passenger seats, and must not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.

The meter must be sealed, without showing signs of tampering or misuse.

The taximeter must be calibrated to the tariff set by the licensing authority, and must not show any other tariffs.

A calibration certificate must be provided for all vehicles which are to be licensed for the first time.

Private Hire Meter

Private hire vehicles are not required to use a meter but in Watford almost all do.

If a vehicle does not have a meter fitted then it will be for the operator and proprietor to determine the manner in which a charge will be calculated. Under

separate regulations this charge or manner of charging must be discussed and agreed with the customer at the time of booking.

Proprietors may use a meter in a private hire vehicle providing it is secured in a safe and clearly visible position.

Credit Card Machines

A debit or credit card machine of the proprietor's choice may be installed.

If a card machine is advertised as in use it must be available for every passenger unless a fault prevents its use.

Non-Factory Fitted Equipment

Proprietors may not use non-factory fitted equipment (for example, radios, PDAs, sat-nav systems) unless they are installed in positions approved by the Council's officers

No equipment can obstruct driver or passenger movement in or out of the vehicle, affect passenger comfort, obstruct the driver's vision, or impede the driver's ability to control the vehicle.

Proprietors must notify the Council before installing any non-factory fitted equipment so that the equipment and proposed position may be tested in relation to safety and comfort.

The vehicle must not be used before approval has been given.

If the vehicle already has a licence and is to be modified to allow the use of a PDA, radio, or other such equipment, permission must be obtained from the licensing authority first.

Proprietors must ensure that equipment installed does not interfere with the electronic systems of their vehicle or other vehicles on the road.

First Aid Kit

Proprietors may carry a first aid kit for their use if they choose to do so. Where a proprietor carries a first aid kit they must:

Ensure it meets the requirements of the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981
Keep an accident reporting log in the vehicle

High Visibility Safety Vests

A number of fluorescent/high visibility safety vests equal to the carrying capacity of the vehicle must be carried for use by passengers and driver in an emergency situation.

Fire Extinguishers

Vehicles must carry a well maintained fire extinguisher of a size deemed appropriate by the proprietor.

Extinguishers must be securely stored in the vehicle in a fixed and easily accessible location.

Defibrillators

Vehicle proprietors may carry a defibrillator if they choose to do so.
Where a proprietor carries a defibrillator they must:

Receive satisfactory training in the use of the machine and provide certificated evidence to prove training.

Obtain the defibrillator from a recognised supplier of genuine quality machines and proof of purchase will be required.

Mount the defibrillator securely in a location where it cannot be accessed by passengers unless directed.

CCTV

Proprietors may install CCTV, both internal facing and external facing.

Where CCTV is installed, the following conditions must be met:

1. That the appropriate person responsible for the camera is registered as the Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018 and is responsible for ensuring compliance with that Act and associated legislation;
2. The use of the camera and the footage complies with the relevant guidance of the Information Commissioners Office (ICO);
3. The footage must remain “tamperproof” and be accessible only to the proprietor or a responsible third party;
4. Vehicles must display adequate signage notifying customers of the use of cameras, how long data is stored for and how customers can access the data;
5. Drivers must provide example documentation of a CCTV usage policy, Privacy Impact Assessment and Subject Access Request application.
6. Drivers must provide an in date copy of ICO registration certificate

Safety Screens

Proprietors may install a safety screen. Where a safety screen is installed, proprietors must:

Provide evidence of professional, certificated installation

Provide evidence of notification to, and approval by, the company insuring the vehicle

Vehicle Tracker

Proprietors may install a vehicle tracker.

Where a tracker is fitted it must be installed by a competent professional and proof of installation will be required.

Receipts

The driver of the vehicle must offer to each passenger (or, if there is more than one passenger, at least one of those passengers) at the end of their journey a receipt containing the following information:

- (a) the date
- (b) the fare for that journey

- (c) the number of the badge issued by the Council to that driver
- (d) other information that may be specified in writing to you by Council officers.

Signage and Roof Lights

Vehicle Plates

Plates may be attached permanently by way of fixing to the vehicle or by way of magnet. No other form of fixing is permitted.

The detachable plate slip must be displayed on the inside of the windscreen and be visible to all passengers.

Door signs

Hackney Carriages

Hackney carriages that do not display a livery must display door signs of a type and style approved by the Council's officers.

Signs must be attached to the front doors only.

Drivers must not, without reasonable excuse, fail to display such signs at all times that the vehicle is hired, plying for hire (including waiting on a rank), on the way to collect a passenger or otherwise used as a hackney carriage.

Private Hire Vehicle

Private Hire Vehicle door signs must be pre-approved by the Council's officers.

At all times when the vehicle is in use for work door signs MUST be applied to the driver's and front passenger door of such dimensions and colours as may from time to time be approved by the Council.

Signs must bear:

the words "Private Hire - Advance Bookings Only";

the operator's name and/or telephone number,

but may not contain the words "Taxi" or "Cab".

Door signs must be maintained in a clean, readable and undamaged state.

Roof lights

Hackney Carriages

All taxis must display a roof light showing the word 'taxi' on the front.

In the case of magnetic lights used on vehicles other than purpose built taxis, the words 'taxi' or 'for hire' must appear on the rear of the sign.

The roof sign must be maintained in good working order.

The magnetic light must be securely attached

The roof-sign must be capable of being lit, and must cease to be lit when the taximeter is brought into operation.

Hackney Carriages capable of carrying passengers in a wheelchair and/or of having accommodation for wheelchairs must incorporate a sign into the roof sign indicating their purpose

Private Hire Vehicles

Private hire vehicles **must not** have roof signs. This is to avoid confusion with hackney carriage vehicles.

Tariff Chart

Hackney carriages

A licence will not be granted where the tariff sheet is not on display at the time of inspection in accordance with the specification laid down in the byelaws.

Private Hire Vehicles

Private Hire Vehicles do not have to display a tariff chart.

Large Driver Badge

You must make sure that there shall be displayed so that it is visible from all parts of the vehicle, whilst it is available and used for hire, an identity style badge as provided by, and which shall remain the property of, the Council, which shall have incorporated within it a photograph of your face and your badge number.

Advertisements

No advertisement or sign of any nature can be displayed on the vehicle other than an advertisement or a sign of a type authorised by the Council.

The following conditions apply with regard to advertisements.

1. All liveries must be approved by the Council and proposal must be accompanied by full colour, three view artwork. The first cab contract must be presented at the Council offices for inspection of the finished livery.
2. No secondary advertising permitted, whether in the form of the company logo preparing the vehicle or the name of the advertising agency.
3. Damaged or unmatched panels are unacceptable and will not be acceptable for re-licensing/renewing in this condition.
4. No part of the advertisement shall appear on any windows so as to obstruct or interfere with, or of the vision of the driver and/or passengers.
5. Window graphing, scrolling advert or hubcaps advertising not permitted.

Livery

Hackney carriages may display a livery.

Where the livery is displayed it must be in accordance with the approved livery of black vehicle with yellow bonnet stripes, yellow boot stripes and yellow roof stripes to a standard colour code approved by the council

There are no livery requirements for private hire vehicles.

Other Signage

Vehicles must display at least one “No Smoking” sign on at least one near-side and one off-side window to be clearly visible to passengers before entering the vehicle. Vehicles may only display the following window stickers or signs providing that they do not obscure vision:

- (a) the Council’s official plate (the detachable slip)
- (b) the name and telephone number of a Watford hackney carriage or private hire firm, recognised by the Council
- (c) an authorised parking permit
- (d) membership of a recognised motoring organization or a hackney carriage or private hire association
- (e) disability awareness signs.
- (f) If CCTV is in use, signs notifying customers of the use, storage and access must be displayed.
- (g) A sign advertising the availability of debit or credit card facilities

No other signage is permitted unless permission is expressly granted by the licensing authority on application

Exemptions from display of signage etc.

Hackney Carriage

Exemption from displaying the council approved door sign is only available where an alternative door sign of an approved design is displayed in the same place on the front doors. Applications for alternative door signs must be made in accordance with the requirements of section 14.6 Vehicle Licensing Policy 2019-2024 (Advertisements). Applications will only be considered where the alternative sign is a form of advertising for a taxi firm or operator.

There is no exemption from displaying a roof sign.

There is no exemption from displaying a vehicle plate.

Private Hire Vehicles

Door Signs

An exemption for the display of door signs is available.

An exemption for the display of door signs will only be granted where the proprietor can provide written evidence in support of the application from a company requesting to use their services without door signs. This evidence must be corroborated by the private hire operator.

Where an Exemption Certificate has been issued for the vehicle by the Council, a magnetic sign may be applied instead to the driver's and front passenger door providing that it meets the requirements stated in section 14.2 and in addition contains in prominent figures the number of the vehicle plate issued to that vehicle. The magnetic signs must be displayed on the vehicle whilst it is being used for Non-Contract Work and may be removed whilst being used for Contract Work.

Within this condition:

Contract Work means journeys undertaken for hire or reward as part of a regular course of business with a particular client or customer as determined to the satisfaction of the Council's officers;

Non-Contract Work means all other journeys for hire or reward including those conducted for the purposes of conveying children to or from any school or educational establishment.

Vehicle Plate

An exemption for display of vehicle plate is available.

An exemption for display of vehicle plate will only be granted where the vehicle is to be used exclusively for work under contract (as defined above) where bookings are:

- made at least 24 hours in advance;
- references from clients supports the use of the vehicle where no plate should be displayed, and;
- payments for such bookings are made by invoice or account.
- evidence is provided by the private hire operator to support the application

Appendix 10

In such cases where an exemption to displaying a plate is granted, the vehicle shall instead display a disc issued in its place. The disc shall be displayed in the front windscreen of the vehicle.