

Appendix G

Vehicle Standards

Hackney Carriage, Private Hire, Dual Driver, and Proprietor & Operator – Vehicle Standards

Cambridge City Council is required to adopt or implement its own policy in relation to National Inspection Standards of Taxi vehicles, both Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles, having regard to the Best Practice Guide (prepared by the Technical Officer Group) in the light of operational needs and geographic circumstances, for the inspection of Taxi vehicles. These standards are designed and intended to provide a framework for authorities in setting and assessing standards for vehicle safety to ultimately determine when vehicles are presented for inspection or test whether or not they receive a pass certificate to enable their use to carry members of the public.

The Best Practice Guide was first introduced in October 2006 following consultation with various interested parties such as The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) (formerly known as the Department of Transport, Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA)), Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) and the Institute of Licensing. Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are subject to much higher annual mileages and more arduous driving than normal private vehicles. Therefore in the interest of passenger and other road user's safety, a more stringent maintenance and testing regime is required.

The national guide sets out specific vehicle safety issues based on expert technical knowledge and experience of the Technical Officer Group. Its aim is to assist all licensing authorities and vehicle inspectors, by endorsing a minimum national vehicle inspection standard for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles. This is subject to revision taking into account ongoing changes in public travel (e.g. the stretched limousine guidance note) and safety issues (e.g. trailing the introduction of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation).

The Council has reviewed the Best Practice Guide as published by the DVSA which is to be used in conjunction with the DVSA MOT Inspection Manual as an advocate to public safety. DVSA is supportive of the Public Authority Transport Network (PATN) initiative to develop and share best practice and recognises the benefit to having a common standard to be applied nationwide.

The legislation governing Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles is the responsibility of The Department of Transport and this includes accessibility for disabled people including those who need to travel in a wheel chair.

All licensing authorities must ensure that each of their various licensing requirements is properly justified by the risk it aims to address. It needs to measure whether the cost of a requirement in terms of its effect on the availability of transport to the public is at least matched by the benefit to the public.

The guidance seeks to embrace safety aspects of vehicle inspections using, as a basic inspection standard, those laid down in the MOT inspection Manual for Car & Light Commercial Vehicle Testing issued by DVSA but provides additional testing requirements to those in the MOT Inspection Manual.

The scope of the guidance is that it does not seek to cover the whole range of possible licensing requirements. Instead it seeks to concentrate only on those that have caused difficulty or seem to be of particular significance. Environmental considerations include designated Air Quality Management Areas whereby local authorities can set vehicle emission standards for taxis and PHVs.

Private Hire and Hackney Carriages, whether designed to accommodate wheel chair passengers or not would generally be required to be fitted with at least four doors and four wheels and be right-hand drive. They would also be required to have adequate space for luggage and be capable of carrying at least four and no more than eight passengers in addition to the driver. These vehicles will not be accepted if any windows let through less than 70% light. Passengers being carried in the vehicle must be visible from the outside. To allow a thorough examination of a vehicle or any part thereof, it must be presented for test in a clean condition. The vehicle presented, will fail the test if, in the opinion of the examiner, it is so dirty that it would be unreasonable for the test to be carried out.

A wheelchair accessible vehicle shall have a minimum door height and width and internal headroom equal to or larger than a London Taxi International FX4 Fairway Taxi. (These measurements are door width 680mm; door height 1270mm and inside height floor to roof 1320mm).

Section 36 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) was partially commenced by enactment of the Local Transport Act 2008 and applies only to those vehicles deemed accessible by the local authority as being used for 'taxibus' services. This legislation imposes certain duties on drivers to provide assistance to people in wheelchairs, to carry them in safety and not to charge extra for doing so. Failure to abide by these duties could lead to prosecution through a Magistrates' court and a

maximum fine of £1000. It is recognised that local authorities can implement training requirements or, ultimately, powers to suspend or revoke licences.

Legislation gives local authorities a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicle that they can licence as hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. Cambridge City Council will only license a vehicle as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle if it complies with European Whole Vehicle (M1) type approval, M1 Low Volume Type Approval or UK National Small Series Type Approval and Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA).

Cambridge City Council currently licences MPV type vehicles able to carry 6 passengers. These incorporate boot seats which fold up and down but they do not allow access to and egress from the vehicle. We are proposing to allow currently licensed vehicles to continue until the end of their licensing life but have decided not to licence vehicles designed to carry any more than 4 passengers in future. This decision has been taken on the grounds of safety.

General Vehicle Standards

Vehicles Must:

1. Be suitable in type, size and design for the appropriate licence applied for. Sports saloons, drop head coupes, convertibles and touring cars will not be licensed.
2. Be covered by a satisfactory insurance policy.
3. Be safe and comfortable
4. Not be less than 4 feet 3 inches wide in the rear part of the body, where such measurements shall be taken 6 inches below the top and 6 inches in front of the rear backrest of the vehicle with both of the rear doors closed.
5. Have a minimum legroom for passengers using the rear seats of 8.5 inches, such measurement shall be taken from the rear door pillar to the nearest point of the rear seat squab.
6. Have provided for all passengers being carried in it, immediate and direct access to doors (minimum of 2 doors in the rear) that is available without assistance from any other person that will provide satisfactory means of escape in the event of an accident or emergency. A separate means of ingress and egress must be provided for the driver.
7. Be fitted with safety glass (i.e. if glass fractures it does not fly into fragments capable of causing severe cuts), which shall be replaced as soon as broken, discoloured or cracked.
8. Have windows that permit maximum visibility into, and out of, the vehicle. All windows must therefore let at least 70% of light through them.
9. Be constructed so as to provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver.
10. Be fitted with the appropriate number of seatbelts according to the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed to carry.
11. Be kept watertight.
12. Be provided with a means of opening and closing not less than one window on each side.
13. Have properly cushioned or covered seats.
14. Have floors covered with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering.
15. Be well maintained in a clean condition and in every way fit for public service.
16. Be provided with a means of securing luggage.
17. Be fitted with at least one no-smoking sign (showing the statutory no-smoking symbol) that is displayed in a prominent position in each compartment of the vehicle constructed or adapted to accommodate persons.
18. Not be fitted with celluloid or other highly flammable material.
19. Be provided with an efficient fire extinguisher, which shall be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use.
20. Be provided with a first aid kit, which shall be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use.