

Solihull MBC 'Taxi' Vehicle Testing

(Changes implemented from 1 April 2013)



PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCE – GUIDANCE NOTES

Once you have been granted a Private Hire Driver's licence and have been issued with a badge, you may then licence your own vehicle for use as a Private Hire Vehicle.

The vehicle must comply with the following conditions:-

- a) Be capable of carrying at least 4 but no more than 8 passengers
- b) Have an engine size of at least 1400cc
- c) Have a minimum of 4 opening doors

Although there are currently no age restrictions on the vehicle at the moment, the Council may be looking at introducing an age restrictions in the future. However please be mindful that some Solihull licensed Private Hire Operators do operate an age restriction. All vehicles will be subject to stringent mechanical checks by our authorised testers in addition to normal MOT requirements.

Before taking your vehicle for a 'Taxi' MOT, the vehicle should be steam cleaned, be in a good mechanical condition, the bodywork should be clean and free from any rust and dents. All fittings should be secure and the interior should be in good order, clean, free of grease and unsightly marks. The seating upholstery should be in good clean condition and free of any tears and cuts.

The following changes will come into force on the Supplementary Test ('Taxi' MOT), and will apply to all SMBC licensed Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles:

- 1) Drivers no longer need to carry a first aid kit or a fire extinguisher. If drivers do decide to carry these two items it will be their responsibility to make sure that they are maintained to a satisfactory standard.
- 2) If new/existing drivers are licensing a Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles for the first time with SMBC, all glazing shall comply with 'Construction and Use Regulation 32' with regards to the level of tints. A minimum light transmission value of 70% shall be maintained in all windows except the front windscreen which shall have a minimum light transmission value of 75%. Any additional tinted/smoked glass fitted to any of the windows either by the manufacturer or darkened by a tint specialist will not be accepted.
- 3) If you are looking to buy a vehicle for taxi/private hire uses ensure that no additional tints have been fitted to the front windows and that all other glass on the vehicle is of same shade/tint. If there is a difference in the shade/tint when comparing the front glass to the back glass then that can only mean that the vehicle has tints/privacy glass and we will not license that vehicle.
- 4) All vehicles must carry either a full sized spare wheel or have the original manufacturers space saver wheel which should carry the marking on either the tyre or wheel rim 'Maximum speed 50 MPH'. The space saver wheel must not be fitted to the vehicle at the time of test. The registration number of the vehicle must be marked on the spare wheel. Alternatively, they may carry an appropriate and adequate tyre sealant made available for inspection at the time of the test to suit the size and type of tyre fitted on that vehicle and which must be within its shelf life.

- 5) All four wheels must be of the same design including alloy wheel centre discs. Vehicles without alloys must have wheel trims fitted. All wheel trims must be matching and securely fixed. The locking wheel nut adapter must be present at the time of the test.
- 6) Vehicles converted from vans which have a type approval other than M1 will not be acceptable unless they are presented with approved M1 certification for that vehicle. If a vehicle has been registered with DVLA and issued with an appropriate registration index number, no change, structural alteration or rearrangement of detail shall be carried out to the vehicle unless such change shall have been subsequently granted M1 Whole Type Approval.
- 7) Any vehicles which have had their seating capacity reduced or increased in order to get a licence for Private Hire must also have an Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) test carried out. In the first instance applicants must contact DVLA, Swansea for the necessary application forms to be completed. For further information or advice you can either contact VOSA on 0300 123 9000 or DVLA Swansea on 0903 124 0003. All bolt holes where seats have been removed must be covered over. Any seats that have been added must be fitted to the manufacturer's specification and pass the IVA test and have all the necessary documentation in place. Any Limousines, Imported and Converted vehicles from outside the EU will require an Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) test irrespective of age. Further Information and application forms for an IVA test can be downloaded direct from www.gov.uk website.
- 8) The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Road Safety Advisory Group have investigated the safety of access and egress in Multi Purpose Vehicles that were used as passenger carrying vehicles. As from 1st April 2013, any MPV type vehicle will only be licensed if it meets all legal criteria, and drivers must demonstrate the workings of any folding/moving seats to their passengers when seating them in the rear seats.
- 9) All vehicles must display a no-smoking sign in a prominent position in each compartment of the vehicle in which people can be carried. The signs must show the international no-smoking symbol at least 70mm in diameter. There are no exemptions to these requirements. It is recommended that for most standard Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicles, two signs are sufficient to comply with these requirements.
- 10) Any vehicle fitted with a tail lift or lifting equipment must produce a LOLER certificate at the time of the test. LOLER stands for "**The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998**". Lifting equipment includes any equipment used at work for lifting or lowering loads, including attachments used for anchoring, fixing or supporting it. Thorough examinations of the lift should be carried out at least every six months.
- 11) Applicants for a vehicle licence will now **only have 10 days** to bring in the garage test papers to plate a vehicle. **Plates will now expire on the same date as the MOT**, so it would be in the applicant's interest to ensure that he/she gets the vehicle tested a month in advance.
- 12) All drivers will now be required to bring in the MOT certificate, the 'Taxi' test form, original insurance certificate or cover note and the V5 logbook when plating a vehicle. Licences will only be issued to the proprietor or keeper of the vehicle. The insurance certificate must accurately show the driver and vehicle details. Fleet Insurances must have a schedule attached to the insurance certificate listing all the vehicles and/or drivers covered under that fleet policy.
- 13) Any vehicle that is to be licensed as a Private Hire/Hackney Carriage vehicle must not have any damage affecting the structural safety of the vehicle. **Any vehicle that is written off for insurance purposes will not be licensed**, regardless of category.

Applicants are advised that before purchasing a vehicle it is thoroughly inspected by a competent person and that a full HPI check is carried out on the vehicle.

- 14) All LPG converted vehicles must produce a certificate of conformity in line with the Code of Practice of the LPG Gas Association Regulations, at the time of the test. The certificate issued must be from an LPGA approved garage.
- 15) All brand new vehicles will now be subject to a full 'taxi' mot at a Solihull MBC approved garage. The licensing team will no longer carry out new vehicle mileage verifications.
- 16) All approved garages are entitled to charge a fee or a deposit prior to a test being carried out, to help ensure the booking is fulfilled. Any appointment made with a garage and subsequently not kept, or a vehicle arriving late for the test may incur an additional charge. Any retest fees are at the discretion of the garage.