

## Information Regarding Applicant's Knowledge Test

The knowledge test is a computerised, multiple choice test which must be completed in either 30 minutes for a private hire test and 45 minutes for a Hackney/Combined test. It is advisable to complete your safeguarding training before sitting your knowledge test.

Areas covered include:-

- Legislation
- Driver Conduct
- Safeguarding
- Highway Code/Traffic Signs
- Locations
- Numeracy
- Basic English

The examination will also test your knowledge of the seating capacities of licensed vehicles and the use of seatbelts. You will also be tested on how you should behave once you are a licensed driver and also what help if any you will be expected to give to passengers.

You will also be tested on the Highway Code/Traffic Signs.

In addition to the above, Hackney Carriage applicants will also be tested on Ranks, Tariffs and Shortest Routes.

If the date and time given are not convenient you must notify this Department giving two working days' notice of cancellation.

If you fail the knowledge test your application will be refused but you will be given the opportunity to resit the test.

It will be illegal for you to drive a Private Hire/Hackney Carriage without a licence and badge issued to you by Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Your licence will be valid for either 12 months or 36 months. A courtesy letter will be sent approximately 30 days before the expiry date. However, it is your responsibility to ensure it is renewed before the expiry of your current licence.

### Summary of Legislation

Local Authorities can licence vehicles to carry up to 8 people plus the driver. Vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats must be licensed through the Department of Transport.

Private Hire drivers can only obtain work by working through a Licensed Private Hire Operator. It is illegal for a private hire driver to accept a flag down (stop for passengers in the street) or arrange bookings. If people wanting to hire the vehicle approach you or if you stop for a passenger in the street and you radio the booking into the office for the Operator to record on their booking sheets, this does not legitimise the booking. If you accept the fare it will still be deemed to be an offence and you and the Operator face possible legal action.

A driver can refuse to take a passenger if they genuinely believe that their health and safety may be put at risk or if the passenger is excessively dirty, abusive or drunk. You may not refuse a passenger on the grounds of their gender, race, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Private Hire/Hackney Carriage drivers must wear their badge at all times whilst they are working on their outer clothing. The dashboard display badge must be displayed in a prominent position in the front of the vehicle on the Dashboard. The Private Hire Driver Record Card should be deposited with the Private Hire

Operator you are working for. The Hackney Carriage Driver Record Card should be deposited with the vehicle proprietor.

Private Hire charges are determined by the Licensed Operator, the Council does not set charges to be made. Private Hire bookings are a contract between the hirer and the Private Hire Operator and the driver cannot charge more or less than the agreed fare.

Authorised Officers of the Council and the Police have the same powers under the Act and all assistance must be afforded to them if they ask for information. Failure to provide information could be considered as obstruction which is an offence. If a customer asks for your details you are required to give your name and badge number.

Hackney Carriage drivers can obtain work from the ranks, flag downs, telephone and from private hire operators or by telephone calls to their home.

The Local Authority determines the Tariff rates for fares that can be charged by a hackney carriage. The Table of Fares should be displayed in a prominent place where the hirer can easily see the charges. The charges listed are the maximum that can be charged, the driver, can if he wishes charge less than the maximum allowed by the Council.

## **Conditions**

Conditions are attached to the grant of a private hire driver's licence. A copy of these conditions are available from our website, you must be familiar with all of them. You will be asked questions which will test your knowledge of the Conditions.

## **Guidance For Drivers Regarding Seat Belts**

The law relating to the use of seatbelts differs slightly in connection with Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles. These guidelines refer to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles only and are not intended to give advice to drivers/owners of any other type of vehicle.

### **Driver Seat Belt Requirements**

#### **Private Hire Drivers**

A Drivers seat belt must be worn when not carrying passengers. Whilst carrying passengers it is recommended that the driver wears a seatbelt but it is not a legal requirement to do so.

#### **Hackney Carriage Drivers**

No legal requirement to wear a seat belt at all when in a licensed Hackney Carriage, provided the vehicle is displaying the correct signage (i.e. plates etc.) It is recommended that the driver wears a seatbelt but it is not a legal requirement to do so.

### **Passenger Seat Belt Requirements and Responsibilities**

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that children under the age of 14 years are restrained correctly in accordance with the law.

#### **Children up to 3 Years**

If a child restraint is not available then the child may travel unrestrained in the rear.

#### **Children aged 3 and above, until they reach either their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday OR 135cm in Height**

Children can only travel in the front seat if a child seat is fitted. They may be carried in the rear of the vehicle in either a child seat, if one is fitted, or the adult seat belt.

#### **Children 12 or 13 years old OR over 135cm in Height**

Children can travel in either the front or rear seat using the adult seat belt.

### **Legal Penalties**

As a driver, if you are convicted of failing to ensure that a child passenger is using an appropriate child restraint or wearing a seat belt according to the legal requirements described above, you could face a fine of up to £500.