

PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE KNOWLEDGE TESTS GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

To offer a safe and efficient service to members of the public it is important that licensed drivers have knowledge of the area in which they work and an understanding of the licence requirements.

All applicants are required to pass a local knowledge test before a licence can be issued. Please read these notes carefully to help you pass the test.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING THE TEST

You will require a good understanding of written English in order to complete the test.

The test will be conducted in silence, you may not speak to any other applicants who may be taking the test at the same time. No assistance will be given by the invigilator during the test unless it is an emergency.

During the test, you will not be permitted to use any of the following:

- mobile phones;
- study notes;
- text books;
- hand held computers;
- satellite navigation devices; or
- any other devices or notes as deemed unacceptable by the invigilator

Evidence of the use of any of the above will result in your test being cancelled.

You will not be permitted to leave the room during the test so please ensure that you have taken any comfort breaks before the test begins.

You will get your results at the end of the test. If you have passed the test you will be issued with a pass certificate, this certificate is valid for 6 months from the issue date.

If you fail the test your application will be refused but you can resit the test. For each full test taken you will be given the opportunity to resit only the sections of the test you failed on your previous attempt. You will have to pay an additional fee before a further appointment will be booked for you.

ARRIVING FOR YOUR TEST

You must attend your appointment promptly, otherwise you may be refused admittance to the test.

Please wait in the seating area located outside the Innovation Station, adjacent to Starbooks Café, 1st Floor, Stockton Central Library, The Square, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 1TU, where a member of the Licensing Team will meet you.

You will need to produce a valid DVLA photo card driving licence or other approved photographic identification, e.g. a valid passport or national identification card. If you cannot provide one of these documents you should contact the Licensing Service immediately, as you will not be allowed admittance to the test and a further fee will be required before a further appointment will be booked for you.

If you fail to attend your appointment it will be considered a test failure and a further fee will be required before a further appointment will be booked for you.

WHAT THE TEST INVOLVES

The knowledge test is a computerised, multiple choice test which must be completed in 45 minutes.

It is advisable to complete your Safeguarding Awareness training before you take your knowledge test. Please visit our website at; <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/community-safety/licensing/private-hire-and-Hackney-carriage-driver-licences/> to complete the online Barnardo's Safeguarding Awareness training.

Questions will be asked on the following:

- Disability Awareness (5 questions will be asked, 4 must be answered correctly)
- Safeguarding (6 questions will be asked, 5 must be answered correctly)
- Legislation & Conditions (10 questions will be asked, 9 must be answered correctly)
- Highway Code (10 questions will be asked, 8 must be answered correctly)
- Locations (10 questions will be asked, 8 must be answered correctly)
- Numeracy (5 questions will be asked, 4 must be answered correctly)
- Literacy (5 questions will be asked, the answers do not affect your test result)

In addition to the above Hackney/Combined tests will also include:

- Ranks & Tariffs (5 questions will be asked, 4 must be answered correctly)

You will be required to demonstrate a good level of local knowledge to include being able to identify the locations of certain key buildings or premises in Stockton-On-Tees, such as pubs, bars, schools, train stations, golf clubs, village halls, supermarkets, hospitals etc. Examples of the type of questions you could be asked are given later in these guidance notes.

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.

It will be illegal for you to drive a Private Hire/Hackney Carriage without a licence and driver badges issued to you by Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council.

If your application is successful and you are granted a licence it will be valid for either 12 months or 36 months. A courtesy letter will be sent to you approximately 30 days before the expiry date, however, it is your responsibility to ensure it is renewed before the expiry date.

BOOKING OR CANCELLING YOUR TEST

Knowledge tests take place twice a month. A test will automatically be booked for you on submission of an application. If the date and time of your appointment are not convenient you must notify the Licensing Service, giving at least two working days' notice of cancellation, otherwise you will have to pay an additional fee before a further appointment will be booked for you.

I WANT TO DRIVE A PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE, WHY DO I NEED TO HAVE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES?

It could be argued that Private Hire jobs are booked in advance so routes can be studied before a journey. But, as a Private Hire driver, you are required to collect passengers on time. You may be delayed if you have to keep stopping in between jobs to look at a map. Passengers can also change their minds about routes or add extra drop-off points. They are not always a position to describe to you the route you should take.

Satellite navigation systems should not be relied upon. If you live outside of the area you may not be aware that the road name identified on your system is not within Stockton-On-Tees or the surrounding boroughs. The software for such systems can also become out of date very quickly.

It is therefore more efficient for both you and your Operator, if you obtain some knowledge of the local area before you start work.

WHY DO I NEED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON THE HIGHWAY CODE WHEN I HAVE ALREADY DONE THIS TO OBTAIN MY DVLA DRIVING LICENCE?

Over time it is easy to forget some of the rules of the road. The overriding concern is for the safety of the public. Questions in the test regarding the Highway Code are a refresher for applicants. Please ensure you re-familiarise yourself with the Code thoroughly before sitting the knowledge test. It can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION

Local Authorities can licence vehicles to carry up to 8 passengers 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 while they are working. 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 however 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 as you will be asked questions on the Conditions in your knowledge test.

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 Private Hire and Hackney Carriage 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 driver's 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 vehicle, provided the vehicle is displaying the correct signage (i.e. plates, door decals 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 12TH 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.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

Each question has 4 answers, the correct answer and 3 incorrect answers.

When you have chosen your answer click anywhere in the appropriate box, your answer will be highlighted, click 'Next Question>>' to continue. You can go back to a previous question if you wish to change your answer by clicking 'Previous Question>>'.

DO NOT CLICK 'FINISHED' UNTIL YOU HAVE REACHED THE END OF THE TEST.

Please note that the questions below are examples of the type of questions you could be asked, the answers highlighted may not be correct.

- **DISABILITY AWARENESS**

How would you recognise an assistance dog?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

The owner will tell you

Next Question>>

They bark

<<Previous Question

They wear a harness, identifying dog jacket or lead

Finished

The dog is always a Labrador

• **SAFEGUARDING**

If you are worried a child or young person may be sexually exploited you should?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

Tell a friend

Next Question>>

Say nothing

<<Previous Question

Tell another taxi driver

Finished

Ring the police on 999

• **LEGISLATION & CONDITIONS**

The Local Authority will issue a licensed driver with a dash display badge, where should this be kept?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

On the dashboard

Next Question>>

It's a spare

<<Previous Question

With the Operator or Vehicle Proprietor

Finished

Hung off the rear view mirror

• **HIGHWAY CODE**

What is the national speed limit on a dual carriageway?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

70mph

Next Question>>

40mph

<<Previous Question

60mph

Finished

50mph

• **LOCATIONS**

On what Road would you find the Mitre Public House?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

Malcolm Drive

Next Question>>

Harrowgate Lane

<<Previous Question

Darlington Back Lane

Finished

Rimswell Road

• **NUMERACY**

How much change do you give a customer if the fare is £14.20 and they pay with a £20 note?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

£6.80

Next Question>>

£2.20

<<Previous Question

£12.00

Finished

£5.80

• **LITERACY**

I told you _____ you didn't listen

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

but

Next Question>>

then

<<Previous Question

if

Finished

for

HACKNEY/COMBINED TEST ONLY

- RANKS & TARIFFS**

How much is Tariff 1 at flag fall?

Your answer (click anywhere in the answer box)

£2.00

Next Question>>

£2.50

<<Previous Question

£2.80

Finished

Whatever I agree with the customer

STUDY TIPS/RELEVANT INFORMATION

You should obtain a good knowledge of the local area before taking the test. In order to help you study you should consider the following:

- spending time in the local area and studying a map;
- researching the names of the roads on which pubs, bars, schools, train stations, golf clubs, village halls, supermarkets, hospitals etc. are situated;
- asking the operator who will be allocating work to you or an experienced driver for advice;
- re-familiarising yourself with the Highway Code;
- looking on our website at; <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/community-safety/licensing/private-hire-and-Hackney-carriage-driver-licences/> where you will find the 'Private Hire And Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy' and 'Guidance Notes' which you should familiarise yourself with.