



**Middlesbrough Council  
Private Hire and Hackney  
Carriage Vehicle  
Specifications**

## **Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicle Specifications**

**All** licensed vehicles shall comply in all respects with the requirements set out below as appropriate for the type of vehicle. This is in addition to all requirements of the Road Traffic legislation, which relates to all motor vehicles.

**All** vehicles must comply with the requirements of Section A. In addition, Private Hire vehicles must comply with the requirements of Section B and F as appropriate, Novelty Vehicles and Stretched Limousines must comply with Sections B and C, and Hackney Carriage vehicles must comply with the requirements of Section D and E as appropriate.

**All** vehicles must be mechanically safe, exceptionally well maintained and roadworthy at all times.

**All** vehicles must be 'type approved'.

The vehicle specification shall be complied with during the licence period unless any changes have been given prior approval by the Council.

**It must be understood that, although the requirements set out in this document have been complied with, each application will be dealt on its merits and approval will be withheld if the Council is of the opinion that a vehicle is unsuitable for public use.**

### **Section A - General specification for all vehicles**

#### **General Construction**

1. The vehicle shall comply fully with all relevant statutory provisions relating to the construction of motor vehicles and including in particular those contained in the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.
2. No modification may be carried out on a vehicle (e.g. alteration of the original seat configuration or any other 'adaptation') without prior approval from the Council and/or the appropriate certificate produced.
3. No fittings, other than those approved by the Council, may be attached to, or carried on the inside or outside of, the vehicle.
4. The steering must be on the offside of the vehicle (unless exempted by the Council).
5. The chassis/VIN plate and engine numbers must match the numbers recorded with the DVLA.
6. All tyres must comply with the relevant legislation and tyres must be of the designated size, speed and weight rating for that make and model of vehicle as prescribed by the vehicle manufacturer. Re-treaded tyres must be marked

accordingly. Tyres on the same axle must be of the same nominal size and aspect ratio.

7. Vehicles shall have a spare wheel to fit the vehicle and equipment to change a wheel on the vehicle with that wheel e.g. a jack and wheel brace. Where vehicles are fitted with a space saver spare tyre the Council will permit their use in licensed vehicles subject to the following:
  - i) The tyre used must be supplied or recommended by the manufacturer of the vehicle concerned;
  - ii) The tyre must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines;
  - iii) The tyre is used only for an emergency or temporary purpose.

Where the vehicle is supplied by the manufacturer with 'run-flat' tyres the Council will licence such vehicles without the need for a spare wheel subject to the following:

- i) The tyres must be supplied or recommended by the manufacturer of the vehicle concerned as original equipment;
- ii) The vehicle must be provided with a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) which must be fully operational at all times and which alerts the driver to a drop in tyre pressure;
- iii) In the event of a puncture the tyres must be used and replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines;
- iv) If run-flat tyres are to be replaced by conventional tyres then advice from the vehicle manufacturer must be sought regarding any modifications to the vehicle's suspension that may be required and the vehicle must then be provided with a spare wheel, jack and wheel brace.

The use of pressurised tyre sealants will not be permitted as an alternative to the above requirements.

8. The vehicle shall be capable of carrying in reasonable comfort a minimum of four passengers unless the Council approves a smaller number.
9. The body shall be of the fixed head type.
10. The vehicle must not be fitted with a roof rack.

### **Passenger Comfort**

11. The rear seat dimensions must be adequate to carry the appropriate number of passengers and must provide a minimum seat width of 406mm (16") for each person. Seats must be properly cushioned and covered. Whilst the Council do not provide a detailed specification in relation to the minimum legroom between seats the Council will reserve the right to restrict the number of seats the vehicle will be permitted to be licensed for to allow for the safety and comfort of passengers. This may be the case for some types of vehicle, for example MPV with flip down seats which may not be regarded suitable for adult passengers. If you are considering purchasing such a vehicle please contact the Licensing Office for advice.

12. The vehicle shall have an adequate heating and ventilation system for the comfort of all passengers.
13. The vehicle must be wind and watertight.
14. The floor must be completely carpeted/covered with appropriate flooring.
15. The vehicle shall have interior lighting fitted in the passenger compartment sufficient to illuminate the whole of that compartment. The light(s) shall be switched such that they may be turned on and off both from the driving and passenger compartments and shall operate automatically when a door is opened.
16. Sufficient means must be available for any passenger to communicate with the driver.

### **Passenger Safety**

17. The windows should maximise passenger visibility into and out of the vehicle. If tinted glass is fitted, it shall have minimum light transmittance of 75% for the front windscreen, 70% for all other front vehicle window glass and 30% for all other window glass (unless previously exempted by the Council). When testing vehicles, the Council will allow a 3% (of the minimum specified reading) error margin in line with the testing instruments manufacturers recommendation. For example therefore, a 3% error margin for a rear window reading equals 0.9% (rounded to 1%). This means that a reading of not less than 29% light transmission will be accepted for rear windows.
18. A proportion of the window area in the passenger compartment must be available for opening by the seated passenger.
19. The vehicle shall have at least 4 doors (NB: a tailgate is not considered to be a door) which open sufficiently wide so as to allow safe and easy access and egress.
20. Each passenger, other than a front-seated passenger, must have access to at least two doors. If access to exit doors is impeded by a flip down/tip up seat, then the method of operating the seat and the location of any lever for the seat should be displayed on a notice which can be clearly seen by all passengers.
21. Lap and diagonal seatbelts must be fitted to all seats.
22. Head restraints must be fitted for all (forward and rear facing) seats.
23. The exterior and interior of the vehicle and its fittings must be clean and exceptionally well maintained, being fit and safe for use by the driver and passengers.
24. Where a swivel seat is fitted as a passenger seat, certificates of fitting from an authorised fitter must be obtained and produced to the Council before a vehicle can be tested and/or licensed.

## **Luggage Capacity**

25. Suitable dedicated provision for the secure carriage of luggage must be made separated from the passenger compartment. Estate and hatch back models of vehicles must provide a fixed grill between the luggage and passenger compartment, sufficient to prevent luggage from entering the passenger compartment in the event of an accident. Each vehicle model will be determined on its merits.

## **Age of Vehicles**

26. Vehicles in respect of new and replacement applications must be no more than three years of age from the date of first registration on the date of the initial application. The vehicle must be licensed within 28 days of the initial application.
27. The licence of any vehicle will terminate not more than eight years from the date of first registration. This will be extended to 10 years for London Style Cabs and side loading wheelchair accessible vehicles approved by the Council.

## **Section B – Specification for new and replacement Private Hire Vehicles**

28. The vehicle must have M1 European Whole Vehicle Type Approval and be of an approved type and which is not black and yellow in colour.
29. All body panels must be painted the same colour.
30. If the private hire vehicle is fitted with a meter, it must comply with the requirements of this policy in relation to meters.
31. Private hire vehicles must not have a roof sign.

## **Section C – Additional specifications for novelty vehicles and stretched limousine private hire vehicles**

32. The vehicle must have passed the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) (from 29 April 2009) or the Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) (before 29 April 2009) scheme test requirements.
33. The vehicle shall have Qualified Vehicle Modifier or Cadillac Coach Builder approval where appropriate.

## **Section D – Specification for saloon hackney carriage vehicles**

34. Hackney carriage vehicles must have M1 European Whole Vehicle Type Approval and be of an approved type and be black in colour with a yellow bonnet and boot.
35. Hackney carriage vehicles must have fitted on the roof, an internally illuminated "TAXI" top sign which is capable of being switched off.

36. Hackney carriage vehicles must be fitted with an approved calendar controlled taximeter in accordance with the requirements of this Policy and the Byelaws with Respect to Hackney Carriages.
37. Hackney carriages must be fitted with a "FOR HIRE" sign which is capable of being switched off.

### **Section E – Specification for New (Wheelchair Accessible) Hackney Carriages**

38. The vehicle shall accommodate a passenger with a disability confined to a wheelchair (reference) and shall be either purpose built or converted prior to first registration and have as a minimum inspection standard the Vehicle Certification Agency Ministers Approval Certificate for a Low Volume Motor Vehicle or European Small Series Type Approval.
39. The vehicle must be fitted with ramps, lifts, wheelchair restraints and/or any other device supplied by the vehicle manufacturer for the safe loading/unloading and carriage of a person in a wheelchair.
40. The vehicle must comply fully with Section A and the applicable parts of section D of the preceding specification.

### **Passenger Safety and Comfort**

41. The vehicle must be capable of accommodating one or more wheelchairs in either a forward or rear facing position allowing adequate space to ensure the safety and comfort of the wheelchair user, without interfering with the safety and comfort of any other passengers.
42. Approved anchorages must be provided for wheelchair tie-downs and the wheelchair passenger restraint. These anchorages must either be chassis or floor linked and shall comply with the strength requirements for M1 standards and any current European directives. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other. All anchorages and restraints must be so designed that they do not cause any danger to other passengers.
43. The design of the vehicle must allow safe access and egress of passengers including elderly and disabled passengers.
44. The door and doorway must be constructed as to permit an unrestricted opening across the doorway of at least 75cm.
45. The clear height of the doorway must not be less than 1.2 metres.
46. Wheelchair access may be from the rear or the side of the vehicle.
47. Grab handles must be placed at one or more passenger door entrances as appropriate, to assist the elderly and disabled. Grab handles must be in a contrasting colour.

48. At the main access door into the passenger area of the vehicle, steps shall be provided to aid ingress/egress as follows:
- where the internal floor height of the vehicle exceeds 300mm an intermediate step shall be fitted every 250mm from road level up to the internal floor height. All steps must be capable of supporting a minimum weight of 150kg.
  - The tread area of all steps must have a minimum depth of 150mm and shall have a slip resistant surface. All steps, both internally and externally shall have all open edges highlighted in a contrasting high-visibility colour.
  - Not be capable of operation when the vehicle is in motion
  - If automatic powered, be fitted with a safety device which stops the motion of the step if that motion could cause injury to the passenger
  - Can fold or retract so that it does not project beyond the side face of the vehicle and the vehicle is not capable of being driven away unless the step is so folded or retracted.
49. A means of illuminating the entrance step at all access doors shall be fitted and switched such that they operate automatically when a door is opened.
50. The vertical distance between the highest part of the floor and the roof in the wheelchair passenger area must be no less than 1.3 metres.
51. A ramp for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for use at either the nearside or offside or rear passenger door. The ramp must have a safety lip, be at least 70cm wide as a minimum, and comprise a single non-slip surface. The ramp shall have a visible reference to safe working load of at least 250 kgs and certified to BS 6109. Provision must be made for the ramp to be stowed safely when not in use.
52. Where seats are placed facing each other, there must be a minimum space of 42.5cm between any part of the front seat and any part of any other seat which faces it.
53. Where all seats are placed facing to the front of the vehicle, there must be a clear space of at least 66cm in front of every part of each seat squab, measured along a horizontal plane at the centre of the cushion.
54. When fitted, occasional seats must be at least 40cm in width and the distance from the back of the upholstery to the front edge of the seat must not be less than 35.5cm
55. Occasional seats must be so arranged as to rise automatically when not in use. When not in use, they must not obstruct doorways.

56. Suitable means must be provided to assist persons to rise from the rear seat with particular attention to the needs of the elderly and disabled.
57. Colour contrasting sight patches are required on all passenger seats.
58. An induction loop system or (equivalent) must be fitted and clearly signed.
59. A swivel facility may be fitted to the nearside rear tip seat to assist disabled passengers.

#### **Driver's Compartment**

60. Every vehicle must be provided with an approved means of communication between the passenger and the driver.
61. Where a single-piece glazed partition is fitted, a facility must be provided for making payment to the driver

#### **Section F – Specification for New and/or Replacement Wheelchair Accessible Private Hire Vehicles**

62. The vehicle must comply fully with Section A and E and the applicable parts of Section B of the preceding specifications.