
Chelmsford City Council

Licensing

Pre-licensing criteria: vehicles

Detailed below is a summary of the criteria relevant to vehicles presented for licensing as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, except in respect of limousines, for which a different set of criteria have been adopted. (Vehicle proprietors should familiarise themselves with the full details contained within the byelaws and other relevant legislation).

Other than with the consent of the licensing authority all vehicles (except limousines) submitted for licensing will be:

1. Age of vehicle and emissions

- a) Private Hire Vehicles may be - at the discretion of the proprietor - either a saloon, estate or wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). Any vehicle presented for licensing as a replacement private hire vehicle, shall be no more than six (6) years of age from the date of first registration.
- b) In respect of all private hire vehicle licences, any vehicle presented for licensing for the first time shall be first registered to the applicant and, in any case, no more than four (4) years old.
- c) A Hackney Carriage shall not be more than 1yr old on the date of first being licensed.
- d) No vehicle shall be licensed once it is more than twelve (12) years old, from the date of first registration.
- e) Unless a vehicle is fully powered by electric, vehicles first licensed by Chelmsford City Council on or after the 1st April 2020 and all vehicles relicensed from 1st April 2024 will ensure that they comply with Euro 6 emission requirements.
- f) All vehicles shall be in a satisfactory mechanical order and body condition and in operational order in all respects. The vehicle is to be either:
 - A saloon, hatchback, estate vehicle or people carrier type vehicle, which is to the manufacturers, unaltered specification; or
 - A purpose-built vehicle or a WAV.
- g) All vehicles shall be right hand drive.
- h) A private hire vehicle shall not be of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a Hackney Carriage.

2. Doors

- a) The vehicle shall have at least two doors for the ingress and egress of passengers and a separate door for the driver.
- b) In respect of doors that open outwards, they must open to an angle of at least 60 degrees.

3. Seats

The vehicle shall:

Have seats of a minimum width of 17 inches (43.2cm) per person (except where the vehicle is individually approved by the licensing authority).

- a) In the event of the vehicle being a people carrier type vehicle or a minibus:
 - The seating configuration in the passenger area (behind the driver), shall be such that no person for the purpose of ingress or egress of the vehicle shall have to move or dismantle any seat or other obstruction or manoeuvre over or round any other passenger or article carried in or on the vehicle or which is fitted so that it forms part of the vehicle. In cases where this is not attainable the seat in the centre row of the vehicle and adjacent to the near side door of the vehicle shall be permanently removed

4. Luggage

- b) The vehicle shall:
 - If the vehicle is a WAV, be capable of accommodating a wheelchair either constructed or dismantled in a reasonable manner
 - Be capable of carrying a reasonable quantity of luggage in a safe, secure manner
 - In the event of the vehicle being a hatchback or estate vehicle, it shall be fitted with a guardrail of an approved construction to separate the luggage area from the passenger compartment.

5. Glass

- c) The vehicle will be fitted with glass meeting the following Visible Light Transmission (V.T.L.) standards:
 - Front side glass: 70% minimum
 - Windscreen glass: 75% minimum

6. Taximeter

- a) A Private Hire vehicle may be fitted with an electric taximeter which shall be set at the rate set by the Authority and which has been certified and sealed by the Authority.
- b) No person shall, without reasonable cause, tamper with or permit any person to tamper with, any taximeter with which the carriage is provided or with the fittings or seal affixed there to.

7. Livery

- a) Private hire door stickers must be permanently attached and displayed centrally within the upper panel of both front doors. Door stickers attached by magnets are not permitted.
- b) There are no colour restrictions in relation to private hire vehicles, however a private hire vehicle must not in any way resemble a Hackney Carriage in its appearance or use the term 'Taxi' on the vehicle.

8. Roof signs

- a) Private hire vehicles are not permitted to affix a roof sign, for any purpose, without the prior consent of the licensing authority.

9. Documentation

- a) The vehicle proprietor must submit the following documents prior to the issue of the licence; the documentation must be current at the time the licence commences:
 - An Insurance certificate or cover note that expressly indicates on risk cover for 'hire and reward'. This may be produced after the vehicle has satisfactorily passed its initial test of suitability;
 - A valid mechanical inspection certificate
 - A valid Department of Transport Test certificate (MOT) as required by the Road Traffic Act
 - Proof that the current vehicle excise duty has been paid.
 - Proof of ownership of the vehicle i.e. registration document and/or bill of sale.

10. Miscellaneous

- a) The vehicle will be equipped with an effective 'in date' fire extinguisher
- b) The vehicle shall be fitted with a spare wheel that is in a serviceable condition at all times unless otherwise agreed with the licensing authority.

- c) No signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, numbers, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, in or from and licensed vehicle without the express permission of the Council
- d) A vehicle being licensed as a hackney carriage shall:
- Be of such design that the driver can verbally communicate with the passengers being carried thereon;
 - Be fitted with an interior light for the use of any person being carried in the vehicle and capable of illuminating the interior thereof;
 - Be fitted with flooring consisting of proper matting carpet or other suitable material;
 - Be fitted with cushioned seats, the upholstery of which is free from splits, cuts, holes or other damage
 - Provide a means of opening or closing not less than one window on each side of the vehicle.
 - Have the roof covered and kept watertight.
 - Be fitted with adequate seat belts for use by persons being carried in the vehicle.
- e) Driver protection screens that are fitted but were not installed and inspected when presented for a mechanical inspection will be deemed unauthorised for use by the Licensing Authority.
- f) Closed Circuit (CCTV) and Audible recording systems that are fitted but were not installed and inspected when presented for a mechanical inspection will be deemed unauthorised for use by the Licensing Authority

11. Proprietors

- a) A proprietor shall be familiar with and at all times comply with the relevant provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 as the same may be amended and all the regulations and Bylaws made by the Council and all other relevant statutory provisions relating to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles for the time being in force.
- b) Unless the proprietor has provided proof of convictions elsewhere to the Licensing Authority e.g. as a driver or operator, each proprietor shall provide a Basic DBS certificate that has been issued within 28 days prior to making application upon initial application and thereafter annually at each re-licensing of the vehicle.