

# Licensing

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing

Issue 5: Spring 2009

# Leeds

[www.leeds.gov.uk/taxis](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/taxis)

Welcome to the Spring edition of Licensing Leeds -  
the quarterly newsletter that keeps  
you informed.



**In this edition...**

***A day in the life of...***

***Enforcement Statistics***

***VRQ/ NVQ Information***

**And much more!**

#### Section Opening Hours

##### Mon – Thurs

08:00 – 15:30

##### Fri

08:00 – 15:00

#### Staff Training

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in every month  
08:00 – 10:00

#### Closure Dates

##### Easter Bank Holidays

Friday 10 April 2009

Monday 13 April 2009

##### May Bank Holidays

Monday 4 May 2009

Monday 25 May 2009

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing

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**Leeds**  
CITY COUNCIL

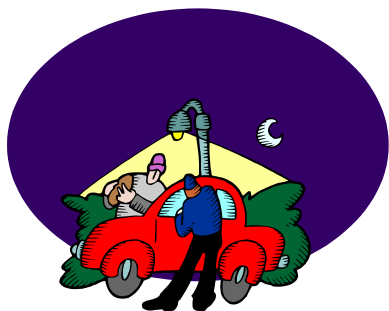
# Personal Security Guidance for Taxi and Private Hire Drivers

**As Taxi and Private Hire drivers, you often have to work in isolated places, at night, deal with strangers and carry cash - all of which makes you particularly vulnerable to violence.**

In 2007 the Department for Transport's Accessibility and Equalities Unit was commissioned to identify and explore the nature of personal security problems affecting Taxi and Private Hire drivers and what measures would improve their actual and perceived security.

Department for  
**Transport**

Staying safe guidance was published in October 2008 covering the following categories;



- Bookings (Private Hire only)
- Cash Management
- Adjustments to your vehicle
- Carry with you
- How your control room can help you/ If you are linked to a control centre
- Staying safe
- If you feel threatened
- If you are attacked
- After an incident

The full guidance can be found by accessing the Department for Transport website;

[www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/taxiphv/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/taxiphv/)



## Office of Fair Trading – Price Fixing by Private Hire Operators

**In November 2008 the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) launched a campaign to ensure Private Hire Operators across the UK understand competition rules.**

This was as a direct result of reports received by them that certain Private Hire Operators may have entered into agreements with their competitors to fix prices.

Such conduct would be illegal under the Competition Act 1998. Under that Act, any business found to have participated in an unlawful price-fixing agreement may be fined up to 10 per cent of its total turnover. In addition, the Enterprise Act 2002 makes it a criminal offence for an individual to dishonestly take part in a price-fixing agreement or other form of cartel conduct between competing businesses. Anyone convicted of the offence could receive a maximum of five years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

You should not be discussing the prices you charge with your competitors. If you are currently doing this you should stop immediately. You are not prevented from changing the price of your services but all of your pricing decisions should be made without discussion with your competitors.

If further instances of similar conduct come to the attention of the OFT, they may take formal enforcement action.

For more information visit [www.offt.gov.uk/pricefixing](http://www.offt.gov.uk/pricefixing). If you have any queries, please call OFT Enquiries on **08457 22 44 99**.



## Private Hire Knowledge Training & Testing

**The Private Hire Knowledge training and test package has been developed as part of our commitment to increasing the level of professional service offered to the public using Private Hire vehicles.**



All new applicants must undertake the training which consists of four, one hour modules followed by a test, before a Private Hire driver licence is issued.

Existing licensed Private Hire drivers are required to undertake the same test as part of a rolling programme in the following order of priority:

1. Those who have been convicted, cautioned or had an established public complaint made against them in the two year period preceding 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008.
2. Those who live outside of the Leeds District
3. All other drivers

Existing licence holder referrals who are the subject of a suspension process will remain suspended until a successful pass mark is achieved.

Existing licence holder referrals who are not suspended will have a three month time scale to attend and pass. If this is not achieved, consideration will be given to the suspension, revocation or non renewal of their licence.

The training consists of four modules;

Module 1 - Training Seminar and Knowledge of Legislation and Conditions Test  
Modules 2 & 3 - Geographical Test: Districts of Leeds and City Centre Locations  
Module 4 – A to Z questions

**Those licence holders who have achieved the recognised VRO/ NVO accreditation will not be required to undertake this test, unless a subsequent training need is identified.**

## GDF Suez Leeds Half Marathon 2009 – Sunday 10 May

**Please be aware that due to the Leeds Half Marathon there will be a series of road closures across the city on 10 May.**



The main event begins at 9:30am although road closures and restrictions will commence at 6:30am and could be in place up until 4:00pm. Diversions and certain 'access only' restrictions will be in place during the closure times.

Closures will be re-opened as soon as possible after the proceedings.

For a full list of road closures visit [www.leeds.gov.uk/taxis](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/taxis)

**Don't forget....  
You can now pay your licence fees by debit card using our chip and pin facilities**

# A Day in the Life of.... the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Vehicle Examiners



L-R: Stuart, Phil, Roy, Dave & Ted

**We are the Vehicle Examination Team and it is our job to ensure that the licensed fleet is comfortable and safe for passengers, drivers and other road users.**

We are based at 225 York road but we can appear on the road at schools and other strange places...no where is safe!

Phil is the "boss", most of you know him – he's been around for some time and knows the job backwards. He keeps us pointing in the right

direction

Roy is the "lad" although he has a wealth of knowledge and experience. He is our expert on buses and disability awareness. He has been around for ages as a mechanic with Leeds City Council; from bin wagons to street sweepers.

Ted has had a varied career from posh cars like Chrysler and Jeep to bin wagons. He is the well educated one having been to grammar school and likes exotic holidays to unusual places.

Stuart was an AA patrol for the last twenty years and like the spy, he has decided to come in from the cold. He is the workshop geek; any computer problems it's him we go to.

Dave is the old man of the team (but only by six months). He has been a Service Manager, supervisor and even had his own garage but now settled for a less stressful life with someone else in charge. If you want to chat with him try talking about cricket.

So that is the team. When you bring your vehicle in for inspection all we want is a nice clean, well maintained car that we would be happy to let our family be carried in. We don't like suspending licences and will only do so if it is dangerous to use. So stick to service intervals wash it and clean the inside and we should have a nice fleet on the streets.



## And... from the Section Head

### Why we do what we do.

Leeds City Council has a statutory responsibility to make sure that before it grants a licence to a driver or Operator it is satisfied the applicant is a 'fit and proper' person. The way we determine this is quite wide ranging and may examine not only a person's criminal convictions but also matters for which they have not been convicted. We also have to assess peoples skills and suitability to be a licensed driver or Operator and to do this we need a lot of information to make sure we make the right decision.

There are some very straight forward questions you can ask yourself in respect of who you would want to be a licensed driver; would you want your daughter to get into a vehicle with a driver who treated young women with disrespect or who made inappropriate sexual advances? Would you want your family to be in a licensed vehicle with someone who dealt drugs or took drugs for their own use?

There are so many similar questions that can be asked in respect of violence and dishonesty, race, disability and gender equality that don't need setting out here but which form the basis of why we do what we do.

Although you may be adversely affected by a decision made by staff, they have a public duty to ensure that they take sensible and proportionate decisions at the point of application or at any time during the life of a licence to protect the public and ensure that those people who live in Leeds or travel through the city can have confidence in Leeds City Councils licensing policy.

Des Broster, **Section Head**



## Carriage of Vulnerable Children – a message from the Police



**It has become apparent that Private Hire vehicles and/ or Taxis are being booked by children residing at children's homes, or with foster carers, where the carers consent has not been given for them to undertake the journey.**

The Police intend to tackle this issue by making it more difficult for these children to travel; limiting the risk of the child being exploited sexually and/ or becoming a missing person.

The following legislation allows Police to take positive action against not only Private Hire and Taxi drivers but others who 'assist' a child to stay away from their place of residence:

*'It is an offence contrary to Section 49 (1) and (3) of the Children's Act 1989 to knowingly and without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, assist a child to:*

*A) run*

*B) stay*

*away from the responsible person'*

Carers have therefore been asked to assist the Police by recording specific details of when a child leaves the home to get into a Private Hire vehicle or Taxi. At the very least the carer should be recording the vehicle details and ideally speaking with the driver to tell them the child's age and advising that consent has not been granted for the child to be taken.

As a Private Hire and/ or Taxi driver you need to be aware that carers have been asked to record the following details specifically about the Private Hire vehicle or Taxi:

- Vehicle registration number
- Operator/ Taxi Association name
- Make and colour of vehicle
- Drivers badge number
- That the driver has been informed of the child's age, that he/she is in care and that permission has not been granted for them to leave in the vehicle
- Any other information provided by the driver e.g. who booked the journey and where they have been asked to take the child

If you are approached by a carer i.e. responsible person, requesting this information you should be aware you are at risk of committing the offence detailed above - you have been made aware that your passenger is a child and is in care.

### Licensing Note:

If such information is received from the Police or Social Services, it could place your licence at risk. Child safety is crucial and Leeds City Council fully support the action by the Police.

**STOP HATE CRIME**  
**0800 138 1625**  
**24 HOUR HELP LINE**

## The proposed Age Criteria policy

**Since July 2006, our Vehicle Examiners have been carrying out inspections of vehicles over 7 years old.**

The results of these inspections and a proposal to change the age criteria Condition of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire saloon and People Carrier vehicles were presented to Elected Members at the Licensing and Regulatory Panel on 3 March.

The results enabled Members to consider the research undertaken over the past three years and to determine if proposals to lower the maximum 'age criteria' on licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles is appropriate and proportionate. After considering both the proposal and the results, Members requested further information and consultation with the trade before making a final decision in May.



As a result of this, you will very shortly be receiving an Information & Consultation pack outlining changes to current vehicle inspection policies and the proposed changes to the criteria.

In addition, a series of open days are to be held to consult with drivers, Operators and Proprietors;

**Tuesday 7 April, Suite 15, Carlisle Business Centre, 60 Carlisle Road, Bradford, BD8 8BD**

**Thursday 9 April, Still Room, Temple Newsam, Leeds, LS15 0AE**

**Friday 17 April, Fulneck Room, Pudsey Civic Hall, Dawsons Corner, Leeds, LS28 5TA**

Please use your opportunity to provide feedback by completing the questionnaire enclosed in the Information & Consultation pack, emailing us at [taxiprivatehire.licensing@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:taxiprivatehire.licensing@leeds.gov.uk) or visiting us at one of the open days.

### Vehicle Inspection Results – 6/7+ Years

#### Hackney Carriage Vehicles

	Vehicles Required to Attend	Passed Test	Failed Test	Vehicle Suspended	Licence Revoked	Licence Surrendered	Failed to Attend
Actual Volume	115	27	45	23	0	7	13
%		23.5%	39.1%	20.0%	0%	6.1%	11.3%

Attended at a later date (Vehicles that failed to attend on first request)

Actual Volume	11	1	6	3	0	1	0
%		9.1%	54.5%	27.3%	0%	9.1%	0%

#### Private Hire Vehicles

	Vehicles Required to Attend	Passed Test	Failed Test	Vehicle Suspended	Licence Revoked	Licence Surrendered	Failed to Attend
Actual Volume	740	138	230	78	32	45	217
%		18.7%	31.1%	10.5%	4.3%	6.1%	29.3%

Attended at a later date (Vehicles that failed to attend on first request)

Actual Volume	192	14	66	22	8	82	0
%		7.3%	34.4%	11.5%	4.2%	42.6%	0%

# VRQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Transport and NVQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving

**In the Winter issue of Licensing Leeds we told you about the introduction of the VRQ & NVQ which all members of the Taxi and Private Hire trade licensed by us must undertake.**

If you still have questions about these qualifications & how to achieve them, the information below may be able to help!

## Who are the training providers delivering the training courses?

There is not an 'approved list' of training providers, however, Leeds City Council is working in partnership with the Learning Skills Council (LSC) and Business Link Yorkshire who will advise which training providers are fully accredited, resourced & able to undertake the training. As of 1 April 2009 those providers are;

- Cablecom Training
- Hull College
- Norton Webb Limited
- PDM Training
- Tyro Training
- Joseph Priestly College
- Yorkshire Business School
- Profound Training Services
- Trescom/ Park Lane College
- Bradford College



Leading learning and skills

## As an Operator, how can I sign up my drivers to a single training provider?

Contact Anne Ingham, the Business Link broker working with us, on 07977 227813. Anne will source the most appropriate training provider for a 'block' training package.

## As a driver, if you want to sign up independently you should:

Contact the Business Link Service on 08456 048 048. You will be advised on the most appropriate training provider for you.

## Do drivers/ Operators/ Taxi Associations have to pay?

At the moment no; Leeds City Council has secured funding from the Learning Skills Council until 2011 for all drivers to attain this qualification. Drivers who do not sign up in the next 2 years may have to pay for the training themselves.

## What should I do if I'm contacted by a training provider not on the list?

These training providers should be directed back to Business Link Yorkshire via Anne Ingham (07977 227813) or the Business Link Yorkshire office (08456 048 048). The service will carry out the necessary checks to ensure that the provider is fully accredited, resourced & able to undertake the training and they will be added to their list as appropriate.

**It is the role of the Learning Skills Council to determine if a training provider is fully accredited to deliver the training as required and Business Link Yorkshire will ensure availability for the number of drivers requiring training.**

**Leeds City Council is not qualified to take this decision so will take advice from the Learning Skills Council and Business Link Yorkshire as to whether the VRQ/ NVQ is recognised.**

**You should be aware that if you are undertaking the training with a training provider not recommended by Business Link Yorkshire, your qualification may not be recognised until the Learning Skills Centre and Business Link have carried out their necessary checks.**

**Please contact the Licensing Office for the most up to date training provider information or visit [www.leeds.gov.uk/taxis](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/taxis)**

## Late Renewals... there is no such thing!

**The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section has recently seen an increase in the number of drivers requesting a late renewal i.e. one month or more after their licence has expired.**

You should now be aware that you will not be licensed once the expiry date on your badge has passed and you therefore will not be insured.

Applications received after the expiry date will be treated as a new application and you may need to;

- ❖ Complete a new application form
- ❖ Undertake an English Comprehension test
- ❖ Provide a Group II Medical Report
- ❖ Undertake a DSA driving test
- ❖ Undertake a CRB
- ❖ Undertake Knowledge Testing

Remember, you must attend, in person, at the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Office no later than the date specified on your renewal letter to avoid being treated as a new applicant.

## Group II Medicals... apologies for any confusion!

**To ensure the safety of both drivers and passengers, Leeds City Council has introduced the Group II Medical for all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers.**

You will recently have received a leaflet to your home address outlining the process; however this has generated some confusion amongst the trade.

After listening to feedback received so far, we are aware that there may be some anomalies with the process that we need to address. The introduction of the Group II Medical requirement has therefore been suspended until the beginning of July.

Licence holders should be aware that the policy will be reintroduced however details will be communicated fully in advance.

