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| **LICENSING A NEW PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE IN TEST VALLEY**  **APPLICATION FORM AND GUIDANCE** | test valley logo |

**What is Private Hire?**

Private hire is the provision of a vehicle and driver to undertake a journey carrying passengers from one location to another for a fee. The journey may only be undertaken if booked in advance with a licensed private hire operator.

Three licences are required to undertake a private hire journey:

1. **Private Hire Operator Licence** Authorises a company or an individual to receive bookings and dispatch licensed vehicles and drivers to undertake bookings.

2. **Dual Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver Licence** Authorises a driver to drive licensed vehicles to carry the passengers.

3. **Private Hire Vehicle Licence** Authorises a specific vehicle to be used for carrying the passengers.

This guidance document outlines the procedure that must be followed to apply for a new **private hire vehicle licence**. Separate guidance documents are available for **dual driver** and **operator** **licence** applications. All three licences must be in place and issued by the same authority for a legitimate private hire booking to be accepted.

**How long will my application take?**

Once your vehicle has been inspected at the Council’s vehicle workshop, we aim to issue a licence and plate after 48 working hours. This assumes that all relevant documentation has been submitted and all other requirements met; if not then the process may take longer than this. You are reminded that it is an offence to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a private hire vehicle until you are in possession of a current private hire vehicle licence issued by Test Valley Borough Council.

**What do I need to consider before I apply for a new Private Hire Vehicle licence?**

Any vehicle that seats eight passengers or less and is available for hire with a driver requires a licence. Licensed private hire vehicles may only be driven by persons holding a private hire driver's licence issued by the same council who issue the vehicle licence. This means other family members who do not hold a private hire driver's licence may not lawfully drive the licensed vehicle.

Private hire vehicles and drivers may only be dispatched by a licensed private hire operator. No private hire driver or vehicle may work without taking bookings directly from a licensed operator. They are not permitted by law to take bookings directly from a passenger.

In view of the vast numbers of makes and models of vehicles available, it is preferred not to produce a definitive list of vehicle makes and models that could be approved. The council requires all vehicles that are to be used for private hire meet a specification in respect of its age, condition and size. Before you make an application you should consider the following matters:

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| Applicants must complete and apply on the form provided and pay the current licence fee. | **Use the online form** |
| Applicants for vehicle licences must produce a current certificate of insurance or cover note to include private hire use (hire and reward). |  |
| The vehicle must undergo a compliance inspection undertaken at the Council’s vehicle workshop at the West Portway Depot, Andover. It is the applicant’s responsibility to arrange the inspection. A separate fee is charged for the inspection. | **See notes below** |
| Applicants must produce the DVLA V5 registration document stating that they are the registered keeper of the vehicle. If you do not have the vehicle registration document you will be required to provide other proof of ownership (e.g. sales invoice or receipt) and supply the vehicle registration document within one month. |  |
| Before submitting a new vehicle licence application all applicants must ensure the proposed vehicle meets the criteria outlined within the vehicle specification contained in the Council’s licence conditions.  In addition, once licensed the vehicle must comply with the specific licence conditions for private hire vehicles. | **Attached** |
| If the vehicle is more than three years old, taken from the date of first registration, it will require a current MOT test certificate. |  |
| All vehicles must be less than six years old and no more than 12 years old, taken from the date of first registration, when first licensed. NB see below |  |
| Certain vehicles namely those of a prestige or vintage nature and those used solely for specific corporate/executive contract work may be licensed if they do not comply with the above vehicle age requirements. In addition, such vehicles may also apply to be exempt from displaying the vehicle identification plate. We recommend applicants contact the Licensing Team for further advice prior to making an application to license such a licence. |  |
| Applicants are encouraged to have read the Council’s Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidelines (Policy) on the Council’s web site https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/taxi-licensing/vehicle-licensing-advice-for-applicants | **See TVBC web site** |

**Is the vehicle you intend to purchase suitable to be licensed?**

The first stage of the application process requires the applicant to read the vehicle specification. Applicants must be satisfied that the vehicle meets that specification and the exemption policy (where applicable) before committing to purchasing a vehicle. If the proposed vehicle does not meet all the required criteria, it will not be licensed.

**If you have any queries about the suitability of a vehicle or the number of passengers the vehicle will be licensed for after reading the specification please speak to a member of the Licensing Team on 01264 368000 or email licensing@testvalley.gov.uk**

Where necessary the Licensing Team will arrange for an inspection of the vehicle at either the Council’s vehicle workshop or the Andover offices.

**What do I need when I submit my application?**

Your application MUST be complete (see above). You should apply online using the form available on the Council’s website here <https://testvalley.gov.uk/taxi-licensing/vehicle-licensing-advice-for-applicants> Using the online form will allow you to submit any supporting documents such as the MOT certificate and insurance and also pay the licence and inspection fees using a debit card. Arrange for the vehicle to be inspected by the Council’s Vehicle Inspector at the West Portway Depot, 37 Macadam Way, Andover SP10 3XW. Make an appointment by telephoning 01264 368370.

**What happens next?**

Assuming the application is complete, once the vehicle has passed the necessary compliance inspection the licensing team will consider the application and decide whether to grant or refuse your private hire vehicle licence within the given timescale.

Where a decision is made to **grant** the private hire vehicle licence, the applicant will be notified when their licence is ready for collection from the council’s Andover offices. Alternatively, the plate and licence can be posted to the applicant although for security reasons this is not recommended. All private hire vehicle licences are issued subject to compliance with the standard private hire vehicle licence conditions which will be provided on issue of your vehicle licence.

Where a decision is made to **refuse** the private hire vehicle licence the applicant will be notified in writing and provided the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Magistrates Court within 21 days.

**What do I need to do once my licence is issued?**

All private hire vehicles (except those issued with an exemption notice) must display the vehicle identification plate on the external rear of the vehicle. You must ensure the vehicle complies with the licence conditions attached to the licence. A copy of the standard conditions is included within this pack.

**How do I renew my vehicle licence?**

Vehicle licences are due for renewal either no more than 12 months after issue for vehicles less than six years old or after 6 months if more than six years old. A renewal reminder is sent by the Licensing Team 4 to 8 weeks before the licence is due for renewal, however it is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure their vehicle licence is valid.

Renewal applications must be submitted at least 10 working days before the current licence expires. Failure to do so could mean the licence is not renewed before your current licence expires, and therefore you will be unable to work.

**Apply online**

You can apply for both new and renewal vehicle licences online. Simply scan the QR code below which will take you to the online application process. The online system will allow you to upload relevant documents and pay for both the vehicle licence and inspection fees. Please note that if you have not already done so you will need to create a customer account before using the system.



PART I

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF FITNESS OF VEHICLES

3. General

Licensed vehicles shall comply with the Construction and Use Regulations for motor vehicles. Where the term ‘approved’ is used in these conditions it means the matter or item shall be acceptable to the Borough Council’s Vehicle Inspector.

A vehicle will not be licensed by the Borough Council if it is already licensed by another local authority unless the vehicle is specifically supplied as a temporary replacement vehicle and the vehicle has been licensed in that capacity by another local authority.

4. Wheels

The vehicle shall have at least 4 road wheels fitted with manufacturer’s recommended size tyres, which – unless alloy – shall have matching wheel trims. The vehicle must also carry at least one spare wheel, a jack and wheel-brace all securely stored in a position not liable to damage passenger’s luggage. The spare tyre should be of the same type as fitted to the road wheels. If a vehicle is fitted with a ‘Space Saver’ spare tyre, run-flat tyre or any other emergency repair system, these will be permitted if:

The type of space saver or other system is an original part of the vehicle’s design specification; and

The space saver tyre or other system is limited to use in an emergency situation only, at a maximum of 50mph. Distance and mileage is to comply with manufacturer’s instructions.

5. Doors

All vehicles shall have at least four doors, excluding any tail gate or shall be purpose built mini-buses with rear tail-gates or doors of full width and height.

6. Seating Capacities

Vehicles shall have seating capacities as per the registration document or per the number of seat belts fixed therein or calculated on the basis of a passenger unit seat width of 16 inches (40cm) measured laterally across the middle of any continuous seat, which ever is the least.

7. Estate Cars

Estate cars shall have sufficient luggage space for the number of passengers the vehicle is licensed to carry without having to fold any seat. A metal grille or any alternative method recommended by the manufacturer shall be fitted between luggage and passengers to ensure passenger safety to the satisfaction of the Borough Council’s Inspector. Luggage must be adequately restrained at all times.

8. Steering

The steering wheel shall be on the offside of the vehicle unless the vehicle is an imported limousine or other specialist vehicle.

9. Tyres

All tyres shall be kept at correct pressure and meet legal requirements and be suitable for use on the vehicle.

10. Additional Fuel Tanks

(a) Fuel tanks shall not be placed in the engine compartment and shall be adequately protected from damage by collision.

1. All fuel tanks and all apparatus shall comply with Construction and Use Regulations.

(c) The filling points for all fuel tanks shall be accessible only from the outside of the vehicle and filler caps shall be so designed and constructed that they cannot be dislodged by accident.

(d) In the case of an engine fuelled by LPG a device shall be fitted by which the supply of fuel to the engine may be immediately cut off. Its situation, together with the means of operation and 'OFF' position shall be clearly marked on the outside of the vehicle. This shall either be a manufacturer’s fitted system or if not the installation shall be supported by documentation showing that it meets the standards set by the LP gas Association in their “Code of Practice 11 Autogas Installations June 1997” or later document.

11. First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguisher

A suitable first aid kit shall be carried in the vehicle, together with an efficient fire extinguisher conforming to a recognised standard such as British Standard EN3 or 5423. The fire extinguisher shall be kept in a readily accessible position and both the extinguisher and the first aid kit shall have the registration number of the vehicle and the Borough Council's licence number affixed thereon.

12. Body

The body shall be of the fixed head type. An approved sun roof may be fitted.

13. Windows

(a) All passenger door windows shall be capable of being opened easily by

passengers when seated.

(b) Windscreens shall comply with current MOT regulations.

14. Heating and Ventilation

An adequate heating and ventilation system shall be fitted for the driver and passengers.

15. Glass

The windscreen and all windows shall be safety glass in accordance with the latest British Standard applicable at the time of manufacture. The windscreen and front side windows shall not be excessively tinted such that the vehicle does not meet legal requirements.

16. Door Fittings

Each passenger door shall be capable of being readily opened from inside and outside the vehicle by one operation of the latch mechanism.

17. Floor Coverings

The floor of the vehicle shall be suitably covered and in good repair.

18. Luggage

(a) Provision shall be made for carrying luggage sufficient for the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed.

(b) If it is intended to carry luggage on the roof, the carrier shall be of an approved type securely fitted to the roof. It shall not be used to carry weight in excess of the manufacturer's recommendation.

19. Taximeter

A Hackney Carriage shall have a taxi-meter fitted and this shall be tested, approved and calibrated by the Borough Council before the vehicle is offered for Hire. Any breakdown or failure of the meter shall be notified to the Borough Council immediately and a suitable sign notifying the travelling public of this fact and giving details of fares shall be displayed and brought to the attention of potential passengers until the meter is repaired. However the necessary repair shall be carried out within 5 working days and the meter re-tested to the Borough Council’s satisfaction.

A Taximeter shall be of an approved type and tested by or on behalf of the Borough Council and shall be sealed at all times. **A Taximeter shall be fitted to Hackney Carriages.** A Taximeter **SHALL NOT** be fitted to a **Private Hire Vehicle.** A Tariff card issued by the Borough Council shall be displayed at all times in a Hackney Carriage vehicle where it can be conveniently seen by all passengers.

20. Taxi Sign

A 'TAXI' sign of approved pattern, clearly visible both by day and by night, when the vehicle is in hire shall be fitted to the roof of the Hackney Carriage. For the avoidance of doubt, all “Taxi” roof signs shall be of an approved pattern and attached to the outside of the Hackney Carriage in a central position upon the roof when viewed from either the front or the rear of the vehicle.

Roof signs are not allowed to be fitted to any Private Hire Vehicle.

21. Radio Apparatus

Two-way radio apparatus shall be fitted to the satisfaction of the Borough Council’s Vehicle inspector.

22. Registration Marks

These shall comply with the latest VOSA and DVLA specifications.

23. Maintenance

Vehicles, including all fittings, etc. shall be well maintained and kept clean and in good working order. The vehicles will at all times be subject to test and inspection and should it be found that a vehicle is not being properly maintained or that any part or fitting is not in good working order, a notice will be served on the owner prohibiting him from using the vehicle until the defect has been remedied. Vehicle owners shall keep a record of all servicing, maintenance and repairs undertaken on their vehicle(s) and produce such records to an authorised officer of the Borough Council upon request.

Miscellaneous

24. For the convenience of subsequent passengers the consumption of food or drink in a Hackney Carriage or a Private Hire Vehicle shall be prohibited.

25. The requirements of the Smoke-free (Exemptions and Vehicles) Regulations 2007 and the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2007 shall be met in relation to hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

PART II

Additional Conditions relating to Mini-Buses

(and similar larger passenger carrying vehicles)

26. Sliding Doors

Side doors, whether sliding or hinged, shall be fitted with an audible or visual warning device, not connected to the horn, to indicate when they are open.

27. Emergency Exit

Rear doors shall be clearly marked on the inside and outside of the vehicle 'Emergency Exit' with the means of operation clearly indicated. Rear doors shall also be fitted with an audible or visual warning device, not connected to the horn, to indicate when they are open.

28. Construction/Adaptation

Vehicles will not be licensed unless the DVLA V5 vehicle registration document shows the carrying capacity of the vehicle to be eight passengers or less.

29. A mini-bus which is licensed as either a Hackney Carriage or a Private Hire Vehicle and seating no more than 8 passengers shall be so constructed or adapted that no additional seats can be fitted.

30. A minibus licensed as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle shall have at least one opening window to the rear of the driver’s compartment unless the vehicle is fitted with air conditioning for the passenger compartment that can be controlled by the driver or the passengers.

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PART IV

Additional Conditions Relating to Private Hire Vehicles

37. The identification plate provided by the Borough Council bearing the number of the licence granted in respect of the vehicle and the maximum number of passengers to be conveyed **shall be securely fixed, to the satisfaction of the Borough Council, to the outside rear** **of the vehicle** in such position that it shall be clearly visible from the rear of the vehicle, and shall not be wilfully or negligently concealed from public view while the vehicle is being used for hire (except for those vehicles where exemption from displaying the plate has been applied for and granted – see below). The licence plate shall remain the property of the Borough Council and may be removed **at any time** by the Borough Council's Inspector if he is of the opinion that the vehicle contains a fault of a serious nature and that the Licence should be temporarily suspended, or where the vehicle is not currently licensed by the Borough Council. Worn or illegible plates may be removed by the Borough Council’s Inspector and a fee for a replacement plate will be payable.

Vehicles seeking exemption from displaying the plate in accordance with section 75(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 will instead of displaying the plate on the rear of the vehicle will be required to carry the Borough Council’s licence plate in the boot together with a paper exemption certificate in the vehicle at all times.

38. At all times the proprietor shall during the currency of the licence keep in force in relation to the use of the vehicle a policy of insurance that complies with the requirements of the Road Traffic Act, 1972 or any re-enactment thereof. The licence holder shall produce to the Borough Council within 72 hours of any change of insurer, a copy of the relevant insurance cover note or certificate.

39. The operator of the Private Hire Vehicle:

(a) shall not carry or permit to be carried in such vehicle any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified in the vehicle registration document and indicated on the Borough Council’s vehicle licence plate.

(b) shall not display on any Private Hire Vehicle licensed by the Borough Council any sign or notice -

i) that consists of or includes the word 'taxi' or 'cab' (or any corruption thereof) whether in the singular or plural and whether alone or as part of another word

ii) that is any form of advertising other than the name and telephone number of the Private Hire Operation for which he is employed. The lettering of such a sign shall not contain letters exceeding 5 cm. in height and may only be displayed on either, the front and rear of the vehicle, or the sides of the vehicle. Where such a sign is displayed it shall include the words “pre-booked only”.

iii) which consists of the words 'for hire' or any form of wording which may suggest that the vehicle on which it is displayed is available for hire or it would be so available if not already hired.

40. The Borough Council shall be notified of all accidents affecting safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle and/or the comfort or convenience of passengers within 72 hours of the occurrence. The Borough Council shall be notified of the change of owner or the change of address of the owner of the vehicle within 7 days of the change taking place.

41. The operator of a licensed vehicle shall comply with the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 so far as the provisions thereof relate to the operation and control of Private Hire Vehicles.