



**Oldham**  
Council

## L i c e n s i n g

# Guidance to Applicants wishing to become Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Vehicle Owners

### Introduction

This guidance is published to assist applicants in lodging their application and understanding what information is required of them. It will also explain the process that will be followed in determining it.

**This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.**

The Council reserves the right to undertake such relevant checks that it deems necessary on the suitability of applicants. This would include checks with DVLA, Motor Insurers and other agencies, partners and Councils.

### Licensing Objectives

The Council has set objectives in relation to the licensing of Drivers, Vehicles and Operators. They are: -

- (a) Ensuring passengers have safe journeys at a transparent price;
- (b) Ensuring vehicles are safe, accessible and reducing their impact on the environment;
- (c) Ensuring drivers are safe and know what they are doing;
- (d) To provide a quality service to the public within the Borough.
- (e) The protection of children and vulnerable adults

### Why Licence a Vehicle

Any vehicle being used for public or private hire carrying eight passengers or less must be licensed.

### Who May Drive a Licensed Vehicle

Only a person who holds a private hire drivers licence may drive a private hire vehicle. The same applies to a hackney carriage. This applies at all times, not just when the driver is working i.e. the driver's partner taking the vehicle to the shops.

## **The Application**

In order that an application can be accepted the following documents must be produced:-

- Completed Application Form (may be submitted up to one month in advance)
- Completed Declaration of previous convictions. (Only applies if the applicant is not a licensed driver).
- Proof of Payment (Fee)
- Colour passport size photograph (recent) if not a licensed driver.
- Vehicle insurance certificate for either public or private hire
- Vehicle registration document (V5) (log book)
- Vehicle Compliance Certificate (Pass sheet from the testing station)

You must also meet the following criteria:-

- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age.
- The vehicle must be licensed within one month of being tested.

***Failure to adhere to any of the above will result in your application being rejected.***

***The address on your application form must be supported by documents containing the same address. Failure to do so will result in your application being rejected.***

Should your application be dormant for a six month period (i.e. you have not progressed it) you will be asked if you wish to keep it live. If you do not the Licensing Authority may discontinue your application and mark it not proceeded with meaning you would have to re-apply in the future.

## **Application Form**

You must ensure you complete this fully otherwise your application can not proceed.

## **Declaration Of Previous Convictions**

Every time you submit an application for a new licence or renewal you must submit a Declaration of previous convictions. Please read the explanatory notes before completing the declaration. Every offence, caution, bind over, fixed penalty and anti social behaviour order must be recorded. Spent convictions must also be recorded, as the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act no longer applies to licensed drivers.

Should you not declare all matters asked of you on your declaration your application may be suspended and the applicant interviewed under caution in relation to failing to disclose information requested. This section only applies if the applicant is not a licensed driver.

## **Fees**

A notice is published annually prescribing the fees set in relation to licences. This can be obtained as part of the application pack you receive.

## **Photograph**

It is important that when you apply for a licence a recent passport size photograph is submitted. Upon renewal, if your appearance has changed, a new photograph may be requested. This section only applies if the applicant is not a licensed driver.

### **Duration of Licence**

A licence will be valid for 12 months.

### **Vehicle Insurance**

A valid original insurance certificate must be produced to support the application. The insured must be the person who is applying for the vehicle licence. The drivers named on it must be licensed drivers. The certificate must specify either public or private hire as appropriate. Insurance to cover the commencement date of the licence must be produced. The person named as main driver must be the vehicle licence holder. The only occasion where a faxed copy of insurance will be accepted is in relation to a change of vehicle and a letter of verification accompanies it from an insurance company. The council reserves the right to contact the insurance company to ensure its validity.

### **Vehicle Registration Document (V5)**

This must be produced each time the vehicle is licensed. It must be in the name and show the correct address of the applicant. A bill of sale will be accepted only once instead of a V5 and only within 2 months of the sale of a vehicle in any event.

### **Compliance Certificate**

A valid compliance certificate issued by the approved testing station must be produced each time the vehicle is licensed. The vehicle must be licensed within one month of the test. Failure to licence within the month will result in the vehicle mileage being checked again unless otherwise stated by an Authorised Officer.

### **Testing of Vehicles**

The vehicle must be tested at the Council's approved testing station which is currently the Council Depot at Moorhey Street, off Lees Road, Oldham.

If the vehicle passes its compliance test the pass sheet must be produced to licence the vehicle. When you receive your licence and plates you will be given a date and time for your next test(s). Following any mid year test, the test sheet will be retained by the testing station and will be forwarded to the Licensing Office. You do not need to attend the Licensing Office following the half yearly test.

Tests are conducted once a year for vehicles up to 3 years of age. Once a vehicle reaches its 3rd birthday it will require testing twice per year. If a vehicle turns 3, within its current licensing period, it will not be due two tests until its next renewal.

A vehicle will then require two tests per year up to its 8th birthday. On a vehicles 8th birthday and up to the maximum age limit it will require three tests per year. If a vehicle turns 8, within its current licensing period, it will not be due three tests until its next renewal.

If you fail to attend the test at the appointed time and it has to be re-booked or if you fail to notify the Licensing Team 48 hours in advance that you wish to change it you will have to pay for a test again as slots are valuable.

If a vehicle is not presented for its test or it fails due to being un-roadworthy an Authorised Officer will remove its plates.

Where the Council is not satisfied with the roadworthiness of a vehicle it may request an HPI check or require the vehicle to undergo an independent inspection and an Autoline report produced at the cost of the applicant. This is to provide information and guidance relating to the proposed licensing of the vehicle.

Where a licence is suspended and the plates are not removed immediately a suspension sticker may be placed over the vehicle licence plate. The cost of new plates thereafter will be borne by the vehicle licence holder. A suspension can only last for up to 2 months. Thereafter the licence is deemed revoked.

The Council has produced a document that outlines the criteria up which a vehicle can be tested. Copies of this document can be obtained from the offices of the licensing section, or via the licensing webpages at [www.oldham.gov.uk/taxilicence](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/taxilicence) You are advised to check your vehicle will pass this criteria before arranging you compliance test. This criteria includes window tints.

### **Booking Tests**

Please go online to [www.oldham.gov.uk/taxilicence](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/taxilicence)

You can select the date and time of your vehicle test at this point and pay for your application.

It is important that if you wish to change this date you do so as soon as possible to save being re-charged for it. You should also keep the date and time of your test somewhere safe so you don't forget it.

### **Transfer of Owner**

If you sell your vehicle you must notify the Licensing Office within 14 days and pay the relevant fee for a transfer. Should you fail to do so you will be committing an offence. You must provide proof of the sale by producing the Vehicle Registration document or bill of sale. Please see the notes above in relation to producing Vehicle Registration documents and insurance certificates.

### **Change of Vehicle**

If you change your vehicle you must contact the Licensing Office to book a test for the vehicle at the testing station. Once passed the test sheet together with the vehicle registration document and original insurance certificate must be produced to the Licensing Office. Please see the notes above in relation to vehicle registration documents and insurance certificates.

## **Age of Vehicle**

The conditions set by the Council outline the limits on the age of vehicles when it can be first plated and when it can no longer be licensed.

A private hire vehicle cannot generally be first licensed when it is over seven years of age. If a vehicle is being licensed between the ages of five and seven it must pass the Council's vehicle compliance test first time. You must also provide proof that it has been serviced by a VOSA approved garage within 14 days of the Council test taking place. It cannot be licensed after twelve years of age and must have its plates removed when the licence expires.

In relation to a hackney carriage saloon vehicle the same rules apply as private hire outlined above. For purpose built or adapted vehicles it can be first licensed up to seven years of age but cannot be licensed over fourteen years of age. Its plates must be removed when the licence expires.

If the vehicle has been previously licensed with the Council it may be re-licensed even if it falls outside the application criteria above. The vehicle will only be licensed until the age mentioned above and no longer.

If the vehicle has been licensed with another Council you may apply to licence it here above the lower age limit under the 'transfer in' scheme. The vehicle must pass the vehicle test first time though and proof it has been serviced by a VOSA approved garage must be produced.

## **Plating of the Vehicle**

When a vehicle is licensed it will be issued with two sets of plates, one for the front and one for the rear. Plate holders will be supplied to affix them safely and securely to the vehicle. Window identification stickers will also be supplied which must be affixed to the rear quarter light windows on both sides of the vehicle.

If plates, discs or holders are damaged, lost or destroyed they must be replaced at the vehicle proprietor's expense.

## **Timescale for Producing Vehicle Plates**

Following a vehicle passing its 'Compliance Test' the following timescales apply for the issuing of vehicle plates and licences.

- For new / change of vehicles belonging to existing licence holders, a test will be booked for the vehicle as early in the morning as possible. Providing the vehicle passes its compliance test, and the pass sheet, and any outstanding documents, are produced to the licensing office before 12:30pm on the day of the test, then plates and licences will be ready for collection later that same afternoon.

If you fail to attend the licensing office with your pass sheet and any outstanding documents before 12:30pm on the day of your test then the vehicles plates and licence will be ready for collection the following day; if this is a Friday that will mean they will be ready for collection on the Monday.

Vehicle owners will be offered the earliest possible test to allow them to return to the licensing office before 12:30pm on the day of their test, if you choose a test that means you will not be able to produce your pass sheet and any outstanding

documents by 12:30pm on the day of your test, then the vehicles plates and licence will be ready for collection the day after.

Please be aware, you should ensure the vehicle is presented for it compliance test in a condition that will mean it passes first time. Failure to do so could affect your ability to collect the vehicles plates and licence on the same day.

- For new vehicles belonging to a proprietor that has yet to be issued with a dual drivers licence, the timescales for producing plates is 48 hours from the time you produce your pass sheet and any outstanding documents to the licensing office. .

### **Door Signs**

Please refer to the vehicle conditions for specifications of door signs. Such signs must comply with these conditions and must be permanently affixed at all times and not secured by magnetic means. 'At all times' means when the vehicle is licensed, including when used for private use or not in use. The only time it as accepted that a proprietor won't be able to comply with this is when the vehicle is owned for the purposes of hiring it out temporarily to other licensed drivers who may have their own vehicles off the road.

### **Advertising**

This is prohibited save for 'Star rating' stickers on private hire or hackney carriage vehicles.

### **Renewal**

You will be reminded that your licence is due to expire. This is out of courtesy but it is your responsibility to ensure that you submit your application prior to the expiry of your licence. You may submit your application up to one month in advance. Failure to do so will result in your licence not being renewed.

### **Process of Application**

Once your application is submitted for either the grant or renewal of a licence various steps have to be followed to ensure that the applicant is fit and proper to hold a licence.

1. Complete application submitted
2. Fee paid
3. Assessment made of convictions to establish whether application is referred to the Licensing Panel (see note below)
4. Compliance test passed
5. Correct insurance/V5 documents produced.
6. Six month test date issued

## **Referral to the Licensing Panel for convictions**

When Officers consider the application they will refer to the Guidelines for the Suitability of Applicants. If they feel that application should be dealt with by the Licensing Panel, made up of Councillors, a hearing will be arranged and you may be interviewed prior to that to establish the facts of the matters disclosed.

### **Contact details:**

<b>In person or in writing to:</b>	Licensing Team Oldham Council Sir Robert Peacock House Vulcan Street Oldham OL1 4LA  09:00 to 12:30 - Monday and Friday 09:00 to 12:30 and 1:30 to 4:00 - Tuesday to Thursday
<b>By phone:</b>	0161 770 4730 09:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday
<b>Fax:</b>	0161 770 4481
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:licensing@oldham.gov.uk">licensing@oldham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oldham.gov.uk/taxilicence">www.oldham.gov.uk/taxilicence</a>