



Wakefield Council Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Newsletter 22nd May 2020

We continue to thank you for your patience as we all try to adapt to new ways of working at this challenging time. We hope that you and your families are staying safe.



Vehicle Applications

As of Wednesday 20th May we began accepting new vehicle applications via email. You can apply following the same procedure as renewals (below), the only difference is that we can now issue you a plate and door stickers (new vehicles only) via the post. This means we are also accepting applications for vehicle change and transfers too. Application forms can be downloaded here:

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-trading/taxis/vehicle-and-operator-licences>

Protection in vehicles

Many of you have contacted us with questions about safe working practices and the use of protective screening in vehicles.

The Council has considered the use of temporary screens in licensed vehicles as an additional measure against COVID19 infection. At this stage, temporary screens are not approved and the council would ask all drivers and operators to ensure they comply with the current Government guidance, which includes social distancing, use of PPE, ventilation in vehicles and antibacterial cleaning of affected surfaces.

Updated guidance

The Department for Transport (DFT) have issued updated guidance following the Governments relaxation of restrictions.

The DFT said

'The guide for operators will help organisations, agencies and others (such as self-employed transport providers) understand how to provide safer workplaces and services for themselves, their workers and passengers across all modes of private and public transport. Each transport provider will need to translate the principles and examples in this guidance into specific actions'.

To support this, please see the attached letter and Q&A for the taxi/PHV sector, containing links to the guidance and answers to common questions.

<https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/media/1gge5efp/20200513-taxi-phv-q-a-and-letter.pdf>

Our public office is still closed but we continue being busy renewing licences and answering your questions.



Many non-urgent queries can be managed online by sending an email and/or attaching the relevant completed form and supporting documents as detailed below to licensingoffice@wakefield.gov.uk this could save you time and will help us continue to support all of our customers.

If you have any sort of issue, we'd recommend, in the first instance, that you read the frequently asked questions below, to see if there's a solution there. If there isn't, contact us by email and a member of our team will reply. You can also leave us a voicemail but you may experience longer than usual wait times, before a member of staff gets back to you. But please bear in mind that staff are not all working normal office hours, we are trying to keep the IT systems free for key workers to use in peak times as much as we can so you may find you get responses outside of the normal 9am-5pm bracket.

Temporary application procedures, regularly used forms and documents can be downloaded by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-trading>

All your applications will be dealt with by email.

After submitting your application a member of the Licensing Team may email you to ask you for more information to help process your application.

When your application has been accepted, you will receive an email with a payment reference number so you can pay for your application online.

Licences and cover letters explaining why you have not been issued with a new photo badge or vehicle plate will be emailed to you.

Licences and cover letters **MUST** be carried in the vehicle at all times. All relevant enforcement agencies have been made aware that badges/plates have been substituted with a letter.

Financial Support

As we enter another week of lockdown, we know that, unfortunately, more and more people are struggling financially. If you, or anyone you know, is finding it difficult to make ends meet, we'd like to remind you that helpful information is available [on our website](#). This covers many topics, such as paying your council tax, applying for universal credit, obtaining mortgage support and what you can do if you are unable to pay your bills.

Our Step-Up team is on-hand to support residents who find themselves unemployed or furloughed with a range of advice. We can help the unemployed to access a range of employment opportunities across the district, help update CVs and suggest online training courses. They are available on 01924 303334 and details can be found on the [website](#).

We know as well that many businesses are experiencing financial pressures and information to help them can be found on the Wakefield First [website](#). Additionally, our dedicated team of account managers can assist businesses to access support with a range of issues such as staffing, financial pressures, supply chain challenges, training needs and additional funding. Their helpline number is: 01924 306630/305835



How do I renew my private hire/hackney carriage driver or vehicle licence?

Click on the link below and download the application form for the type of licence you want to renew and follow the instructions.

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-trading>

I have received my DBS certificate. What do I do now?

Click on the link below and follow the instructions on what to do when you get your DBS back, including registering with the update service, if you have not already done so.

My vehicle needs a test. Can I still get one?

The Councils Newton Bar Depot is still open for private hire/hackney carriage vehicle compliance tests. To help the Depot meet demand and ensure enough tests are available for everyone you will be offered the first available test. Tests will only be changed in extreme circumstances, so if you are only able to attend on a specific date or time, please state this in your email when you submit your application.

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-trading>

I am unable to get an MOT certificate. Can I still use my vehicle?

The Department for Transport have announced MOT certificates expiring after the 30th March 2020 will be extended by 6 months but you must keep your vehicle safe to drive during this period. We have updated our procedures to reflect these changes. For further information on the changes and your legal obligations as a driver click on the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-mots-for-cars-vans-and-motorcycles-due-from-30-march-2020>

<https://www.gov.uk/legal-obligations-drivers-riders>

My Grandfather rights are due to expire, can I have an extension?

All grandfather rights have been extended for a further year and will begin to expire as of 1st March 2021.

Can I cancel my hackney carriage/private hire insurance, if I am no longer working?

If you have stopped working due to the national emergency, we can suspend your licence but you must notify us by email, inform your operator you are no longer working and remove your plate and the plate number from the windscreen. If you have them, **LEAVE** Wakefield Council signage on the doors.

How long do I have to take my vehicle back for a retest if it fails?

The 14 day retest period has been extended to 28 days to allow drivers more time to find spares and fix vehicles to make them suitable for retest.

Can I use the vehicle for private use once I have told you I am not working and cancelled my insurance?

Yes you can, but you must contact your insurer and ensure the vehicle is covered for private use, for example social, domestic and pleasure purposes. Failure to do this makes the owner and driver liable to criminal prosecution.

What do I need to do if I want to start working again?

You must tell us when you want to start working again. To lift the suspension we will need to see your new certificate of insurance covering you for 'hire or reward' and evidence that you are working for an operator.

My vehicle has been in an accident. What do I need to do?

Accidents must be reported. Download the Accident report form from our website using the link below. Complete this and together with three photographs (2 of the damage and 1 of the plate) send to us by email. An Enforcement Officer will contact you and advise you further.

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-trading/taxis/vehicle-and-operator-licences>

My vehicle was involved in an accident and has been examined by an Enforcement Officer, who suspended it. How can I get back on the road?

Contact the Enforcement Officer who inspected your vehicle. They will either check the repair and lift the suspension or refer you to the Licensing Office to arrange a test at the Newton Bar Depot.

Are you accepting applications for new Private Hire/hackney carriage driver licences?

As of 20th May we have begun accepting new, vehicle and transfer applications. You can email the applications and supporting documents to us and we will contact you to book a test and arrange payment. Application forms can be downloaded here

<http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/business/licensing-and-trading/taxis/vehicle-and-operator-licences>

Can I get new door signage for my vehicle?

Currently we are unable to provide new door signage.

I want to transfer a licensed vehicle to someone else. Can this still be done?

By submitting the relevant application form along with a copy of your vehicle insurance policy.

I am required to have a medical and my doctor can't see me. What shall I do?

We are aware that GP's have suspended all medicals so we will still issue you a licence with the agreement that once GP's resume that you will acquire a group 2 medical and submit it to us.

I am worried about Covid -19. What precautions should I be taking?

All drivers and operators should take reasonable precautions to stay safe by following government advice on social distancing and taking reasonable steps to clean and sanitise their vehicles after each journey. We encourage you to keep up to date with and follow the guidance set out by the Government, Public Health England and the Institute of Licensing. For more information click on the links below.

<https://www.instituteoflicensing.org/news/covid-19-licensing-issues-can-hackney-carriage-and-private-hire-drivers-refuse-to-carry-certain-passengers-through-fear-of-infection/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>



Wakefield Council Licensing

Telephone: 01924 302932

Email: licensingoffice@wakefield.gov.uk