

BULLETIN 60

- To:** 1. **All Private Hire Operators** (Please notify all vehicle proprietors and drivers who work through your offices)
2. **All Hackney Carriage Proprietors**

MULTI - SEAT VEHICLES (MPV's/Minibuses/People Carriers)

In 1996 Wakefield MDC introduced a policy regarding suitability of vehicles for licensing in terms of access to and from seats (Bulletin 33 refers). The requirement is that all vehicles must be capable of being used without the need to fold/collapse/move a seat to gain access to or from another seat and to have access to a minimum of two doors. This in practice usually affects access to the rear row of seats on such vehicles.

As previously required, any vehicle intended for carrying more than 4 passengers must be approved by the Council as Licensing Authority before application for the grant of a licence is made.

Vehicles have in the past been accepted with modifications made to seating layout or the replacement of seats in order to allow unhindered access. This requirement will now be varied, dependent upon vehicle type.

Proprietors are advised not to purchase any vehicle before it has been formally accepted as suitable, irrespective of whether or not similar vehicles are currently licensed. Every vehicle will be considered on its own merits on a one by one basis. Proprietors are further advised to consider carefully the suitability of any prospective vehicle they may wish to purchase in terms of passenger comfort and luggage space **in addition to** access requirements.

As part of the Council's continuing drive to improve passenger safety and comfort the policy has been reconsidered following advice and information from manufacturers, specialist converters and the Vehicle Inspectorate. As a result the seating configuration will vary from vehicle to vehicle depending upon seat fixing points and systems **in addition to** the access requirements. The access requirements remain unchanged.

As a direct consequence and with immediate effect all vehicles based on the **Ford Galaxy** body shell will only be licensed for 5 passengers. All seats must be in the forward facing position with the nearside middle row seat permanently removed.

The **Peugeot 806** will be licensed for either 5 or 6 passengers dependent upon whether or not a bench seat is fitted to the rear row of seats. All seats must be forward facing with the nearside middle row seat permanently removed.

(continued overleaf)

The **Nissan Serena** will only be licensed for 5 or 6 passengers with all seats facing forwards. The middle row of seats must either be modified to carry 2 passengers only (to M1 specification) so as to allow unhindered access to the rear seats thereby allowing a maximum of 6 passengers, or the nearside middle row seat must be permanently removed allowing a maximum of 5 passengers only.

These requirements will also apply to all other manufacturers' vehicles with seats fitted by way of removable "clip in, clip out" systems (other than the approved Unwin Tracking System). An exception **may** be possible where manufacturers approve and market a particular vehicle with seats facing each other, at the discretion of the Council.

In respect of converted vehicles (e.g. van-derived or wheelchair conversions) the Council reserves the right to require Single Vehicle Approval through the Vehicle Inspectorate or such other approval as may be required before acceptance for licensing purposes. This will be at the discretion of the Council. Any additional costs involved will be the responsibility of the applicant.

It is the intention of the Licensing Office to introduce an Approved List for multi-seat vehicles which will incorporate approved seating layouts. Vehicles will be added to the list following an appraisal by the Licensing Office and Newton Bar Garage. Anyone then seeking to purchase a vehicle from such list in the approved seating configuration will be able to do so in confidence, however a pre-test inspection will still be carried out by the Licensing Office before a test can be booked at Newton Bar Garage.

It will be the responsibility of a purchaser/intending purchaser to make such vehicle(s) available for consideration for inclusion on an approved list. The Council's Officers will not be available to attend garages or dealerships to carry out such appraisals.

ALL VEHICLES CURRENTLY LICENSED WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE IN THEIR PRESENT AGREED SEATING CAPACITY WITHOUT MODIFICATION (SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH ANY OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS) PROVIDING THERE IS NO BREAK IN LICENSING. ANY REPLACEMENT VEHICLE MUST CONFORM TO PREVAILING REQUIREMENTS AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION.

INDIVIDUAL PROPRIETORS WILL BE CONTACTED IN DUE COURSE AND ADVISED AS TO THEIR OWN PARTICULAR VEHICLE. SHOULD ANY PROPRIETOR WISH TO DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS AS TO THEIR VEHICLE, PLEASE CONTACT THE LICENSING OFFICE IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

Dated this 8th day of November 2001

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