

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR NEW APPLICANTS FOR PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS' LICENCES

Applicants for a private hire operators' licence who are not already licensed as a private hire or hackney carriage driver will require a basic disclosure (criminal record check) from Disclosure Scotland for the grant and renewal of an operator licence. On submission to the taxi licensing office, this disclosure must be less than one calendar month old. This can be done online at www.disclosurescotland.co.uk Applicants that hold a private hire or hackney carriage driver's licence must have undergone an enhanced disclosure through taxi licensing with the Disclosure and Barring Service within three years of making an application for an operator's licence. A further enhanced disclosure will be required if it is more than three years since the last one.

All new applicants for an operator's licence will have the application referred to the Council's Planning Department. If planning permission is required, this must be obtained by the applicant before the issue of the operator's licence. Due to this requirement, applicants must provide details of where vehicles will be parked.

A private hire operator's licence is not transferable. The holder of an existing licence must notify the Council immediately in writing of any proposed changes of the person authorised to operate under the terms of the licence. A person who is buying an existing private hire business must complete an application form and pay the relevant fee for a new licence.

Applicants for operators' licences cannot use the same (or similar) name as any private hire firm currently operating within the district or any name previously used within the district and registered by the operator at Companies House.

Vehicle sideplates must bear the name of the private hire firm and the telephone number and/or the website address. This means a private hire operator can choose to display a telephone number or a website address or both can be displayed. In all instances the name of the private hire firm must still be displayed. The website address cannot contain the words "for hire", "taxi" or "hackney carriage". Vehicle sideplates must also include the wording "**PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE – PRE BOOKED ONLY**" in suitable lettering at least 50mm (2") high. The sign must not include the words "FOR HIRE", "TAXI", or "HACKNEY CARRIAGE".

Artwork for vehicle sideplates must be submitted to the Council's Taxi Licensing Section for approval and must comply with the following guidelines:-

- The design of the sideplate must be uncluttered and must clearly show the information required by the private hire vehicle licence conditions
- All lettering must be in solid block print, not just an outline and contrast in colour from the background so as to be easily read from a distance
- Sideplates may include the private hire company logo

- Advertising of third party products or services is not permitted on sideplates
- Sideplates must not contain any offensive or indecent information

To “operate” private hire vehicles means in the course of business to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for private hire vehicles at the premises specified in the licence. All telephone bookings must be made via a landline at the address specified in the licence and cannot be taken on a mobile telephone.

Private hire operator licenses are granted for a period of five years.