

Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Policy

**Approved by the Licensing Committee on 26TH October
with an implementation date of 01/04/2022
Amended 04/12/2025**

Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1 The policy is designed to maintain a minimum standard of operation of Taxi and Private Hire vehicles and drivers, and is underpinned by public safety and improving standards of service. Aberdeen City Council is the Licensing Authority and has resolved to licence taxi and private hire drivers and vehicles under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. This policy facilitates the Council's decision to licence taxis under that Act.

Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 Taxi and private hire vehicle owners and drivers are the parties that are within the scope of this policy. The policy sets minimum operating standards to be adhered to, to ensure reliability and quality of service and the safety of the general public.

Responsibilities

- 3.1 Chief Officer- Governance has overall authority for licensing of taxi and private hire drivers and vehicles, and the maintenance and review of this policy. Day to day responsibility for licensing will be carried out by the Licensing Team-Governance. Breaches or feedback on the policy can be reported via enforcement@aberdeencity.gov.uk or Licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk
- 3.2 Reported breaches of policy may result in a review of the license by the Licensing Committee. A review has four possible outcomes- no action, warning, suspension (period will vary) and revocation.
- 3.3 The Licensing Committee are responsible for setting this policy.
- 3.4 This policy has been publicly consulted on, but further feedback can be raised by emailing the Chief Officer-Governance via the licensing email address detailed in 3.1

Supporting Procedures & Documentation

- 4.1 [Taxi Testing Manual](#)
- 4.2 Licensing Conditions – [Taxi](#), [Private Hire](#), [Booking Office](#), [City Zone](#) and [Airport Zone](#)
- 4.3 [Fees](#)
- 4.4 [Form of Registration of Interest](#)
- 4.5 [Corporate Information Handling Policy](#)

5.1 Taxis

5.1.1 Taxi Limit

The current limit on licensed taxis is set at 1079. Should the number of licensed vehicles reach that limit anyone wishing to apply for a Taxi Licence will be required to register their interest in writing using the [Form of Registration of Interest](#) which can be found on the Council's website.

5.1.2 Zoning

The licensing authority area is split into 2 zones for the purpose of taxi licensing - airport and city.

The airport zone encompasses the area within the legal boundary of Aberdeen International Airport and the city zone encompasses the remainder of the licensing authority area.

Those vehicles licensed in the city zone will display yellow licence plates and cannot collect a fare within the airport zone unless it is pre-booked or the airport operator has illuminated the "green light".

Vehicles licensed within the airport zone will display green licence plates and cannot collect a fare from within the city unless pre-booked. Airport licensed vehicles may however operate in the city zone from midnight Saturday to 5am Sunday.

5.1.3 Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)

All vehicles which are licensed as Taxis for the first time must be Wheelchair Accessible vehicles (WAV).

Any Taxi licence granted prior to 1994 may operate a vehicle which is a Saloon, MPV or WAV and may replace that vehicle with a Saloon, MPV or WAV whilst the licence remains in force. All new licences granted after 1994 must operate a WAV for the entire duration of the licence (any replacement vehicle must also be a WAV).

(This policy is subject to review)

5.1.4 Vehicle Types

The following vehicle types are permissible as licensed Taxis-

- Saloon Car (min 4 doors and 4 passenger seats) – for pre 1994 licences only
- Estate Car (derived from a saloon only- min 4 doors and 4 passenger seats) – for pre 1994 licences only
- MPV (8 passenger seats or less) – for pre 1994 licences only
- WAV (Must meet current [WAV specifications](#))

5.1.5 Age of Vehicles

- WAV taxi vehicles must be 10 years old or less at first licensing and at substitution.
- All other taxi vehicles must be 5 years old or less at substitution onto pre 1994 licences.

5.1.6 Roof Signs

All taxis licensed by the Licensing Authority must display an approved roof sign dependent on zone and model of vehicle. There are currently four main types of roof sign that are approved by the licensing authority, as follows:

- Small green sign- Airport Zoned Vehicles Only
- In-Built sign- WAVs only where a pod style sign is already in-built
- Pod sign- WAVs or similar vehicles where the standard roof sign does not fit
- Standard sign- All other licensed taxis

Approved roof signs must meet the following requirements-

City Zone Roof Sign (Yellow Plate) Standard-

Colour-	White		
Length-	88-92cm	Width-	13-17cm
Height-	11-15cm		
Text-	Black lettering on front of sign only		
Front Top Line	"City Of Aberdeen" - 3cm high letters		
Front Lower Line	"Taxi" - 6.5cm high letters (Can be replaced with company logo)		
Each Side	4-digit vehicle licence number - 2.5cm high letters		
Rear	Telephone number (optional)		

City Zone Roof Sign (Yellow Plate) Pod-

Colour-	White		
Length-	28-35cm	Width-	9-12cm
Height-	10-14cm		
Text-	Black lettering on front of sign only		
Front	"Taxi" - 6.5cm high letters (Can be replaced with company logo)		
Rear	Telephone number (optional)		

Airport Zone Roof Sign (Green Plate)-

Colour-	Green		
Length-	45-49cm	Width-	13-17cm
Height-	10-14cm		
Text-	Black lettering on front of sign only		
Front	"Airport Taxi" - 7.5cm high letters		
Each Side	4-digit vehicle licence number - 2.5cm high letters		

Airport Zone Roof Sign (Green Plate) Pod-

Colour-	Green		
Length-	28-35cm	Width-	9-12cm
Height-	10-14cm		
Text-	Black lettering on front of sign only		
Front	"Airport Taxi" - 6.5cm high letters		
Rear	Telephone number (optional)		

Lighting for all roof signs must be provided by standard bulb or LED bulb.

All roof signs must be connected to the taxi meter, be lit when available for hire, and must be securely attached to the vehicle.

Where there is any doubt, licensing will determine which roof sign is appropriate to any licensed taxi.

5.1.7 Taxi Meter

All taxis must have an approved taxi meter meeting the standards required by the [Measuring Instruments \[Taximeters\] Regulations 2006](#) fitted in a position authorised by the licensing authority. The meter must be sealed by the licensing authority and the seal may only be removed either by the licensing authority or for the purpose of an update to the meter software as approved by the licensing authority.

The meter must be used to calculate maximum fares in all journeys within the licensing authority boundaries but need not be used when a journey involves leaving the authority boundary.

5.1.8 Advertising on Taxis

- Advertising is permitted on and/or in all taxis.
- Advertisements must not be placed on any of the vehicle's windows, or obscure any identification plates, notices or roof signs provided by the Council.
- Wheel hub advertising is permitted. These must be securely fitted and comply with the Taxi Inspection Centre's requirements (see Taxi Testing Manual).
- The fitting of internal TV or video displays for advertisement or entertainment purposes will require the making of an application for consent to carry out a material alteration to the vehicle and, if approved, will require to be inspected by and comply with the Taxi Inspection Centre's requirements (see Taxi Inspection Manual).
- The advertising of the following products is prohibited –
 - (i) Alcoholic products (but not including advertisements of premises which are licensed in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005);
 - (ii) Tobacco products, including reference to sporting activities sponsored by tobacco companies where the tobacco producer or the name of the manufacturing company is included; and
 - (iii) Any advertising which may be seen as offensive, as determined by the Licensing Committee.

9.2 PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

5.2.1 Vehicle Ages

- WAV vehicles must be 10 years old or less at first licensing and at substitution.
- All other vehicles must be 5 years old or less at first licensing or substitution.

5.2.2 Vehicle Types

The following vehicle types are permissible as licensed Private Hire vehicles-

- Saloon Car (min 4 doors and 4 passenger seats)
- Estate Car (derived from a saloon only- min 4 doors and 4 passenger seats)
- MPV (8 passenger seats or less)
- WAV (Must meet current WAV specifications)

5.2.3 Roof Signs

Roof signs are not permitted on Private Hire Cars.

5.2.4 Advertising or Branding On Private Hire Cars

No advertising is permitted on a Private Hire Car.

No branding or notice identifying the vehicle as a Private Hire Car or vehicle for hire is permitted on a Private Hire Car other than the licence plates issued by the licensing authority.

5.2.5 Taxi Meter

Private Hire Cars may but need not have a meter fitted. Private Hire Cars fitted with a meter must have an approved taxi meter meeting the standards required by the Measuring Instruments [Taximeters] Regulations 2016 fitted in a position authorised by the licensing authority. The meter must be sealed by the licensing authority and the seal may only be removed either by the licensing authority or for the purpose of an update to the meter software as approved by the licensing authority.

If a Private Hire Car has a meter fitted, the meter must be used to calculate the maximum fare for all journeys within the licensing authority boundaries.

If a Private Hire Car does not have a meter fitted then the fare for the journey must be agreed in advance with the passenger and must not be changed unless the journey is changed at the request of the passenger.

5.3 TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

5.3.1 Inspection

All licensed vehicles must pass 2 taxi (hackney) inspections per 12 month period. The first inspection must be carried out immediately prior to first licensing or renewal (within 14 days) and thereafter at 6 month intervals (within the 14 day period).

A vehicle must have a current Pass Certificate issued after the vehicle had passed its last vehicle inspection.

If a Pass Certificate has expired the vehicle cannot be used as a taxi or private hire car until a new Pass Certificate has been obtained.

5.3.2 Tariff Card

The current Aberdeen City tariff card must be on display in all vehicles in a position where it can be readily seen by passengers.

No other sign relating to fares or cost of hire is permitted in a licensed vehicle.

5.3.3 Spare Wheels

A spare wheel (full size or space saver) or breakdown kit must be carried in every vehicle unless run-flat tyres are fitted.

Where a space saver wheel is fitted, or the run flat warning light is illuminated, passengers must not be carried.

Similarly, when the breakdown kit is used passengers must not be carried.

5.3.4 Licence Holder

The holder of a taxi or private hire vehicle licence must be the owner of the vehicle, the named keeper on the V5 registration document and the named Insurer on the vehicle insurance certificate.

The only exceptions to this are-

- Licences in the name of Partnerships, where the owner/keeper and insurance may be in the name of one of the partners.
- Where a vehicle is leased from a leasing company or purchased on finance, the leasing company or finance company may be the registered keeper or owner of the vehicle.

5.3.5 CCTV & Dashcams

Prior to use of a CCTV or Dashcam system it must be inspected and approved by an authorised officer of the licensing authority. Clear signage, clearly visible from the passenger seats, must be displayed within the vehicle to advise passengers that recording is in operation and advise that images and sound are being recorded and for what purpose. The details of the data controller of the system, including a contact number, should also be clearly displayed.

The Data Controller is under a legal obligation to ensure that all Data Protection requirements are fulfilled. For the avoidance of doubt, Aberdeen City Council, as the licensing authority is not the Data Controller in respect of CCTV or Dashcam systems installed by licence holders, their drivers, or their insurers. Independent legal advice should be sought prior to the installation of any system.

5.3.5.1 External (Accident) Recording

The licensing authority may permit the installation and operation of CCTV or Dashcams in taxis and private hire cars in respect of external image recording, for the purpose of accident event recording (in relation to insurance claims) and to assist with the prevention, detection and prosecution of crime. External audio recording is not permitted.

5.3.5.2 Internal (Incident) Recording

The licensing authority may permit the installation and operation of CCTV in taxis and private hire cars in respect of internal image recording to improve passenger and driver safety and for the prevention, detection and prosecution of crime. Internal audio recording is not permitted except by way of a “panic button”, which may be pressed by the driver to record audio only on the occurrence of an incident.

5.3.5.3 Data Protection Policy (Mandatory Requirements)

The licence holder must have a data protection policy which explains why CCTV or a Dashcam is necessary and what controls will be used to ensure the secure storage and processing of data recordings. It should also specify the standard retention and regular secure data disposal procedures.

5.3.5.4 Specification of CCTV or Dashcam systems

- Wiring of the CCTV/Dashcam system must be compliant with current British Standards.
- CCTV/Dashcam cameras must be permanently wired and turned on and off by the ignition only. They cannot have a switch to be turned on or off manually or be powered by a dashboard cigarette lighter.
- The storage system for recorded data should be solid state (hard drive) and of sufficient reliability, preferably with industrial grade memory. Where the storage of recorded data is on removable devices such as computer discs, SD cards or suchlike the data controller/licence holder must have satisfactory safeguards for the secure processing, storage and ultimately disposal of the data in accordance with this policy and the CCTV condition of licence. It is recommended that where removable storage is utilised the system is kept in a lockable box or compartment to prevent theft or unauthorised access.
- Stored recorded data must be encrypted and only be accessible to the data controller.

5.3.6 Passenger Seating

Any licensed vehicle must be capable of seating a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 passengers. The vehicle must meet the minimum and maximum dimension restrictions noted below. Seats which are side facing or temporary in nature (such as occasional seats) will not form part of the licensed capacity, neither will any seat which can only be accessed by folding or moving another seat where the movement required is more than 100mm.

5.3.7 Vehicle Dimensions

Licensed taxi and private hire vehicles must meet the following dimensions:

Maximum Ground Clearance	185mm
Minimum Rear Legroom	700mm
Minimum Rear Headroom	900mm
Minimum Boot Capacity	450 litres (includes empty wheelchair space in WAVs)
Minimum Rear Seat Width	1200mm (across all rear seats)

Ground Clearance is measured from the road to the bottom of the vehicle body at the rear door.

Rear Legroom is measured from the rear of the driver seat (fully back) to the rear seatback.

Rear Headroom is measured from the interior roof to the top of the rear seat cushion.

5.3.8 Engine Size & Propulsion

There is no limit on engine size and any means of propulsion is now permitted.

[Approved but not yet in force:

From *(date to be confirmed once more information available on necessary infrastructure for alternative fuelled vehicles)* petrol and diesel vehicles will not be accepted for the grant of a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

From *(date to be confirmed as above)* petrol and diesel vehicles will not be accepted for the renewal of a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.]

5.4 **TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS**

5.4.1 **Street Knowledge Test**

All applicants for the grant of a taxi driver licence or private hire driver licence must pass the street knowledge test before an application for the licence can be submitted. The Street Knowledge test will be set by the Council and the Council will determine whether or not an applicant has passed the test.

5.4.2 **Medical Fitness**

All applicants for the grant of a taxi or private hire driver licence, and all holders of those licences, must meet DVLA Group 2 medical standards at all times.

Accordingly, all applications for the grant or renewal of a taxi driver licence or private hire driver licence must be accompanied by confirmation from a medical professional that the applicant meets DVLA Group 2 standards. Where an application does not include this confirmation, the applicant will be referred to the authority's Occupational Health provider for medical examination. A higher fee will be charged for applications that require a medical examination. The holder of a taxi or private hire car driver licence must notify the authority of any change in medical circumstances that may affect their ability to meet [DVLA Group 2 standards](#).

5.4.3 **Dress Code**

All taxi and private hire drivers must comply with the following smart, not casual, dress code at all times when working:

Permitted attire (Examples)

- plain shirt, polo shirt, dress or blouse
- dress jacket
- dress trousers or skirt
- dress shoes
- taxi/private hire company branded clothing

Prohibited attire (Examples)

- jeans
- t-shirts
- tracksuit trousers or tops
- trainers
- football shirts

5.4.4 **Fares**

Drivers do not have to accept payment by card, however if this is the case they must notify any prospective passenger of this before the journey starts.