

## **TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **VEHICLE SPECIFICATION AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE TAXIS**

#### **1.0 General**

Vehicles must meet the following general criteria:

- (i) the vehicle shall have either four side opening doors (not including a tailgate) or three side opening doors and two rear opening doors, all of which must be capable of being opened from the exterior and interior of the vehicle;
- (ii) the vehicle must be right-hand drive;
- (iii) the vehicle must have an engine capacity of not less than 1000 cubic centimetres;
- (iv) the vehicle must have European Whole Type (M1) Approval or UK Low Volume Type Approval, or
- (v) if (iv) above cannot be satisfied, then a Certificate of Individual Vehicle Approval must be produced

#### **2.0 Vehicle Licence**

- 2.1 The vehicle licence must be carried in the vehicle whilst it is in use for hire and reward and be produced on demand by any police officer or authorised officer of the Authority.
- 2.2 A vehicle licence must be renewed annually, or be renewed on change of vehicle.
- 2.3 The vehicle licence must be returned to the Authority upon its cancellation, suspension or, revocation.
- 2.4 The applicant for the licence must be the proprietor or part-proprietor of the vehicle to which the licence relates. The applicant will be required to produce a valid Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C) as proof that he is the registered keeper of the vehicle.
- 2.5 When a taxi is sold or transferred, the licence plate may not be transferred to another vehicle until the buyer has produced to the Authority a Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C) certifying that he is the new keeper of the vehicle. Any licence transferred before the new Vehicle Registration Certificate is produced will be immediately suspended or revoked.

#### **3.0 Insurance**

- 3.1 The proprietor of a taxi must ensure that the vehicle is insured for public hire and reward.
- 3.2 The proprietor of a taxi shall produce to the Authority a new certificate of insurance or cover note within 7 days of the expiry of every certificate of insurance or cover note.
- 3.3 The proprietor of a taxi shall notify the Authority of the cancellation of any certificate of insurance or covering note, or any extent of the terms within 7 days of such cancellation or variations of cover in accordance with Part IV of The Traffic Act 1972.

3.4 The responsibility for ensuring that continuous and appropriate insurance cover is in place for the vehicle rests with the vehicle proprietor. The Authority will accept no liability for accident, injury, loss or compensation if a proprietor fails to ensure that the vehicle is not properly insured.

#### **4.0 Modifications to Vehicle**

No material alteration or change to the specification, design, construction or appearance of the vehicle shall be made without the approval of the Authority.

#### **5.0 Change of Vehicle**

The licence holder must notify the Authority of any proposed change of vehicle prior to submitting it for licensing to ensure it complies with the Authority's vehicle specification. The vehicle must be made available for vehicle inspection in accordance with paragraph 6.0 below.

#### **6.0 Vehicle Inspection**

6.1 Any vehicle for which an application for the grant or renewal of a taxi licence is submitted will be required to undergo a mechanical inspection, regardless of age, at any garage authorised to conduct MOT tests on behalf of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. An inspection form will be provided by the Authority and must be completed by the examiner and endorsed with the testing station's official stamp and then returned to the Licensing Office. A vehicle which fails the inspection must be re-presented for further inspection at the same testing station within 10 working days.

6.2 Vehicles which are over five years of age will be required to undergo a mechanical inspection every six months. Vehicles over ten years of age will be required to undergo a mechanical inspection every four months.

6.3 The cost of inspection(s) must be borne by the applicant/licence holder

6.4 If the Licensing Office receives mechanical inspection reports identifying mechanical failures this may be an indication that the vehicle is not being properly maintained and enforcement action may be taken.

#### **7.0 Accidents/damage to Vehicle**

7.1 Any damage or accident to a licensed vehicle must be reported to the Authority within 24 hours of the incident and a written report submitted on the appropriate form within 72 hours of the event.

7.2 If a licensed vehicle suffers a mechanical defect or require accident repair a replacement vehicle may be used or hired for one month. The replacement vehicle will be required to undergo the Authority's mechanical inspection process and must comply with the Authority's standard licensing criteria. The licence holder must notify the Licensing Office immediately the original vehicle is defective and again when the vehicle has been repaired and is available to be re-licensed. The replacement vehicle must not already be licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

## **8.0 Closed Circuit Television Systems (CCTV)**

- 8.1 No CCTV system shall be installed in a vehicle unless it has been approved by the Authority.
- 8.2 Where fitted, the CCTV system must comply with the minimum specification set out below.
- 8.3 Any vehicle in which a CCTV system is installed must display prominently in each compartment of the vehicle where it can be easily read by all passengers a notice stating that a CCTV system is operating in the vehicle.
- 8.4 CCTV cameras, where fitted, must be located in positions where they do not interfere with the driver's field of vision or can be tampered with by a passenger.
- 8.5 The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that the CCTV system, where fitted, is regularly maintained and serviced by a suitably qualified person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Written records of all maintenance and servicing shall be retained by the proprietor for a minimum of 12 months and shall be made available for inspection at the request of a police officer or authorised officer of the Authority.
- 8.6 Upon request for image retrieval by a police officer or an authorised officer of the Authority, the proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that the CCTV system and any recorded images are made available as soon as is reasonably practicable and no later than five days of the request.
- 8.7 The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that any driver of the vehicle is given proper instruction in the use of the CCTV system and the need to comply with the relevant conditions of licence.
- 8.8 The proprietor of the vehicle shall ensure that the CCTV system is operated in accordance with the current CCTV Code of Practice issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 8.9 Specification for In-car CCTV Systems

The system shall, as a minimum:

- (i) be capable of date and time system identification stamping
- (ii) be capable of recording and storing images for a minimum period of seven days
- (iii) be capable of capturing images that, in low light conditions, must be of sufficient quality to enable identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and be of such quality that they can be used for the purposes of prosecution
- (iv) be capable of storing images in a manner which prevents them being removed, downloaded or viewed by the driver of the vehicle, a passenger in the vehicle or by any other unauthorised person
- (v) provide that images are only capable of being downloaded by the system administrator
- (vi) provide that the data unit is stored separately from the camera(s) and out of sight of the person travelling in the vehicle
- (vii) provide that, where the system uses a DVD recorder, the system is protected from shock and vibration.

- (viii) ensure that any area recorded by the camera does not extend outside the vehicle
- (ix) be marked with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Certification) which signifies that it meets the European Industry Standard.

## **9.0 Fuel**

The proprietor of a vehicle which has been converted to run on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) must produce a certificate of conversion issued by a member of the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association Approved Installer Scheme to confirm that the installation conforms to the Association's code of practice and is safe for public use. A certificate from an approved converter must also be supplied in respect of vehicles converted to run on other alternative fuels. The proprietor of a converted vehicle must notify his/her insurance company of the conversion.

## **10.0 Vehicle – Exterior**

### **10.1 Maintenance of Vehicle**

10.1.1 The vehicle and all its fittings and equipment shall at all times when the vehicle is in use or on hire be kept in a safe, efficient, tidy and clean condition and all relevant statutory requirements and conditions relating to the vehicle must be fully complied with.

10.1.2 The bodywork of the vehicle shall be kept in good condition and shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's original specification. Minor paint chipping, small dents, scratches or scuff marks may be accepted provided that their extent does not adversely affect the overall appearance of the vehicle. Where the collective extent of such defects adversely affects the overall appearance of the vehicle, the Authority will require the defects to be repaired in a reasonable time frame specified in writing by the Authority. Failure to comply with the specified time frame may result in penalty points or the suspension of the licence.

10.1.3 Large dents in body panels or any damage to the vehicle and its fittings which render it unsafe and/or unsuitable for use as a public service vehicle will not be accepted and must be repaired within a reasonable time frame specified in writing by the Authority. Failure to comply with the specified time frame may result in penalty points or the suspension of the licence.

### **10.2 Windscreens and Windows**

10.2.1 The windscreen of the vehicle shall be kept clean and in good repair. Permits/stickers must not impede the driver's field of vision. Any chips or cracks in the windscreen must be inspected by an V.O.S.A. approved M.O.T. testing station and repaired immediately or the windscreen replaced as appropriate.

10.2.2 All windows shall be kept clean and in good repair.

10.2.3 All windows designed to open shall operate in accordance with the manufacturer's specification.

10.2.4 Vehicles with tinted windows will only be accepted for licensing if the level of light transmission complies with current legislation.

10.2.5 Apart from statutory notices, notices, signs, stickers, displays or anything of a similar nature which might impede the driver's field of vision must not be displayed in the front or rear windscreens or in any window of the vehicle.

### 10.3 Vehicle Signage

10.3.1 A taxi is required to have a sign of a type approved by the Authority fitted to the roof of the vehicle. Such signs must be capable of illumination and must contain the word "Taxi", the company name, the company's telephone number or a combination of any of the three at the front and/or rear of the sign. Purpose built vehicles with an integral roof sign fitted by the manufacturer will not be required to carry an additional roof sign. All roof signs must be connected to the taximeter in such a way that the sign light is extinguished when the taxi is hired.

10.3.2 Signage containing a company name and/or telephone number, e-mail address, website address or other contact details may be displayed on the side doors, rear doors, boot and bonnet of the vehicle but must not encroach onto any part of the windscreens or windows (except as provided for by paragraph 10.3.3).

10.3.3 The company name and/or telephone number, e-mail address, website address or other contact details may be displayed on a self-adhesive sunstrip of not more than 150mm in depth affixed to the front and/or rear windscreens always provided the sunstrip does not impede the driver's field of vision.

### 10.4 Licence Plates

10.4.1 The external licence plate identifying the vehicle as a taxi shall be securely affixed to the rear of the vehicle using screws, rivets or other fixings approved by the Authority. The licence plate shall be fixed in a position approved by the Authority and shall be kept fully visible and legible at all times.

10.4.2 The internal licence plate identifying the vehicle as a taxi shall be displayed prominently on the left hand side of the front windscreen facing inwards where it can be readily seen by passengers.

### 10.5 Advertising

10.5.1 Commercial advertising (internal and external) will only be permitted with the prior written approval of the Licensing Team and will be subject to the following conditions:

(i) All adverts should be appropriate for viewing by children, and no advertising will be permitted which causes public offence.

(ii) Advertising material must comply with relevant legislation; guidance issued by The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP); the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code); and any rulings of the Advertising Standards Authority.

(iii) Advertisements must not encroach onto any part of the windscreens or windows.

(iv) Advertisements of alcohol, sex establishments, gambling products and services, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or other similar tobacco products are prohibited.

(v) Advertisements relating to any political or religious organisation or campaign are prohibited.

## **11.0 Vehicle – Interior**

### **11.1 Seats**

11.1.1 Seats must have a minimum width of 400mm (16”) per passenger.

11.1.2 There must be sufficient space between each row of seats in their minimum spaced configuration to accommodate passengers in safety, reasonable comfort and with adequate legroom.

11.1.3 There must be sufficient space between each seat cushion at its highest point and the lowest part of the roof to accommodate passengers in safety and in reasonable comfort.

11.1.4 Seats which are not constructed to the same design or specification as the standard seats in the vehicle (e.g. seats which fold down to create additional luggage space in the rear of a vehicle) may not be suitable for the carriage of passengers. In order to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers, the Authority may refuse to include such seats in the total licensed seating capacity of the vehicle.

11.1.5 The arrangement of seats in the vehicle must not impede or restrict access into or egress from the vehicle. Vehicles with seats which need to be folded or moved to permit access to/egress from the vehicle may not be suitable for licensing. In order to ensure the safety, comfort and convenience of passengers, the Authority may refuse to license such vehicles or may require such seats to be removed or may license the vehicle for such lesser numbers of passengers as it considers appropriate.

11.1.5 Seats and seat fixings must not be moved or modified from the manufacturer's original installation unless the modification is carried out and certified safe by the manufacturer, an authorised dealer/agent or a firm authorised or approved. to carry out such work.

### **11.2 Seat Belts**

11.2.1 All vehicles must be fitted with fully operational seat belts, one for each passenger to be carried which must comply with sections 46 and 47 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 except where the law or VOSA guidance specifically provides for an exemption.

11.2.2 All passengers must be carried in accordance with the Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993 as amended by The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 2006.

11.2.3 Passengers must not be carried in the luggage compartment of a vehicle (e.g. in the space between the rear seats and the rear door(s)) or in any other section of the vehicle which is not specifically designed for the carriage of passengers.

### 11.3 Upholstery

All upholstery and coverings shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition. No tear, crack or hole over 25mm in any dimension will be permitted. Upholstery includes seats, headrests, armrests, carpets and any other trim.

### 11.4 Fittings

All fittings shall be properly maintained and in good working order. Fittings include interior lights, grab handles, door surrounds, sun blinds and other equipment provided for use by passengers or for passenger aid and comfort.

### 11.5 Roof and Floor Coverings

Roof and floor coverings shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition. No tear or other damage over 25mm in any dimension will be permitted.

### 11.6 Luggage

11.6.1 All vehicles shall have sufficient luggage space in the vehicle to accommodate a reasonable amount of luggage for each passenger. Luggage carried in the vehicle must not obstruct any gangways or exits.

11.6.2 The luggage space must be kept clean and tidy at all times and available for use when the vehicle is on hire.

11.6.3 Excess luggage may be carried in a trailer (see 16.0 below).

## 12.0 **Taximeters**

12.1 A hackney carriage must be fitted with a taximeter of a type which complies with The Measuring Instruments (Taximeters) Regulations 2006 and shall meet the following criteria:

- (i) The taximeter shall be fitted with a key, flag or other device, the turning of which will bring the mechanism of the meter into action and cause the word "HIRED" to appear on the face of the meter;
- (ii) Such key, flag or other device must be capable of being locked in such position so the mechanism of the meter is not in action and that no fare is recorded on the face of the meter;
- (iii) The word "FARE" shall be printed on the face of the taximeter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon;
- (iv) The taximeter shall be so positioned that the face of the meter is plainly visible at all times to the person being conveyed and shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring;
- (i) The taximeter and all fittings shall be so affixed to the carriage with seals and other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances;
- (ii) The taximeter must be calibrated to the fares laid down in the Council's current table of fares.
- (iii) The licence holder must contact the Licensing Office to replace any broken/missing seals.

- 12.2 All meters are required to be calendar controlled i.e. to be fitted with a pre-programmed date calendar which can only be altered by the meter manufacturer or an authorised agent.

### **13.0 Table of Fares**

The Table of Fares prescribed by the Authority must be clearly displayed in the vehicle where it can be readily seen by passengers or, where this is not practicable, must be kept in the vehicle and made available on request by a passenger.

### **14.0 Fire Extinguishers**

- 14.1 The vehicle must be equipped with a dry powder type fire extinguisher for the inflammability classes A,B,C with a minimum capacity of 1 kg. The extinguisher must be suitably located and secured in the vehicle in a position where it can be reached without delay.

- 14.2 The fire extinguisher must be operational and unused.

### **15.0 First Aid Kits**

A suitable first aid kit containing appropriate dressings and appliances must be provided inside the vehicle or in the luggage compartment where it can be reached without delay. As a minimum, the first aid kit must contain gloves, bandages, dressings, adhesive plasters and a pair of scissors.

### **16.0 Trailers**

A licensed hackney carriage may be permitted to tow a trailer for the purpose of carrying passengers' luggage which cannot be accommodated in the vehicle, subject to the following conditions:

- (i) the vehicle insurance policy must provide insurance cover for the towing of a trailer;
- (ii) trailers must not be used when the vehicle is standing on a taxi rank;
- (iii) the speed restrictions applicable to trailers must be observed at all times;
- (iv) a spare wheel for the trailer and adequate tools to change a wheel must be carried in the vehicle or in the trailer;
- (v) the towbar must comply with the type approval regulations in respect of all towbars fitted to cars after August 1998;
- (vi) trailers must be manufactured by a recognised manufacturer and not be structurally altered or modified in any way;
- (vii) unbraked trailers shall be less than 750 kgs gross weight (or no more than half the kerbside weight of the towing vehicle);
- (viii) trailers over 750 kgs gross weight shall be braked acting on at least two road wheels;
- (ix) a suitable lid or other watertight covering shall be fitted to the trailer to secure the contents;
- (x) trailers must not exceed 5 metres in length (including the drawbar and coupling) and must not be wider than the towing vehicle subject to a maximum width of 2.3 metres;
- (xi) trailers must comply with the requirements of the Road Vehicles (construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended);



- (xii) A second licence plate bearing the details of the towing vehicle must be securely fixed to the rear of the trailer using screws, rivets or other fixings approved by the Council.
- (xiii) Safe exit from the vehicle must be maintained at all times.

## **17.0 Vehicle Specification for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis**

All vehicles presented for licensing shall have been originally constructed with seats for no more than 8 passengers and one driver and shall comply in all respects with the requirements of the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) Regulations 1980, Motor Vehicle (Type Approval) Regulations (Great Britain) 1984 and the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. In addition, all vehicles must comply in all respects with the British and European Vehicle Regulations and be type approved to the requirements of the M1 category of European Whole Type Approval 70/156/EEC as amended. Vehicles converted from vans that have a type approval other than M1 will not be accepted unless they are presented with approved M1 certification for the resultant vehicle. If a vehicle has been registered with DVLA and issued with an appropriate registration index number, no change, structural alteration or rearrangement of detail shall be carried out to the vehicle unless such change shall have been subsequently granted M1 Whole Type Approval.

All vehicles shall have at least 4 side opening doors (excluding a tailgate), or three side opening doors and two rear opening doors. All of which must be capable of being opened from the inside to permit the entry and exit of passengers.

Every seat fitted must be at least wide 400 millimetres and be forward facing except for fold down seats, which may be rear facing. All seats must be fitted with a seat belt and access to all seats must be unobstructed by form of an aisle.

The vehicle must be designed to permit loading of wheelchairs either via the rear door(s) or via a side door.

Wheelchair internal anchorages must be of the vehicle manufacturer's design and construction and secured in such a position as not to obstruct any exit. Suitable adjustable restraints shall be supplied with the vehicle to secure the wheelchair in position while being transported.

An inertia or fixed type 3 point seat belt shall also be made available for the purpose of restraining the occupant of a wheelchair in the case of an accident.

Access ramps and or lifts to the vehicle must be capable of being securely fixed prior to use and must be so constructed to safely support a wheelchair, its occupant and helper. In addition the surface of such ramps or lifts must be maintained with a non-slip covering at all times. Ramps and or lifts must be capable of being securely stored within the vehicle so as not to cause danger or interference with any passenger.

There shall be provided a compartment within the vehicle to the manufacturers approved design for the purpose of the storage of luggage. This compartment must be constructed so as to prevent any item entering either the passenger or driver's compartment of the vehicle in the event of an accident.