
Guide to the testing and preparation of vehicles for a private hire vehicle licence

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This information guide has been produced to advise applicants for a Private Hire vehicle licence of the test requirements at the Council's Test Centre at Bradley Fold. It will assist you in preparing your vehicle for that test.
- 1.2 Vehicles under two years old will be subject to one inspection per year at the Council's Vehicle Test Centre at Bradley Fold. Vehicles over two years old will be subject to two inspections per year. **However, any vehicle, regardless of age, which fails any two consecutive periodic inspections with 3 or more MOT failure faults (as defined in the VOSA MOT Inspection Manual for Private Passenger & Light Commercial Vehicle Testing) will result in the vehicle having to undergo 2 interim tests per year.** It is current policy to only licence private hire vehicles up to 10 years old unless the vehicle is an 'exceptional vehicle' in condition or, due to its continued main use for the carriage of disabled passengers / those with special needs. For example, if someone were to purchase a vehicle and placed it inside a garage for 10 years and did not drive it, this vehicle would be in "exceptional condition" for its age. Alternatively, an already licensed vehicle which the owner can demonstrate has been maintained to a high standard in respect of its safety, performance and appearance and has been specially adapted and it is primarily used for the carriage of disabled people or those with special needs on a home to school contract, would also fall into this category.
- 1.3 The purpose of the test is to ensure that the vehicle meets Ministry of Transport minimum road safety standards which are governed by law (a standard class 4 MOT) and in addition, that the appearance of the bodywork and paintwork is of a high standard, free of damage and rust. The interior of the vehicle must also be of a high standard so as to provide travelling members of the public with the high level of comfort and cleanliness they expect.
- 1.4 As the periodic vehicle test is to ensure that minimum standards are reached, vehicle owners are expected to maintain their vehicles to a high level in order to allow for deterioration of components during the period of the licence. The Council expects vehicle owners to have their vehicle serviced at regular intervals in accordance with the vehicle manufacturers service schedule by a competent person such as a qualified and experienced vehicle mechanic. Defected components should be replaced and all repairs should be carried out to a professional standard.

2.0 VEHICLE SPECIFICATION

- 2.1 The Council will not licence any vehicle which has only two doors or which does not have adequate adult seating for the total number of passengers the vehicle is to be licensed to carry.
- 2.2 In relation to minibuses and MPV's, if the vehicle is shown other than 'Vehicle Category M1' on the DVLA Form V5 (log book), then all passengers in the rear of the vehicle must have access to at least two doors (side or rear) without having to fold down or climb over any seats. If the V5 shows the vehicle category as M1 and the vehicle appears not to have been modified from the manufacturers original specification, then this rule is not applicable.
- 2.3 If the vehicle has been modified (e.g. a cargo carrying van has been modified and passenger seats installed) please see paragraph 6.0 below.

3.0 MECHANICAL INSPECTION

- 3.1 During the test, the following components will be inspected to ensure that they are functioning correctly and are in a good state of repair:

Lighting and signalling equipment

1. Front and rear position lamps & registration plate lamps.
2. All stop lamps and testable warning lights
3. Rear fog lamps
4. Direction indicators and hazard warning lamps
5. Rear reflectors
6. Audible warning (horn)
7. Headlamps
8. Headlamp aim
9. All electrical wires and battery correctly fitted and the vehicle capable of being restarted.

Steering (including suspension)

1. Steering control
2. Steering system
3. Power steering
4. Suspension – General
5. Front suspension, wheel bearings and drive shafts
6. Rear suspension and wheel bearings
7. Shock absorbers

Brakes

1. Parking brake lever mechanism and associated mountings
2. Hand operated brake controls
3. Service brake control
4. Anti-lock and anti skid braking systems
5. Mechanical brake components
6. Hydraulic, air and vacuum systems and additional braking devices
7. Brake performance
8. Manufacturers plate
9. Electronic park brakes

Tyres and Road Wheels

1. Tyre tread must be a minimum of 1.6mm in a continuous band throughout the central $\frac{3}{4}$ of the tread width, throughout the whole of the circumference.
2. No other tyre defects (e.g. tyre wall damage) should be present
3. Where wheel trims are fitted, they must match and be free of damage

Seat Belts

1. Required seat belts are fitted to all mandatory seats
2. Seat belt condition and operation
3. Seat belt installation
4. Supplementary restraint system
5. Air bags

Body, structure and general items

1. Vehicle structure, body security and condition (No damage or rust to body panels, paintwork, bumpers fitted correctly, protective strips or rubber seals. Repairs must be carried out to a professional standard.
2. Doors and seats.
3. Registration plates and VIN details
4. Load security, spare wheel/ spare wheel substitute /carrier and tools
5. Speed limiter (where fitted)
6. Tow bar (if fitted) and electrics
7. Speedometer and dashboard illumination
8. Driving controls
9. Glazing (see below re tinted glass)
10. Fire extinguisher (British standard 5423, minimum capacity 0.9 kg foam or powder, fitted inside the vehicle so that it can be reached by the driver when driving).

Exhaust, fuel and emissions

1. Exhaust system
2. Fuel system
3. Exhaust emissions – spark ignition
4. Exhaust emissions – compression ignition

Drivers view of the road

1. Mirrors must operate correctly
2. Wipers and washers
3. Windscreen (minimum light transmittance - 75%)
4. Front passenger and driver side windows (minimum light transmittance - 70%)
5. Remaining glass (other than the rear windscreen) minimum light transmittance - 25%.
6. Bonnet opening mechanism and locking device.

Licence plates and vehicle signage

1. Once licensed, a vehicle presented for it's 6 month interim test or annual renewal test, must have correctly fitted to the vehicle in accordance with council

instructions, both front and rear licence plates and holders, the Council issued door signage relating to vehicle insurance and the appropriate Private Hire Operator signage. It must have on display inside the vehicle the mandatory 'No Smoking' signage and the Council issued window signage. If any of the Council issued signage has been lost or damaged, replacements must be obtained from the Licensing Office prior to the vehicle being presented for testing.

2. Bonnet signage is not permitted unless approval has been obtained from the Licensing Service

4.0 PREPARING YOUR VEHICLE FOR TESTING

- 4.1 **Servicing** – You should arrange for your vehicle to be properly serviced by a competent and qualified vehicle mechanic prior to attending the test appointment at Bradley Fold.
- 4.2 **Bulbs** – Ensure that all light bulbs are working. Replace any that are not ensuring that they are the correct colour.
- 4.3 **Paintwork** - All paintwork should be wax polished, blemish free and polished to a high gloss shine. Any damage to paintwork which in the opinion of the vehicle examiner materially affects the appearance of the vehicle must be professionally repaired. All matt finish paintwork must be cleaned with an appropriate cleaning substance.
- 4.4 **Bumpers** – Should be secure cleaned with appropriate cleaning materials and all plastic bumpers finished with the use of a colour restorer. All other vehicle trim should be cleaned/restored in the same manner.
- 4.5 **Wheels and tyres** – Wheels must be cleaned and should shine. Where detachable wheel trims are fitted, all four should match, be clean and free of damage. Chrome covers must be free of rust and polished.
- 4.6 **Exterior trim** - - All exterior trim, to include window trim and seals must be cleaned with an appropriate cleaner and finished with the use of a colour restorer. There should be no blemishes or show signs of overspray from paintwork repairs. All trim should be complete, secure and in good repair. Damaged trim must be replaced.
- 4.7 **Mirrors and windscreen wipers** – Door mounted mirrors must be clean, undamaged and securely fitted to the vehicle with the correct mountings. Wiper arms and blades must be in good condition and free from rust and flaking paint. Mirrors and wipers must operate correctly.
- 4.8 **Engine compartment** – The engine compartment must be cleaned so that the vehicle examiner can properly inspect the vehicle components.

5.0 VEHICLE INTERIOR

- 5.1 **Carpets and upholstery** – All carpets and upholstery must be correctly fitted and free of tears, burns and stains. They must be vacuumed and cleaned with carpet shampoo. Seat covers are not permitted for the initial inspection. If they are fitted for subsequent tests, they must fit correctly, be clean and all seats must match. Consideration will be given to cosmetic damage to a driver's seat

which can have a cover fitted provided it blends with the rest of the vehicle upholstery.

- 5.2 **Seating** – All seating must be securely mounted in the vehicle. The seat padding and springs must be in a good state of repair.
- 5.3 **Roof lining** – Roof lining must be professionally fitted and free of damage. It must be spotlessly clean when the vehicle is presented for test.
- 5.4 **Door trim and parcel shelves** – All door trims must be secure and free of damage and stains. They should be cleaned with an appropriate cleaner. Parcel shelves must be clean and complete.
- 5.5 **Dash boards** – Dash and fascia fitments must be clean, complete and undamaged. They must fit correctly leaving no holes to expose the inner dash area / wiring (e.g. radio blank trim missing). The heater controls must fully operate.
- 5.6 **Door apertures** – The inside of door apertures, door pillars and hinged area must be clean and rust free.
- 5.7 **Window glass and mirrors** – All windows (inside and out) must be cleaned with the use of a non wax cleaning substance so that they are free of water streaks. All glass and mirrors must be spotlessly clean and free of cracks, chips or blemishes.
- 5.8 **Boot area** – The vehicle boot/ luggage area should be clean, neat and tidy. It should be kept free of excessive personal effects so as to enable the carriage of a passengers luggage/shopping. Parcel shelves / load covers must be fitted for the inspection.

6.0 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MODIFIED VEHICLES

- 6.1 Where a vehicle appears to have been converted from the original manufacturers specification and the Vehicle Registration document does not show it as a passenger carrying minibus / taxi but for example as a cargo carrying panelled van, then the vehicle must go to VOSA (the nearest to Bury is in Chadderton) for Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) at the owners expense. It must then undergo the normal inspection process at the councils Testing Centre at Bradley Fold.
- 6.2 VOSA would expect the owner to provide a 'Certificate of Conformity' supplied by the company which carried out the conversion stating that any additional seats / seat belts and their anchorages where to M1 pull standard and that they were fitted in accordance with the appropriate manufacturers specifications. VOSA would then inspect the vehicle to ensure that the flooring / fixings comply with current regulations.
- 6.3 In addition to the above, the following is the Council requirements in relation to modified vehicles:
- 6.4 **Modified minibuses / PSV's** - Vehicles which are described other than category 'M1' on the DVLA Form V5 (Log book), must enable passengers seated behind the driver to have access to at least 2 doors (side or rear opening)

without having to climb over or fold down any seats. If the vehicle is to carry a wheel chair refer to paragraph 6 below.

- 6.5 Manufacturer's original glass should already satisfy the above requirements in respect of the glass to the front windscreen and the front doors, provided that this glass has not had any laminating film or secondary treatment applied. However, such glass fitted elsewhere on the vehicle may not meet the above criteria and will have to be replaced.
- a. All retro-fitted seatbelts must meet MOT installation and condition standards.
 - b. The passenger interior floor area must be of a flat, non slip, non trip surface. Where wheelchair tracking is fitted, the Council recommends the fitting of blanking strips.
 - c. Partitioned rear passenger compartments must be heated and capable of variable control. Such heaters must be linked accordingly to the main vehicle heating system and be capable of variable control. All exposed piping and wiring must be secure and adequately insulated. Water leaks are unacceptable.
 - d. No interior surface within the passenger compartment shall contain sharp edges likely to cause injury.
 - e. All interior trim must match and be fitted to a professional standard. Evidence of obvious work or modification should not be on view.
 - f. All modified seats fitted must be of a matching type. Please note that on the initial inspection, seats must not be fitted with removable seat covers
 - g. All vehicles must be fitted with safety glass containing an approved marking to this effect. Any partition fitted with safety glazing (plastic) must be of a suitable material (e.g. shatter proof).
 - h. Rear compartment entrance/exit areas must be adequately illuminated at floor and at higher levels. Such lighting must operate automatically when each rear passenger door is opened.
 - i. All passenger doors must be capable of being restrained in the open position.
 - j. Each rear passenger door aperture must contain at least one grab handle to assist passengers while entering /exiting the vehicle. Each handle(s) must be securely fixed using a substantial mounting(s) such as machine screws that are capable of holding a reasonable force.
 - k. Each rear passenger compartment must contain at least two opening windows that can be opened from the interior for ventilation purposes.
 - l. The Council recommends that all rear facing seats are fitted with some form of head restraint/cushion to reduce injury in the event of a collision.
 - m. The maximum height from the road surface to the passenger floor should be no more than 420mm at any point. Vehicles exceeding this figure must have some

form of step incorporated into the bodywork. (This may be of a retracting or folding type).

7.0 WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

- 7.1 If you intend on carrying passengers in wheelchairs, the rear compartment entrance/exit doors must be of a suitable size to allow access for a wheelchair.
- 7.2 Where a vehicle is fitted with a tail lift, a 'LOLER Certificate' must be obtained prior to the vehicle inspection at Bradley Fold and produced to the vehicle examiner for inspection.
- 7.3 The vehicle must contain an adequate floor turning area inside the rear passenger compartment to allow a wheelchair room to manoeuvre and face rearwards.
- 7.4 The vehicle must be capable of adequately securing a wheelchair to the vehicle floor using a suitable type of clamp or restraint.
- 7.5 Appropriate wheelchair restraint(s) must accompany the vehicle when it is presented for test and a competent level of aptitude must be demonstrated by the presenter to the vehicle inspector in regard to the operation of each restraint.
- 7.6 Wheelchair ramps must be capable of being **securely fixed** to the vehicle during use. They must be of a type and length allowing safe and easy use by the person loading the wheelchair.
- 7.7 Wheelchair ramps must be safely and securely stored in a suitable area of the vehicle when they are not in use.
- 7.8 Seat belts must be fitted to restrain wheelchair occupants. A single seatbelt must not be used to restrain both the wheelchair and occupant.

REMEMBER THAT:

Prior
Planning and
Preparation
Prevents
Poor
Performance

Have your vehicle serviced regularly by a competent, qualified and insured vehicle mechanic who has all the appropriate equipment at his disposal to professionally check and service your vehicle.