

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Newsletter – September 2019

Welcome to the September 2019 taxi and private hire newsletter.

We hope you will take a few minutes to read this newsletter as it contains lots of relevant taxi and private hire news and information including a copy of the hackney carriage and private hire guidelines.

If you would like to give feedback or ideas for future editions please contact us via email at fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Further information can be found on our website at:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/licences-permits-transport.

Contact us:

Email: fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk

Revised fit and proper person policy to be introduced on 1 October 2019

The Council's fit and proper person policy for licensed hackney carriage and/or private hire drivers, and private hire operators has been updated. There are currently two policies in place, one for new applicants and one for existing drivers and operators. The Council has reviewed these policies and it was agreed at the Licensing Committee meeting on 2 September 2019 to adopt the revised policy that covers all applicants for hackney carriage and/or private hire licences, this will also include applicants for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences, where they have not previously gone through the fit and proper person test. This policy has taken into account The Institute of Licensing's guidelines regarding the suitability of applicants in the hackney carriage and private hire trade to ensure consistency in applying the fit and proper person test across all licensing authorities.

As part of this process the hackney carriage and private hire trade representatives were consulted for their views.

Drivers and vehicle owners will be assessed against the new policy on their first renewal after 01 October 2019 or on initial application.

DBS Update Service

In accordance with the revised fit and proper policy from 1 October 2019 all applicants for hackney carriage and/or private hire licences will be required to sign up to The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service. This service lets applicants keep their DBS certificates up to date online and allows employers to check a certificate online. The cost is currently £13 per year. You can sign up to this service when you receive your certificate. A guidance note has been supplied with this newsletter. For further information on how to sign up go to: <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>.

Payment Plan

Please note that the payment plan for three year hackney carriage/private hire driver and five year private hire operators licences has been discontinued due to issues with payments not being recovered and safeguarding issues with suspended licences not being returned.

Applicants for these licences can request a one year licence, currently at the payment plan fee but these fees are subject to review as they will require more administration than a three/five year licence.

Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers badges

Hackney carriage/private hire drivers badges should be worn by drivers at all times whilst working not just kept in the vehicle. This has been highlighted as a widespread issue during recent enforcement checks. Failure to comply with this will result in drivers being issued with penalty points.

Appropriate behaviour

Council staff carry out a service that includes responsibility for enforcement and are carrying out a process on behalf of the Council that is defined within legislation.

Any rude, aggressive or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated towards our staff.

Any applicant witnessed doing so will be dealt with by enforcement action, which may include suspension or revocation of their licence.

If you have a complaint about the service you should put this in writing to: fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk or speak to a taxi trade representative. Details of trade representatives can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

Behaviour on taxi ranks

Taxi drivers are reminded that they are professional drivers and should behave in a civil and orderly manner at all times.

Drivers are reminded that when waiting on a taxi rank they should be with their vehicle. Drivers should not try to enforce the guidelines and legislation between themselves and not get involved in confrontation with other drivers at any time. If evidence is obtained of this type of behaviour your hackney carriage/private hire drivers licence will be subject to review and this could result in the revocation of the licence.

Taxi ranks – smoking, litter and running engines

Can drivers please be aware that they should not leave litter on taxi ranks, this includes cigarette ends. All litter should be disposed of in an appropriate receptacle; if none available litter should be taken away and disposed of appropriately. Taxi engines should not be left running whilst waiting on the taxi rank.

This applies to all drivers but has been highlighted as an issue particularly in the areas of Amesbury, Melksham and Chippenham where we have been asked to make drivers aware.

On the Market Place Rank in Chippenham could drivers also refrain from smoking in front of the entrances to premises including the Chippenham Museum and The Angel Hotel.

Refusal of fares

May we take this opportunity to remind all drivers of hackney carriages they are not entitled to refuse a fare on the grounds that it is only a short journey. Hackney carriage drivers can only refuse a fare if it is reasonable to do so. To refuse a fare without reasonable grounds is an offence in law and any reports of this will be investigated and dealt with accordingly.

Taxi Meters

Drivers are reminded that taxi meters should always be showing the correct tariff for the relevant day and time as shown on the tariff card at all times, this fare may be discounted but the meter should always show the correct tariff.

Trowbridge - Fore Street Pedestrianised Area

We have been asked to remind drivers that taxi and private hire vehicles are not permitted to use the pedestrianised area in Fore Street, Trowbridge at any time. Drivers witnessed doing this will be subject to enforcement action.

Drivers of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

All licensed drivers who drive wheelchair accessible vehicles must be fully conversant with the correct method of operation of all ramps, lifts and wheelchair restraining mechanisms fitted to the vehicles and should be able to provide evidence of suitable training.

Hackney carriage and private hire guidelines

Please find attached a copy of the current Wiltshire Council Guidelines for hackney carriage and private hire licences. These apply to all holders of hackney carriage and private hire licences. All licence holders should ensure that they have read and understood this document as well as other relevant legislation. Failure to adhere to these Guidelines or any other relevant legislation will result in enforcement action being taken against the licence holder.

Website forms

There are now forms available on the website, these forms must be completed for the following:

Vehicle accident form
Change of address form
Private hire exemption request form
Hackney carriage vehicle advertising request form

They can be found at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/licences-permits-transport> under Notification and request forms

Appointment requests

If you wish to make an appointment we recommend you do so via our website:

For driver appointments: <https://pages.wiltshire.gov.uk/taxidriverappointmentrequest.htm>

For vehicle appointments: <https://pages.wiltshire.gov.uk/taxivehicleappointmentrequest.htm>

Trade representatives

Details of the current Trade representatives and contact details:

Adrian Berridge (West)

Email: adrian@starlinetaxis.co.uk

Tel: 07824901751

Mike Henley (West)

Email: aanddtaxis@googlemail.com

Tel: 01225 751332

David Thompson (South)

Email: dctb@hotmail.com

Tel: 07830105454

Vivienne Pepler (North)

Email: viv.adi.com@hotmail.co.uk

Tel: 07718301080

Glenn Sharp (East)

Email: glenn@devizestaxis.co.uk

Tel: 07855 416738

David Clark (South)

Email: gunnyclarke55@live.com

Tel: 07516618844

This is an exciting time for trade representatives who are currently being asked to look at the taxi tariff and fare structure and will shortly be involved in the review of the hackney carriage and private hire guidelines. The Trade representative role involves liaison between the compliance team and the taxi and private hire trade. Quarterly meetings are held in Devizes to communicate and discuss items with the trade. You will be expected to attend at least 50% of these meetings. This is your chance to have your say and put forward the views of the taxi and private hire trade within your area. If you are interested in becoming a Trade Representative, please contact us via email at: fleet.licensing@wiltshire.gov.uk. The next trade representatives meeting has provisionally been set for 07 October 2019 at Kennet House, Sergeant Rogers Way, Hopton Business park, Devizes SN10 2ET.

Fees and charges 2019/2020

Please visit our website for a list of current fees and charges from May 2019.

Depot locations and appointment days

Please see below for a list of depot locations and appointment days. **Please do not turn up without an appointment as you will not be seen.** If you need to drop documents in please ensure that it is on the relevant appointment day and between the times of 09.00 – 12.00 or 13.30 – 15.00.

Alternate Mondays - Kennet House, Sergeant Rogers Way, Hopton Park Industrial Estate, Devizes SN10 2ET

Tuesdays - Riverway Depot, Riverway, Trowbridge, BA14 8LL.

Wednesdays – Parsonage Way, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 5PT

Thursdays – ****Stephenson Road Churchfields Industrial Estate Salisbury Wiltshire SP2 7NP
**** Due to the current refurbishment of Churchfields Depot in Salisbury some appointments will need to be relocated to: Five Rivers Leisure Centre, Hulse Road, Salisbury – you will be notified if this is necessary.

Ask Angela Campaign



The Licensing teams of Wiltshire and Swindon Councils alongside Wiltshire Police launched a campaign on 1st October 2018 enabling those who feel vulnerable in pubs and clubs to discreetly approach staff and request assistance in Swindon and Wiltshire.

Available at participating venues throughout the county, the 'Ask for Angela' initiative aims to reduce sexual violence and vulnerability by providing customers with a non-descript phrase they can use to gain assistance from staff members in order to be separated from the company of someone with whom they feel unsafe due to that person's actions, words or behaviour.

The initiative was originally launched by Lincolnshire County Council in 2016 and since then has received nationwide attention.

By "asking for Angela", an individual is alerting staff that they require help. They will be taken aside, or to a safer location, so they can speak in confidence to that staff member about what assistance they need.

Options available to staff include: offering to call a taxi for the individual; contacting their friends or family; or requesting that an individual causing the distress leaves the venue.

The aim is to make people feel safe and enjoy their time across Swindon and Wiltshire's pubs and bars however; there are times when an individual can be made to feel uneasy and not quite know how to remove themselves from a potential harmful situation.

Popularity of dating apps means more people might find themselves in difficult situations. The Ask for Angela campaign aims to make people feel safer in these situations.

Licensing teams, alongside Wiltshire Police are working with licensees to promote the scheme and will offer guidance to staff on how to manage these situations when they arise.

Taxis may be called to assist in these situations and it is imperative that licensed drivers are aware of the campaign and the need to behave discreetly if they are called to transport a passenger home that is in this situation.