

Welcome to the Online Driving Forward!

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In a move to increase efficiency and improve our service to you, our newsletter Driving Forward will now only be published ONLINE or emailed to you directly.

Sending paper copies is costly and time consuming.

Moving to electronic methods should help to get information to you more quickly and more often. In the future we aim to carry out a lot more communication via email or online eventually moving to online applications and renewals so we can finally say goodbye to the many paged application forms.

To help us move towards the future – please let us have your email address.

The easiest way to do this is to email us at licensing@birmingham.gov.uk with the following:

- Your name
- Your licence number(s) (please state all – including vehicle / badge and operator where appropriate).

Officers will also be asking you to provide an email address when you come in for your appointments – so if you don't yet have email – please set one up.

Pre appointment Checklist:

Do you have an appointment?

Have you got all the necessary paperwork? e.g.:

- DBS Documentation / identity documents
- DVLA licence check code (see below)
- Vehicle log book
- Completed application form
- Operator form
- Is your medical up to date?
- Is your DBS due for renewal
- Means to pay.

Unfortunately many people arrive for their appointment without checking these basic things. This wastes time at the counter and causes delays for others.

Payments

Since moving to the new offices, we no longer take cash payments. This is part of our move to streamline the service and make efficiencies. By not accepting cash payments, the security risk is lower, and the administrative processes, such as cashing up and taking payments are quicker.

It has been noted by the counter staff that some drivers are attempting to pay with cards which are not their own.

YOU MUST NOT ATTEMPT TO PAY WITH ANOTHER PERSON'S CARD UNLESS THEY HAVE ACCOMPANIED YOU TO THE OFFICE IN PERSON.

It is possible to set up pre-payment cards which enable you to load funds onto the card which can then be used as if it were any other bank/credit card. More information is available online at the following websites:

<http://www.moneysupermarket.com/prepaid-cards/>

<http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/credit-cards/prepaid-cards>

Complaints:

Inconsiderate parking

There are surprisingly frequent incidences of licensed vehicles being parked and left unattended in a location likely to cause problems for other drivers and members of the public. Licensing Officers regularly receive calls from people unable to access their business premises, or even to leave their own driveways at home because of inconsiderately parked hackney carriage or private hire vehicles. A lot of officer time is wasted ringing mobile numbers, home numbers and operator numbers, to find a driver just to request a vehicle be moved, time which could have been saved if a little more consideration was given to other road users. Please think about where you are parking your vehicle and in particular do not block access to businesses or domestic premises.

Toilet complaints

Unfortunately we are still receiving complaints concerning drivers relieving themselves in car parks and other wholly inappropriate places. It is very unpleasant and there is really no excuse for it.

Refusing Fares

We continue to receive complaints that HC drivers waiting on ranks are refusing short fares in the hope of getting a longer and higher fare journey. HC Drivers are reminded that they cannot refuse a fare without good reason. A short fare is not a good reason to refuse a

customer.

Assistance Dogs:

There have been an unacceptable number of instances where drivers have refused to carry assistance dogs in their vehicles. Complaints of this kind are taken very seriously and drivers will be prosecuted

Keep Informed

Consultations will be posted the Licensing pages of the City Councils website and the consultation will be on **Be Heard**: Birmingham's Consultation Database for Birmingham's public sector. This means you can participate in consultations about local issues that interest you. Using Be Heard means you can make your views known when decisions are being made about things that affect you and the area you live in. Go to either <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/licensing>

or www.birminghambeheard.org.uk

If you prefer to complete the survey in writing – please email

licensing@birmingham.gov.uk and a printable version will be sent to you.

Trade Liaison Meetings

These meetings are held every 2 months. The purpose of the forum is to enable two-way communication between Birmingham City Council Licensing Service, the City Council's Transportation Division and the hackney carriage and private hire trade. Representatives may use it to seek information from Licensing or Transportation, or to convey matters of concern on behalf of those they represent. Birmingham City Council officers may use the forum to consult with representatives of hackney carriage and private hire drivers and operators and to convey information or discuss matters of mutual concern. The full Terms of Reference can also be found online.

The minutes of the Trade Liaison Meetings are available on the licensing pages of the website.

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20107/taxi_and_private_hire/294/information_for_taxi_drivers_private_hire_drivers_and_operators

Road works currently affecting Birmingham

A number of major investment projects are currently underway in Birmingham City Centre including the redevelopment of Paradise Circus, construction of the Midland Metro City Centre extension tram system, along Broad Street. These and other developments will enhance the local economy by improving the transport infrastructure and enhancing Birmingham as an international business, commercial and retail centre and visitor / conference destination.

The scale of the investment does however present challenges in managing traffic as

significant sections of the highway network are affected during construction work. Every effort is made to organise temporary traffic management arrangements effectively and appropriate signage is provided to indicate both traffic regulations and appropriate routes for through traffic and to specific destinations in the city centre.

Birmingham City Council is constantly improving the quality of information we provide to the emergency services, media and members of the public and the Road works map provided by Elgin, which delivers real-time access to local road works

information from the majority of the 175 local highway authorities of England and Wales.

Visit roadworks.org for an interactive, up to the minute map of road works in Birmingham

To find out about road works planned for the next few months, visit our highways works programme page:

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/highways-works-programme>

Air Quality

On 23 October 2017 Birmingham's Licensing & Public Protection Committee approved a policy to set new vehicle exhaust emission standards for licensed private hire vehicles and hackney carriages. The policy will take effect from 1 January 2020. The policy is being introduced to respond to the Government's UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, published on 31 July 2017, which required Birmingham, with Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton, to deliver Clean Air Zones by the end of 2019.

The Government's UK Plan recognises that air pollution, mostly caused by vehicles, is having a serious impact on the health of everyone who lives and works in Birmingham.

On 12th September Birmingham's Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee published its report 'The Impact of Poor Air Quality on Health'. Having heard evidence from Public

Health experts it identified that in Birmingham up to 900 deaths per year are linked to man-made air pollution. In adults air pollution is linked to heart disease, diabetes, asthma, obesity, cancer and dementia. In children it is linked to still births, infant deaths, low birth weight, organ damage and premature death. In high pollution areas children are four times more likely to have reduced lung function when they become adults. Taxi and private hire drivers are three times more exposed to pollution than anyone else.

The report's first recommendation says: "There is now clear and compelling evidence that poor

air quality has an impact on general population health and child development. The evidence also shows that diesel vehicle emissions are the most prevalent and impactful source of health-affecting air pollution in Birmingham.”

Vehicle emissions Policy for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles

The policy agreed by the Licensing & Public Protection Committee is that after 31 December 2019:

- Vehicles will have to meet the minimum standards identified for Clean Air Zones, namely Euro 4 for petrol vehicles and Euro 6 for diesel vehicles. Vehicles that do not meet their relevant standard will not be licensed and may not be used as taxis or private hire vehicles after 31 December 2019.

This policy was approved by the Committee after taking into account the responses to a 14-week consultation that Licensing carried out with drivers and the general public. We received 775 responses, which fell into 3 main categories:

Drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles were concerned that the cost of replacing their vehicles with cleaner, newer vehicles is prohibitive.

Given the cost involved to replace a vehicle, drivers felt that the timescales envisaged by the draft policy did not allow sufficient time to plan for vehicle replacement.

There was a call for the timescales in the draft policy to be extended to permit drivers and vehicle owners as much time as possible to enable them to prepare for purchasing cleaner vehicles.

The Committee acknowledged the responses of the consultation by extending the original deadline for the introduction of the policy to allow drivers and vehicle owners as long as possible to change their vehicles (where necessary), but still ensure that the deadline will not compromise Birmingham's need to achieve European air quality standards in the shortest possible time. The Committee also adopted the absolute minimum standard of Euro 4 for petrol engines whereas the policy that we consulted on proposed a higher minimum standard of Euro 5.

The Committee agreed to extend the lifespan of the 65 hackney carriages that have been converted to LPG under the BCC Scheme until December 2025. This decision recognises the fact that these vehicles have had to undergo a very rigorous mechanical and structural test before being given approval to be converted to LPG, making them of a better standard than other comparable hackney carriages. It maximises the benefit from the financial investment that has gone into each vehicle, but will be subject to the vehicles having to pass a strict annual safety assessment.

What will this mean for you?

For drivers and vehicle owners, you will need to check the emission standard of your vehicle to determine whether it meets the relevant standard. As a rough guide, Euro 4 petrol vehicles started to be sold in 2006 and Euro 6 diesel vehicles started to be sold in 2015. If your vehicle does not meet the relevant standard you will need to consider your options.

Options — Changing your Vehicle

This is the most expensive option for drivers, but if your vehicle is very old it might be that you were already planning to replace it between now and 2020. When buying a replacement vehicle you need to ensure that it is at least Euro 4 if it is petrol or Euro 6 if it is diesel.

Birmingham wants to encourage taxi and private hire drivers to drive the cleanest vehicles possible. Ideally that means electric or hybrid (also referred to as Zero Emission Capable (ZEC) Vehicles and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV).

Our emissions policy for the next 10 years is still being developed. We are consulting with trade representatives on proposals before we consult more widely, but we will be asking the Licensing & Public Protection Committee to set higher standards for the future as we encourage the move from diesel and petrol to electric. For this reason, if you are considering buying a new vehicle buy the cleanest technology that you can afford.

Birmingham City Council will soon begin installing a network of 197 electric recharging points around the city solely for the use of taxis and private hire vehicles. They will be located in the city centre, in suburban areas, and at a new energy park which is being built at Tyseley.

Engine Sizes

Our policy in Birmingham requiring private hire vehicles to have engine sizes of at least 1.6 litres has been removed as it was no longer consistent with our ambition to improve air quality and does not enable us to license electric vehicles. The new policy removes the requirement for a minimum engine size and allows us to license electric and hybrid vehicles whilst retaining the dimensional standards that apply to private hire vehicles to prevent very small vehicles being licensed, but without any restriction on minimum engine sizes, enabling more fuel efficient vehicles to be licensed.

Help for Drivers

- Government plug-in grants of up to £4,500 for purchasers of new electric and hybrid vehicles and up to £7,500 towards the cost of electric taxis are available
- The Government's Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme will fund up to 75% (capped at £500 including VAT) to pay for the installation of a dedicated domestic recharging unit.
- Individual vehicle manufacturer scrappage schemes for drivers replacing older vehicles with newer cleaner vehicles.
- LEVC (formerly LTC) offers a Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) scheme for taxi drivers to spread the cost of its new TX electric taxi and is also making second hand TX4 vehicles (with Euro 6 diesel engines) available on a PCP scheme.
- We have introduced a dual badge for hackney carriage drivers to enable them to drive private hire vehicles. Hackney drivers who do not want to invest in a replacement hackney carriage will have the option of becoming a private hire driver where there is a much wider pool of suitable vehicles available to them.

Enforcement of a Clean Air Zone

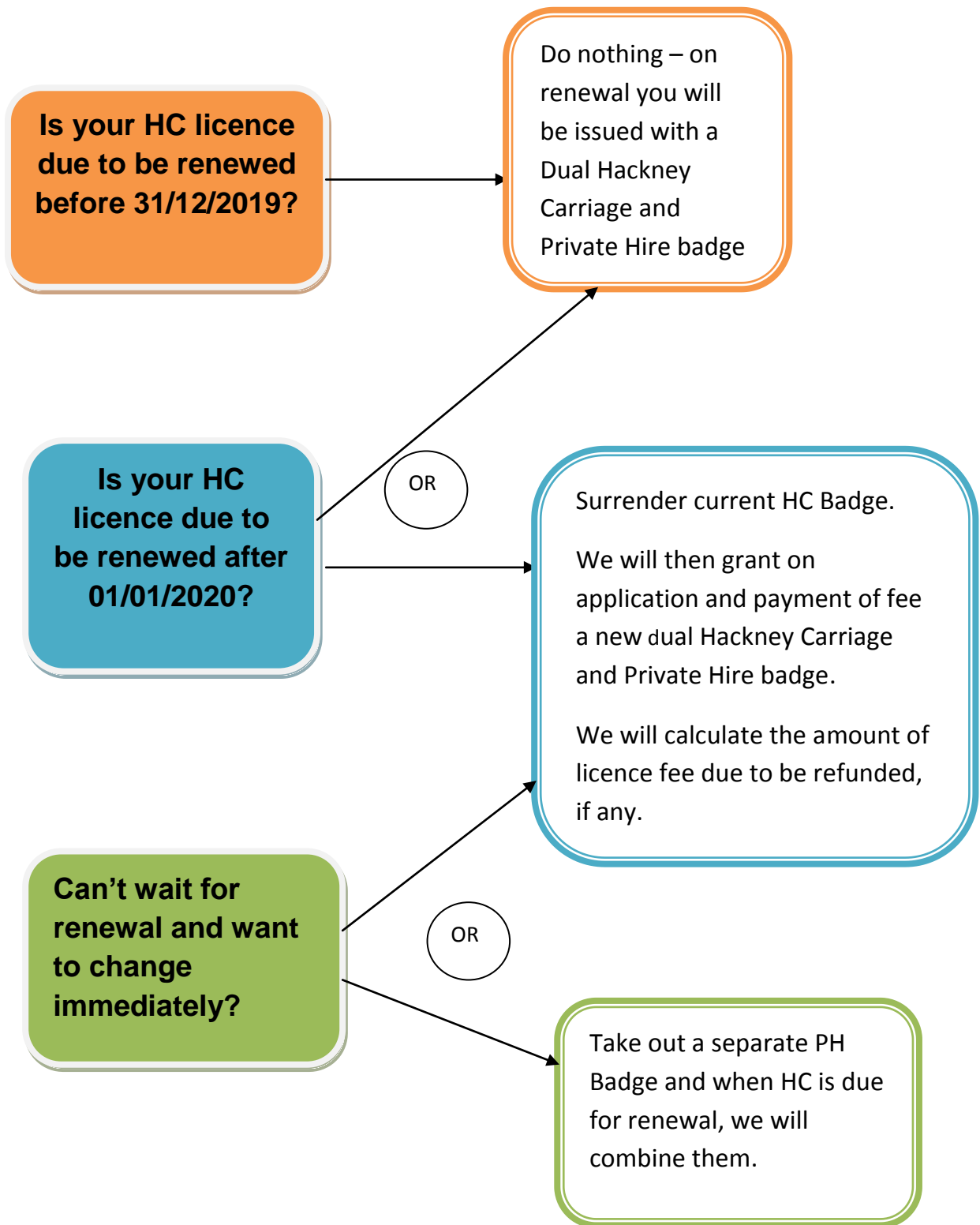
The Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in Birmingham will apply to taxis, private hire vehicles, heavy and light goods vehicles and buses and coaches. Its location will depend on the outcome of air quality monitoring to identify where air quality does not meet standards set by the EU Air Quality Directive. It will be enforced by Automatic Number Plate (ANPR) cameras, but it will apply to taxis and private hire vehicles regardless of where they are licensed. This means that vehicles which work in Birmingham that are licensed by other local authorities will need to meet our CAZ emission standards or pay a penalty charge when they enter the CAZ.

Future Emissions Policy..

In November a report was presented to Licensing and Public Protection Committee. It sets out suggestions to deal with hackney carriage vehicles in particular and proposes that officers should consult on the suggested recommendations contained in this report. This will be subject to public consultation which will consider the medium to long-term emission standards and age policies for licensed vehicles.

The report can be found on the licensing webpages.

DUAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE BADGES



For options 2 & 3 If the drivers DBS or medical are over 12 months old they will need to provide a new one. If the driver is signed up to the DBS update service only a new medical will be required.

A private hire knowledge test will NOT be required of any hackney carriage driver that wishes to take out a PH Badge.