

TAXI FORUM

You are invited to the next meeting of the Taxi Forum, taking place on the **18TH OCTOBER 2010 AT 18:00 HRS** at the **ORIEL HOUSE HOTEL, ST ASAPH**. Officers will update you on the results of the recent vehicle testing consultation. Licensing would be grateful if you could inform the Licensing Team if you are attending the Forum.

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Driver Knowledge Test

You will remember that in the last issue of the Taxi Newsletter there was an article proposing to implement a Driver Knowledge Test for all new and existing drivers. A report was submitted to the Licensing Committee on the 23rd June 2010, where Members considered and approved same. The knowledge test will cover the existing Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Conditions, knowledge of local geography, location of hackney ranks and tariffs, numeracy and customer care skills, Highway Code and routine vehicle maintenance.

On your next renewal of your driver licence you will be invited to make an appointment to take your knowledge test. You will receive an information pack with sample questions. The test is free if you pass it first or second time, you will then have to pay £15 per test. If you are unfortunate enough to have been unsuccessful in passing the test after 6 months you will be referred to the Licensing Committee. We appreciate that there is a wealth of experience and knowledge amongst licensed drivers. We therefore do not expect to refer many drivers to the Licensing Committee, as the test questions are all aimed around things you should already know as a licensed driver.

If you are worried or concerned about taking this test, please do not hesitate to contact the Licensing Team, in confidence, to discuss your concerns.

Testing Station Licensing Regime and vehicle specification relating to age of vehicle

You will have all received, during August, a questionnaire on proposals to change the existing compliance testing regime and vehicle specification relating to age of vehicles. Licensing hope that you dedicate some time to completing and returning the questionnaire.

The full results of the consultation will be disclosed and discussed at the next **Taxi Forum** on the **18th October 2010**. The results of the consultation will of course have to be taken back to our next Licensing Committee in December for Members consideration.

Ranks

Rank space throughout the county is extremely limited, and is compounded by some members of the trade who believe themselves to be exempt to road traffic regulations.

Hackney Carriage legislation and the Council's licensing conditions make clear the actions a licensed driver should take when plying for hire on any street within the controlled district of Denbighshire and when not actually hired.

Ranks

A driver must proceed to a hackney stand appointed under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or other Highways Regulation.

If a stand at the time of the arrival, is occupied by the full number of Hackney Carriages authorised to occupy the stand, the driver should proceed to another stand where a space is available.

Upon arriving at a stand not already occupied by the full number of Hackney Carriages authorised to occupy it, the Hackney Carriage is to be manoeuvred immediately behind the Hackney Carriage/s on the stand and facing in the same direction.

When a Hackney Carriage is either hired or leaves the stand, all subsequent Hackney Carriages must move up to ensure space is made available for further Hackney Carriages to ply for hire.

The practice of hanging off the back of ranks and taking fare when other Hackney Carriage drivers have legally ranked and plied for hire may lead to action being taken against the drivers of those Hackney Carriages acting in this manner.

As per section 64 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

UPDATE ON OTHER REPORTS TAKEN TO LICENSING COMMITTEE 23RD JUNE 2010

Driver Point System

You will remember that in the last issue of the Taxi Newsletter you were informed that a report was being submitted to the Licensing Committee on proposals to introduce a "point system" for licensed drivers. Members felt that Licensing and the Legal Department should liaise closely before introducing such a system and resolved to defer pending full consultation

Hackney Carriage Fares and Charges

Members of the Licensing Committee resolved to increase the fare structure subject to full consultation being undertaken. This has now taken place and therefore as of the 1st September 2010 the proposed fares and charges came into effect. All Hackney Carriage Proprietors have been issued with the new fares and charges and should have now had their meters calibrated accordingly. Proprietors should note that Meters should only contain the NEW tariffs as set by the Council.

Taxi Marshalls

Due to the recent success of employing Taxi Marshalls at Ranks during busy periods e.g. World Cup matches, we will once again be employing Marshalls on six key dates over the festive period. We will be advertising these dates nearer the time.

The feedback from Taxi drivers has been very positive, to name a few, you felt that the presence of Marshalls at ranks improved the behaviour of customers and your personal safety whilst acting as a driver was protected.

TOOTING OF HORNS

It has come to the attention of Licensing that some of you are unaware of Section 112 of the Highway Code relating to the use of your car horn. We would advise that you familiarise yourself with this section of the Highway Code (extract below for ease of reference), as it is causing some annoyance and disturbance to residents. You are further reminded that if you are picking up a fare please do not toot your horn to inform your passengers that you have arrived!

Section 112 of Highway Code

*The horn. Use only while your vehicle is moving and you need to warn other road users of your presence. Never sound your horn aggressively. You **MUST NOT** use your horn;*

Whilst stationary on a road

When driving in a built-up area between the hours of 11.30 pm and 7.00 am, except when another road user poses a danger while stationary on the road

Seatbelts

Are you aware of your obligation as a driver of a motor vehicle as to the law on wearing seatbelts? For those of you that are unsure, please find details below:

The law - seat belts and child restraints

The law requires that drivers and passengers aged 14 and over in cars, vans and other commercial vehicles must wear a seatbelt if available. As a driver you are responsible for ensuring that anyone under the age of 14 wears a seat belt or use an appropriate child restraint as required in the regulations.

Exceptions to the rules

In limited circumstances, children can travel without the correct child restraint.

1) In a licensed taxi or licensed private hire vehicle. If the correct child restraint is not available then, in the rear seat only, children under 3 may travel unrestrained. Children aged 3 years and over must use an adult seat belt.

As a driver of a licensed taxi you are exempt from wearing a seatbelt "while it is being used for seeking hire, or answering a call for hire, or carrying a passenger for hire"

As a driver of a Private Hire Vehicle you are exempt from wearing a seatbelt "while the vehicle is being used to carry a passenger for hire".

If you are a School Contract Operator the following condition applies:

"Suppliers shall provide booster cushions or seats conforming to UN ECE44.03 standard or R44.04 for use by small children to ensure their safe use of seat belts. A "small child" is defined as one from 15 kg upwards or one from 22 kg up to reaching the height limit of 135cm. It shall be the driver's responsibility to ensure he has sufficient booster cushions for the number of small children travelling. Contractors shall ensure Drivers are trained to assess the type of restraint appropriate to the small child and Contract Vehicle and to fit them correctly."

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is important and a condition of your licence that we hold your up to date address.

Please inform the licensing team of any change in address as soon as possible. This will help keep you up to date and avoid having letters or reminders sent to the wrong address.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Drivers of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles must visibly WEAR their driver badge
2. If a rank is full then you should proceed to the next available rank.
3. Unlawfully plying for hire is standing on a street other than a rank.
4. Private Hire Vehicles should not be approached on a street by customers or flagged down by a customer.

We have engaged an additional Taxi Enforcement Officer to report any breaches of the above to the Licensing Manager.

MOBILE PHONES

It is illegal to use a mobile phone whilst driving. The penalties are a £60 fine and 3 penalty points on the DVLA driver's licence. A driver can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free device if they are not in proper control of the vehicle. Employers can also be prosecuted if they require employees to make or receive calls while driving. There are a few exemptions:

1. A driver may call 999 or 112 in response to a genuine emergency
2. Two-way radios are not covered by the above offence.

COMPLAINTS

The council aims to respond to any complaints within 10 days of receipt.

Please submit any complaints you may have, in writing, to:

Licensing Services, Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl LL18 3DP

Or alternatively in email to licensing@denbighshire.gov.uk

Greener Driving Tips:

- Drive away immediately when starting from cold – idling to heat the engine wastes fuel and causes rapid engine wear.
- Keep an eye on your revolution counter – changing up gears before 2,500rpm (petrol) and 2,000rpm (diesel) saves on fuel and engine wear.
- Anticipate road conditions and drive smoothly. Hard acceleration, sharp braking and aggressive driving all use more fuel.
- Slow down! Especially on motorways – fuel efficiency decreases rapidly after 60mph. Minimum emissions occur between 40 and 60mph and increase with higher speeds. Driving at 80mph rather than 70mph uses 10–15% more fuel.
- Using air conditioning reduces fuel efficiency and so significantly increases fuel consumption (up to 10% in urban driving).
- Regular maintenance, such as keeping the engine tuned, will reduce emission. Also, tyres inflated to the correct pressures will lengthen their life, make the car safer and reduce greenhouse emissions by 5%. Underinflated tyres are dangerous and can increase fuel consumption by up to 3%.
- If you're stuck in a jam or even at lights, switch off! Cutting the engine will save fuel and stop emissions, and restarting the engine **uses less energy than 10 seconds of idling.**

LICENSING TEAM DETAILS

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|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| LICENSING MANAGER | - Roly Schwarz | |
| SENIOR LICENSING OFFICER | - Jo Thomas | 01824 706451 |
| | - Nicky Jones | 07771 512 556 |
| LICENSING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER | - Thomas Blake | 01824 706382 |
| LICENSING SUPPORT OFFICER'S | - Stephen Tomes | 01824 706311 |
| | - Emma Anthony | 01824 706342 |

Licensing are now also part of the newly formed Community Enforcement Team, which has an additional 7 Officers dedicated to enforcement matters, to include CCTV, Community Enforcement and Licensing.

Russell House
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Rhyl
LL18 8DP
01824 706342
licensing@denbighshire.gov.uk
www.denbighshire.gov.uk/licensing

