

New vehicle into the hackney carriage or private hire trade guidance notes

There are key differences between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles which impacts on whether or not Crawley Borough Council will licence a vehicle. It is your responsibility to check that the vehicle meets the council's required standards. The primary purpose of the licensing regime is public safety.

You are advised to [read the council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy](#) as this sets out the framework for decision making.

Hackney carriage vehicle specifications are listed in Appendix A of the [Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy](#)

Private hire vehicle specifications are listed in Appendix E of the [Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy](#)

Before you buy

These are the key points to consider before you buy a licenced vehicle.

Age

Vehicles must be no older than four years at the time of initial licensing.

Vehicles older than four years, with an average annual mileage of less than 30,000, may be considered. Any such application must be accompanied by the original MOT or mechanical compliance certificates or other suitable documents, such as a service history, in order to verify the vehicle mileage as genuine. Vehicles with modified mileage are not permitted.

The age of a vehicle is calculated from the date of first registration of the vehicle.

The maximum age permitted for a vehicle is 11 years from the date of registration.

Colour

Colour wrapping of vehicles is not permitted.

Hackney carriage vehicles must be all white in colour.

Private hire vehicles should be any other dark colour but not silver or any other light colour as this could cause confusion to the travelling public. Seek advice from the Taxi Licensing Service if you are not sure.

Engine size

Engines must be 1400 cc, as defined as 1.4 litre engine size by manufacturer or electric or hybrid equivalent.

Emissions

Consider vehicle emissions as the council is working toward minimum standards of at least Euro 6 or above. To secure vehicle longevity, it is worth considering that petrol and diesel vehicles will be phased out in the near future in favour of electric and hybrid vehicles to meet local and central government targets.

Things to consider when looking to licence a vehicle

Its important to cross check this information with the council's policy which may change from time to time. [Read the council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy for more information.](#)

The primary purpose of the licensing regime is public safety. The onus is on a licensed driver to ensure vehicles are fit for purpose, safe and able to comply with all licensing requirements.

[Visit the DVLA's MOT history of a vehicle website](#) to:

- find a vehicle's mileage history and relevant MOT history. Drivers should confirm accurate mileage (without any type of modification) and also make sure it meets with the council's policy.
- check for outstanding vehicle recalls and decide whether you wish to proceed. The primary purpose of the licensing regime is public safety
- check vehicle emissions status and date of first registration to make sure it meets with council policy.

You must confirm the vehicle has never suffered significant damage or been written off, and in particular Category S. You may be asked to provide an HPI check and other documentation to confirm this.

Confirm it is not licensed with any other council, as Crawley Borough Council will not licence a vehicle already licensed with another council.

Size

- Does the vehicle meet the council's size requirements in terms of seat space, leg room, head room, customer comfort and luggage space? [Read the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy to find out more.](#)
- There are differences between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. Be aware that there can be some differences depending on the age and model of the car, so you may be asked to present the vehicle to an officer for inspection before it is licensed if an assessment is needed. [Read the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy to find out more.](#)
- See if the vehicle is the make and model of a vehicle already licensed by Crawley Borough Council as this is a good indicator that it may be licensed.
- Whilst some conversions of hackney carriage vehicles by authorised organisations may be permitted, please check with the Taxi Licensing Service before progressing.
- No other modifications to the vehicle of any sort are permitted. This includes adding window tint, engine modifications or replacements, spoilers, modified exhausts, raised number plates or modifications to the genuine mileage of the vehicle.
- The vehicle must be able to transport a minimum of four and a maximum of eight passengers.
- There should be adequate luggage space for the number of passengers specified on the licence, especially in the case of hackney carriages.
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles should be purpose built and designed specifically for that purpose.

Seats

1. Vehicle seats must have the following specifications:
 - (a) The rear seat of the vehicle must be a minimum of 1.22 meters long (405 millimetres, 16 inches per person)
 - (b) All seats must be fitted with fully operational seat belts
 - (c) The number of passenger seats must remain as stated on the vehicle licence
 - (d) There must be no alteration to the seating configuration without notifying the council
 - (e) All seats must be forward or rear facing

- (f) All vehicles must be able to seat all passengers in comfort with sufficient legroom for all passengers
 - (g) The seat covering must be clean and in a good state of repair
2. The vehicle and its fittings must, when being presented for inspection and at all times during when it is licensed and available for hire:
 - (a) be safe
 - (b) be tidy
 - (c) be clean
 - (d) comply with all relevant statutory requirements applicable to the class of vehicle to which it belongs including, but without prejudice to the Motor Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations which currently apply.
 3. The vehicle must be maintained throughout the term of the vehicle licence to a high standard of appearance to the complete satisfaction of the council. [Read the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy for more information.](#)
 4. Some sport vehicle models have two very defined seats at the back with only a small table like seat in the middle. These can measure the required 48 inches across the back but with only space realistically for two passengers. These would not be approved.

This means that the vehicle may not be suitable for licensing or you would only be licensed for a smaller number of maximum passengers at any one time. Each case will be looked at on its merits and authorised officers will determine the case.

Seating configurations in vehicles may also alter the number of passengers permitted and result in the vehicle being licensed for a lower number of passengers.

Useful links

[Check if a vehicle is taxed - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Get vehicle information from DVLA - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Check the MOT history of a vehicle - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy](#)