



St Albans Licensing

Newsletter

December 2020

Consultation: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

As you will be aware the Licensing Team are currently consulting on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. The consultation is open until Tuesday 12 January 2021.

This draft policy brings all the information together in one place, as well as updating our approach as a result of changes to national guidance. The Department for Transport have informed all local authorities that they must have regard to the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards. These standards have greatly influenced this Policy. You can view these standards at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards>

This is your chance to have your say. If you have any comments on the policy please email licensing@stalbans.gov.uk. Please note that all responses must be received no later than midnight Tuesday 12 January 2021.

You can view the consultation document at:

<https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/consultations>

All responses during the consultation will be considered and incorporated into the Policy where appropriate. A summary of all responses will be included in the Report to Elected Members during the Committee process. The final Policy will be determined by the Elected Members at the Licensing & Regulatory Committee on 26 January 2021.

Please note that where responses include personal details in the body of the response this information may be subject to publication or disclosure.

Tax checks on licence renewal applications

From 4 April 2022 an applicant who wishes to renew a licence will need to carry out a tax check. We will need to obtain confirmation from HMRC that the applicant has completed the check before being able to consider their renewed licence application.

Travelling with confidence



Watford Borough Council has created a new 'quality assurance' mark for transport operators in Watford. This mark is designed to reassure passengers that when they use hackney carriage or private hire vehicles in the area, the right controls are in place to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

St Albans Council will be introducing this program within the immediate future. We will write to all licence holders once the program is live.

As part of the programme, and to qualify for the confidence mark, all St Albans based licence holders receive specialist infection control and risk assessment training and, for those who meet the strict standards required, the council is making a grant available for the installation of a passenger safety screen. Once drivers have successfully completed the programme, they will be awarded the mark to display in their vehicles as a clear sign to customers they can use the hackney carriage or private hire vehicles with confidence.

Vehicle renewals during the Pandemic

Due to Covid-19 many drivers are currently working on expired plates. This is due to them having renewed during the period where the council has been closed. All vehicles which have been renewed during this time can continue to work with their expired plates, as long as they have received their paper licence from the council.

We will begin to contact drivers who have renewed their vehicle licences during this time in the coming weeks to arrange a time for them to collect their current vehicle plate.

When invited in we ask that you park your vehicle in the vehicle inspection bay of the top floor of the carpark. An officer will meet you to remove the previous plate and attach the current plates. Please ensure you have a mask with you for the plate hand over.

COVID-19

While working during these uncertain times you need to take steps to protect yourselves from potential infection, and to protect any customers.

If anyone suffers from flu like symptoms they should follow the government advice to self-isolate for at least 10 days. For any shared households (including flats or other spaces) where another person has flu like symptoms, all people within the household should all self-isolate together for at least 14 days. This is to account for the incubation period.

The symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

The flu like symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can include:

- a new and persistent cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath
- loss of taste or smell

There are things you can do to help stop viruses spreading:

- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately
- wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- dry hands after hand washing with disposable towels
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- detergent based disinfectants can be used with disposable non- latex gloves, and disposable cloths to clean hand contact points in the vehicle, such as steering wheel, hand break, gear stick, dials, and door handles;
- you should consider ways in which you can reduce contact with customers where possible, for example, avoid shaking hands, and using a contactless card payment system.

A reminder for all drivers that they should be wearing a face covering while working. All passengers are also required to wear a face covering while in a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle. While some people are exempt from wearing a face covering, they are not required to provide evidence.