



# **St Albans Licensing**

## **Newsletter**

### **June 2020**

#### **Partitions in Taxis**

We are happy for drivers to get partitions, however because of safety our preference is for partitions that separate the back of the vehicle to the front. These types of partitions are the most effective and safest option and therefore it is our normal policy to recommend these if you wish to install a partition. We have concerns about the safety of the partitions that isolate the driver alone. If you wish to install this type of partition we will require you to provide us with sufficient evidence that satisfies us that the partition will be safely installed and not obstruct anything.

It is important to ensure that all partitions are installed securely to reduce potential distractions or movement. You must make sure nothing is obstructing the gear stick/ hand break/ controls or obscuring view from windscreen/windows. This must not have an effect on side curtains, side seat air bags, seat belt restraint systems or any other safety systems if these are fitted.

Our main concern with partitions is if the partition is safe and secure. We would require some form of paperwork that would show it was installed correctly. It is vital to ensure that the partition does not restrict access to the doors, or the functionality of the doors. It is also important to ensure that passengers have access to the windows and are able to open them if they wish to.

Another thing you would need to keep in mind is that you would need to inform your insurance of any change. While some insurance companies may not have any issues, some might which might affect your cover.

We would ask that if you did have this installed for you to send photos over once it has been completed so that we can update our records.

There is currently no guidance on partition screens for taxis, however if this was to change it may be possible that the screen you are looking for may not be permitted. This is just something you should keep in mind.

## Switch on to SWITCHING OFF

People are justifiably concerned about the impacts of air quality on their health and the climate. We know that vehicles emit microscopic particles and chemicals that do damage to peoples bodies when they are inhaled.

We receive regular complaints from the public about taxi drivers who sit in their stationary vehicles idling their engines. Idling engines create a noticeable impact on surrounding air quality. Not only does it affect others around your car, but it also puts your own health at risk as in-car air pollution is often higher because of the reduced air flow inside the vehicle.

As a taxi driver who is licenced by the Local Authority, we ask you to take a responsible approach to doing your work in our District. Please switch off your engine when you are stationary.

Lets work together for cleaner air.



## Drivers granted 7 month DVLA photocard licence extension

To make it easier for drivers who need to update their DVLA photocard licence with a new photo at the end of the 10 years validity, DVLA photocard driving licences that expire between 1 February 2020 and 31 August 2020 will be automatically extended for 7 months from the expiry date.

Drivers do not need to take any action as the extension will be automatic and they will be sent a renewal reminder before their 7 month extension ends.

If a driver has already applied online to renew their DVLA photocard, this will be processed as normal. If they have already sent a paper application to renew their DVLA photocard there will be delays in processing, but the 7 month extension will apply in the meantime.

This extension applies to the DVLA photocard renewal date. It does not apply where a driver's entitlement to drive is due to expire if they wish to continue to hold a valid licence - they need to renew this the normal way.

## Social Distancing at Hackney Carriage Ranks

We have had complaints from members of the public that drivers at Hackney carriage ranks are not social distancing. We understand that there are longer waiting times currently for fares, however you still need to follow government guidance of social distancing.

The Government is permitting more social activity outside. You can spend time outdoors with members of your own household and you can also meet in a gathering of up to six people you do not live with, provided you maintain social distancing and stay 2 metres apart.

It is important that everyone continues to act responsibly in public places, as the large majority have done to date.

If you need to be near other people you should avoid physical contact, try to face away from other people, and keep the time you spend near other people as short as possible. Be aware of the surfaces you or others touch.

You should ensure you keep a two metre distance from others, and wash your hands regularly. You should wear a face covering in an enclosed space where social distancing isn't possible and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

At all times, you should follow the government guidance on self-isolation if they or anyone in their household shows coronavirus symptoms. You should not go into work if you are showing symptoms, or if you or any of your household are self-isolating.