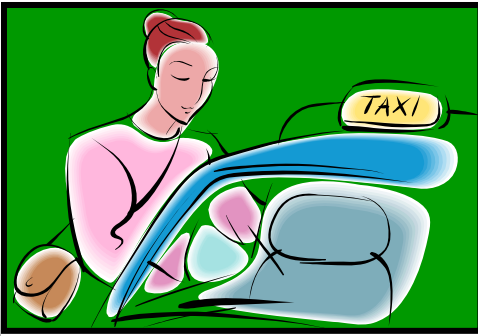


Private Hire Vehicles Plying for Hire



We are receiving complaints that private hire vehicles are plying for hire in certain locations which include Cwmbran Railway Station and outside of Wetherspoons (John Fielding) public house in Cwmbran Town Centre. This is not permitted unless the vehicle is licensed as a hackney carriage (taxi). Private hire may only pick up a fare which is pre-booked, they may not hang about in locations where they may pick up passing trade, this right to stand and ply for hire is reserved for hackney carriages.

If a private hire vehicle is seen parked in any location that a member of the public would believe that it is being made available for hire, the driver is committing a criminal offence, contrary to Section 45 Town

Police Clauses Act 1847, there is no need for the council officers to prove that a fare has actually been accepted to prove this offence. If a private hire vehicle is seen parked at any location for a period of time where it is likely to attract custom, the offence is complete.

Officers will be proactively monitoring locations within the county borough where this is seen to be a problem and will prosecute any driver/operator that is identified and that may result in a fine. We will then review any licence granted to that driver and/or operator which may result in that licence being suspended or revoked.

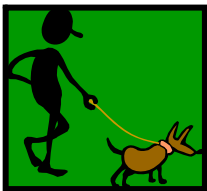
Smoking in Vehicles

A reminder that your licensed vehicle is an enclosed premises for the purposes of the **No Smoking legislation**, and that applies at all times whether the vehicle is being used for business or not. We are still finding that drivers are smoking in the vehicles despite our information on the subject. If you smoke in your vehicle you may receive a fixed penalty notice for the offence. It is also an offence for you to allow customers to smoke in the vehicle.

Drivers are also reminded that it is a requirement of the smoke-free legislation that all vehicles display the required smoke-free signage. If you need additional signage for your vehicle, please contact a member of the licensing team as we have a limited supply for your use.



Assistance Dogs



A reminder to all drivers, you cannot refuse to take an assistance dog in your vehicle or you will be in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. If you have a medical condition that would be affected by contact with dogs you can apply for an exemption certificate on production of a statement from your doctor. Information leaflets are available from the licensing office. Assistance dogs are guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs and any other dog trained to assist a disabled person. It is your responsibility to check.

Identification Plates and Door Signs



We have changed suppliers of the identification plates and door signs to MOGO which is a system used by most authorities in the UK. The door signs will appear much the same as before but with extra information.

The plates, which must be permanently fixed to the rear of the vehicles, are slightly wider but are constructed in the same way that registration plates are made and therefore much more robust. The way that you have them attached to your vehicle is up to you as long as it is a permanent fixing, they can be riveted, attached with high quality double sided tape or if you prefer MOGO supply a mounting bracket which is specific to your vehicle and attaches to the vehicle by removing the registration plate and mounting behind the plate using the same mounting as the registration plate. The bracket then protrudes from the vehicle either below alongside or above the registration plate where the plate is attached.

These attachments are not provided by the council but can be ordered through our approved testing stations for them to fit as before. If you do not need new plates but wish to upgrade to the new ones we will replace them at your expense.

Fees

Following the proposed fee increase that was advertised for implementation on the 1st May 2009 a number of representations were made objecting to the increase. The increase was reviewed by the Executive Member for the service area on the 13th May 2009 and a revised fee structure was approved which reduced the increase for vehicles and operators licences and set a scaled fee for plates and door signs. It was also agreed to delay the implementation date for the increase until the 1st July 2009. The revised fees are:

SERVICE/ITEM	CURRENT FEE 2008/09	ORIGINAL FEE AGREED FOR 2009/10	REVISED FEE FROM 1/7/09
Hackney Carriages & Private Hire Vehicles (Including 2 tests per year)	£225	£248	£242
Wheelchair Accessible Private Hire Vehicles & Hackney Carriages (Including 2 tests per year)	£170	£179	£179
Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driving Licence (Including DVLA check)	£85	£94	£94
CRB check; the appropriate fee at the time of application will be charged at the rate set by the provider Which is currently	£37	£37	£36
Operators Licence 5 or less cars	£246	£270	£264
Operators Licence more than 5	£445	£490	£478
Transfer of vehicle	£26	£29	£29
Roundels and Plates (only when required)	£35	£39	£39 set of 3 £33 for 2 items £27 for 1 item
Replacement Licence/Badge	-	£10	£10

OPERATION FARE

During January and February 2009, an Operation between Torfaen Licensing Department, Heddlu Gwent Police and VOSA took place in Torfaen. Licensed vehicles were stopped and inspected on the roadside, others were directed for a full MOT test to the testing station at New Inn, Pontypool. As well as the mechanical inspection, both vehicle and drivers licences were checked to ensure all licences were current and that vehicles were insured correctly and had up to date tests. The results were as follows:



79 vehicle stops in total
Approx 20 vehicles were tested by VOSA

8 PG9 notices were issued (meaning defects were found which resulted in either the vehicle being taken off the road immediately or a notice served giving the driver 7 days to fix the problem)

Other defects found included:

No first aid kit and/or fire extinguisher found in the vehicle, first aid kits and fire extinguishers not marked with the vehicle identification number or registration number, defective lights, defective tyres, drivers badges not displayed as required, driver's badges not in the possession of the driver.

An unlicensed driver was also found to be driving a licensed vehicle. You are reminded that once a vehicle is licensed as a Private Hire or Hackney Carriage vehicle, it is always a licensed vehicle, meaning that any person who drives it, must be in possession of a driving licence issued by the same Authority that licences the vehicle.

This also applies to when the vehicle is being used for personal use. For Private Hire vehicles all three licences must be issued by the same Authority, that being the Operating licence, the vehicle licence and the driver's licence

First Aid Kits

The following are suggested contents for the first aid box; equivalent alternatives will be considered acceptable.



The kits must be permanently marked with either the registration number or the licence number of the vehicle where it is placed and must remain in the vehicle at all times.

We will also be updating our policy with regards to the requirements for first aid kits in vehicles, basically you need to have a basic first aid kit as the vehicle is your workplace and there are suitable kits ready to buy over the counter that comply with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommendations from major chemists. The contents of the kit as recommended by the HSE must include as a minimum the following items:

- Guidance leaflet on basic first aid
- 20 individually wrapped sterile dressings (assorted sizes)
- 2 sterile eye pads with attachments
- 4 individually wrapped triangular bandages
- 6 safety pins
- 6 medium individually wrapped sterile un-medicated wound dressings (12cm x 12 cm)
- 2 large individually wrapped sterile un-medicated wound dressings (18cm x 18 cm)
- pair of disposable gloves

You must not keep any medicines or tablets in the first aid box

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

We have been notified that the recommendation in our policy with regard to fire extinguishers is out of date. BCF and HALON gasses are now illegal as they destroy the ozone gasses in our atmosphere; you must have these extinguishers disposed of safely by a BAFE approved fire extinguisher company. BAFE (British Approvals for Fire Equipment) is the industry standard for fire equipment manufacturers, maintenance and suppliers, their website www.bafe.org.uk

The law requires you to carry a minimum of 0.75kg dry powder extinguisher in your vehicles. All extinguishers must be marked with the current European standard BS EN3. These extinguishers can only be fitted if they have a current certificate that the unit has been serviced and tested, and this can be arranged through any BAFE business. Foam extinguishers are legal but less effective and larger therefore the council is requiring dry powder only.

The recommendation of fire safety experts including South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is that it should be a 1Kg dry powder extinguisher.



The council realise that 1 Kg is quite a large unit and as they must be fitted in the cab within easy access of the driver that may cause difficulties, therefore our recommendation is for a secure holder to prevent it moving around when the vehicle is being driven, they must be permanently marked with the vehicle registration or licence number, **do not engrave the cylinder**, use paint or other similar method, and it must remain in the vehicle at all times