

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles Testing Manual

This document is intended for the guidance for licence holders who are intending to present their vehicle for a test, and not as definitive test requirements. If in the Tester's opinion other items with regards to the vehicle are detrimental to passenger safety, the Tester may, after due explanation, fail the vehicle.

Anyone who wishes to complain about or is in dispute with any of the approved testing stations may contact the Licensing Team who will investigate the complaint. Complaints concerning the part of the test that checks the councils' conditions will be dealt with by the Licensing Team with reference to an expert if necessary. Complaints about the mechanical part of the test may be referred to DVSA if appropriate.

Version control		
Version	Date	Revisions
v1	1 October 2022	Document comes into force
v2	30 June 2026	Revised following adoption of new policy

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1. GENERAL

	Inspection / checks	Notes
1.1	Vehicle complies to all current MOT Regulations at time of test	Vehicles must pass <u>all</u> checks required the MOT test irrespective of whether a current MOT is held in respect of the vehicle
1.2	Check vehicle can carry no fewer than four passengers and no more than eight passengers	
1.3	Vehicles must be right hand drive and have at least four wheels	
1.4	Check for any evidence the vehicle has previously been written off; the councils will not license vehicles that have been classified as Category 'A' (whole vehicle to be crushed), 'B' (body shell to be crushed) or 'S' write offs (structural damage), or any vehicle with a 'Q' plate registration	

2. ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

NB Any failure to comply with all of the requirements in this section mean the vehicle will also be ineligible for a discounted licence fee

	Inspection / checks	Notes
2.1	Check that vehicles fitted with special facilities for disabled passengers post manufacture or those modified to be wheelchair-accessible post manufacture have been given DVSA approved certification	In the event of failure to provide suitable documentation drivers/owners should be referred to the relevant licensing authority
2.2	Passenger should be able to remain sitting in their wheelchair facing either forwards or backwards in the vehicle as recommended by the vehicle manufacturer or conversion company	Wheelchairs must never be carried facing sideways in a vehicle

2.3	Check necessary seatbelts, safety restraints and locking mechanisms are in place and in good working order	<p>The system and the devices used to secure a wheelchair to the vehicle shall comply with the relevant standards laid down in European Directive 76/115 EEC (as amended by 90/629 EEC) or the UK equivalent standard</p> <p>All wheelchair tracking must comply with European Standard UNECE Regulation 14 (EC Directive 76/115 EEC) or the UK equivalent standard</p> <p>Each wheelchair user shall be provided with a disabled-person seatbelt, which fastens to the structure of the vehicle either permanently or temporarily by use of approved fixings to the position of the wheelchair as required by (European Directive 76/115 EEC or the UK equivalent standard and Regulations 46 and 47 Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986)</p>
2.4	Check wheelchair access equipment (ramps or lifts) is fit for purpose	<p>Ramps must be present and fitted to prove they are safe and secure and must have visible reference to a safe working load of 250kg and certified to relevant British Standards</p> <p>Lifts should be operational and demonstrated to be so at test.</p> <p>All lifts must have a valid LOLER 98 certificate presented at time of inspection</p> <p>The wheelchair access equipment shall be fitted such that it terminates at the interior floor level to allow smooth entry/exit of the wheelchair</p> <p>A locking mechanism shall be fitted that holds the access door in the open position whilst in use</p>
2.5	The aperture of the door into which the access equipment is fitted shall have minimum clear headroom in its central third of 1220mm (48 inches), and the measurement shall be taken from the upper centre of the aperture to a point directly below on either the upper face of the fully raised platform or the upper face of the ramp fully deployed on level ground	

3. EXTERIOR OF THE VEHICLE

	Inspection / checks	Notes
3.1	The exterior of the bodywork, the underside of the vehicle and the engine compartment must be in a suitably clean condition to allow for proper inspection of these areas	
3.2	Check the operation of all external doors catches and locks to ensure that all doors can be easily opened and securely closed	
3.3	Check all doors to ensure that they are properly aligned and close easily	
3.4	Ensure door hinges are in good condition allowing free movement of the door and wind-checks to ensure that doors are held in place when fully opened	
3.5	Examine the rubber seals to every door for serious damage, looseness or absence	
3.6	Examine the external body panels and structure for evidence of corrosion, damage and/or unsatisfactory repairs which affect the appearance, performance, safety or mechanical fitness of the vehicle	Engineer's certification may be required to satisfy the vehicle examiner that repairs have been properly carried out
3.7	Check all external trim and fitments for security	
3.8	Examine the external paintwork for damage which adversely affects the appearance of the vehicle and check that all paintwork is of consistent colour and finish	All paintwork should conform to original manufacturer's specification as far as is practicably possible
3.9	Check that the nearside and offside door/wing mirrors are fitted to the vehicle in a secure manner and that they function	
3.10	Ensure that the front and rear bumpers are in good order (without damage) and are securely fixed to the vehicle	

3.11	The windows rear of the B-pillar must have a visible light transmission (VLT) of not less than 30 per cent	<p>Vehicles with an exemption from display of the plate are exempt from this requirement; you must confirm in the notes field that you have seen evidence of the exemption and if no evidence is presented, the test should be failed</p> <p>All vehicles with film on the rear windows which means the vehicle doesn't meet the required measurements are an automatic failure and the film must be removed</p> <p>If the vehicles have been given either a grandfather rights exemption (due to a previous incorrect pass by a garage) or a CCTV exemption, they will have a letter to confirm this which is vehicle-specific and when entering the test, you must include the letter reference in the notes field so we can verify the exemption (if they fail to present the letter, the test should be failed)</p> <p>You must include the tint readings in the notes field for any failures</p>
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4. SIGNAGE - PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

	Inspection / checks	Notes
4.1	Check the vehicle is not displaying a roof sign	
4.2	Check there is no external signage which consists of the words "TAXI" or "CAB" whether in the singular or plural or as part of another word or forming part of a word making up any business name of operator	
4.3	Check any external signage attached to the vehicle to ensure it does not protrude and is not loose	Any advertising on vehicles (other than for the firm the vehicle works for) requires approval from the licensing authority
4.4	Check that any signs affixed to the interior of the windscreen or any other glazing do not affect visibility	
4.5	Any meter fitted must not display a "for Hire" sign, and no "For Hire" sign should be displayed on the vehicle	

4.6	Check that the vehicle displays a 'No Smoking' sign in each compartment of the vehicle in which people can be carried	This must show the international no-smoking symbol at least 70mm in diameter
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5. SIGNAGE - HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

	Inspection / checks	Notes
5.1	Check roof sign in place and complies with requirements	<p>An aerodynamic triangular structure referred to by some sign manufacturers as 'streamline' or 'sloped' with long dimension 450mm (18 inches), base is 150mm (6 inches) and height is 150mm (6 inches)</p> <p>Must be connected to the taximeter and it be automatically controlled, and must be lit when the taximeter is not active or when the vehicle is plying for hire and not lit when the taximeter is in use or the vehicle is not available for hire</p> <p>White background with the relevant council's logo, measuring 125mm wide and 95mm high displayed on the far left of the front of the roof sign, the vehicle plate number must be displayed under the logo, the proprietor's surname or company name may be displayed in the remaining space, with nothing else on the front</p> <p>NB if the vehicle is a London style cab or other similar vehicle that has a built-in taxi roof sign, the council's logo, measuring 125 mm wide and 95mm high, must be displayed in both rear passenger door windows</p>
5.2	Check any external signage attached to the vehicle to ensure it does not protrude and is not loose	Any advertising on vehicles (other than for the firm the vehicle works for) requires approval from the licensing authority
5.3	Check that any signs affixed to the interior of the windscreen or any other glazing do not affect visibility	
5.4	Check that the vehicle displays a 'No Smoking' sign in each compartment of the vehicle in which people can be carried	This must show the international no-smoking symbol at least 70mm in diameter

6. LICENCE PLATES (HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE)

	Inspection / checks	Notes
6.1	Inspect the vehicle licence plate to the rear of the vehicle for signs of damage or excessive wear and ensure that the licence number is clearly legible and visible	All hackney carriages must display a rear licence plate at all times Some private hire vehicles have an exemption from displaying the plate, these vehicles will display smaller internal badges in the front and rear windows but they <u>must</u> carry their main plate in the boot of the vehicle for inspection
6.2	Examine the plate fixing to the vehicle to ensure that it is securely fixed and in a prominent position on the rear exterior of the vehicle	Plates fixed by temporary fixings such as Velcro [®] , magnets, double sided tape or cable ties are not acceptable Plates in the rear window/parcel shelf are not acceptable The plate should be fixed to the tailgate, rear panel or bumper, not the valance Plates may be fixed onto mounts or brackets and must be attached to such mounts using tamper evident clips or fixings Plates or brackets which cover part of the registration plate in breach of number plate regulations are not acceptable

7. TYRES AND SPARE WHEEL

	Inspection / checks	Notes
7.1	Check that all tyres and wheels are serviceable with no distorted or cracked rims and no damage to treads or sidewalls, and all tyres are inflated to the manufacturer's recommended pressures	If a car has tyres in a combination which conforms to current legal requirements (e.g. radial and cross ply) the carrying of one spare wheel/tyre cannot be accepted since it can only be used in limited circumstances - the vehicle must therefore fail the test even if the spare tyre is in good condition and matches one pair of the tyres fitted to the vehicle
7.2	Check the vehicle has <u>either</u> a spare wheel suitable for immediate use and properly maintained, with a jack and tools for changing the wheels all in good working order, or a	Temporary space saver spare is acceptable If locking wheel nuts are fitted check that the correct adaptor is in the

	complete and unused tyre inflation kit of the original manufacturer fit	vehicle
7.3	Check any spare wheel fixing bracket (or similar securing device) to ensure that the wheel is properly secured in the correct position	

8. BOOT/LUGGAGE AREA

	Inspection / checks	Notes
8.1	Examine the boot interior for evidence of damage, corrosion or water penetration	
8.2	Examine the boot floor covering to ensure that it is in good condition and offers adequate protection to luggage stored	
8.3	Examine the interior of the boot for accumulations of dirt, dust, grease, litter etc or staining of any surface with which luggage may come into contact	
8.4	Check the boot for the presence of containers of any flammable or corrosive material	Oil must be in a leak proof container
8.5	Check that estate cars are equipped with a guard to retain luggage within the rear compartment	
8.6	Check that adequate means are provided to secure luggage in the area provided in minibuses, e.g. compartment sub-divisions, netting or strapping	
8.7	Ensure that the vehicle boot lid opens, closes and locks properly, and that the opening mechanism adequately supports the lid when it is in the lifted position	
8.8	The boot size should be sufficient to accommodate the necessary luggage for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed, under normal operating conditions	

9. ENGINE COMPARTMENT

	Inspection / checks	Notes
9.1	Carry out visual inspection of the engine compartment for signs of oil or fuel leaks	The condition of all pipes, belts, hoses and wiring should be such that they will not impede the reliability of the vehicle being tested
9.2	Ensure that the battery is properly secured in position	
9.3	Examine visible wiring and electrical connectors for signs of wear or deterioration	
9.4	Check drive belts for signs of incorrect adjustment and/or deterioration	
9.5	Examine the engine mountings for signs of deterioration	
9.6	Ensure that the radiator is properly secured to the vehicle and check for signs of any leaks	
9.7	Examine the inner wing panels and suspension for any corrosion or deterioration	
9.8	Check the master cylinders for any signs of spillage or leakage of fluid	
9.9	Check the clutch mechanisms for correct operation	
9.10	Check the operation of the bonnet release catch	

10. INTERIOR OF VEHICLE

	Inspection / checks	Notes
10.1	Examine the floor and upholstery inside the vehicle for accumulation of dust, dirt, litter, general debris, staining or excessive wear	Vehicles that are dirty and/or smell unpleasant should be retested following a thorough valet NB drivers are not allowed to smoke in vehicles at any time
10.2	Remove any mats from the floor and examine the carpeting for signs of leakage of water into the vehicle	

10.3	Examine any mats to ensure that they are not worn or damaged	
10.4	Sit in each of the passenger seats to ensure that all seat cushions and back rests are in good condition and offer proper support to passengers	
10.5	Check that each passenger is able to exit the vehicle with ease in an emergency	Each passenger shall have direct access to a door without the need to remove or completely fold flat any other seating in order that passengers may access their seat easily and escape without delay in case of emergency; the council will consider vehicles that have seats that 'tilt' forward by a single operation, please refer to council for a decision
10.6	Examine all seats to ensure that they are properly secured to the vehicle; seat cushions must be firmly affixed to seat frames/bases	
10.7	Check all internal trim and fitments are present and are secure	
10.8	Check that all seats and internal trim materials meet the manufacturer's original specification and colour match throughout	Seats which do not meet the original specification will be accepted provided all seats coverings are of the same colour and pattern and are in keeping with other internal trim Seat covers will be accepted if properly fitted and of a quality, condition and colour which is in keeping with other internal trim Specialist custom seats and child seats will be accepted provided they are of an acceptable British Standard design and manufacture and fitted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions
10.9	Each passenger seat must have a width of at least 406mm (16 inches) measured across its narrowest part and must be fitted with a seat belt and no seats may be side facing	
10.10	Check the operation of the interior light within the vehicle, both the manual switch and the door operated switches	
10.11	Examine interior rear view mirror and ensure that it is securely fixed	

10.12	Check the operation of the heater/windscreen demister including rear screen heater	
10.13	Examine clutch and brake pedal rubbers for signs of excessive wear	
10.14	Check the operation of all window winders ensuring that they allow all windows to be fully lowered and raised easily	
10.15	Check the operation of all door release catches to ensure that doors can easily be opened from within the vehicle	
10.16	Ensure that child proof locks (if fitted) to the rear doors are in working order	
10.17	Where there is a CCTV system (which faces into the vehicle, i.e. not a dashcam), there should be signage in the vehicle to confirm who manages the system (data protection legislation)	Licence holder should have notified council prior to installation of system, ensure this is marked on report to council
10.18	The vehicle should display the card with information for customers about how to comment or complain so that it may be clearly read by passengers	This has been given out with the grant of a new licence since 1 February 2026 Vehicles which have not been licensed before will not have the card If card is behind sun-visor, not accepted as clearly on display
10.19	Advertisements are permitted on the interior of purpose-built hackney carriages on the underside of the tip up seats and across the bulkhead above the dividing glass partition only, and no advertisement may be placed on the dividing glass partition other than notices approved by the council; advertisements are not permitted on the interior of non-purpose-built hackney carriage vehicles or inside any private hire vehicles	

11. REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

	Inspection / checks	Notes
11.1	Emergency warning triangle marked with plate number	
11.2	Torch in working order and marked with plate number	
11.3	First aid kit in date and marked with plate number	
11.4	High visibility jacket or waistcoat marked with plate number	
11.5	Where a partition is fitted, a hearing loop must be in place	

12. ROAD TEST

	Inspection / checks	Notes
12.1	Check for any vibrations through the steering column or transmission	
12.2	Check that the steering is true, positive and tracks straight	
12.3	Check that the operation of the footbrake does not cause the vehicle to judder, or to pull the vehicle to the nearside or offside	
12.4	Listen for any unusual noise from the engine and transmission	
12.5	Check the clutch for correct operation	
12.6	Check operation of gear lever for excessive wear in the mechanism	
12.7	Observe the performance of the engine during the road test for signs of misfiring, lack of engine power etc, or any indication that the engine is not functioning in the correct manner	
12.8	Investigate and report any other matters which affect the fitness of the vehicle for use as a licensed vehicle	

13. METER CHECK (hackney carriage vehicles only)

	Inspection / checks	Notes
13.1	All hackney carriage vehicles shall be fitted with a taximeter compliant with the Measuring Instruments (Taximeters) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2304) or UKCA (UK Conformity Assessed) marked and in sound working condition	
13.2	All meters must be of the 'calendar' type to automatically change according to the wording of the council's agreed current maximum fare tariff or a lower tariff set by the operator	The maximum tariff is set by both Councils and the meter can be set at a lower level if preferred
13.3	Check that only the tariffs displayed in the vehicle are displayed on the taximeter	
13.4	Check the meter readings comply with the tariffs displayed by time and over a measured mile	Vehicles with inconsistent displayed tariffs/meter may require meter to be reset by a specialist and returned to compliance centre for checking and resealing
13.5	The meter must show the fare in plainly legible figures, and the meter must be securely fixed in such a position so that the fare recorded is visible to all passengers within the vehicle at all times and the figures shall be illuminated for this purpose whenever necessary	
13.6	In the case of electronic metering equipment fitted with printout facilities check the printout corresponds to the displayed tariff	Seal meter with appropriate tamper evident seal to prevent unauthorised adjustment
13.7	The tariff card must be fixed in such a position that it is visible to all passengers within the vehicle at all times, and must clearly display the vehicle licence number and the tariff in use by the vehicle	