

# **So you want to be a Combined Hackney Carriage Driver & Private Hire Driver**

## **Introduction**

So you are thinking of becoming a combined hackney carriage & private hire driver to work on a local circuit?

What do you need to know?

Before we get to the requirements of becoming a licensed driver there are some basics of working as a licensed driver you should consider. The financial rewards can be hard to find when driving a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle. It is a big financial commitment and the hours interfere with your social life.

## **How many hours will I need to work?**

As a combined hackney carriage & private hire driver you will need to look at working the morning and evening rush hours as well as every Friday and Saturday night in order to secure your best possible income. You will need to work in between the rush hours as well and the vast majority of drivers are working in the region of 70-90 hours per week. Pick any rank in the district and see how long a taxi is not moving and when it pulls away with a customer are they back within 30-45 minutes? The average fare for that type of trip is £4.

As a combined hackney carriage & private hire driver of a you can expect to spend a lot of time sitting on ranks waiting for a walk on customer or a radio job, you could be sitting in your vehicle for several hours at a time before you have a customer or if you are driving a private hire vehicle on a circuit you will spend time waiting at the office for a pre-booked job, a private hire vehicle cannot ply for hire or stop on a taxi rank.

Taxi and private hire driving is a customer focused service and if you have a clean vehicle and tidy appearance your chances of getting repeat customers are greatly increased. The drivers who tend to have a better income are those who put the effort into their appearance, their vehicles appearance and their attitude towards their customers. It pays to be customer focused, it does make the difference.

The information above is not to discourage you from your chosen profession but to give you a view of what you can realistically expect when you become a licensed driver.

## **How long will it take?**

This depends on the applicant; we as the Licensing Authority do not put a time limit on how long it takes to complete the procedure. As a rough guide most applicants take a minimum of three months to prepare and take the knowledge test.

The application process will start once we have received the completed forms together with the appropriate fee; we suggest that the required medical is not taken until close to the time you are confident in becoming a licensed driver. A licence will not be issued until all the required paperwork has been received. It is strongly advised that you do not commit yourself to any work until you have received your licence.

## **What do I need to know to apply for a combined hackney carriage & private hire licence?**

- Complete a combined hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence application form.
- Be over 21 years of age.
- Produce a full UK driving licence which has been held for a minimum of three years.
- Sign a mandate to check the validity of your driving licence.
- Produce a current passport or birth certificate.
- Provide four current passport sized photographs of yourself.

- Provide two referees who are known personally to the applicant and are not family members. If a referee replies back as a friend it will automatically disqualify them as a referee.
- Have a criminal record check carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau. If you have ever had a conviction or caution you must declare it on the form, you do not have to list the offence if it is a spent conviction. Any doubts please seek advice from the Hackney Carriage Staff. Failure to declare could result in your application being refused.
- Pass a Group 2 medical examination which will be carried out by your own GP and a fee is charged by them for this service.
- Must not have been convicted of three or more motoring offences during the previous three years.
- Must not have been convicted of a serious motoring offence during the previous three years.
- Must not have been cautioned by the Police for a criminal offence during the previous 12 months.
- Must not have been convicted of a criminal offence e.g. **theft**, **Possession of drugs** during the previous three years.
- Must not have been convicted of a serious criminal offence, e.g. **causing grievous bodily harm** or of a sexual offence during the previous seven years.
- Must not have been convicted of a criminal offence which is not otherwise "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Have passed a DSA private hire and taxi drivers assessment or be the holder of a recognised advanced driving qualification. DSA assessment costs start from £79.66 for weekday testing or from £96.00 for evening and weekend testing (current as of January 2012) for further information visit the link below.  
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.s=tl&r.l1=1081597476&r.lc=en&r.l3=1084756147&r.l2=1082103262&topicId=1082155067>

# **The Knowledge test for a combined hackney carriage & private hire drivers licence.**

**Applicants for a combined hackney carriage & private hire driver's licence will be required to undergo a knowledge test of the Rochford District Council Area.**

An applicant will be allowed to take a maximum of four knowledge tests at two week intervals. If by the 4<sup>th</sup> attempt they are unsuccessful, they will be required to wait six weeks before any further attempts, additional costs apply. The knowledge test consists of the following categories.

## **1 Roads**

An applicant will be required to know the roads at either end of a given road from any part of Rochford District Council area; it could be a main road, a through road or a minor road. A good knowledge of the area is essential.

## **2 Routes**

An applicant will be required to identify the all roads and turns needed to travel from a given point A to point B using the shortest route keeping to roads in the district of Rochford. A good knowledge of the area is essential.

## **3 Places of Interest**

An applicant will be required to identify the locations of pubs, clubs, hotels, restaurants, parks, public buildings and historic sites etc. in the Rochford District area. A good local knowledge is essential.

## **4 Highway Code**

An applicant will be required to answer questions based on the Highway Code including signs. They will need a good understanding of the rules of the road and the meaning of signs.

## 5 Licence Conditions

An applicant will be required to answer questions based on the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licence Conditions, which apply to drivers both prior to being licensed and once licensed. They will need a good understanding of these conditions and the responsibilities of licensed drivers.

This is a multiple choice computerised test that has a maximum time limit set for completion. You will be supplied with a map book, a tourist information booklet and the licence conditions to help with you to gain the knowledge.

### The initial licence fees payable to the Council are:

For a combined hackney carriage & private hire drivers licence	£120.00
Drivers licence check	£6.00
Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure	£44.00

## Once a licensed driver what next?

When a combined hackney carriage & private hire drivers licence has successfully been granted what are the options?

If you have not already made arrangements to work for someone now is the time to look at your options, you can approach a company or proprietor who may be willing to hire or share a licensed hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

- **Option 1** – Is to hire a vehicle from a proprietor of a licensed vehicle, which may cost several hundred pounds per week. These fees are required every week, 52 weeks of the year. In addition to this are fuel costs that the vehicle requires. There may also be a radio fee on top of the cost of the hire of the vehicle.

- **Option 2** – Is to find a proprietor of licensed vehicle prepared to loan their vehicle when they are not working and agree to take a split in the takings whilst driving their vehicle. Normally the agreed split is in the region of 60:40 (the larger portion going to the proprietor).

If you plan to own your own vehicle and to work on a circuit you will have rent for a radio and data head to pay. The fees can vary from circuit to circuit and are normally set at weekly rate and are set by the circuit owners (see below in relation to owning your own vehicle as to restrictions).

## Can I own my own vehicle?

### Hackney carriage vehicles

If you are looking to own your own hackney carriage and private hire vehicle there are three options available to you.

- **Option 1** – Purchase a wheelchair accessible vehicle under six years old which conforms to either EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval or has a Low Volume Approval Certificate. Present the vehicle for inspection at the council and providing the vehicle and documents are in order the vehicle will be licensed as a hackney carriage.
- **Option 2** – Is to find a proprietor of a licensed hackney carriage or private hire vehicle who is willing to transfer the interest of their licensed vehicle to you. There is a fee for the transfer of interest.
- **Option 3** - Purchase a vehicle that is suitable to be licensed and used as a private hire vehicle.

Before you commit yourself to purchasing a vehicle speak to the Transportation Department at the Council, failure to do so could be a costly mistake. You will need to read the conditions in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

## **Is it expensive to maintain a licence? Fees and other recurring expenses**

- Combined hackney carriage and private hire drivers licence renewal fee £60
- Annual drivers licence check £6
- Every three years a Criminal Records Check £44
- Every five years medical report (yearly if 65 or over) Fee set by your GP.
- In addition if you have your own licensed vehicle:
  - You have the annual vehicle insurance cost.
  - The servicing costs for your vehicle.
  - The annual vehicle licence fee depending on vehicle up to £250 (additional cost for vehicle over six years old).
- Do not forget to factor in the cost of fuel, other running costs and possibly the cost of an accountant.

## **Contact details**

Rochford District Council  
Transportation Department  
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Rayleigh  
Essex SS6 7EB  
Telephone 01268 798607