

# So you want to be a Restricted Private Hire Driver

## Introduction

So you are thinking of becoming a restricted private hire driver?

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 restricted private hire driver you should consider. The financial rewards can be hard to find when driving a private hire vehicle. It is a big financial commitment and the hours interfere with your social life. You can not work on a circuit where the majority of your journey remains within the Rochford District area, unless it is a contracted route such as a school run.

## What will my working hours be?

As a restricted private hire driver your hours will be dictated by your clients and you could find yourselves with early morning starts and late at night finishes with a lot of spare time during the day, not forgetting that it will take time to build up a client base.

Private hire driving is a customer focused service; it pays to be customer focused, it does make the difference, be smart in appearance with a clean and tidy vehicle to ensure that you can build up your clients.

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 restricted private hire licence?**

- Complete a restricted 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 for a restricted private hire drivers licence. Applicants for a Restricted Private Hire Drivers Licences (Executive hire, contract hire and airport runs, where the majority of work is outside the local area) will be required to undergo a restricted knowledge test.**

An applicant will be allowed to take a maximum of four tests at two week intervals. If by the 4<sup>th</sup> attempt they are unsuccessful, they will be required to wait 6 weeks before any further attempts, additional costs apply.

## **1 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.

## **2 Highway Code**

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

This is a multiple choice computerised knowledge test that has a maximum time limit set for completion. You will be provided with a copy of the licence conditions.

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

For a private hire drivers licence	£100.00
Drivers licence check	£6.00
Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure	£44.00

## **Once a licensed driver what next?**

You may find an operator who will provide a vehicle to carry out such work or you will need to have your own vehicle.

## **Can I own my own vehicle?**

As a private hire driver there are no restrictions on the type of vehicle you can licence although some vehicles do not fulfil our licensing conditions. 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 private hire vehicles and operators licensing.

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

- Private hire drivers licence renewal fee £50
- 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 £200 (additional cost for vehicle over six years old).
- For private hire operators an annual licence fee £70 to £100 depending on number of vehicles.
- Do not forget to factor in the cost of fuel, other running costs and possibly the cost of an accountant.

## **Contact details**

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