

CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT FOR LICENSED DRIVERS

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire



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The Council view the hackney carriage and private hire trades as a key service, that provides front-line transport services to residents and visitors to Plymouth and as such consider licensed drivers as 'ambassadors' in promoting the good image of Plymouth. First impressions are vital in encouraging tourism and new businesses to relocate in this area.

In order to promote its licensing objectives the Council has adopted a Code of Good Conduct in respect to the operation and behaviour of licensed drivers and operators and as such will have regard to this document in all its decision-making.

The Council is committed to improving the professional image of the trade so expects drivers to be smart in appearance, courteous and knowledgeable. This in turn will raise the reputation of the licensed trade and increase trade.

This Code of Good Conduct should be read in conjunction with other statutory and policy requirements, in particular that licensed vehicles are safe and roadworthy at all times.

It is a reasonable expectation that a passenger can expect a licensed vehicle to be safe, in a roadworthy condition and driven by a professional driver.

For the purposes of this code the 'trade' refers to both the hackney carriage and private hire trades.

The Council will consider the content of this Code of Good Conduct when assessing whether an applicant or existing driver is a 'fit and proper' person to hold or retain a driver's licence.

Responsibility of the Council

The Council as the Licensing Authority will provide a licensing service that is;

- Public Safety focused and will balance the requirements of public protection against the needs for the licensed trades to operate within a stable regulatory regime
- Non-profit making;
- Fair and equitable;
- Provide support and assistance to the trade wherever possible;
- Adopt an even-handed approach to compliance and enforcement;
- Take appropriate enforcement action in respect to unlicensed activities;

Responsibility of the Trade

It is the Council's view that business owners, operators, proprietors and drivers of licensed vehicles have a shared responsibility, so far as is reasonably practical, to promote the image of the trade by complying with the following requirements;

- To comply with this Code of Good Conduct;
- To operate and make business decisions having due regard to the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy, Conditions of Licence and Vehicles Specifications or any other associated policies that may be relevant;
- To ensure any persons within their control such as employees or drivers, conduct their duties in a lawful and professional manner;
- To behave in a professional, civil, orderly and responsible manner at all times.

Responsibility of Vehicle Proprietors

A proprietor shall take reasonable steps to ensure that their vehicle(s) is maintained in a mechanically safe and roadworthy condition; is clean and well-presented both externally and internally at all times.

Licensed Driver Standards

A licensed driver will take reasonable steps to comply with the following standards;

1. To carry out a daily check to ensure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition prior to carrying passengers. Where faults of any description are identified which undermine the roadworthy condition of the vehicle the driver should not drive the vehicle and should report them to the proprietor as soon as possible;
2. To be professional and understanding to other road users;
3. To be polite and courteous to passengers;
4. To behave in a manner that is in keeping of that expected of a professional licensed driver;
5. Not to engage in any activities that would undermine professional standards and public confidence in the service;
6. No licensed driver should contact their passenger directly for example by phone or via social media, after any journey and any contact. This would undermine professional standards and public confidence.
7. Not use private data or social media searches to make contact with a customer, with or without consent.
8. Relationships with customers should be no more than professional, avoid:
 - a. Unnecessary physical contact
 - b. Building personal relationships
 - c. Talking about sensitive or intimate subjects
9. To assist passengers, where necessary into and out of the vehicle;
10. To offer assistance to passengers with their luggage;
11. To wear the driver's identification badge at all times when working;
12. Be punctual;
13. Not to smoke or allow passengers to smoke in your vehicle;
14. Drive with due care and consideration for other road users and pedestrians and in particular shall not use a hand held mobile phone or similar device whilst driving;
15. Obey all Traffic Regulation Orders and directions at all times;
16. Not to use a hand held mobile phone or similar devices whilst driving unless permitted by Law;
17. Not consume alcohol at least 8 hours before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle
18. Ensure appropriate breaks from work are taken and never drive when tired. Drivers should have a minimum break of 8 hours continuous hours in a 24 hour period and not exceed 13 hours work in any 24 hour period. For the purpose of this code, work includes time waiting for fares or bookings;
19. Report to the Council in writing/email within 24 hours or as soon as is practicable if you suffer any serious illness or injury such as heart attack, stroke, broken limbs, diabetes or sleep apnoea. This also applies to anything that may affect your driving, or that has to be reported to the DVLA because it would affect your driving licence. The Council may ask you to have an additional medical examination or to produce written confirmation from your own GP or

hospital consultant about your continued fitness to drive. The Council may also seek an independent assessment of any such report or medical. Any costs associated with these medical checks will be met by the licence holder.

20. Be smart and clean in appearance;
21. Be aware of and take reasonable steps to maintain acceptable levels of personal hygiene;
22. Transport passengers by the shortest available route (subject to any unforeseen circumstances such as any road works or congestion where it may be appropriate to take an alternative route by agreement with the passenger);
23. Charge the correct monetary fare;
24. Provide a receipt if requested on an official receipt book or business card;
25. Comply with the requirements of the Highway Code;
26. Continue to develop and improve their knowledge of the main and shortest routes around the City. Not place sole reliance on Satellite Navigation equipment.
27. Undertake 'Enhanced training' where appropriate or a mandatory condition of licence (e.g. Safeguarding training or Plymouth Ambassador training) or where it will improve the good image of Plymouth for the benefit of passengers.
28. Have regard to their surrounding environment and not cause nuisance when picking up or dropping off passengers, in particular;
 - a. Not sound the vehicle horn as a means of notifying a passenger of your arrival;
 - b. Switch off the engine if required to wait;
 - c. Do not play amplified music without passenger consent;
 - d. Take whatever action is necessary to avoid disturbance to local residents;
 - e. Pick up and drop off safely and without risk to pedestrians and other road users
 - f. Not leave or wait with the vehicle in a way which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or obstruction to
29. To be ambassadors for the City and take personal responsibility for presenting Plymouth in a good light
30. Present themselves in a manner that promotes a good professional image.
31. To comply with the standards of dress detailed below.

Dress Code

Acceptable Standard of Dress

All clothing worn by the driver must be clean and in good condition, and the driver must have good standards of personal hygiene.

As a minimum standard:

Tops

Collared shirt, collared polo shirt or collared blouses which have a full body and short or long sleeves.

Trousers/Shorts/Skirts

Smart long legged trousers (no denim), knee length tailored shorts, knee length skirt or dress.

Footwear

Footwear for all drivers shall fit around the heel of the foot.

Drivers should not wear or display any clothing, logos, badges or any other image that implies a political, sporting, national or similar allegiance which could cause offence, discriminate or inflame sections of the community.

There will be times when it is reasonable to provide community support e.g. World Cup, Olympics, royal weddings, local charitable events etc. In these cases prior permission should be sought from the Council, who may issue general guidance as may be appropriate.

Unacceptable Standards

The following standards are examples of unacceptable standards on the grounds of safety, common decency and professional image;

- Bare chests;
- Clothing or footwear which is unclean or damaged;
- Clothing printed with words, logos or graphics, which might offend;
- Clothing intended to support any political party, pressure group or other organisation designed to provoke discrimination or objection;
- Sports replica shirts e.g. football, rugby or cricket tops or track suits;
- Beach-type footwear (e.g. flip-flops or mules);
- High heels;
- The wearing of hoods or other clothing that obscures the drivers vision or their identity
- Sports shorts or swimming trunks
- Poor personal hygiene

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