

# VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

Private Hire Vehicles



## **General Vehicle Suitability**

This document sets out to provide vehicle proprietors with the minimum standards a vehicle must satisfy in order to be licensed as a Private Hire Vehicle by Plymouth City Council. All vehicles must seat no more than 8 passengers, must have M<sup>1</sup> classification from the Vehicle Certification Agency, be of fixed head design (i.e. no convertible vehicles) and fully comply with all aspects of the Vehicle Compliance Testing Manual.

The Council wishes to maintain a clear separation between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, therefore certain vehicles are prohibited from being licensed as a Private Hire Vehicle, if they resemble a Hackney Carriage or are currently licensed as such. Any prospective vehicle purchaser is strongly urged to seek advice from the Licensing Section, **before** purchasing any vehicle which they intend to licence.

All vehicles must have European Whole Vehicle Type Approval (EWVTA), Low Volume Type Approval or Individual Vehicle Type Approval from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA).

A vehicle intending to be licensed as Private Hire Vehicle must be presented to a Council appointed vehicle testing station and pass the vehicle compliance test, before any licence can be granted. Further information on the Vehicle Compliance Test can be found in the vehicle Compliance Test Procedures document, and the Vehicle Compliance Testing Manual.

Vehicles that have been categorised by insurance companies as a Category A, B or S insurance write offs will not be accepted as suitable for a licence.

The vehicle shall have no significant signs of damage, or corrosion and paintwork must be of a 'professional' finish and of one colour scheme for the whole vehicle. The passenger compartment and upholstery must be clean and free from damage that may affect its suitability for the carriage of passengers.

## **Licensing Legislative Framework**

Plymouth City Council is the regulatory Licensing Authority for vehicles operating as either Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicles within the city. The Council obtains its powers for licensing purposes from the Plymouth City Council Acts of 1975 and 1987, and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. This legislation enables the Council to determine the characteristics and specifications that vehicles must satisfy in order to be granted a licence. In order to assist vehicle proprietors the Council has produced separate vehicle specifications for each vehicle licence category. These specifications provide the general requirements that vehicles must satisfy, for them to be considered for licensing purposes by the Council.

## **Licensing section contact information**

Licensing Office,  
Public Protection Service,  
Plymouth City Council,  
Windsor House,  
Plymouth,  
PL6 5UF

E: [taxi.licensing@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:taxi.licensing@plymouth.gov.uk)  
[www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk)

## Vehicle Specifications – Private Hire Vehicle

### Vehicle dimensions and Engine Size

1. The wheelbase must be a minimum of 2.44m (2440mm)
2. The engine size must not be less than 1290cc.

### Steering

1. The steering wheel and drivers controls must be fitted to the offside of the vehicle, i.e. right hand drive.

### Vehicle Colour

1. From 1 May 2022, any new vehicle presented for licensing as a private hire vehicle may be any colour other than white.
2. From 01 May 2027, prospective private hire vehicle proprietors on the transfer of an existing licence, or existing private hire vehicle proprietors upon renewal of a current licence, must ensure, as part of that application, that the vehicle is any colour other than white.

### Doors

1. All vehicles must be fitted with at least four doors with two passenger doors at the rear with a door situated on each side of the vehicle for the use of passenger's. Rear opening doors are not counted for the purpose of this specification.
2. The driver's door must be situated on the offside and the front passenger door situated on the nearside of the vehicle to allow convenient egress from the vehicle. Similar arrangements shall apply to the rear passenger doors.
3. Sliding doors are permitted. Any sliding door must be fitted with a device that will illuminate a sign mounted on the rear of the vehicle, which warns following traffic that the doors are opening.
4. Passenger doors must be capable of being readily opened from the inside and outside of the vehicle by one operation of the latch mechanism.

### Windows

1. Windows must be provided in each passenger compartment and the driver compartment. Windows must be capable of being opened or adjusted by passengers when required.
2. The front windscreen must achieve a minimum of 75% light transmittance.
3. All rear windows and side windows must achieve a minimum of 70% light transmittance.
4. Mirrored tints will not be permitted.

### Seating

1. No vehicle shall have more than 8 passenger seats (excluding the driver seat)
2. Where separate forward facing seats are provided, each seating position shall be counted where a properly functioning seatbelt is provided.
3. Where a continuous forward facing seating is provided, each seating position shall be counted where a properly functioning seatbelt is provided.
4. All licenced passenger seats will be suitably designed for an adult passenger. Fold away seats will not count towards the overall passenger seating capacity of the vehicle.

### **Heating and lighting**

1. An adequate heating system must be provided in the passenger compartment which must be capable of being controlled by any passenger.
2. An adequate heating must be provided within the driver compartment.
3. Adequate lighting must be provided within the passenger compartment, and must be capable of being controlled by the passenger.
4. Adequate lighting must be available in the driver compartment.

### **Wheels and tyres**

1. All vehicles must have a minimum of 4 road wheels fitted to the vehicle.

### **Wheelchair Accessibility**

1. The Council will licence private hire vehicles that are capable of carrying a wheelchair.
2. Where the licensed vehicle is capable of carrying wheelchairs, all wheelchair securing devices, fixtures and fittings as specified by the vehicle manufacturer must be available for use and kept in good working order.

### **Emission Standards and Fuel**

1. Diesel, petrol or electric powered vehicles are permitted to be licensed as private hire vehicles.
2. All vehicles plated for the first time by the Council (including existing proprietors on the change of vehicle), must meet the Euro 6 emissions standard as a minimum.
3. From 1 April 2030, all vehicles (renewals and new applications) must be an Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) as defined by the UK's Office for Low Emission Vehicles as emitting less than 50g CO<sub>2</sub>/Km and able to travel at least 70 miles without any emissions at all.

### **Electric Vehicles, Hybrids etc.**

1. The Council will licence electric, hybrid or similar vehicles providing they are of such design as to be able undertake a full range of journeys within the district, whilst carrying the maximum licensed number of passengers and associated luggage. Please refer to the Vehicle Compliance Testing Manual specific to electric and similar vehicles for further detailed guidance on licensing requirements.

### **General**

1. The foregoing provisions give a general guide to the features which will be taken into account when assessing a vehicle's suitability for licensing. They are not exhaustive and the Council retains the sole discretion to approve or reject any vehicle if it is not considered suitable for licensing for any reason.
2. The Council reserve the right not to licence a particular vehicle as a private hire vehicle if this particular make is already licensed as a hackney carriage.
3. All fixtures and fitting must be fitted as per manufacturer's instructions and be in good working order.

**These specifications are made by virtue of Section 5(1) of the Plymouth City Council Act 1975.**

OFFICIAL

These vehicle specifications apply to all private hire vehicles licensed on or after the effective date of 01 May 2022 and supersede all previous private hire vehicle specifications.