

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.

Responsibility of the Council

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

- balancing 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.

Responsibility of all Licensed Drivers

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

- 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;
- To be professional and understanding to other road users;
- To be polite and courteous to passengers;
- To behave in a manner that is in keeping of that expected of a professional licensed driver;
- Not to engage in any activities that would undermine professional standards and public confidence in the service;
- To assist passengers, where necessary into and out of the vehicle;
- To offer assistance to passengers with their luggage;
- To wear the driver's identification badge at all times when working;
- Be punctual;
- Not to smoke or allow passengers to smoke in your vehicle;
- Not to use a hand held mobile phone or similar devices whilst driving;
- Be smart and clean in appearance;
- be aware of and take reasonable steps to maintain acceptable levels of personal hygiene;
- 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);
- Charge the correct monetary fare;
- Comply with the requirements of the Highway Code;

A licensed driver has successfully passed a Knowledge of Plymouth test which demonstrates a good knowledge of all main routes throughout Plymouth. A licensed driver is then expected to develop and improve their knowledge whilst working. Sole reliance on Satellite Navigation equipment is not an image that the Council wishes to promote. A professional driver is expected to know the shortest route and where unsure ask the passenger when nearing the desired destination.

A licensed driver will be expected to undertake '**enhanced training**' where it is appropriate or a mandatory condition of licence to do so e.g. Safeguarding training or Plymouth Ambassador training where it will improve the good image of Plymouth for the benefit of passengers.

A licensed driver should also have regard to their surrounding environment and not cause nuisance when picking up or dropping off passengers so must take reasonable steps to comply with the following requirements;

- Not sound the vehicle horn as a means of notifying a passenger of your arrival;
- Switch off the engine if required to wait;
- Do not play amplified music without passenger consent;
- Take whatever action is necessary to avoid disturbance to local residents;
- Pick up and drop off safely and without risk to pedestrians and other road users.

Hackney Carriages Drivers

Hackney carriage drivers can 'stand or ply for hire' so when using appointed ranks drivers must comply with the following requirements (as detailed in the Byelaws);

- Rank in an orderly manner;
- Move up promptly to allow others to access the end of the rank;
- If a space is not available, proceed to the next available rank;
- Remain with the vehicle whilst ranked;
- When hailed on the street to stop in a safe manner without hazard to other road users;

Private Hire Drivers

Private hire drivers cannot 'stand or ply for hire' or pick up from the street when hailed.

A private hire driver can only accept a fare that has been pre-booked through an operator.

The Council views the following activities as examples of unlawful plying for hire:

- Accepting a booking direct from a member of the public without the fare having been pre-booked.
- Touting or standing at the roadside directing persons to vehicles.
- A driver contacting his office by radio in order to make a booking on behalf of the customer.
- A driver contacting his office using his own mobile phone to make a booking on behalf of the customer.
- A driver offering their mobile to assist the customer to make a booking.

Professional Standards

The Council consider all licensed drivers to be 'ambassadors' who will take personal responsibility for presenting Plymouth in a positive light.

The Council is committed to improving the overall standards and as such expect all licensed drivers to present themselves in the manner that promotes a good professional image.

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 enflame 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

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.

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