

VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

Hackney Carriages



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 Hackney Carriage by Plymouth City Council. All hackney carriages must be wheelchair accessible, seat no more than 8 passengers, must have M¹ 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.

Hackney Carriage licences will only be granted subject to any numerical limits imposed by the Council. 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).

Vehicles intending to be licensed as hackney carriages 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 or B 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

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Vehicle Specifications – Hackney Carriage

Vehicle Dimensions and Steering

1. The maximum length of any vehicle licensed as a hackney carriage shall be 5 metres (5000mm). Any ancillary equipment or accessories attached to the vehicle such as tow bars will be included within the overall vehicle length.
2. The wheelbase shall be a minimum of 2.44m (2440mm)
3. The maximum step height on a passenger door shall be 0.43m (430mm)
4. The steering wheel and drivers controls shall be fitted to the offside of the vehicle, i.e. right hand drive.

Doors

1. All vehicles must have 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 passenger door on the nearside of the vehicle.
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. All passenger doors must be fitted with an Automated Door Locking System which prevents the doors from being opened whilst the vehicle is in motion.
5. 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 and 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 front 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. Each separate forward facing seat must be provided with the properly functioning seatbelt.
3. Where continuous forward facing seating are provided, each seating position shall be counted where a properly functioning seatbelt is provided.
4. The vertical distance between the highest point of the un-deflected seat cushion and the top of the floor covering must not be less than 0.35m (350mm).
5. Grab handles or other suitable means must be provided to assist passengers to rise from the rear seat.
6. Rear facing occasional tip up seats are permitted, provided they rise automatically when not in use.
7. Where seats are placed facing each other there must be a clear space of 0.38m (380mm) between any part of the front of a seat and any part of the other seat that faces it.
8. A front seat may be used for the carriage of passengers provided it is within the licensed capacity of the vehicle providing such seat is fitted by a suitably qualified mechanic and a properly functioning seatbelt.

Heating and Lighting

1. An adequate heating system must be provided in the passenger compartment which is capable of being controlled by any passenger.
2. An adequate heating system must be provided within the driver compartment.
3. Adequate lighting must be provided within the passenger compartment which can be 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.
2. Wheels and tyres must be of a suitable size to ensure the correct operation of the calibrated taximeter.

Taximeter and Ancillaries

1. A taximeter of an approved type must be fitted within the vehicle in such a position so as to be readily seen by passengers within the passenger compartment.
2. An illuminated taxi 'For Hire' lamp must be fitted in an approved position. The words 'Taxi' or 'For Hire' shall be illuminated so as to be clearly visible both by day and by night when the taxi is not hired, and be extinguished or display the word 'hired' when the taxi is hired.

Wheelchair Accessibility

1. All Hackney Carriages must be capable of carrying a wheelchair as specified by the manufacturer of the vehicle.
2. Only the nearside rear passenger door opening is permitted for use in loading a wheelchair.
3. Rear loading wheelchair access is not permitted.
4. Ramps to assist with the loading and unloading of wheelchairs must be available for use and kept in good working order.
5. 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 hackney carriages.
2. From 1 April 2015 all vehicles presented for the grant of a licence must achieve a Euro 4 vehicle emission standard without any modification.

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 hackney carriage if this particular make is already licensed as a private hire vehicle.
3. All fixtures and fittings must be fitted as per manufacturer's instructions and be in good working order.

These specifications are made by virtue of the Plymouth City Council Act 1975. These vehicle specifications shall apply to all hackney carriages licensed on or after the effective date and supersede all previous specifications relating to hackney carriages.