Licensed Vehicle Specification 2026

DRAFT

RED – added by ESSL

BLUE – removed by ESSL

GREEN – licensing amendments

GENERAL SPECIFICATION FOR
HACKNEY CARRIAGES & PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

For any queries or advice, please contact:

South Depot (Ufford)Toby (Workshop Manager) 01502 443360
North Depot (Lowestoft) Carl (Workshop Manager) 01502 443361

DRAFT

1. FOUR PASSENGER SALOON VEHICLES

a) No minimum engine capacity but please note the seating requirements outlined in section L with respect to the size of vehicle to be licensed.
b) 4 or 5 Doors.
c) Right Hand Drive only.
d) Seat Belts fitted for driver and each fare paying passenger.
e) Rear View mirrors offside and nearside.
f) Not less than 90% of luggage space provided in the vehicle to be available for passengers' luggage.

2. VEHICLES WITH MORE THAN FOUR PASSENGERS

Vehicles that have a seating capacity to carry more than 4 passengers may be licensed, subject to the ESSL Transport, Fleet and Workshop Operations Manager's approval.

In respect of multipurpose vehicles that have fold down seating in the boot area, although slightly smaller than the Councils current seating guidelines, the additional seats may be licensed subject to the ESSL Transport, Fleet and Workshop Operations Manager's inspection and approval.

3. MODIFIED PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Providing a vehicle meets the required standard, the Council will also licence private hire vehicles that have been modified or converted after manufacture, such as stretched limousines. The suitability of such vehicles will be determined on individual application.

If the vehicle has been imported, certification under the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) or Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) scheme must be produced together with the declaration made at the time. Documentation relating to the vehicle provenance and conversion must also be produced to the satisfaction of the Council.

Modified private hire vehicles must be presented and tested by an approved specialist every six months. Please discuss this with the Licensing Team and ESSL Transport, Fleet and Workshop Operations Manager.

4. OTHER VEHICLES THAT ARE NOT MODIFIED PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

Hackney carriages that conform to the 'Conditions of Fitness' as prescribed by TfL (Transport for London). Requirements for other vehicles carrying more than 4 passengers will be specified on individual application. The Council will not licence vehicles to carry less than 4 passengers.

5. WHEELCHAIRS

Vehicles must be presented to one of the East Suffolk Services Ltd depots, or a qualifying agency garage (one that is equipped to examine wheelchair vehicles), for inspection before a licence will be issued, this is to determine the capacity of wheelchairs that can be carried in a vehicle at any one time. All vehicles presented for inspection must at the time of inspection have all seating straps present and any vehicle that has electric hydraulic lifting equipment must have valid certificate of installation. Vehicle plates and licence will be issued to show how many wheelchairs can be carried, along with the maximum permitted passenger allowance with no wheelchairs.

DRAFT

6. **VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION**

a) **All Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles – Plates**

Vehicle proprietors will be provided with identification plates. These remain the Council's property but must be fixed to licensed vehicles as follows:

The larger, external plate must be fixed adjacent, above or below the registration plate so that it is clearly visible. It must **NOT** be placed in the rear window or in such a way that it is obscured by the number plate, rear bumper etc.
The smaller, internal plate must be fixed inside the vehicle in the front windscreen with the yellow, fluorescent side visible from the outside. It must **NOT** be fitted over an airbag aperture cover.

b) **All Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles – Replacement Plates and Brackets**

If the plates are lost or damaged, a charge will be made for a replacement.

c) **Modified Private Hire Vehicles**

Modified private hire vehicles will be exempt from displaying exterior vehicle identification plate provided that a written request is received and the subsequent Notice issued is kept within the vehicle. The requirement to display the interior plate will remain. Furthermore, this must be displayed in a position where it can be seen by passengers in the rear of the vehicle (not on the dashboard). Some executive vehicles may also be exempt from displaying the exterior identification plate. Please speak to the Licensing staff for each individual vehicle.

d) **All Vehicles -** "**No Smoking/Vaping**" and **"Complaints"**

'No Smoking/Vaping' signs must be clearly displayed in a vehicle – stickers should be prominently positioned in any window where there is passenger seating – it is the driver/proprietors' responsibility to provide the signs/stickers.

Signs advising people how to make a complaint or give feedback about the driver, the vehicle or the journey must be clearly displayed in a vehicle - stickers should be prominently positioned in any window where there is passenger seating.

e) **Hackney Carriages Only**

must have an illuminated sign fixed to the roof bearing the word "taxi" and no other word.
must display and maintain the scale of fares fixed by the Council so as to be clearly visible to passengers.

DRAFT

may display

a) an illuminated “for hire” sign
b) windscreen sticker with name and number of taxi firm
c) any other non-luminous sign or advertisement

must be fitted with a meter which is clearly visible to all passengers

Private Hire Vehicles Only

must not have a sign or advertisement which includes the word “taxi” or “cab” in any form
must not have an illuminated sign of any description
may be fitted with a meter which must be clearly visible to all passengers

A – LIGHTING

1. Lights must conform to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) MOT Manual of Inspection Standard Section 1.

2. All lights and fitting must be fitted as at vehicle manufacture.

3. There must be no modification, alteration or parts fitted that do not comply with manufacturers specifications.

4. All lights and fittings must work, be free from damage, clean and in a condition that does not reduce light output or beam patterns.

B - STEERING / SUSPENSION

DRAFT

1. All steering and suspension systems must comply to the DVSA MOT Manual of Inspection Section 2: Steering and Suspension.
2. All steering and suspension systems must be fitted as at manufacture.
3. There must be no modifications, alterations or parts fitted that do not comply with manufacture specifications.
4. Any play found in a steering/suspension component must be within manufacturer tolerance.

C - BRAKES

1. All brakes and their relevant systems must comply to the DVSA MOT Manual of Inspection Section 3: Brakes.
2. All brakes, systems and components must be fitted as at manufacture.
3. All brakes, systems and components must work and be in good serviceable condition.
4. There must be no modification, alteration or parts fitted that do not comply to manufacturers specifications.
5. All brake pipes must be correctly routed and secured free of corrosion, pitting and damage.

D - TYRES, ROAD WHEELS

1. All road wheels and tyres must comply to the DVSA MOT Manual of Inspection: Section 4: Wheels & Tyres.
2. All wheel and tyre size must be fitted to manufacturer specification, and must be
   a. fitted with matching wheels on both axles
   b fitted with matching trim covers on both axles
   c Must not foul any component or bodywork

DRAFT

3. The tread pattern must be at least 2mm in depth throughout the centre ¾ and visible on tread edge. ~~complete circumference and tread breath of the tyre.~~

4. No nails or large stones should be stuck in tread and must be inflated to manufacture specification.

5. Aluminium wheels must be clean, match in colour and be free from damage, heavy scuffing or paint loss.

6. Wheel trims must match in colour and be in a good cosmetic condition.

7. Speed rating of the tyres must comply with manufacturer specification.

8. Vehicles fitted with run flat tyres do not require a spare or inflation device.

9. The spare wheel and tools must be as supplied by manufacture.

10. Spare wheel must be present and in its designated compartment.

~~11.~~ All spare tyres must have a tread depth of no less that 2mm throughout the centre ¾ and visible on tread edge. ~~complete circumference and tread breadth.~~

12. Where the manufacturer does not supply a spare wheel some form of tyre seal and tyre inflator must be carried.

13. Space saver tyres must comply with manufacturer specification.

14. Car jack and tools must be in good serviceable conditions and in their designated compartment.

15. Valve caps must be fitted.

E - EXHAUST / FUEL - EMMISSIONS

1. Exhaust, fuel and emissions must comply with DVSA, MOT Manual of Inspection Standards Section 7: Exhaust Fuel Emissions.

DRAFT

2. Exhaust system must be fitted as at vehicle manufacture.
3. Exhaust system type must be as at vehicle manufacture.
4. There must be no modification to any part of the exhaust system.
5. System must be free from any leaks or heavy corrosion.
6. System must be secure, in its correct position as not to touch any part of the vehicle as to cause knock or vibration.
7. Exhaust heat shield should not be loose or missing or fouling any part of vehicle exhaust as to cause vibration.
8. Fuel System must be free of any leaks.
9. All fuel pipes must be free of any leaks.
10. All fuel pipes must be free of corrosion correctly routed and free from any damage or kinking.
11. All part of fuel and filler system must be in good serviceable condition.
12. All fuel system must be as at vehicle manufacture.
13. Fuel cap must comply with manufacturer specification.

Please note: If LPG is to be carried it can either be placed in the spare wheel well or in the boot provided that it does not take up more than 20% of the luggage space.

F - ENGINE COMPARTMENT

DRAFT

1. All engine compartment components must be as at vehicle manufacture.
2. All engine and all components must comply with vehicle manufacture specifications.
3. Must be free from any oil leak / water leaks.
4. All cosmetic covers, if fitted, must be clean and secure.
5. There must be no modification to engine or auxiliary components that do not comply to manufacture.
6. Engine must be free of oil leaks and clean. Correct caps dipstick must be fitted and form a secure seal.
7. There must be no noise from any auxiliary component to indicate that it is worn outside manufactures specification.
8. There must be no noise from the engine to indicate it is worn outside manufacture specifications.
9. All engine and gearbox mounting must be free from movement outside manufacture specifications.
10. Any vibration inside and outside vehicle to indicate worn engine/gearbox mountings.
11. All air, fuel, water pipes, trunking must be fitted to vehicle manufacture specification.
12. All air, fuel, water pipes must be in good condition free from perishing, kinks and damage.
13. All clutch and brake fluid levels must be within manufactures required limits.

G - BODY AND PAINTWORK

DRAFT

1. Body structure and general items must comply to the DVSA MOT Manual of Inspection Standards Section 6: Body Structure and General Items.
2. Vehicle body, structure and general items must be as at vehicle manufacture, allowing for minor wear and tear.
3. All rear passenger doors must be able to be opened from both inside and outside using the manufacturer's relevant control in each case. There must be no excessive wear in any door pin hinge or latch.
4. All boot and bonnet gas struts must be present and capable to hold bonnet/boot lid or tailgate in the open position.
5. Body and paintwork must be as vehicle first manufacture; minor damage may be acceptable at tester's discretion.
6. All panels fitted to manufacture specifications.
7. Mud flaps must be of a matched pair, clean, secure and free from damage.
8. All door handles, trim, mirrors must be fitted to manufacturer specification.
9. All door handles must be in good condition, and operate according to manufacturer's specifications.
10. All doors, bonnet, tailgate and boot must fit flush.
11. All doors must open and close to manufactures specifications.
12. All door, bonnet, boot, tail gate hinges, locks and pins must be in good conditions.
13. Door boot tailgate weather strips must comply with manufacture specifications.
14. Door boot tailgate weather strips must be free from splits damage and in a good condition as to prevent water leaking into compartment.
15. Bonnet grill, front valance trim and grills must be as first manufacture and free from damage and secure.

DRAFT

WINDOWS

16. Window glass must be as at vehicle manufacture and to manufacture specifications.

17. Windows must be clean, free from scratches/scores in a condition that could impair the passengers or drivers view under adverse light conditions.

18. Windscreens must be fitted to manufacture specifications.

19. No rear window tint to be fitted to rear windows that may obscure the vision of the driver to the rear and sides of the vehicle.

20. All windows must operate according to manufacture specification.

21. All windows must operate correctly and seal correctly when in closed position.
22. All window rubbers, trims must be in good condition.

23. Only manufacture tint to the near and offside windows that allow at least 70% of light transmitted through them.

24. Tinted screens must allow at least 75% of light to be transmitted through them.

PAINTWORK

25. Paintwork must be clean, free from rust and any major damage.

H - CHASSIS AND UNDERSIDE

1. The underside at time of inspection should be free from mud, grease and oil to permit a thorough inspection. It should be adequately protected against corrosion.

DRAFT

2. Must be free of corrosion holes and damage outside the 30cm prescribed areas covered in the DVSA MOT Manual of Inspection Standards.

3. All under body panels must be fitted as at manufacture free from damage, correctly secure to manufacturers specifications.

4. All driveshaft gaiters must be fitted and in good condition.

5. Play in prop-shafts, drive-shafts must not exceed manufactures specification.

6. All under-body components must be free of any oil contamination.

7. No oil leaks from engine, gearbox or any part of the drive train – that leak at a rate which will leave a deposit on the roadway when stationary.

8. No oil leaks from engine, gearbox or any part of the drive train when the vehicle is in motion at a rate which deposits a coating on the underside of the bodywork, exhaust or braking system so as to create fumes or danger to the vehicle itself.

I – DRIVER VIEW

1. Driver's view of the road must comply with the DVSA, MOT Manual of Inspection Standard Section 8: Driver View.

~~2.~~ Screen must be free of damage exceeding 10mm in Zone A (Driver's view) and 40mm outside Zone A. ~~in a contained diameter circle in passenger swept area.~~

3. No screen advertising must encroach on the swept area.

4. All screen washers and wipers should be as vehicle manufacture.

5. All washers must work and provide enough fluid to clear windscreen in conjunction with the wipers.

6. All wipers front and rear must be free from splits and clear screen/rear window.

DRAFT

7. Rear window washer must work and provide enough liquid to clear window in conjunction with the wiper.

8. Vehicle must be fitted with interior mirror; this mirror must not have items suspended from it.

9. All mirrors, casings and fixings must be in good conditions and comply with the manufacturer's specification.

J – VEHICLE INTERIOR

1. All driver controls must be as vehicle manufacture.

2. Clutch pedal rubber must be fitted with anti-slip provision, must provide grip, it must be securely fitted to clutch pedal.

3. All inhibitor system switches for starting the engine when vehicle is in gear must work to manufacturer specification.

4. Gearbox selector mechanism and all relative components must be free from wear, secure and in good serviceable condition and comply with manufacturer specification.

5. All dashboard dials must illuminate, work and not be obscured.

6. All dashboard warning lights must illuminate and extinguish according to manufacturer specification.

7. Indicator self-cancelling mechanism must work correctly.

8. All switches must be as at first manufacture.

9. All switches must be in good condition, work and be secure.

10. Door panels, seat backs and parcel shelve must be clean, in good condition and free from damage.

DRAFT

11. Parcel shelves, if fitted, must be as fitted at manufacture.

12. Floor covering must be clean and in good condition.

13. No fumes from engine exhaust fuel system must be detected inside the vehicle when the vehicle is moving and window closed.

14. Roof lining must be clean and good condition.

15. All fixtures and fittings must be as at first manufacture, clean and in good condition and free from bad odours.

HEATER/CLIMATE CONTROL

16 Heater/climate control must be as at vehicle manufacture.

17 Must work correctly, free from damage to any part of system, including dashboard vents.

18 Does not omit bad odours.

INTERIOR / LIGHTING

19 Interior lighting must be as vehicle manufacture.

20 All interior lighting must work according to manufacture specifications.

21 Colour or illumination must be as manufacture.

22 Must be secure and free from damage

K - SEAT BELTS & SUPPLEMENTARY RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

DRAFT

1. All seatbelts and supplementary restraint systems must comply with the DVSA MOT Manual of Inspection Standards Section 5: Seatbelts/Supplementary Restraint Systems.

2. Seatbelts/supplementary restraint systems must be fitted as at manufacturer.

3. There must be no modification, alteration or parts fitted that do not comply with the manufacturer specification.

4. All seatbelts must be clean and free from cuts, fraying and any deterioration.

5. Where there is a provision for a wheelchair passenger, either in a manufacturer's model or in an approved conversation, a seatbelt which complies with the manufacturer's specification and have a British Standard mark.

L - SEATING

1. All seats must be as at manufacture.

2. All seats that are designated to move must be able to adjust forward and backwards and secure in their selected positions.

3. All seats must be properly cushioned or covered with no damage or stain.

4. Seat bases must be in good condition no excessive wear to discomfort the passenger.

5. If seat covers are used, they must be matching, a good fit and free from damage.

6. All seat headrests must be as vehicle first manufacture.

7. There must be sufficient space between the lowest part of the seat cushions and the lowest part of the roof to safely accommodate the driver and passengers in reasonable comfort. This must be at least 865mm (34 inches).

DRAFT

8. The minimum leg room available to any passenger must normally be 200mm (8 inches). The measurement will be taken from the edge of the seat cushion to the rear of the seat/object in front'. Where there is no seat/object in front the measurement will be taken from the base of the seat to the nearest obstruction in front.

9. Each seat must not be less than 440mm (17.3 inches) in width at its widest point.

10. Where bench seats are provided, then the seat should provide at its widest point a minimum of 440 mm (17.3 inches) seating space for each passenger i.e. a bench seat must not be less than 1320 mm (52 inches) or be able to properly accommodate 3 adult passengers.

M – ROAD TEST

1. Wheel-bearing must be free from noise.

2. Exhaust system free from knocks and rattles.

3. Gearbox free from noise that indicates worn outside manufacture specification.

4. Brakes should be free from squeal, judder or grabbing.
5. Steering wheel should be in correct alignment, free from wandering free play and over correction.
6. Engine should run correctly, should not be sluggish, misfire, lack power or be unduly noisy.

7. Engine should not emit excessive smoke.

N - TRAILER

No trailer will be licensed unless it is fit for purpose and complies with the following standards:

1. Un-braked trailers shall be less than 750kgs gross weight.

2. Trailers over 750kgs gross weight shall be braked acting on at least 2 road wheels.

DRAFT

3. The towing vehicle must have kerb weight at least twice the gross weight of the trailer.

4. A suitable lid or other approved means of enclosure shall be fitted to secure the contents within the trailer whenever in use.

5. The maximum permissible length of the trailer must be 4 metres including the drawbar and coupling.

6. The width of the trailer shall not be greater than the towing vehicle subject to no trailer being wider than 2.3 metres.

7. The maximum length for braked twin axle trailers is 5.540 metres.

8. The Trailer must at all times comply with the Road Traffic legislation requirements in particular those laid down in the Road Vehicles (Construction and us) Regulations 1986.

9. The vehicle insurance must reflect cover for a towing trailer.

10. Trailers must not be left unattended anywhere on the highway.

11. The speed restrictions applicable to trailers must be observed at all times.

12. An additional hackney carriage or private hire vehicle plate must be displayed on the outside rear of the trailer.

13. All trailers must be fitted with an approved style number bearing the same number as the towing vehicle.

INSPECTIONS

14. The trailer and tow bar must be inspected twice yearly by the garage responsible for carrying out the Council's vehicle inspections before the trailer can be used for carrying luggage.

15. The inspections will be required at the same time as the vehicle compliance test with the relevant compliance fee plus the trailer test fee being

DRAFT

paid.

O - METERS

1. Meters must be calibrated and set in accordance with the Council's fare tariff.
2. The fare tariff shall be displayed in a prominent position to enable passengers to clearly view the fees set.
3. Meters will be tested and sealed by an authorised officer of the Council every six months and further testing if a complaint is received.

P - FIRE EXTINGUISHER

1. A fire extinguisher must be carried and comply with BS EN3:1996.
2. It must be in good condition, mounted securely and the retaining device can be easily released.
3. Extinguisher maintenance records must be kept up to date and satisfactory.

Note: Fire Extinguishers should be used as a preventative measure only. If you have a fire when passengers are being carried, and they have difficulty in exiting a vehicle, it would be possible for an extinguisher to delay a fire spreading, in order to assist passengers getting to safety.

Q – MANUFACTURER RECALLS

1. Vehicles with safety-critical recall must be repaired and fixed as soon as advised. If the recall is not a safety issue, evidence must be provided by the proprietor at the time of testing.

IF THE VEHICLE'S PREVIOUS MECHANICAL TEST WAS COMPLETED BY ANOTHER COUNCIL APPROPVED GARAGE, THE CERTIFICATE MUST BE PRESENTED AT THE APPOINTMENT. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD RESULT IN TE TEST BEING CANCELLED.

DRAFT