

This report may be of interest to: All Members

CONDITION OF VEHICLE STANDARDS

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the Panel's approval to clarify Section 11 of the Vehicle Inspection Report – General Observations to clarify inspection procedures

2. Summary

- 2.1 Section 11 of the Vehicle Inspection Report allows for special observations that may deem a vehicle unsuitable for use as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle. These criteria have not however been formally introduced and rely heavily upon the tester's individual judgement. Whilst inspectors are experienced and do apply criteria as consistently as possible, it is considered that clearer guidelines should exist regarding such issues.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the list attached as an Annex as clear guidelines for vehicle testing.

4. Background

- 4.1 Concern was expressed by representatives of the trade that the aesthetic appearance of some of the vehicles upon the circuit was not satisfactory and there was a need to clarify what represents satisfactory appearance.

- 4.2 Whilst the Enforcement Officer had produced unofficial guidelines regarding appearance these had not been integrated into the Vehicle Inspection Report and as such the final decision was left with the discretion of the inspector.
- 4.3 Particular concern was expressed by the Chair of the Hackney Carriage Association that the testing of Roof Lights was leading to inconsistencies.
- 4.4 To ensure that the approach is consistent it was decided that Section 11 of the Vehicle Inspection Report – General Observations be made more specific
- 4.5 The **Annex** to this report outlines clear criteria regarding levels of aesthetic suitability for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles embraced within Section 11 of the vehicle inspection report.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 To ensure the comfort of the public as well as safety there is a need to monitor the visual as well as mechanical aspects of vehicles. The guidelines introduced in the **Annex** to this report set out measurable and reasonable criteria for achieving this objective.

6. Implications

6.1 Environmental

There are no environmental implications

6.2 Equalities

There are no equalities implications

6.3 Financial

There are no financial implications

6.4 Legal

None. Section 11 of the Vehicle Inspection Report allows for general observations to be considered prior to issuing a licence.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

There are no staffing or accommodation implications

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 It is important that the standard of comfort for the customer is taken into consideration before a vehicle licence is granted as well as safety. The conditions outlined in Annex stipulate guidelines that are aimed at ensuring the fleet of vehicles within Milton Keynes, achieve this objective.

Background Papers: Private Hire Vehicle Licence - Conditions

1. The steering wheel must be on the offside
2. The vehicle must have four passenger doors, being two on each side of the vehicle. A rear door will not be accepted as one of the four doors (people carriers excluded)
3. The acceleration and braking capabilities should match the engine and carrying capacity of the vehicle. A minimum engine size of 1600cc is advised.
4. The maximum number of passenger seats allowed by law is eight, none to be sideways to the direction of travel and all to comply with seat belt regulations. All vehicles with anchorage points must have seat belts fitted.
5. A minimum of 12 cubic feet or 350 litres boot capacity is required
6. All vehicle body panels to be the same colour with no shade variations. The colour to match that as specified in the vehicle registration document. Minor variations such as special edition body lines and insignia are acceptable in the case of private hire vehicles. Hackney Carriages to remain all black or as current licence conditions dictate.
7. A vehicle must possess four wheel trims as fitted by the manufacturer or suitable alternative. All four trims to match.
8. All door handles and window wipers as originally fitted (including electric windows) must be operative and undamaged
9. The vehicle exterior and interior must be clean and tidy and free from any noxious or dangerous substance or item. Seats must be clean and tidy and free from cuts, tears or other damage.
10. The vehicle must be free of any accident damage.
11. All window glass must be as the manufacturers original specification and 'type approval certificate' and not cracked or broken whereby it may cause danger or visual impairment to driver or any passenger. No vehicle with tinted windows, whether original specification or not will be accepted. (see clause 12 below)
12. No vehicle will have tinted windows as this may prejudice the safety of the passenger.
13. Bumpers to be as original manufacturers specification and colour coded if appropriate. Any misalignment of bumpers to render the vehicle dangerous and/or unsightly will not be acceptable.
14. In addition to statutory requirements all light lens covers and surrounds must be of good appearance and unbroken so as not to cause danger or be of unsightly appearance.
15. Any vehicle with exhaust emissions exceeding the prescribed limit quoted for the Ministry of Transport testing arrangements will fail the licensing test.
16. A rear seat width of 48" (taken between the armrests) as a minimum. Heights of 34" between seat and roof and 7" from back of front seat to front of rear seat

are minimum size criteria for vehicle. Contoured rear seats defining accommodation for two passengers will not be acceptable.

17. Any ancillary fittings or parts either internal or external must be fitted to manufacturers specification and not be a source of danger or annoyance to driver, passengers or public. Home made or unsightly parts or fittings, which visually detract from the appearance of the vehicle, will not be acceptable.
18. Roof signs on Hackney Carriage vehicles be in good working order