

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976  
Town Police Clauses Act 1847  
Public Health Act 1875, as amended

## VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS FOR:

- Hackney Carriages
- Private Hire
- Executive/Limousine/Party Private Hire
- School Transport

## HACKNEY CARRIAGE

Hackney carriage licences will only be granted to vehicles which comply with A, B & C below.

### A. SPECIFICATIONS

1. Complies with the Public Carriage Office, Hackney Carriage Specification "Conditions of fitness", as amended appropriate to Reading Borough Council.
2. Has means to facilitate the carriage of chair bound disabled persons.
3. Is of the manufacturer's colours, or Council approved livery.
4. All Mercedes Vito Taxis be fitted with the Mercedes Taxi Graphic Pack prior to being licensed as hackney carriages in Reading.
5. Is provided with an AFFF (Aqueous Film Forming foam) fire extinguisher of 1 litre or greater capacity.

### B. READING BOROUGH COUNCIL HACKNEY CARRIAGE AGE POLICY:

No Hackney carriage vehicle will be licenced if over 15 years of age from 1 October 2018.

#### **New to fleet vehicles**

New to fleet vehicles will be permitted to a maximum of 8 years from 1 October 2018.

### C. WINDOWS

Windows must meet the following standards:

- Windscreens: must let in at least 75% of the light
- Front, side windows: must let in at least 70% of the light
- Rear, side windows: must let in at least 65% of the light
- Rear screen windows: must let in at least 65% of the light

## PRIVATE HIRE

Private Hire Vehicle licences will only be granted to vehicles which comply with A, B & C below.

Potential applicants for private hire vehicle licences are advised to contact Reading Borough Council, ☎ 0118 9373 762 Option 2 for advice on vehicles which are likely to be licensed **BEFORE** they agree to purchase a particular vehicle.

#### A. SPECIFICATION

1. No vehicle more than 5 years old shall be eligible for licensing for the first time.
2. The vehicle must be capable of carrying no more than 8 passengers.
3. The owner shall ensure that all vehicles upon reaching 10 years old and every 12 months thereafter be inspected by the Council's Officers in order to assess their internal and external condition and ensure that they are suitable to be used as private hire vehicles in accordance with the criteria stated in section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. No vehicle older than 20 years shall be licensed for Private Hire use.
4. The vehicle must be right hand drive.
5. The vehicle body must be a fixed head type. (A sunroof may be fitted).
6. The vehicle must have a minimum of four road wheels.
7. Vehicles must either carry the manufactures system of tyre repairs or spare wheel as compliant with the Construction and use Regulations 1986 as amended.
8. Vehicles that do not have a separate luggage compartment (boot) must be fitted with a grill behind the rear seat to prevent luggage entering the passenger area.
9. Access and egress to rear passenger seats must be through a rear passenger door.
10. Access to the vehicle shall not be more than 15" (38cm) from ground level.
11. New vehicles will only be licensed which fall within the following Euro NCAP or European Classification groups as set below:
  - Large Family
  - Executive
  - Small MPV (will only be licensed to carry a maximum of 4 passengers)
  - Large MPV
  - European Commission Classification D,E,F & M
12. Further to paragraph 11. above, vehicles which do not fall within Euro NCAP or European Classification groups criteria may be considered for Private Hire vehicle licensing on a case by case application basis.
13. **Window tints**
  - Windscreens: must let in at least 75% of the light
  - Front, side windows: must let in at least 70% of the light

Prior to registration with the Driver Vehicle Licensing Authority and initial licensing with the Council, the rear side windows and rear screen of all newly manufactured vehicles must be fitted with the lowest percentage tint supplied by the manufacturer.

No vehicle shall have after purchase tinting

Owners with any queries concerning compliance with these specifications should consult with officers from the Licensing Section before purchasing any vehicle.

14. Vehicles must not be of a design or in any way similar to, a London style taxi.
15. The Council may vary the requirements of paragraphs 1 - 14 in their absolute discretion in exceptional circumstances but reserve the right to refuse to licence a vehicle if it is considered unsuitable for use as a private hire vehicle.

## **EXECUTIVE/LIMOUSINE/PARTY PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

Executive Private Hire Vehicle licences will only be granted to vehicles which comply with A, B & D below. Limousine or Party Private Hire Vehicle Licenses will only be granted to vehicles which comply with A, C & D below

### **A. EXECUTIVE/LIMOUSINE/PARTY**

1. The vehicle shall be of a make and model which the Council considers appropriate for an Exemption Notification. The Council may consult any person or organisation as it considers appropriate before deciding whether an Exemption Notification shall be granted in respect of any vehicle.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of Clause 1 above, the vehicle shall comply with all of the following minimum requirements:
  - a) Be a recognised model of a four door saloon motor car or people carrier but **not** a hatchback, kit car or vehicle substantively altered in appearance or modified in any way except as within the section Limousines/Party Vehicles below.
  - b) The vehicle interior and exterior shall be of the very highest quality in design and use of materials available and in exceptional condition.
  - c) The vehicle shall not be designed or adapted for off road purposes.
  - d) Vehicles manufactured as people carriers may be considered for an exemption to display the plate. However, the vehicle shall be of the highest specification, quality and condition. Each application will be considered on its own merits. Only vehicles on the approved executive list shall be considered for licensing as an executive vehicle.
3. Any vehicle presented for licensing for the first time shall not be older than five years on the day that the fully and correctly completed application is received with the appropriate fee. (Limousines and Party vehicles shall be considered for exemption of this condition in exceptional circumstances where the vehicle is in immaculate condition).
4. Only vehicles that satisfy Clauses 2 (a) to 2 (d) above, are on the approved executive list and at the top of the range within the manufactures fleet of vehicles, may be considered for a Exemption Notice, not to display the vehicle plate, which will be at the Council's discretion.

### **B. EXECUTIVE**

The makes and models of vehicle which will be considered for licensing as an executive vehicle are:

- BMW 7 SERIES
- MERCEDES S CLASS
- MERCEDES E CLASS
- LEXUS GS and LS
- CHRYSLER CDR
- JAGUAR XJ SWB and LWB
- AUDI A8

For vehicles not included on the above list contact the Licensing Section by email: [licensing@reading.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@reading.gov.uk) or tel. 0118 937 2453.

### C. LIMOUSINE AND PARTY

1. On being presented for licensing for the first time, the vehicle shall have proof of one of the following:
  - Individual Vehicle approval certificate?
  - a European whole vehicle certificate?
  - a UK low vehicle type approval certificate?
2. No Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle shall be licensed by the Council where the conversion carried out results in the vehicle being more than 330.2cm (10 feet 10 inches) long. Where the conversion has been approved there shall be displayed on the vehicle a fixed plate giving the details of the company that carried out the conversion.
3. No Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle shall be licensed by the Council where the maximum unladen weight of the vehicle exceeds 3,220.50kg (7,100 lbs).
4. A Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle shall only be considered for licensing where the applicant produces evidence that the "stretch" was performed by the manufacturer or by a coachbuilder approved by the vehicle manufacturer. American limousines/party vehicles shall have been built by an approved coachbuilder under the QVM programme for Ford vehicles or the CMC programme for Cadillac vehicles. The onus shall be upon the applicant to prove that the vehicle meets the prescribed standards.
5. Any replacement parts fitted to a Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle shall meet the approved standards of the stretched specifications i.e. tyres shall meet both the size and weight specifications.
6. Vehicles shall be capable of carrying no fewer than three and not more than eight passengers in addition to the driver. Side facing seats shall only be permitted on a Stretched Limousine/Party Vehicle if they meet the minimum requirements of lap belts fitted to each passenger seat of the side facing seats. A seat shall be a minimum width of 400mm. Stretched limousines shall only be licensed to carry a maximum of eight passengers regardless of how many seats are fitted to the vehicle.
7. Vehicles shall be equipped at all times with seat belts of an acceptable type in respect of every seat which can be used for the carriage of passengers. Seat belts shall comply with current legislation and be in proper working order at all times.
8. Each passenger shall have direct access to a door without the need to fold flat, tilt up or remove other seating.

9. Vehicles shall be fitted with at least four doors and four wheels.
10. The vehicle may be left or right hand drive.
11. All paintwork shall be free of rust and corrosion and be of a very high standard.
12. Vehicles shall have adequate space for luggage.
13. All brakes and mechanical parts shall be kept in good order and condition.
14. The vehicle shall have a serviceable spare wheel, together with the proper tools and equipment to change the wheel in the event of a tyre or wheel becoming defective.
15. All tyres (including the spare) shall be suitable for the vehicle.
16. The vehicle shall not be designed or adapted for off road purposes.
17. The vehicle shall not be designed or adapted as a people carrier, mini bus, people mover or other like vehicle.

Note: **PRIOR TO** purchasing any vehicle to be used as an executive vehicle or limousine/party vehicle you are strongly advised to contact Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team ☎ 0118 937 3762 then option 1 for advice concerning the different makes and models of vehicles considered appropriate for licensing for this type of work.

#### **D. WINDOWS (EXECUTIVE/LIMOUSINE/PARTY)**

Windows must meet the following standards:

- Windscreens: must let in at least 75% of the light
- Front, side windows: must let in at least 70% of the light

#### **IDENTIFICATION SIGNS**

Executive, Limousine and Party private hire vehicles are not required to display a roof sign or side identification panels.

## **SCHOOL TRANSPORT VEHICLES**

School Transport Vehicle licences will only be granted to vehicles which comply with A & B below.

#### **A. SPECIFICATION**

- 1) No vehicle:
  - a) more than five years old at the time of application shall be eligible for licensing as a school transport vehicle for the first time.
  - b) shall be relicensed as a school transport vehicle following a gap of two years where it has not been licensed.
  - c) more than eight years old shall be eligible for licensing as a school transport vehicle provided that the Council in its absolute discretion may license such a vehicle.
- 2) The vehicle must be capable of carrying no more than 8 passengers.
- 3) Vehicles must be right hand drive and must have at least three passenger doors in addition to the driver's door.

- 4) Vehicles of the "estate" type must be fitted with a secure fixed grille behind the rear seat to prevent luggage from entering the passenger area.
- 5) Vehicles should not be fitted with heavy tinted glass, so that the driver, and front and/or rear passenger(s) cannot be clearly seen from outside of the vehicle.
- 6) New vehicles will only be licensed which fall within the Euro NCAP or European Classification groups as set out in 11) and 12) of the private hire specifications above.
- 7) The vehicle must be suitable for the school transport route covered.
- 8) All tyres must be 'E' marked and comply with the requirements of Construction and Use Regulations. Remoulded tyres must be marked as complying with the requirements of BSAU 144e, or as amended, or be certified for use by the Vehicle Certification Agency. All tyres and wheels must be of the size, type and load rating recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.
- 9) All seating should be arranged so that all passengers are seated facing forwards.
- 10) Three point type seat belts must be fitted to all passenger seats. Lap belts may only be used for the middle rear passenger seat of saloon vehicles. Otherwise, all seat belts must be of the three-point type.
- 11) Vehicles which are adapted to carry passengers seated in wheelchairs must meet the following specifications:
  - a) Suitable independent restraint systems must be fitted for both wheelchair and passenger. The restraint system must be installed and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. At no time should wheelchair passengers be transported in vehicles that do not have floor restraints fitted.
  - b) Passengers must not be fitted in wheelchairs facing sideways or rearward.
  - c) Vehicles may be fitted with ramps or power operated lifts to facilitate entry and exit for passengers in wheelchairs. Vehicles with a floor height of more than 330mm must be fitted with a power operated lift and not a ramp. All such equipment must be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
  - d) If a powered lift is used, an emergency manual method of lowering the lift must be provided.
  - e) Ramps or lifts must not prevent service and emergency doors from being operated from both outside and inside the vehicle.
  - f) The ramp surface must be of non-slip material and raised edges should be provided on each side of the ramp.
  - g) Doorways for use by passengers in wheelchairs must be at least 800mm wide up to a height of 800mm, and 600mm wide (between the hand rails) above that height. The height of the doorway must be a minimum of 1300mm. There should be a minimum floor to ceiling height of 1350mm in any part of the vehicle to be occupied by passengers in wheelchairs.
  - h) Power-operated passenger lifts must have a load-bearing capacity of at least 300kg, and have a platform size of at least 750mm wide and 1200 mm long with raised rear rollback plate when deployed and with grip handles fitted to both side edges.
  - i) Vehicles using power-operated passenger lifts must ensure that they have
    - i) fluorescent yellow grip handles and strips on the edges of the lift,

- ii) an audible signal to indicate deployment of the lift,
  - iii) clear warning notices displayed to advise passengers not to board a moving lift, and
  - iv) a lift surface of non-slip material.
- j) Tail lifts must be maintained and operated in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice for Tail Lifts BSEN1756. This code of practice requires that the tail lift to be tested once a year and inspected twice a year.

Vehicle owners have to pay an extra test fee for this service and will need to supply evidence, if requested, that tail lifts meets the required standard.

## **B. WINDOWS**

Windows must meet the following standards:

- Windscreens: must let in at least 75% of the light
- Front, side windows: must let in at least 70% of the light
- Rear, side windows: must let in at least 65% of the light
- Rear screen windows: must let in at least 65% of the light

If you have tinted windows you must provide calibrated evidence that the windows allow in the permitted amounts of light.