

To all; Drivers and Private Hire Operators

Southfield Road, Loughborough,
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Ask for: Licensing

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Friday, 11 December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

****IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ****

HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the tenth edition of the Hackney & Private Hire Newsletter for Charnwood.

Staff Changes - Antony Bunker (Licensing Enforcement Officer) has left his position within the Council and we wish him well in his new civilian post with the Warwickshire Police.

The Charnwood Licensing Team have developed this newsletter, following a number of requests by the local taxi trade to keep them up to date with the latest legislation and Government/Council policy changes that affect you.

1. CORONAVIRUS (COVID19): TAXIS & PHV'S.

National Restrictions - National restrictions apply in England. From and including, Wednesday 2nd December 2020, new local restriction tiers come into effect.

The details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

Under national restrictions, taxis and private hire vehicles should operate services as normal for passengers who have a legally permitted reason to travel. To help control the spread of the virus you should remind passengers of the rules of travel but you do not have to refuse to carry them.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Local restriction tiers - From and including, 2nd December 2020 a system of local restriction tiers will apply to passengers in England.

Taxis and private hire vehicles providing services through or within these areas should continue operating as normal. To help control the spread of the virus you should remind passengers of the rules on social contact

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

Travel over the festive period

Some social contact restrictions will be different between 23rd and 27th December

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

Passengers may travel to meet people in their Christmas bubble and return home between 23rd and 27th December. People travelling to or from Northern Ireland may also travel on 22nd and 28th December.

Drivers - As a self-employed driver of a vehicle <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles> you must conduct a risk assessment to understand the risks and what you can do about them. You should think about how you work and ways you can protect yourselves and your passengers.

As a driver you don't have to write anything down about your risk assessment.

Picking up Passengers – Before a passenger enters your vehicle, you should ask if they have:

Coronavirus symptoms – a fever, new cough or loss of smell or taste.

Had a positive coronavirus test in the last 10 days

You should refuse service if they have.

You should wash or sanitise your hands if you come into contact with a passenger or their luggage. You should do this before and after contact.

You must continue to provide support to disabled passengers to safely enter and exit your vehicle. You must continue to assist disabled passengers with their luggage and mobility equipment.

Show passengers your face whilst socially distancing so that they can identify you as their driver.

Persons must stay at home and avoid travel, unless for work, education or other legally permitted reasons.

If travelling away from home under a legally permitted reason, passengers can only travel with someone they live with (social contact), or with someone they have formed a support bubble with, unless they are travelling as part of an activity that is exempt.

To help control the spread of the virus you should remind passengers of the rule, but you do not have to refuse to carry them.

Passengers travelling from, and including 2nd December should check the local restriction tiers <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions> that apply in the areas they will pass through. To help control the spread of the virus you should remind passengers of the rules on social contact applicable in the tier you are operating in, but you do not have to refuse to carry them <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

In the Vehicle – Passengers must wear a face covering in a Taxi or PHV, unless they are exempt. You can refuse to take a passenger if they are not wearing a face covering and they are not exempt <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

Passengers do not have to provide proof that they are exempt.

You as a driver do not have to wear a face covering, but we recommend that you do if it does not affect your ability to drive safely. Your Operator may ask you to wear a face covering. You should follow their guidance if it does not affect your ability to drive safely.

You may need to remove your face covering in order to communicate with passengers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

You should ask passengers to sit as far from you as possible or put a mark where you would like them to sit. Where possible they should not sit in the front of the vehicle.

Open windows when carrying passengers and/or use the vents to bring in fresh air from outside. You should not use the recirculated air option for the cars ventilation system when carrying passengers.

End of journey – leaving the vehicle – Take contactless payment if you can.

If not you should wash your hands with soap and water or sanitiser after handling money.

You should remind passengers to wash or sanitise their hands after the journey.

Preparing your vehicle for the next passenger – COVID is carried in the air by tiny droplets. Larger droplets can land on surfaces they touch. Smaller droplets (called aerosols), can stay in the air for at least 5 minutes and often much longer if there is no ventilation.

Between every journey you should:

Clean those parts of your vehicle that your passengers may have touched, for example door handles, payment devices, protective screens, buttons, seats

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Open doors/windows to ventilate the car for 5 minutes.

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser.

If you have coronavirus symptoms or have been told to self-isolate –

You should not work if you have coronavirus symptoms

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms> or you have been told to self-isolate. If you have coronavirus symptoms you should get a test as soon as possible. You should stay at home until you get the result.

Financial help for drivers

If you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, you may be entitled to a payment of £500.00 from your local council under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme-claiming-financial-support/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme>

Self-employed drivers may also be eligible for:

the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension/self-employment-income-support-scheme-grant-extension>

the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme>

a coronavirus Bounce Back loan

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-coronavirus-bounce-back-loan>

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable and have received a formal shielding notification, you are entitled to either Statutory Sick Pay or Employment Support Allowance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Read more about Coronavirus (COVID – 19): what to do if you're self-employed and getting less work or no work

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-youre-self-employed-and-getting-less-work-or-no-work>

PHV Operators and Taxi intermediaries

Carrying out a COVID19 risk assessment – operators & intermediaries

PHV operators and taxi intermediaries that are employers must carry out a risk assessment in line with government guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-taxis-and-phvs>

If you have fewer than 5 employees including non-drivers (dispatchers, booking agents etc.), you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment.

Providing health information to drivers and passengers

You should provide health information to drivers and passengers through your smartphone apps, text message and displaying posters within operating centres. You should also:

Encourage the drivers you work with to read the drivers guidance.

Display posters to remind drivers and passengers of hygiene good practice.

<https://extranet.dft.gov.uk/safer-transport-campaign/resources-for-taxi-phv/>

Share messages to encourage passengers to download and use the NHS COVID-19 app.

Remind passengers of social distancing rules when they make a booking.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>

Make clear to passengers that unless they are exempt, they must wear a face covering at all times when in the vehicle.

Remind passengers to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before entering the vehicle.

Drivers do not have to wear a face covering, but we recommend that they do if it does not affect their ability to drive safely.

It is further recommended that you should not offer ride-sharing or pooled ride services online or at taxi ranks.

Financial help for PHV Operators and Taxi Intermediaries

Businesses and self-employed drivers may be eligible for:

the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme>

a coronavirus Bounce Back loan

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-coronavirus-bounce-back-loan>

Find out what financial support schemes you may be eligible for
<https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder>

Licensing appreciates that this newsletter is in written format and that it can be difficult to copy the link to the internet to search the relevant information. Drivers and Operators are reminded that the above information is also contained on the Councils website,
https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/taxi_driver_news

2. CHANGES TO RAPID DROP OFF AT EAST MIDLANDS AIRPORT.

We have been asked by the Commercial Transformation Director at East Midlands Airport to advise drivers and operators of changes to rapid drop off prices at East Midlands Airport.

Included within a review of car parking prices was the decision to increase rapid drop off charges from £3.00 for 10 minutes to £4.00 for 15 minutes, when passengers return.

The one hour free parking in Long Stay 2 is unaffected and 30 minutes for £5.00 parking can be had in Short Stay 1.

Blue Badge parking is available at Short Stay 1 car park (free for first 30 minutes), where blue badge parking bays are clearly identifiable.

Whilst E.M.A. appreciates that the increased cost of the rapid drop off price will not be welcome, an additional five minutes waiting time will allow drivers more time to drop passengers off.

New protocols for passengers and visitors –

A number of new measures are in place to help make air travel safer for passengers and staff. Please note, only travelling passengers are allowed in the terminal. Drivers dropping off or collecting passengers must wait in their vehicles.

3. DVLA ON-LINE SERVICE TO CHANGE ADDRESS ON VEHICLE LOG BOOK.

Taxi drivers who need to update the address details on their vehicle log book (V5C) can now do this online in a matter of minutes. The DVLA announce that this will slash the amount of time it takes for motorists to receive a new log book from up to 6 weeks to just 5 working days.

Using this new service, it takes less than 2 minutes to inform DVLA of their new address. All you need is the vehicle registration number, log book document reference number and your postcode.

<https://www.gov.uk/change-address-v5c>

4. TEMPORARY TAXI RANKS – HIGH STREET & BAXTER GATE, LOUGHBOROUGH.

Kinch Bus Services have again contacted the Council advising that their drivers are still experiencing problems with Charnwood 'taxis' ranking in the bus stops on High Street and Baxter Gate, Loughborough outside the designated times that these areas can be used as taxi ranks.

This is particularly an issue at weekends, and in some cases has led to bus passengers having to disembark into the road.

Licensing would remind taxi drivers that the Skylink Service is a 24 hour service requiring access to a bus stop number HB situated on High Street, 24 hours a day every day of the week.

The designated times for the temporary ranks (including bus stops) are:
High Street opposite Peri Peri Chicken – 6.00pm until 6.00am.
High Street opposite Post Office – Midnight until 5.00am.
High Street all other temporary ranks – 6.00pm until 6.00am.

Baxter Gate from Maxins Chicken to Revolution – Midnight until 5.00am.
Baxter Gate all other temporary ranks – 6.00pm until 6.00am.

5. LONDON ROAD LEICESTER - RED ROUTE SCHEME.

Leicester City Council is making an Experimental Traffic Order on London Road to extend the Red Route from the Railway Station up to the Mayfield Road roundabout. The aim of the order is to create a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, reduce congestion, and prevent inconsiderate and indiscriminate parking along this stretch of London Road. The experimental scheme has been running since 31st August 2020 for a maximum period of 18 months.

Roads affected by the Red Route scheme:

St. Georges Way (from Charles Street to Waterloo Way)
Waterloo Way (from St. Georges Way to Regent Road)
London Road (from Waterloo Way to Mayfield Road roundabout)

The Red Route Scheme applies to all Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles as well as general motorists. For both Double Red Lines (operational all hours, 7 days a week) and Single Red Lines (operational during signed times) drivers can only stop a motor vehicle in the following circumstances:

- To avoid an accident.
- Under the instruction of a Police Officer in uniform.
- Emergency vehicles being used in the performance of their duties or emergency.
- When forced to do so by other traffic or traffic signals.
- To open or close gates or barriers, to allow access from or to off-street premises.
- To use parking or loading bays when the traffic signs exempts those bays during specified hours of opening.
- **Taxis (Hackney Carriage) to pick up and drop off passengers only (must proceed off without delay from that section of road after completing that activity).**

- Disabled badge user, only to pick up or drop off passenger (must proceed off without delay from that section of road after completing that activity).

Taxis (Hackney Carriages) are not permitted to stop at any time on a red bus stop clearway.

The enforcement from this scheme will be partially CCTV and Civil Enforcement Officers. If drivers do not comply with the 'no stopping prohibition' they will receive a £70.00 penalty charge notice through the post, or you will be issued one to the vehicle by a Civil Enforcement Officer.

Further to this as a reminder Private Hire Vehicles are not exempted to use the London Road Bus Lane or any other bus lanes and bus gates within Leicester City.

6. GENERAL MATTERS.

A gentle reminder that vehicle tests **cannot** be carried out before 28 days prior to expiry., All drivers are requested to check the details on the compliance certificate are correct before leaving the garage.

The Licensing team also request that drivers **when collecting a vehicle plate or badge first contact the team for an appointment.** You must attend the Council Office car park on the date and time given. Please do not be late. A further appointment will need to be made for any no show. Please remain seated in your vehicle with your face covering on and your front passenger window left open. A member of the Licensing Team will meet you at your vehicle and place your licence/plates on your front passenger seat whilst maintaining social distance at all times. If you are collecting a badge a signature will be required. Please bring your own pen.

When returning a vehicle plate it must be accompanied by all other livery – door signs, internal plate, licence document, and in the case of surrender the front plate. A Vehicle plate return form must be completed and returned at the same time.

The Licensing Team would also like to make all drivers/operators aware that incoming 'post' is quarantined by the Council, so where possible contact Licensing via e-mail. Licensing Officers are predominantly working from home during the Covid19 pandemic.

Should any driver/operator/proprietor require guidance or information regarding protective screens for their vehicles please access the following link:

https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/taxi_protective_screens

For the benefit of you all, the Licensing team have created a taxi driver news page (which also gives access to previous newsletters). This news page can be found at:

https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/taxi_driver_news

You will have noticed that attached as an extra sheet to the newsletter is information and a 'Face Covering' advice sticker to affix in a suitable place within your HC or PHV. These stickers will also be included within vehicle packs for the foreseeable future.

In regard to the information relating to the VIP armband/headrest pouch kit your feedback on whether you consider it could be useful would be appreciated to:

Christmas Opening Times

Please note that the Council and Licensing Offices are closed from **1pm on Thursday, 24 December 2020** until **8.30am on Monday, 4th January 2021**.

Best Regards and Merry Christmas from the Licensing Team

Stay Safe

