

**COVID-19 – V4
 TEMPORARY TAXI/PRIVATE HIRE TRADE VEHICLE LICENCES
 VALID WITH EFFECT FROM 15 June 2020**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

| | Question | Answer |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | Can staff in the Guildhall help with my licensing enquires? | The One Stop Shop will remain closed for the foreseeable future for the licensing service. |
| 2. | I have a question about my vehicle/driver licence expiry date what should I do? | <p>You should speak to your Operator first and hopefully they will be able to clarify for you. If your Operator is not sure they can email into licensing@northampton.gov.uk</p> <p>The Operator may be able to identify a number of drivers that have the same question and send one email, instead of the licensing team receiving the same question multiple times.</p> |
| 3. | My vehicle licence has already expired or is due to expire in June/July. I have continued working, what should I do now? | <p>We are now able to process all vehicle renewals in the usual manner and therefore in order to continue working you should now apply online and take your vehicle for testing as usual.</p> <p>Please note: if you are not currently working, you do not have to apply for a vehicle renewal and some of the information below may answer some of your questions.</p> |
| 4. | How do I submit my documents? | <p>Please keep all your documents and once you have made your online application we will contact you by email to request that documents are sent to;</p> <p>licensing@northampton.gov.uk</p> |
| 5. | How will I get my new/renewed vehicle licence and plate? | <p>We are now posting out all licences and plates by Royal Mail 1st or 2nd class post.</p> <p>All licences are posted by Royal Mail using return addressed envelopes. This means that if the Royal Mail are not able to deliver</p> |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | | <p>the licence and/or you have moved, they will return the licence to the Guildhall marked “gone away”. It may take several weeks before the licensing office receive the returned mail.</p> <p>It is important and a condition of your licence that you keep the licensing office informed of any change in your address. This can be done by email to; licensing@northampton.gov.uk</p> |
| 6. | What do I do with my old plate? | <p>Hackney & private hire licence plates belong to the Council and it is a condition of your licence that these are returned.</p> <p>We are making this information a formal request that all old expired licence plates are returned within <u>7 working days</u> of the expiry date, or as directed.</p> <p>You can do this by leaving the old licence plate in a secure box at the Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.</p> <p>A box will be made available and clearly sign posted in the self-service area, located just before the One Stop Shop.</p> <p>You are reminded that you will need to ensure that you keep 2 metres apart from any other person/s when you are in this area.</p> |
| 7. | What happens if I do not return my old plate? | <p>We will be monitoring the return of the licence plates.</p> <p>Your vehicle licence may be revoked/suspended, or your next vehicle renewal application refused, if you do not return any old plates.</p> <p>This helps to prevent the plates being used inappropriately and will</p> |

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | | <p>assist with reducing the environmental impact.</p> <p>The Council have made arrangements to recycle the old plates and are committed to reducing the environmental impact wherever possible.</p> |
| 8. | What happens if I do not receive my plate? | If you applied 2-3 weeks before your vehicle licence expires, and you have submitted all documents correctly. You should receive your licence and plate before the current one expires. |
| 9. | I applied 2-3 weeks before my licence expiry date and I have not received my renewed plate before my current licence expires, what should I do? | <p>If you applied online and submitted your documents in accordance with our process guide and your licence is showing as granted in your licensing portal and on the public register, then you can continue to work.</p> <p>You should still leave the old plate on the back of your car, until you have received the renewed licence in the post.</p> <p>If you have still not received your plate 3 working days after your last expiry date, you should email; licensing@northampton.gov.uk</p> |
| 10. | I applied 1 week before my licence expiry date and I have not received my renewed plate before my current licence expires, what should I do? | <p>You have left your application too late for the licensing team to process your application and post the vehicle licence and plate back to you.</p> <p>Therefore, you must not work until you have received the renewed licence and plate in the post.</p> <p>Remember next time to apply 2-3 weeks before the expiry of your current plate.</p> |
| 11. | My insurance is due to expire what should I do? | Your vehicle must always be insured. If you are using the |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | | vehicle for taxi/private hire work, you must make sure that you have the appropriate hire and reward insurance document in place at all times. See information below if you are not working |
| 12. | My MOT has expired what should I do? | You should not drive your vehicle if you do not have a current valid MOT certificate, unless you have been granted an exemption in accordance with the criteria detailed at GOV.UK |
| 13. | My MOT has been extended by the Government will I still need to take my vehicle for testing? | Yes – the tests carried out at the two approved garages includes the Council test to ensure that your vehicle meets the local policy specifications and we will still require that documentation. |
| 14. | I am not currently working; am I still able to renew by vehicle licence when I am back to work? | We understand that you may not be working and may not want to spend money on a vehicle renewal at this time. We are aiming to be flexible and will still allow you to apply for a renewal and will accept MOT/Inspection forms that have been obtained later than usual. If you have not been working, you may wish to consider applying for a new vehicle licence (see information below) |
| 15. | I am not currently working and want to change my insurance cover to reduce the costs, how will this affect my licence application? | <p>If the vehicle is not being used for taxi/private hire work and it is only being used for your own personal use, then it is your own decision if you wish to change the policy. However you must email into licensing@northampton.gov.uk to make the local authority aware that you are not working and we will suspend the licence plate accordingly.</p> <p>You may also want to discuss the cost implications in detail with your insurance company as they may make charges for each change in policy etc. Also please consider that the day your vehicle starts being used again for private hire/taxi work, you must make sure</p> |

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| | | <p>that you have the appropriate hire and reward insurance etc. in place and that the suspension has been removed. The licensing team will request details to show that you have the correct hire and reward policy back in place.</p> |
| <p>16.</p> | <p>I am not currently working, and my licence has lapsed. Will you apply the vehicle emissions standard if I apply to licence the same vehicle again in the future?</p> | <p>If your vehicle is off the road for a few months due to you not working in the current pandemic, or for other financial reasons, then we will allow you to bring this back onto the fleet without imposing the emission standard.</p> <p>However, please note this will only apply to vehicles that were due to expire since the pandemic started in March 2020 and we will not be allowing vehicles that expired any earlier to come back onto the fleet, although each situation will be decided upon its own individual merits.</p> <p>Therefore, for example if your vehicle licence expired in May 2020 and you have not been working, we will allow you to apply for a <u>new</u> 6-month licence.</p> <p>If this application is made and granted around August/September 2020, you will be granted a 6-month licence allowing you to keep the vehicle until January/February 2021.</p> <p>Going forward, to date we have not made any decisions with regards to the delaying of the emissions standard policy.</p> |
| <p>17.</p> | <p>I have changed my vehicle and I need to obtain a new vehicle licence; can I still do this?</p> | <p>Yes – you must obtain the appropriate MOT & council inspection form from one of the approved garages. You can still apply online for a new vehicle licence and we will contact you for all the relevant paperwork to process your application. Please</p> |

| | | |
|-----|---|--|
| | | <p>note we will also require a copy of your <u>insurance certificate</u> and <u>logbook</u>.</p> <p>Before purchasing a vehicle you should also consider the vehicle specifications and emissions policy.</p> |
| 18. | If my new vehicle licence application has been granted, can I carry on with taxi/private hire work whilst I am waiting for the plate to arrive in the post? | In the interest of public safety, it is still a requirement that all vehicles display the appropriate signage, including the plate. Therefore, you must wait until this arrives in the post. If your new vehicle is required as a matter of urgency for school contracts etc., please ask your Operator to email licensing to request that this is given priority. |
| 19. | I have purchased a taxi/private hire vehicle that is already licensed. What should I do? | You will need to complete a notification of a licensed vehicle change in ownership form This will ensure that licensing records are correctly updated to reflect the new owners' details. You are also required to send a copy of the insurance documents, detailing that the new owner is correctly insured for taxi/private hire work. |
| 20. | I have purchased another vehicle; can I move the licensed plate from my old vehicle onto the new vehicle? | <p>No, you cannot do this.....</p> <p>A licence is issued to a specific vehicle registration number, after the Council is satisfied that it has undergone the appropriate testing and application criteria.</p> <p>Therefore, you will need to submit a new vehicle application and the appropriate paperwork to obtain the necessary licence/plate.</p> |
| 21. | Other useful publication links for the taxi and private hire trade | GOV.UK MOT Exemptions Institute of Licensing - COVID-19 Carrying Passengers & MOT information Health & Sanitisation Information |
| | | |