

APPLYING TO BECOME A HACKNEY/PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER IN THE NORTHAMPTON AREA

Before proceeding with an application to become a Private Hire/Hackney Driver you must read the relevant criteria and guidance notes detailed at **appendix A, B, C & D**

A good knowledge of the English language is essential, applicants **must** read the guidance notes and qualifying criteria and are advised to carry out their own research into the Hackney/Private Hire trade, as some of the fees are non-refundable.

You will be required to obtain your licence as a Private Hire Driver, before you can proceed to take the more comprehensive knowledge test to become a Hackney Driver.

When you have read and understood the requirements, if you still wish to proceed you will need to;

- create an [online licensing account](#)
- submit an online request for the application and pay the initial fee of £320.00 (please refer to the fees table below). You may wish to refer to the [step by step guide](#)

Once your online payment has been received, you will receive;

1. an email with a new driver declaration form asking for more detailed information and declarations. This **must be** completed and returned to the licensing team.
2. once the declaration form has been received and validated, an email acknowledgement with the appropriate link and request for you to apply online for your **enhanced** disclosure and barring certificate (**DBS**) with [Taxi Plus](#)
3. once the licensing team have confirmed with Taxi Plus that your DBS application is in progress, you will receive an email inviting you to attend the next available induction course.

A flow chart of this process is shown in **appendix D**

How will my information be used

Your information may be used in accordance with the [Licensing Privacy Notice](#) and the [NR3 register](#)

FEES (credit/debit card or cheque)		PAYABLE
Application Validation (Non-Refundable)	£30.00	At the time of submitting new driver online application.
One Day Induction Course (Refundable providing not attended course & application withdrawn)	£100.00	At the time of submitting new driver online application.
Grant & Issue 3 Year Licence (Refundable if application unsuccessful or withdrawn)	£190.00	At the time of submitting new driver online application.
Disclosure & Barring Certificate Application & Driving Licence Check	£63.00 + post office fee	Paid online to Taxi Plus (Fee variable)
Induction Day Re-tests	£55.00	To be advised
Hackney Knowledge Test	£55.00	To be advised

APPENDIX A – Identification Documents & Criteria

Identification documents	When these documents should be produced
Passport/s or Birth Certificate (please bring all multiple passports issued by different countries)	Post Office certified copies to be sent to Personnel Checks for Disclosure & Barring Application and Post Office certified copies to be submitted on Induction Day
Driving Licence	
Proof of address i.e. recent utility bill or bank statement etc.	
Right to Work	Original to be produced on Induction Day or provide GOV.UK employer check code by email to licensing@northampton.gov.uk
Certificate of Good Conduct if applicable	Submit with declaration form
One Passport sized photograph	

Criteria - all applicants must attend a One Day Induction Course and meet the following criteria.

Written Tests - a simple maths, reading and writing test.	This will be at the start of the induction day. Applicants that fail this test will not be allowed to continue but will be given advice on how to achieve the required standard and how to book a re-test.
Knowledge Test	Including Areas of town, Taxi/Private Hire Council Conditions & Highway Code A copy of the conditions book is available online
The Law relating to Hackney and Private Hire vehicles and drivers and good practice	For example - illegally plying for hire, dealing with the public and safety awareness.
Disability awareness	Approximately a 90-minute training session delivered by an external provider.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	An overview on how to spot the signs of CSE and reporting mechanisms. A member of the school contract team may also attend to give guidance on acceptable behaviour when carrying children & vulnerable adults

Criteria - all applicants must also meet the following criteria.

Disclosure & Barring Check (DBS)	You must apply for an enhanced DBS Disclosure with Taxi Plus . A separate fee for this check will be payable to Taxi Plus .
Taxi Driving Test	<p>All applicants will need to undergo an enhanced taxi driving test with an accredited test provider at their own expense, to assess their competency to drive a licensed vehicle.</p> <p>You can book a test with either of the following: - www.advancedmotoring.co.uk www.bluelamptrust.org.uk www.greenpenny.co.uk</p> <p>You may be able to use other companies, providing the examiner holds the appropriate accreditation.</p> <p>A separate fee for this test will be payable to the test provider.</p> <p>Note: Pass Plus is not an appropriate qualifying certificate</p> <p>You may be exempt from the requirement to undergo this test if you hold a full licence to drive either a large goods vehicle (LGV) or passenger carrying vehicle (PCV).</p>
Driving Licence	<p>All applicants must have held a United Kingdom driving licence for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Driving licences must show the applicant's current address</p> <p>A check of your current driving licence status will be undertaken with the DVLA by Taxi Plus at the same time as your DBS check.</p> <p>You must also bring your driving licence to your Induction Day</p>
Certificate of Good Conduct -	<p>Applicants who have been resident in the United Kingdom for less than five years from the date of application are required to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct or equivalent from any country in which they have been resident in the last five years</p> <p>The Certificate of Good Conduct must be in English and provided at the applicant's own expense. This will be in addition to the DBS check.</p>

ACRO Check (Criminal Records Office)	Where appropriate and proportionate an ACRO form may be submitted for the police to carry out an international check on applicants' foreign convictions. This form may be completed by officers and the results of any search may be returned back to the local authority
NR3 Check	<p>This is a national register of hackney carriage and private hire licence refusals and revocations.</p> <p>When we receive an application for a licence, we check the applicant's details on the register to confirm that there is no record of them having a licence revoked or refused elsewhere.</p> <p>We use the database to ensure the fitness and propriety of licence holders as part of an application process.</p>
Medical Group 2	The medical form available to download on this councils website . This must be completed at your own expense by an appropriate qualified medical practitioner. Fees may vary between different medical centres.
Hackney Test	This is a separate higher level of geographical knowledge once you have qualified as a Private Hire Driver. These tests are run approximately every 6 months.

**REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT
1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 Act places limits on what convictions and cautions an employer/regulatory body can ask an individual about and what they can take into account, subject to the exceptions order.

The Exceptions Order sets out occupations and positions exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, these are generally positions of trust and relates to sensitive areas such as work with children, or other people in vulnerable circumstances and where there is a valid need to see a person's full criminal history in order to assess their suitability for a position.

Where the role is listed in Regulations made under the Police Act 1997 an enhanced disclosure certificate can be requested for certain types of *regulated activity*, and an employer can ask a person about any unprotected spent convictions and cautions.

The Licensing of Taxi and Private Hire drivers falls within the scope of the Exceptions Order and is deemed to be a *regulated activity* where the local authority is entitled to consider all convictions and intelligence information for the purposes of determining an application for a licence. Every application for a licence is considered on its own individual merits.

When determining whether or not to Grant, Renew, Suspend or Revoke a Private Hire Drivers or a Hackney Carriage Drivers Licence where convictions and relevant information is disclosed, this council has adopted a local policy guidelines that you may wish to take into consideration before making your application.

NORTHAMPTON AREA POLICY

Each case will be decided on its own merits taking into account these guidelines and any other relevant circumstances.

1. A person with a current conviction for serious crime need not be permanently barred from obtaining a licence but should be expected to remain free of conviction for 3 to 5 years, according to the circumstances, before an application is entertained. Some discretion may be appropriate if the offence is isolated and there are mitigating circumstances. However, the overriding consideration should be the protection of the public.
2. The following examples afford a general guide on the action to be taken where convictions are admitted. A new application with more than 8 current points on the D.V.L.A. Driving Licence will generally not be considered.

(a) Minor Traffic Offences

Convictions defective tyres/ brakes, failing to stop at traffic signs etc) should not prevent a person from proceeding with an application. If sufficient points have been accrued to require a period of disqualification of the applicant's driving licence then a hackney carriage or PHV licence may be granted after its restoration but a warning should be issued as to future conduct.

(b) Major Traffic Offences

Following a conviction for dangerous driving or aggravated vehicle taking at least 3 years to 5 years free of such a conviction should be shown before an application is entertained.

Convictions for driving with no insurance, driving whilst disqualified, driving without due care and attention. More than one conviction of this type of offence within 2 years should merit refusal and no further application should be considered until a period of 1 to 3 years free from convictions has elapsed.

(c) Drunkenness

(i) With Motor Vehicle

A serious view should be taken of convictions of driving or being in charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drink and/or drugs. Likewise a conviction for failing to provide a specimen. Due regard will be had to the alcohol/drugs level and or the penalty imposed by the Court, together with the circumstances of the offence.

An isolated incident should not necessarily debar an applicant but strict warnings should be given as to future behaviour. More than one conviction for these offences should raise grave doubts as to the applicant's fitness to hold a licence. At least 3 years should elapse (after the restoration of the driving licence) before an applicant is considered for a licence.

If there is any suggestion that the applicant is an alcoholic, a special medical examination should be arranged before the application is entertained. If the applicant is found to be an alcoholic a period of 5 years should elapse after treatment is complete before a further licence application is considered.

(ii) Not in Motor Vehicle

An isolated conviction for drunkenness need not debar an applicant from gaining a licence. However, a number of convictions for drunkenness could indicate a medical problem necessitating critical examination (see (I) above). In some cases, a warning may be sufficient.

(d) Drugs

An applicant with a conviction for a serious drug related offence should be required to show a period of at least 3 years free of convictions before an application is entertained, or 5 years after detoxification treatment if he/she was an addict.

(e) Indecency Offences

As hackney carriage and PHV drivers often carry unaccompanied passengers, applicants with convictions for indecent exposure, indecent assault, importuning, any indecency involving children or any of the more serious sexual offences, should be refused until they can show a substantial period (at least 3 to 5 years) free of such offences. More than one conviction of this kind should preclude consideration for at least 5 years. In either case if a licence is granted a strict warning as to future conduct should be issued.

(f) Violence

As hackney carriage and PHV drivers maintain close contact with the public, a firm line should be taken with applicants who have convictions for grievous bodily harm, wounding or assault, robbery, offences relating to weapons, serious criminal damage or public disorder offences. At least 3 years free of such convictions should be shown before an application is entertained and even then a strict warning should be administered.

(g) Dishonesty

Hackney carriage and PHV drivers are expected to be persons of trust. The widespread practice of delivering unaccompanied property is indicative of the trust that business people place in drivers. Moreover, it is comparatively easy for a dishonest driver to defraud the public by demanding more than the legal fare etc. Overseas visitors can be confused by the change in currency and become "fair game" for an unscrupulous driver.

For these reasons a serious view will be taken of any conviction involving dishonesty, examples of which are theft, burglary, fraud, deception, blackmail and taking a vehicle without consent. In general, a period of 3 to 5 years free of conviction should be required before entertaining an application.

APPENDIX C– FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
<p>What is the first step to making my application?</p>	<p>You do not need to speak with an officer. You can apply online and follow the process outlined in the flowchart. Appendix D</p> <p>You must pay £320.00 or your online application will be rejected.</p> <p>If you have concerns about your suitability to become a driver, it is advisable that you submit the declaration form and email licensing to request a call back to discuss this in more detail with a senior licensing officer. This will allow officers to consider the information that you have provided and give a more informed opinion.</p> <p>Please note that licensing officers will not be able to give you a guarantee that your application will be successful as this will be dependent upon several different factors and any further relevant information that may come to light.</p> <p>If your application falls outside of any policy criteria, this may also need further consideration by a Licensing Committee.</p> <p>As private hire/taxi drivers are exempt from the rehabilitation of offender’s guidelines, if you are in doubt about anything that should be declared, you should always include this information on your declaration form. Appendix B</p>
<p>How should I submit my documents?</p>	<p>Please refer to the criteria instructions above regarding the appropriate time to bring your identification documents. If you have any medical/driving certificates etc. to submit, this can be done using the drop-in scanning services at the One Stop Shop in the Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton.</p>
<p>I have a criminal record and/or motoring offence etc. can I still apply?</p>	<p>Yes – you can still apply however you must declare all convictions/motoring offences etc. regardless of when they may have expired. Each application will be considered on its own individual merits</p>

<p>I have previously held a private hire/taxi licence with another authority, can I still apply?</p>	<p>Yes – you can still apply however you must declare that you have previously, or currently hold a licence with another authority. You should also declare if this licence has ever been suspended or revoked. Each application will be considered on its own individual merits.</p>
<p>If I apply to be a New Private Hire Driver, how long will it take to complete my application?</p>	<p>It may take several months to complete your application and this is very dependent upon a number of external factors, for example it may take some time for your Disclosure Certificate to come back from the DBS service and there may be a wait with the external company who will undertake your private hire driving test.</p>
<p>If I start my application and decide not to continue, will I be able to come back and carry on with the application later?</p>	<p>We appreciate that there may be circumstances where you cannot continue with your application; however, we will not let an application remain pending forever. Some of the certificates that you have obtained will expire. Therefore, we advise that you complete your application within a 12-month period. After this period, we may write to warn you that the application will be terminated and you must start the application from the beginning, if you do not contact us within 7 days of the letter.</p>
<p>If my application is terminated, will I be able to use the certificates that I have already obtained, and will I be required to undertake the induction course again?</p>	<p>The only certificate that does not expire is the Driving Test that you may have undertaken. Once your application has been terminated, you will be required to start as a New Driver and will be asked to obtain a new DBS, Medical etc. and you will be required to attend the Induction Course and take the necessary knowledge tests again.</p>
<p>Why do I need to undertake the Induction Day again and retake the tests?</p>	<p>The Induction Day is constantly being updated to reflect new changes in local policies and it is important that any new driver has attended the most recent up to date course. Also, when we are considering any licence application, we need to be certain that we have checked the most recent and up to date Disclosure & Barring Certificate and your medical suitability.</p>
<p>Can I have a refund of any monies that I have paid?</p>	<p>The New Driver application is broken down into different parts. You are required to pay a £30 initial application validation fee, a £100 induction course fee and a £190.00 3-year licence fee. The £30.00 is non-refundable, however if you have not attended the Induction Course then we will consider refunding the £100.00, although we may take out any</p>

	charges that have been incurred as a result of your cancellation or non- attendance. The £190.00 licence fee is refundable at any time before the licence is granted providing your application is withdrawn in writing.
What is included on the knowledge test?	The knowledge test includes questions on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the council's local conditions policy available on the councils website • the local geographical area – available on general publications and/or internet • the highway code available on general publications and/or internet.
Will I need to know every street in Northampton for the local area part of the knowledge test?	For the private hire test, you do not need to know every street in the residential areas. However, you will need a good knowledge of the local districts, places of interest, public places and the main roads that take you around the town.
How many questions are asked in each test that I take?	There are 50 questions in the English & Maths test and 50 in the Knowledge test; you have 45 minutes to complete each test paper.
How many questions must I get right to pass the tests?	The pass mark is 70% on each test paper, this means that you must get at least 35 correct.
What if I fail the knowledge test?	You will be allowed to retake the test at the next available Induction Course day. You won't be required to do the whole course, just the test in the afternoon. You can retake the test as many times as you like but you will be charged £55 for each re-sit.
Where can I book my taxi driving test?	You can book a test with either of the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.advancedmotoring.co.uk www.bluelamptrust.org.uk www.greenpenny.co.uk <p>You may be able to use other companies, providing the examiner holds the appropriate accreditation.</p> <p>NB Pass Plus is not an appropriate qualifying certificate</p>
What do I need to bring to the Induction Day?	You will need to bring identification documents, including your driving licence, passport and any applicable right to work documents. Please refer to the document guide in appendix A
How often will I be asked to complete a disclosure and barring application and a medical?	If your application is successful and you have been issued with a 3-year licence, you will be asked to complete a further disclosure and barring application and medical certificate every 3 years. If you are aged over 65 you will be asked to submit a medical certificate every year.

APPENDIX D- PROCESS FLOWCHART

