



# TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE TIMES

JANUARY 2025



## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wishing you a happy and prosperous 2025.

### DBS CHECKS

The fee for a DBS check has increased to £62.00 with immediate effect.

It is mandatory for you to register with the DBS Update Service and you can do this within 30 days of receiving your DBS certificate. There is a payment of £16 each year to the update service and this is taken automatically from whichever card you used to pay the initial registration fee. Debit and credit cards expire and new cards are issued, when this happens and the DBS Update service cannot take the annual fee, an email will be sent to you to update your payment method. Please don't ignore the email and act on it as soon as possible.

If you need to have a new DBS check certain documents are required in order to be able to process your application form. If you are asked to provide alternative documents, please do this as a matter of urgency. A failure to provide the requested document means that your DBS cannot be processed and you may find your licence suspended.

When you receive the email from [dbschecks@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:dbschecks@suffolk.gov.uk) act on it as quickly as you can and complete the form carefully. The name you add to the application form should be the same name on your DVLA driving licence and passport. If the names are different on each of them, you will need to provide an alternative document.

## ACCIDENTS IN YOUR LICENSED VEHICLE

If you have an accident in your licensed vehicle, you must email [licensing@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@ipswich.gov.uk) within 72 hours of the accident taking place giving details of the accident and damage to your vehicle, you may be requested to provide photographs of the damage.

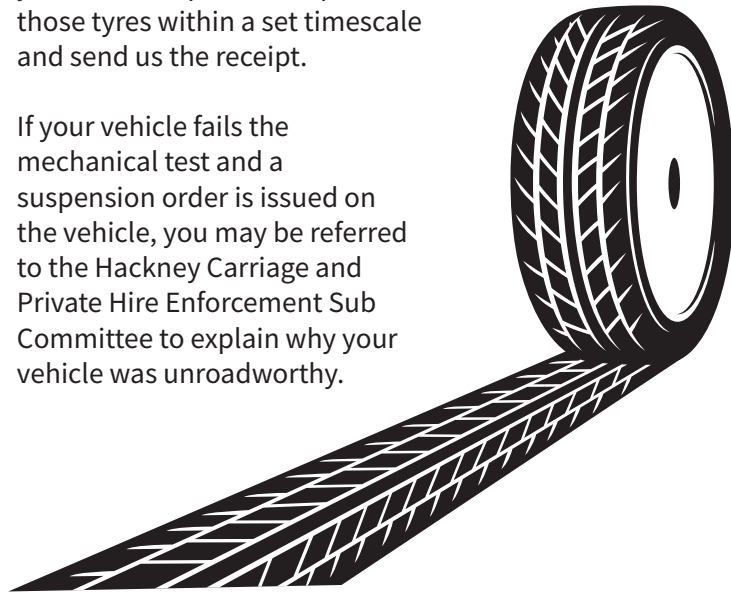


## CHECK YOUR TYRES!

It is imperative that your vehicle remains roadworthy at all times and it is your responsibility to ensure this. You should carry out checks of your licensed vehicle on a regular basis, this check should include tyres, lights, indicators, seat belts.

If, your mechanical test shows advisories on your tyres, you will be required to replace those tyres within a set timescale and send us the receipt.

If your vehicle fails the mechanical test and a suspension order is issued on the vehicle, you may be referred to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Enforcement Sub Committee to explain why your vehicle was unroadworthy.



## CONDITIONS OF LICENCE MUST BE CARRIED IN YOUR LICENSED VEHICLE

It is a condition of your Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver conditions that you carry a copy of the vehicle licence and driver licence conditions in your licensed private hire vehicle. These conditions can be found here: [Taxi and private hire licensing](#) and you can print a copy yourself. If you are unable to print a copy, request copies from [licensing@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@ipswich.gov.uk)



## ASSISTANCE DOGS IN LICENSED VEHICLES



You may not refuse to transport passengers with assistance dogs unless you have been issued with an exemption certificate from doing so. An exemption certificate will only be issued with medical proof which supports the exemption and application forms and details can be obtained from the licensing team.

If you arrive at a booking, or are approached on the rank, you must carry the passenger and their assistance dog. They may sit where they like in the vehicle and the dog must remain with the passenger at all times.

## PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES IN BUS LANES

Once a vehicle is licensed as private hire, it is always private hire until the licence is surrendered or cancelled, regardless of the size of the vehicle (this does include all vehicles up to and including 8 seats). Private Hire cannot use bus lanes.

If you drive a private hire vehicle and are seen using a bus lane, you will receive a written warning. A second offence will warrant a final warning and a third offence will result in you appearing at the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Enforcement Sub Committee.

## DOUBLE YELLOW LINES – MEAN NO STOPPING/ WAITING

It is accepted that sometimes you may be required to collect or drop off a passenger with mobility issues and this may require stopping on double yellow lines. If this happens, please don't wait on double yellow lines – arrive on time to collect your passenger and minimise the time you spend on the double yellow lines. You should not wait on double yellow lines at any time. If you arrive early for a collection, wait where it is legal to do so and only move when your passenger is ready.

## DO YOU DO A SCHOOL CONTRACT?

If you do a school contract you must have completed a Safeguarding training course required by Suffolk County Council. In addition, Suffolk County Council Passenger Transport has issued the following advice:



- No additional persons can be in the vehicle other than the person being transported and any passenger assistant;
- Never exchange mobile phone numbers, or any other personal information;
- Never buy or give food or drink to passengers;
- Never accept or give gifts to passengers or parents/carers;
- Never engage in conversation of a personal nature;
- Never, under any circumstances, take pictures of passengers;
- Never enter into any kind of relationship or have social media contact with the passenger or their family;
- Never give/lend passengers the use of your mobile 'phone or tablet;
- Never make unnecessary physical contact;
- Never accept any transport changes, ensuring you keep to the agreed timetables and route;
- Never use bad or inappropriate language;
- Never become involved in an argument;
- Report any incidents or concerns to your private hire operator, Suffolk County Council Passenger Transport, or to licensing;
- Maintain clear, appropriate boundaries and be professional.

Whilst not a mandatory requirement, it is recommended that you install CCTV in your vehicle, especially if you carry out a school contract.

All drivers should be aware of the Code of Conduct for drivers: [Taxi and private hire licensing](#)

## CONVICTIONS/CAUTIONS/ARREST/CHARGE/FIXED PENALTY NOTICES/COMMUNITY RESOLUTION ORDERS

You are required to notify the Council of any arrest, charge, caution, conviction, fixed penalty notice or Community Resolution Order (CRO) within 48 hours. Details must be emailed to [licensing@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@ipswich.gov.uk).

## VEHICLE AGE LIMITS

The current vehicle age limit is 15 years old for all licensed vehicles. If your vehicle is 14 years old when you renew your vehicle licence and turns 15 years old during the life of that one year licence, you will not be able to renew the licence the following year and will need to replace it.

If you replace your vehicle during the course of a licence, the replacement vehicle must be newer than the one you want to replace.

A new hackney carriage vehicle licence will only be issued for a wheelchair accessible vehicle that is less than 4 years old, or 10 years old if ultra-low emissions.

It is not possible to change a saloon private hire vehicle to hackney carriage and if a wheelchair accessible vehicle, it must be less than 4 years old or ultra-low emissions and meet the Council's wheelchair vehicle specification:

[appendix 1](#) [appendix j](#) - [hv wheelchair specification 0.pdf](#)

## PLYING FOR HIRE

A Combined Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver driving a licensed private hire vehicle is Private Hire and can only accept bookings issued by the private hire operator.

If you are parked up on the side of the road and someone approaches you and gets in the vehicle or asks you to transport them when you do not have the booking through your private hire operator, you must refuse and ask them to leave the vehicle. If you take the passenger it will be classed as plying for hire and your vehicle insurance will be invalid as it will state for private hire use only.

It is a criminal offence to ply for hire as a private hire and if you are prosecuted the charge of no insurance will also be made. On conviction, you could receive a fine, penalty points on your DVLA driving licence and ultimately your licence could be revoked by the Council.

If you are concerned at someone's welfare and believe they may be in danger if you do not transport them, call the Police on 101.

## PASSENGERS IN WHEELCHAIRS

If you drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle, you may not refuse to transport a passenger in a wheelchair. Furthermore, you must load the passenger in the wheelchair into the vehicle and ensure it is securely fastened using the straps in the vehicle.

The only exception to this is where the wheelchair will not physically fit into the vehicle.

All wheelchair accessible vehicles, hackney carriage or private hire, are on the Designated Vehicles list under Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010 and it is an offence under that Act to refuse to transport a passenger in a wheelchair without a reasonable excuse or holding an exemption certificate.

