

DRIVERS FIRST

Informative newsletter for the Taxi & PHC trade in Edinburgh

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for all things Taxi and PHC. This edition will focus on changes to the service due to Covid and we would encourage you to read this newsletter in full very carefully to ensure you are completely familiar with these changes.

In this newsletter we will aim to bring you accurate information regarding policy changes, licence conditions and anything which is likely to impact the way drivers and operators work.

We hope you find this useful and welcome any feedback you may have. For details on how to contact us, head to the back page!

We are also due to meet with the trade representatives soon so we would also encourage you to share feedback through them.

Thank you, Licensing Service



THANK YOU

We want to highlight and recognise the great support the trade has offered vital services during the covid-19 outbreak. We have seen many instances of operators going out of their way to support vital services such as the NHS. We want to thank all of you for doing your part to help others in need and helping to stem the spread of the virus by adhering to the latest government advice.

Covid-19 Advice for Trade

Taxi & PHC Guidance

The Scottish Government has recently published detailed guidance and advice on how the trade should adapt to the COVID outbreak. The full guidance can be found [here](#) on their website and we encourage you to read this carefully.

Business Advice Page

The City of Edinburgh Council has developed a [newsletter](#) with helpful advice to businesses to comply with Scottish Government regulations and guidelines:



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✉ licensing@edinburgh.gov.uk



TEMPORARY MEASURES FOR EXISTING VEHICLES

SORNeD VEHICLES

We are aware that a number of operators chose to SORNeD their vehicles at the beginning of lockdown, to minimize operating costs at a time when the opportunity to earn a living was reduced significantly for many drivers.

To support those affected to return to operation, the Licensing Service have agreed to defer the testing of vehicles, strictly subject to the following measures:

- Renewal application and fee **MUST** be submitted and paid for **BEFORE** the expiry of the vehicle licence
- Evidence that the vehicle has been registered as SORNeD with the DVLA.
- Written request to defer the test date for the vehicle.

Any operator seeking to take advantage of this temporary measure should be aware of the following legal restrictions:

- The Council must test your vehicle and determine your application within 9 months of the date of application
- When your vehicle is eventually scheduled for testing, you must present it at that time – due to the volume of work the TEC is carrying out, we are unlikely to be able to accommodate changes to scheduled test dates
- Your renewal application must be determined within this 9 month period if all the necessary checks have not been completed, your application may be refused and subsequently the vehicle licence (plate) will no longer have effect.

AGE AND EMISSIONS

We are still accepting applications for temporary exemption to the Age & Emissions Policy. These applications are currently determined by senior officers within the Council as a result of emergency powers enacted due to the Covid pandemic. The application documents can be [here](#) found on our website.

As we are keen to ensure we do all we can to support the trade, the following temporary measures have been adopted:

- Licence holders whose currently licensed vehicles do not meet the Age & Emissions criteria, will be permitted to continue to operate at this time.
- The TEC will continue to test vehicles, where valid applications for renewals AND exemptions have been made before their test date.
- The vehicle must meet all other standards and conditions.
- Licence holders must present evidence that an exemption application has been submitted in advance of their test date.
- If someone has already had an exemption application considered and refused, they cannot operate with that vehicle and must present a vehicle which is compliant with all standards and Age & Emissions criteria.

Applicants must bear in mind that the testing of their vehicle does not give any indication or guarantee that their exemption application will be granted. This is a temporary measure the Licensing Service have adopted to support operators in the short-term and is designed to allow vehicles which otherwise comply with the remaining conditions to remain operational, pending that decision.



UPDATES TO SERVICES

TAXI EXAMINATION CENTRE (TEC)

The Taxi Examination Centre re-opened for business on Wednesday 22 July. Significant work went on behind the scenes for weeks beforehand to ensure that re-opening of the TEC was safe for both customers and colleagues. The operation of the TEC will be very different from before lockdown. For example, any visits to the TEC will be by appointment only. You will not be able to 'turn up' and be seen without a prior appointment.

If you need to arrange an appointment to be seen at the TEC, including for non-test matters such as replacement plates or stickers etc., you should send an email to taxi.examination@edinburgh.gov.uk with details of why you need to be seen, and a member of the team will contact you to arrange an appointment.

The TEC will be operating at full capacity, with appropriate restrictions in place to minimize face-to-face contact. Our ramps are fully booked for the foreseeable future to ensure we can first offer tests to those vehicles with MOTs that are due to expire. We are asking for your cooperation and consideration if we are unable to make short notice changes, **please be aware that there is little or no flexibility within the testing schedule for the remainder of 2020**. You should also be aware that you will be charged the test cancellation fee if you miss your slot.

NEW TEST PROCEDURES - On arrival at the Taxi Examination Centre you must park your vehicle in a MOT testing parking bay. Please then go to the entry foyer to collect a large (A3) plastic wallet to place the unfolded vehicle V5C document into, along with a smaller (A4) wallet for the vehicle insurance document. Then place both wallets on the passenger seat ensuring staff are able to clearly view. Also drop off the vehicle key (removed from any bunch of keys) wiped down with cleaning material provided and placed onto the designated key hook for the ramp you have been allocated in the reception area. Drivers are asked to respect social distancing guidelines at all times, only 1 driver can enter the foyer area at any one time and there cannot be any face to face interaction with staff, for everyone's safety. In addition, in line with the guidance issued by the UK government with regard to re-introduction of MOTs, the viewing area will be closed. Appropriate safety equipment will be worn by the examiners when they are in charge of your vehicle. To ensure social distancing is maintained the indoor waiting area will also be closed and you will be asked to wait in the car park whilst your vehicle is tested. Exit the site and return 1 hour later to collect the key and associated documentation.

FAIL RATE/NO SHOWS – we currently have a very high failure rate and no shows. Your test should not be used as a pre inspection check and you must ensure your vehicle is presented in a condition ready to pass, especially if your vehicle is currently operating. Where the failure rate continues to increase or drivers fail to show up for their inspection, it may be necessary to limit the number of re-tests we can offer failed vehicles which may result in your vehicle no longer having a licence.

Driver Training

You will be aware that the City of Edinburgh Council committed to delivering a training course for all new and current taxi and PHC drivers. We have had to make some change to the introduction of this training as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, but we will deliver the training in full as promised as soon as possible.

Centre of Excellence

We are due to launch training for all drivers where you will be able to gain a recognized City & Guilds qualification. To ensure we offer you the very best service and an efficient application process, we are moving all our Taxi and PHC resources into one Centre of Excellence. This will be located at the Taxi Examination Centre, where you can submit applications, make payments and test your vehicle all in one place. Full details will be released soon but we hope to have this up and running as soon as possible.



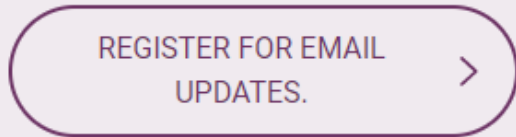
Did you know...

You can register your email address with us to get the latest up-to-date Coronavirus guidance and information. This will also register your email address with your licence records to help us keep in touch with you remotely whilst you are on the go.

Just click the button >>

Coronavirus email update for licence holders

Download and return the form to share your email address with the Licensing Service.



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