

Frequently Asked Questions – New Applicants for Driver’s Licence

Q What must I bring in to make an application for a taxi licence?

A Your application will not be accepted unless you have all of the following:

- Completed application form
- Both parts of your driving licence
- Completed Criminal Records Bureau form
- Important Notice – Disclaimer form
- 2 proofs of address (bank statements, utility bills)
- Photo ID (if you do not own a photocard driving licence)
- 2 photographs (can be taken at Connect)
- Fee

Q Do I have to declare all of my convictions on my application form, even if they are very old?

A Yes, you are legally obliged to declare all of your convictions on your application form, regardless of how old they are. Failure to do so will be considered a false declaration and will have serious implications on your application for a licence.

Q I have held a licence with another authority, can I transfer it to Solihull?

A No, a new application must be made to this Authority. We can accept your CRB disclosure **only** if it’s less than 3 months from the date of issue.

Q I have been refused a licence or had a licence revoked by another Council. Can I apply for a licence in Solihull?

A You must declare this on your application form, however as long as you have no unspent convictions, and meet our application requirements you can apply. Before a licence can be issued you must appear before the Licensing Sub-Committee, however you must have completed the whole application process before you will be given a date for a hearing.

Q I have held a DVLA Driving Licence for 1 year, can I apply for a taxi licence?

A No, you must have held a full UK driving licence for at least 2 years

Q I have a driving licence which has been issued in another country, can I apply for a taxi licence?

A No, you must have held a full UK driving licence for at least 2 years.

Q What is an IDS Check?

A IDS Stands for Intelligent Data Systems. When you apply for your licence you will be asked to complete a mandate form. We then send this form to Intelligent Data Systems who check with the DVLA that you have a current driving licence with no undisclosed penalty points. You will be charged a fee for this.

Q I have a CRB disclosure from another organisation. Can I use it here?

A We can accept your CRB however it must be no more than 3 months from the date of issue.

Q Is the theory test available in any other language besides English?

A No, the test is only available in English, however a course is available to anyone who feels they may need help with the theory test. Contact Adult Education Centre, 477 Stratford Road, Sparkhill, B11 4LE 0121 464 1893.

- Q Is there anything I can buy to help with the theory test?**
A The Hackney Carriage Handbook, the Licence conditions booklet which is issued at the time of application, the highway code and any theory test guide issued by the DSA can help you to revise for the test.
- Q I have failed my theory test and I want feedback**
A We can give you some general feedback on the numbers of questions answered incorrectly in each section, however if you want more detailed feedback, you will need to write in to us.
- Q Can I re-arrange my Theory Test/ Knowledge Test / Driving Assessment?**
A You must give us at least 24 hours notice, the appointment can be rescheduled twice, the third time you must pay again.
- Q Can I do the driving assessment in a hire car?**
A Yes, but you must bring the hire agreement with you.
- Q Can I do the driving assessment in an instructors car?**
A Yes the instructor must accompany you to the test but will not be required during the test itself. You must also produce the MOT (if the vehicle is more than 3 years old) along with the insurance certificate and your complete driving licence.
- Q How long will my CRB take? How can I chase it up?**
A As the CRB are a separate organisation, we have no influence over the time it takes for the form to be returned. You can chase up the progress by calling the CRB direct on 0870 9090 844, however the CRB advise not to chase until you have waited for 12 weeks.
- Q I have a medical issue and I am not sure if I will be able to get a medical.**
A Contact the Council's approved Doctor (Coventry Road Medical Practice) for advice on 0121 743 2154.
- Q What do I do if I have failed my medical?**
A If you have not yet made an application for a licence then you will be unable to do so for 6 months from the date of the failure. After 6 months you will be able to go for another medical examination and if successful, will then be able to make an application.
- Q Who completes Form A?**
A Your own GP should complete form A, they may make a charge for this. You must take the completed form A with you when you attend for your medical examination with the Council's approved Doctor.
- Q Do I have to buy a Hackney Carriage Knowledge Folder or can I use one from another driver?**
A The folder must be issued to the driver who is applying. You can't use one from another driver.
- Q Where can I find the answers to the legal questions in the knowledge test?**
A You need to refer to the handbook, licensing conditions booklet (issued at time of applying) & should also refer to the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 & Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Information about these can be found in the library or online.

Q I have made an application but no longer wish to pursue it.
A You must notify us in writing and a refund will be sent by post within 28 days. The medical and CRB fee is non refundable so it's only the application fee, minus an admin charge that will be refunded.

Frequently Asked Questions – Existing Drivers

Q My Hackney Carriage Badge has expired, can I renew it?
A No. Once a badge has expired it is no longer a current licence and therefore can't be renewed. A new application must be made.

Q I want to inform you that I have changed my address
A You need to notify us in writing. You must also ensure that you obtain an updated driving Licence from the DVLA.

Q I need to renew my badge but I have lost part of my driving licence
A You must apply to DVLA for a new licence and obtain proof of postage. The badge can then be renewed but you must produce the licence to us as soon as it is returned from the DVLA. Failure to do so will result in the badge being suspended.

Q Can I renew my licence on the day that it expires?
A Yes although it is not recommended that you leave it this late. The licence is valid until midnight on the day of expiry.

Q What is an IDS Check?
A IDS Stands for Intelligent Data Systems. When you renew your licence you will be asked to complete a mandate form. We then send this form to Intelligent Data Systems who check with the DVLA that you have a current driving licence with no undisclosed penalty points. You will be charged a fee for this.

Q I need a duplicate of my Hackney Carriage paper licences?
A You must attend Solihull Connect, where a duplicate can be issued, a charge will be made.

Q What do I do with my plates if I am going abroad for a long period of time?
A If you are going away for more than 3 weeks then you must return the plates to Solihull Connect where they will be stored until you return. The plates can be collected as soon as you return and when you have produced your valid insurance certificate.

Q What if my badge expires while I am away?
A The badge **must** be renewed prior to expiry. You can renew it up to 4 weeks before the expiry date or alternatively someone else can renew the badge on your behalf. They must bring the following with them:

- Application form signed by you
- Both parts of your driving licence
- Old badge
- 2 photos
- Fee

Q I want to hand my badge / plate in as I am no longer working as a taxi driver. Am I entitled to a refund?

A Only the deposit fee can be refunded regardless of how many months are remaining on the plate / badge.

Q I have had points added to my licence

A You must inform us of any points added to your driving licence within 7 days of any conviction before a court. You should also notify us of any points resulting from a fixed penalty notice within 7 days and you must forward a copy of your DVLA licence to us once the points have been added. If you accumulate 10 or more penalty points then you will be required to appear before the Licensing Sub-Committee.

Q I have received a Criminal Conviction, what should I do?

A You **must** inform the Licensing Office immediately and in any case within 7 days of the conviction.

Q Do I have to declare all of my convictions on my application form, even if they are very old?

A Yes, you are legally obliged to declare all of your convictions on your application form, regardless of how old they are. Failure to do so will be considered a false declaration and will have serious implications on your licence.

Q How long will my CRB take? How can I chase it up?

A As the CRB are a separate organisation, we have no influence over the time it takes for the form to be returned. You can chase up the progress by calling the CRB direct on 0870 9090 844, however the CRB advise not to chase until you have waited for 12 weeks.

Q What do I do if I have failed my medical?

A You must contact us immediately.

Q I have a medical issue and I am not sure if I will be able to get a medical.

A Contact the Council's approved Doctor (Coventry Road Medical Practice) for advice on 0121 743 2154

Q Who completes Form A?

A Your own GP should complete form A, they may make a charge for this. You must take the completed form A with you when you attend for your medical examination.

Q I have lost my badge. Can I still work?

A No. You must obtain a lost property/crime number from any police station and then attend Solihull Connect for a replacement. A fee will be charged and you will also need 2 photographs. You must not work until you have received your new badge.

Q Do I have to give my passengers a receipt?

A Yes, you should provide a receipt upon request, and your name and badge number should be included.

Frequently Asked Questions – Licenced Vehicles

Q How do I licence my car?

A You need to get the vehicle tested at one of our approved garages, complete the application form and pay the licence fee. **DO NOT GET YOUR VEHICLE TESTED UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN ISSUED YOUR BADGE.** Garage papers are only valid for 28 days. If you are unable to plate the vehicle in this time then they will expire and you will have to get it re-tested. You cannot drive a plated vehicle unless you have a badge.

Q Will you accept fax copies of insurance?

A No. If a plate is leaving Solihull Connect then an original insurance certificate must be produced. No faxes or photocopies. We will not accept a fax even if it is faxed from the insurance company.

Q Will you accept emailed insurance certificates?

A Yes, as long as they are sent directly from the broker/company. We may request additional information to verify this.

Q Will you accept insurance cover notes?

A Yes, as long as it's the original document and not a fax or photocopy.

Q Can I licence a vehicle that has been an insurance write off?

A No, any vehicle that has ever been written off can never be licensed as a Hackney Carriage vehicle regardless of the category of write off.

Q Can I Licence a minibus?

A We only licence vehicles up to 8 passengers (excluding driver) any vehicles with more seats must be licensed by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) Tel: 0300 123 9000.

Q I have had an accident in my vehicle, what should I do?

A **You MUST report any accident to us within 72 hours**, and book an appointment for an inspection with a Licensing Officer (by calling the Contact Centre on 0121 704 8003). If the vehicle is undriveable, you must forward a copy of the engineers report as soon as possible and hand the plates into Solihull Connect.

Q I have had my vehicle repaired and want to get my plates back.

A You must arrange for a vehicle inspection with a Licensing Officer (by calling the Contact centre on 0121 704 8003). If the damage has been satisfactorily repaired then the plates will be returned to you.

Q I have lost my plate. Can I still work?

A No. You must obtain a lost property/crime number from any police station and then attend Solihull Connect for a replacement. A fee will be charged. You must not work until you have received your new plate.

Q Can my partner drive my licensed vehicle?

A No, once a vehicle has been licensed for Hackney Carriage use it can only be driven by a person who holds a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence issued by this authority, and also has relevant insurance.

Q Can I use a left hand drive vehicle as a taxi?

A No, only a right hand vehicle can be used due to the hazard involved when a passenger exits a vehicle from the off side.

Q Do I have to take pets in my vehicle?

A You are not obliged to transport pets in your licensed vehicle, however **you must never refuse to transport an assistance dog**. This is against the law and may result in prosecution. The only exception to this is if you have an allergy to such animals, and you must obtain an exemption from the Councils approved Doctor.

Q Can I smoke in my vehicle?

A No. It is against the law for you or any other person to smoke in a Licensed Vehicle at any time, regardless of whether you are working or not.

Q What are the rules regarding child seats in Licensed Vehicles?

A A taxi journey is considered an occasional journey, and therefore you are not expected to provide suitable car seats.

A child under 3 may travel unrestrained, i.e on an adults lap.

Children over 3 should wear the adult seat belt.

The legislation does apply whilst you are using the vehicle for your own domestic purposes.

Q Who is responsible for ensuring that passengers wear seat belts?

A It's the driver's responsibility to ensure that children under 13 years adhere to seatbelt laws. Over the age of 13, it is the responsibility of the passenger.

Q Do I have to wear my seatbelt whilst in my Hackney Carriage Vehicle?

A Hackney Carriage Drivers are not obliged to wear seatbelts. Solihull Council advises drivers to wear seatbelts at all time.