

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PLEASE NOTE – THESE FAQs WILL BE CONTINUALLY UPDATED IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT OR CORPORATE GUIDANCE AND OUR ABILITY TO DELIVER THE SERVICE. PLEASE KEEP CHECKING BACK ON A REGULAR BASIS FOR NEW ADVICE.

UPDATED 21 September 2020

COVID-19 Specific Queries

Q1. Can I still go to work as a hackney carriage or private hire driver?

A. Although Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles can continue to work, the government advice is absolutely clear - people should stay at home if possible. That is the way to save lives and protect our NHS. The public should avoid travel unless absolutely essential. The only reasons to leave our houses are set out in the [government guidance](#).

The DfT have confirmed that hackney carriage and private hire drivers should not generally be considered Critical Workers. Those undertaking Home to School transport or the transport of 'extremely vulnerable' people may be considered Critical Workers on a case-by-case basis.

Q2. I have read that the Government is extending MOTs for six months – does this apply to me as a hackney carriage or private hire driver?

A. The DVSA have announced that all cars and motorcycles will be granted a 6-month exemption from MOT testing from 30 March 2020, enabling them to '**continue to travel to work where this absolutely cannot be done from home, or shop for necessities.**' Vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition, and garages will remain open for essential repair work. Drivers can be prosecuted if driving unsafe vehicles. Solihull licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are tested to a much higher standard as they also have to undergo an additional supplementary test which is part of the process for getting a vehicle licence.

If you meet the Critical Worker criteria and your vehicle licence is due to expire then you need to book an MOT and supplementary test in the normal way at one of the four approved garages which are currently still open for business. Please contact the garages by telephone to book a test rather than visiting them. If you are not a Critical Worker then you need to stay at home as per the government guidance.

Please read the official guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/getting-an-mot>

Q3. My badge or plate is due to expire but I'm unable to or don't want to work at the moment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Can I renew my licence late?

A. It may be possible to put your renewal 'on hold' until it is safe to work. Please contact us on licensing@solihull.gov.uk with your details and we will send you confirmation by email. If you wish to renew your licence in the future you will not be required to undertake the new application process again and your licence will be issued from the new date once all the renewal criteria is in place. However please be aware that the full licence fee may still be payable on renewal.

Q4. My vehicle requires some work but my normal repair shop is closed. What can I do?

A. It remains a legal requirement that you must keep your vehicle in a roadworthy condition – read the Government guidance here: [advice on keeping a vehicle in a good condition](#)

We will not be able to grant a vehicle licence without an MOT and supplementary test so you will need to find an alternative garage to go to get the work done. If this is not possible, but you need to remain working, you will need

to hire a licensed vehicle from someone else. You must contact us at licensing@solihull.gov.uk to provide the details of the alternative vehicle and produce an insurance certificate or cover note.

Q5. I want to carry on working but I'm worried about the spread of infection in my vehicle – how can I keep myself and my passengers safe?

A. The Government have issued specific guidance for people working in the public transport sector, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>

Any modifications made to your vehicle must be approved by the Licensing Authority first – so we strongly suggest you contact us for advice if you are considering making any alterations to the interior of your vehicle.

We are aware that some drivers/vehicle proprietors wish to fit partition screens in their Private Hire Vehicles. Whilst the Licensing Authority does not endorse any screens currently available on the market, we do recognise that these are unprecedented times and want drivers/vehicle proprietors to be able to make a choice about their own personal safety and that of their passengers. If you decide to fit a screen in your vehicle it is your responsibility to ensure that:-

- It is completely safe, purpose built from a manufacturer, compatible to your vehicle and **MUST NOT** be a homemade DIY screen.
- It is installed by a competent person
- It is cleaned frequently, using the right products and in line with Government guidelines
- Any fixtures and fittings do not interfere with the entry and egress of passengers, particularly in the event of an accident
- Any fixtures and fittings are secure at all times and must be regularly inspected for wear and tear
- The screen, and its fixtures and fittings do not interfere with any of the vehicle controls. This includes any interference to the safe deployment of any side airbags and curtains in the event of an accident
- The screen is clear and does not impair the driver's rear vision.
- Your insurance company is aware that you have installed a screen
- Passengers are aware that they should avoid touching the screen

Q6. Can I get any financial support from anywhere during the COVID-19 crisis?

A. Have a look at the following links to the official government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19>

The Self-employment Income Support Scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months. This may be extended if needed. More information on the scheme is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-a-grant-through-the-coronavirus-covid-19-self-employment-income-support-scheme>

The Chancellor has set out a package of temporary, timely and targeted measures to support public services, people and businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19. More information on the measures is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

You might also find some more information on our website here:

<https://www.solihullforsuccess.com/News/Coronavirus-COVID-19-Guidance-for-Businesses>

Q7: Is Solihull Council paying for school transport contracts?

A. During the COVID-19 response period Solihull Council is paying its suppliers 65% of the agreed daily price for normal school days for inactive routes. In making this payment it is Solihull Council's expectation that a proportion flows down to drivers subcontracted to do school routes. You should contact the contractor to pursue any claim. Unfortunately Solihull Council cannot get involved as any agreement you have is between you and the contractor.

Badge/Driver Related Queries

Q8. I'd like to apply for a private hire or hackney carriage driver's licence.

A. Unfortunately we are unable to process any brand new applications for driver's licences at the moment, as the office is closed and we are unable to confirm your identity in person. If you have already undertaken the driving assessment and disability awareness training we may be able to extend the dates of these so that they remain valid when we are able to accept applications. Please contact us on licensing@solihull.gov.uk with your individual circumstances and we will advise you.

Q9. I'd like to renew my private hire or hackney carriage driver's licence.

A. We can accept renewal applications via email. In order to renew your licence you will need to email clear scanned or photographed images of the following, to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

- Fully completed, signed application form
- DVLA check code
- DVLA Driving Licence
- Current passport/proof of right to work
- Medical certificate dated within one month (if available) or completed medical declaration
- Completed DBS declaration
- A digital head & shoulders photograph of yourself taken against a light background

Once we are in receipt of your application and supporting documentation, we will check all of the details carefully and if there is anything we need resending or clarifying we will contact you. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will then email you confirmation that your renewal has been successful and your licence has been granted. You must then keep this confirmation email (either on smart phone/tablet or a printed copy) with you at all times when working, along with your old badge which must be worn. Both must be produced to an authorised officer or police officer on request. This email will also be sufficient to send to your operator for their records.

We will endeavour to send your new badge to you as soon as possible, and soon as is practicable we will contact you to complete the medical certificate, Enhanced DBS disclosure application and produce your original documents and return your old badge.

Plate/Vehicle Related Queries

Q10. I'd like to license a vehicle for the first time (because I am new to the trade or I am an accident management or fleet management company).

A. While we are able to gain access to our office and the postal services are still operating, we are able to process these applications. You will need to email a clear, scanned or photographed image of the following, to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

- Fully completed, signed application form

- MOT certificate
- Supplementary test papers (garage papers)
- V5C (log book) or green new keepers slip
- Insurance certificate/cover note

Once we are in receipt of your application and supporting documentation, we will check all of the details carefully and if there is anything we need resending or clarifying we will contact you. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will then issue a paper licence and the two plates and send them out to you by recorded delivery post. **PLEASE NOTE** we will not be able to send a bracket, so you will need to obtain one from your operator (if they have one) or you will need to affix the plate directly to the rear of your vehicle.

Q11. I'd like to renew my Private Hire or Hackney Carriage Vehicle licence.

A. In order to renew your licence, you will need to email a clear, scanned or photographed image of the following, to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

- Fully completed, signed application form
- MOT certificate
- Supplementary test papers (garage papers)
- V5C (log book)
- Insurance certificate/cover note

Once we are in receipt of your application and supporting documentation, we will check all of the details carefully and if there is anything we need resending or clarifying we will contact you. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will then email you confirmation that your renewal has been successful and your licence has been granted. You must then keep this confirmation email (either on smart phone/tablet or a printed copy) with you at all times when working, and display your old plate on the vehicle in the normal way. Both must be produced to an authorised officer or police officer on request. This email will also be sufficient to send to your operator for their records.

We will endeavour to send your new plate to you as soon as possible and as soon as is practicable you will be required to return the old plate.

Q12. I have bought a licensed vehicle from another Solihull driver and want to transfer the plate into my name.

A. You'll need to send a clear, scanned or photographed image of the following to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

- [Change of owner form](#) (signed by both the vendor and the buyer)
- V5C (logbook) or new keeper slip
- Insurance certificate/cover note

Once we are in receipt of your application and supporting documentation, we will check all of the details carefully and if there is anything we need resending or clarifying we will contact you. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will then email you confirmation that the change of proprietor has taken place and your licence has been granted. You must then keep this confirmation email (either on smart phone/tablet or a printed copy) with you at all times when working, and display the old plate (in the previous proprietor's name) on the vehicle in the normal way. Both must be produced to an authorised officer or police officer on request. This email will also be sufficient to send to your operator for their records.

We will endeavour to send your new plate to you as soon as possible and as soon as is practicable you will be required to return the old plate.

Q13. I have bought another vehicle and want to licence it instead of the one I've currently got.

A. You'll need to send a clear, scanned or photographed image of the following to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

- Fully completed, signed application form
- MOT certificate
- Supplementary test papers (garage papers)
- V5C (log book)
- Insurance certificate/cover note

Once we are in receipt of your application and supporting documentation, we will check all of the details carefully and if there is anything we need resending or clarifying we will contact you. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will then email you confirmation that the change of vehicle has taken place and your licence has been granted. You must then keep this confirmation email (either on smart phone/tablet or a printed copy) with you at all times when working, and display the old plate (with the previous vehicle details on) on the vehicle in the normal way. Both must be produced to an authorised officer or police officer on request. This email will also be sufficient to send to your operator for their records.

We will endeavour to send your new plate to you as soon as possible and as soon as is practicable you will be required to return the old plate.

Operator Related Queries

Q14. I want to obtain a Private Hire Operator's licence.

A. Unfortunately we are not able to deal with applications for new operator's licences at the moment as we are unable to verify your identity, undertake the interview or inspect your premises. If you'd like to send your details to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

We will keep your details on file and will contact you as soon as we can accept your application.

Q15. I want to renew my Private Hire operator's licence.

A. You'll need to send a clear scanned or photographed image of the following, to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

- Application form
- Proof of public liability insurance
- Current passport/proof of right to work
- [DBS declaration](#)
- Current list of drivers and vehicles

Once we are in receipt of your application and supporting documentation, we will check all of the details carefully and if there is anything we need resending or clarifying we will contact you. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will then issue a new paper licence and post it out to you. On receipt of the new licence please securely destroy your old one and email confirmation to us that you have done so.

General Queries

Q16. I need a duplicate paper licence/plate/badge

A. Please complete the application form [here](#) and email it to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

If you do not have a printer please complete the form electronically and type your name in to the signature box. Once we are happy that your application can be processed, we will contact you to take payment over the phone. We will issue the licence and email a copy of it to your Operator and put the original document in the post.

Q17. I need to tell you about my change of address

A. Please complete the form [here](#) and send it to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

We will then update your record.

Q18. I need to report a caution, conviction, fixed penalty notice or tell you about another reportable matter.

A. Please email as much detail as possible to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

We will then contact you to explain the next steps. If you are reporting a motoring conviction please provide a DVLA check code – guidance on how to obtain one is [here](#).

Q19. I need to report an accident

A. Unfortunately we can't undertake a physical inspection of your vehicle. Please email details of the accident and photographs of the vehicle and the damage (ensuring the registration number is visible on at least one of the photographs) to licensing@solihull.gov.uk

On receipt of these photographs an officer will contact you with an indication of whether he/she thinks the licence should be suspended. If the officer thinks a suspension is required, we will then email you a suspension notice. You will be required to remove the plates from the vehicle and keep them somewhere safe while they remain suspended. We will also inform your operator that the vehicle licence is suspended.

Once any damage is repaired, please email us again with photographs and a copy of your insurance certificate so that we can undertake a visual inspection of the work done, and if satisfied, we will lift the suspension. We will then instruct you to attach your plates to the vehicle again.

Once we are able to, we may request that you bring the vehicle to us for a physical inspection – but we will contact you about this in due course.

Q20. I need to hire a replacement vehicle because my vehicle has been in an accident or is in an un-roadworthy condition.

A. Please contact the accident management company. They will email us with the relevant documentation, and once we are happy, we will then send the plates to you by recorded delivery post. Once you have finished with the vehicle, please return it, with the plates, to the accident management company who will inform us that you are no longer using it.

Q21. I need an application form

A. These can be downloaded from the website or we can email one if you can't find what you are looking for. Please contact us on licensing@solihull.gov.uk