

Licensing Managers Response to RoSPA Consultation

RoSPA's safety advice on this matter has not waivered or altered since they first took a position on the wellbeing of fare paying passengers in the late nineteen nineties when MPV vehicles first started to be licensed by Council's and RoSPA issued their guidance and opinion to Council's that "passengers should be able to exit a taxi or private hire vehicle without having to climb over or move a seat". They have again expressed the same opinion and given that same safety advice as part of this recent consultation process.

RoSPA have said as part of their response to this consultation that the MPV seating Policy adopted by Basildon Borough Council and its taxi and private hire trades in January 2015 seems to offer a reasonable way of mitigating risk of passengers in the rearmost row struggling to exit the vehicle in an emergency because they have to climb over or move another seat. However they have caveated this opinion by also saying that "it still leaves some risk that a passenger may struggle to exit the vehicle quickly in an emergency, and with the current level of data and knowledge, it does not seem possible to be certain whether this option is best".

Only RoSPA have however commented on the Basildon policy in any positive way and it is clear from the very small number of persons from the taxi trade who responded to the consultation that there is little appetite or interest amongst those responders to considering the Basildon seating policy as a replacement or alternative for TDC's current MPV seating policy. It certainly would be difficult to argue that there was a mandate for such a change amongst those few that have responded to the consultation.

RoSPA is a charitable organisation which for almost 100 years has formulated policies, practices and influenced legislation to prevent accidents and promote safety in a variety of industries and circumstances. Its views on the seating arrangements in MPVs (or people carriers) used for taxi or private hire work has not changed since the late 1990s. It is a consistent stance and there has seemingly been no evidence provided to them which has altered or made them reconsider this stance.