

APPENDIX 3

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

VEHICLE GUIDELINES TO ASCERTAIN SEATING CAPACITY FOR VEHICLES OTHER THAN SALOON VEHICLES CARRYING UP TO 8 PASSENGERS [MULTI PURPOSE VEHICLES]

1. The following should be observed in relation to all applications for licensing vehicles constructed for the sole use of passengers and their effects in accordance with Construction and Use Regulations, and **NOT** adapted, for the conveyance of up to eight passengers.
2. The maximum number of passenger seats is eight and the following will be taken into account when deciding seating capacity:-
 - (a) The width of each seat should not be less than 400mm per person, this measurement being taken across the front of the seat and, where necessary, between arm rests.
 - (b) Each seat should face forward in the direction of travel unless, in the case of rear facing seats, there is supporting documentation to say that the seats conform to the relevant Ministry of Transport standards.
 - (c) All seats, whether rear or front facing, shall be fitted with a seat belt. Each seat should comply with the seat belt regulations and, if necessary, be able to secure a child seat/booster seat.
 - (d) There shall be sufficient room between the seats to allow adequate room for the movement of passengers. There shall also be adequate head and leg room to allow passengers to be conveyed in comfort and safety and therefore there should be a height of 870mm between the seat and roof of the vehicle and 180mm from the back of the front seat to the front of the rear seat [when the front seat is fully pushed back].
 - (e) The arrangements of the seats shall be such that no person has to remove, push forward or dismantle any seat or other obstacle; nor should it be necessary to climb over any person being carried in the vehicle or require any person to leave their seat to allow anyone to enter or leave the vehicle.
 - (f) If the seating arrangement does not allow free access to and from the vehicle as set out in condition (e) above then, in order that the vehicle may be licensed as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle and in the interests of public safety and comfort, the Council will require as many seats as may be deemed necessary to be removed.
 - (g) When deciding the seating capacity of any vehicle, account will be taken of the weight bearing capacity of the rear axle and any other factors considered necessary in order to ensure the comfort and safety of the public. Applicants will be required to supply this information or take the necessary steps to contact the manufacturer of the vehicle in order that this information is available at the time the inspection takes place.

- (h) Except where the vehicle is fitted with an offside passenger door, it shall be possible for a passenger to walk from the rear nearside passenger door through the vehicle and out of the rear door without having to step over any seats.
 - (i) Taken from the area to the rear of the driver, the floor of the vehicle shall be of one level to the rear of the vehicle.
 - (j) The vehicle will have a front nearside passenger door.
 - (k) Each vehicle should either be fitted with an integral step to assist passengers entering or leaving the vehicle either by the front or rear passenger doors. If this is not the case, then each vehicle should carry a portable step for this purpose.
 - (l) Rear doors of the pillar hinged, single (offside hinged) or two door opening type should be capable of opening to 90°, ideally with a step or similar device to ease access or egress.
 - (m) If the vehicle is fitted with an offside rear passenger door, then the rear door may be of the hinged lift-up type such offside rear passenger door to be of the sliding or front pillar hinged type, capable of opening to 90°, ideally with a step or similar device to ease passengers to enter or leave the vehicle.
 - (n) The vehicle shall be right hand drive, with the driver's door to the offside.
 - (o) The vehicle shall be fitted with either a sliding or front pillar hinged door to the nearside passenger carrying area such additional door, if hinged to be capable of opening 90°, ideally with a step or similar device to assist passengers in entering or leaving the vehicle.
 - (p) All vehicles must be capable of carrying a wheelchair in a reasonable manner. In the interests of passenger safety and comfort, should any vehicle be capable of carrying a person who remains in the wheelchair, or where the seating layout may be varied to accommodate a wheelchair, such vehicle must have adequate provision to enable the wheelchair to be fixed securely to the floor of the vehicle. The remaining seating capacity will then be determined in accordance with the conditions set out above but the total passenger carrying capacity shall not be less than four.
3. An appeal against a decision on capacity may be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee, provided that documentation in support of the appeal can be produced by the applicant.
 4. Notwithstanding the seating capacity stated on the Vehicle Registration Document, in order to meet the above criteria for the safe conveyance and comfort of passengers it may be necessary for a seat or seats to be removed and any licence and subsequent licence issued by the Council in respect of the vehicle will be subject to such reduced seating capacity.
 5. These conditions may be varied from time to time to accord with changes of Government legislation. It should be noted that the Government is currently considering new legislation which will incorporate the carriage of disabled persons in their wheelchairs.