



GUILDFORD
BOROUGH

Contact: 01483 50 50 50
Email: regulatoryservices@guildford.gov.uk
Web: www.guildford.gov.uk/taxi

Taxi and Private Hire Update 25 March 2020



Dear Members of the Guildford Licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trades,

This update follows the update issued on 20.03.2020

As you are aware, the Covid-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the government has now advised people to stay at home with a few exceptions, such as travelling to work, where that work cannot be done at home.

You are advised to keep checking the GOV.UK website to see the latest guidance, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

For the licensed trade, we have been looking at a number of contingencies depending on how the situation evolves. Apologies for the length of this message, but please read it carefully to see if it answers your queries before contacting us. Whilst we are working to ensure that we have staff to run the licensing service, it may be that staff are diverted to other essential duties at short notice.

Renewal Applications:

Currently the depot is open and able to inspect vehicles, so full applications are required in order to renew a vehicle licence (or any other vehicle application where a vehicle test is required), and as set out in the email sent to the trade on Friday 20 March, applications can be made by email to regulatoryservices@guildford.gov.uk, and you can call customer services on 01483 505050 to make payment a debit or credit card.

Additionally, Post Offices are also still open which will allow applicants for driver's licences to complete their DBS.

Currently, due to the restrictions, for both drivers and vehicles, once the licence has been renewed, you will be issued the paper licence by email, but no plates or badges – you will however be issued a covering letter detailing that due to the current circumstances, the plate or badge will show as being expired. You will need to carry both the paper licence and the covering letter with you in the vehicle, along with the expired plate or badge. Once the situation allows, we will start producing plates and badges and arrange for these to be distributed.

If the depot has to close, then (and only then) we will accept vehicle applications without the vehicle test, provided all other documents are submitted. You will also have to complete an additional declaration confirming that the vehicle has been regularly serviced and is fit to be used as a licensed vehicle. We will then process the application as above, with the expectation that you will get the vehicle test completed as soon as practically possible once the depot resumes service. If the vehicle is inspected and found to be unfit for use as a licensed vehicle, further action is likely to be taken against the driver and/or proprietor.

Interim vehicle tests

While the depot is operational, you are expected to continue getting the interim vehicle test completed. If you are not getting the test done, for whatever reason, you will need to email us on regulatoryservices@guildford.gov.uk to confirm that you are not getting it done and that the vehicle **will not** be used to carry passengers for hire and reward until the vehicle has successfully passed the vehicle test.

If the depot closes, in place of the interim test you will need to complete an additional declaration confirming that the vehicle has been regularly serviced and is fit to be used as a licensed vehicle. You may then carry on operating, with the expectation that you will get the vehicle test done as soon as practically possible once the depot resumes service. If the vehicle is inspected and found to be unfit for use as a licensed vehicle, further action is likely to be taken against the driver and/or proprietor.

Medicals

We are aware that the NHS is under pressure, so if your medical is due, you will need to write to us to confirm three things:

1. That since your last medical there have been no changes in your health, and
2. That since your last medical you have not been instructed not to drive, and
3. That in line with the condition of your licence you will inform the Council, in writing, within 7 days of any changes.

On receipt of confirmation on these three points, we will defer your medical for up to 6 months, at which we will review the situation, on the expectation that you will get a medical done as soon as possible once your surgery is in a position to start doing them again.

If you do not confirm there have been no changes and/or that you have not been instructed to drive, it is likely that the Council will consider you unfit to drive and suspend your licence.

Delaying a renewal

Due to current circumstances, you may be self-isolating or have taken the decision not to work, and understandably you do not want to spend extra money on a licence renewal where you are not able to use the licence.

We have therefore taken the decision to allow the trade to delay a renewal application for a period of up to 3 months. This means that licences can expire and provided we would have granted the renewal application when the licence expired, we will then accept a late renewal application, for a period of up to three months.

However, please note that if you wish to do this, you would still need to apply in good time to allow the application to be processed before you wished to resume using the licence and obviously if a licence has expired it cannot be used again until it is renewed.

We will review the situation again in June. If your licence renewal is approaching and you choose to use this three-month grace period please contact us by email to inform us that this is your intention.

To conclude

Hopefully this will address a lot of the more common scenarios and concerns affecting the trade. As previously set out, we cannot accept applications without the advertised fee. We are also unable to extend licences without an application.

The health and wellbeing of licensees is important to us and we are conscious of the challenging and unsettling nature of the current situation in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. We would also remind the trade that the government is regularly updating its support for individuals and businesses and we would recommend that you check the GOV.uk site regularly for updates as to what assistance is available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses>

Other sources of advice include the Money Advice Trust, a national charity helping people across the UK to tackle their debts and manage their money with confidence. It offers free, independent and confidential advice on personal debt and Business Debtline, the UK's only free dedicated debt advice service for people who are self-employed and other small business owners.

Please see: www.moneyadvicetrust.org

We appreciate that these are unprecedented extreme circumstances but wish the licensed trade well during this difficult time.

Kind regards,

The Licensing Team
Regulatory Services

