

COVID-19

Advice for Taxi and Private Hire licensees

Guidance from the Department of Transport (DfT) is that Hackney (Taxis) and Private Hire vehicles can continue to work. But advice is absolutely clear: STAY ALERT.

If at any time you or a member of your household feels unwell or shows symptoms of the virus you should immediately stop working, self isolate and then follow current Government Guidelines for Track and Trace.

Below is some advice for drivers. You should try and follow as many of these as possible to promote a safe space for you and your passengers. Common sense and good risk assessment for each journey will be the key to enabling your return to work.

1. Hand Hygiene – “The spread of COVID-19 is in your hands”, we have heard this many times from the Government and Public Health England meaning that every individual can make a difference to prevent further transmission of the virus by ensuring that they wash their hands on a regular basis. You should wash your hands on a regular basis, for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap, that lathers, this is particularly important after handling money or before eating or handling food. If you are unable to wash your hands during your working shift use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. It is recommended that the hand sanitiser contains a minimum 60% alcohol.
2. You may make hand sanitiser available for your passengers, while you can not make them use the hand sanitiser you can offer it to them for use before entering the vehicle.
3. Avoid touching your face with your hands. Be conscious of this and try to keep your hands on the steering wheel as much as possible.
4. Following the Prime Ministers announcement on 22 September 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) laid a Statutory Instrument in both Houses of Parliament to mandate the wearing of face coverings in taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) in England under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. This regulation has now come into effect.

In line with public transport and retail settings the Regulations gives new powers to taxi and PHV drivers to deny access to a service, and to direct someone to leave a service, if they are not wearing a face covering without a legitimate reason. If passengers fail to comply, the Police have a power to remove passengers from a service (using reasonable force if necessary), and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. The requirement only applies when a service is being provided i.e. passengers are not required to wear a face covering when the vehicle is used for personal use.

We always recommended that passengers wear face coverings in PHVs and taxis and moving to mandating this is a reasonable additional step to take to reduce the risk of infection when used alongside other measures. We will also be as soon as possible for operators and passengers on travelling safely during the outbreak. The guidance will reflect the latest information about face coverings. I would be grateful if you could share the change and the updated guidance with your licensees.

we would also like to take this opportunity to draw your attention a number of assets which DfT are creating to support our stakeholders to communicate this

change. The assets will contain messages around how to ensure both drivers and customers are kept safe, as well as messaging on exemptions. They will be made available here shortly alongside the existing assets we have available. Please do cascade these assets and resources to your members/networks.

5. Gloves – The wearing of gloves does not prevent transmission of infection to the wearer and may discourage adequate hand hygiene practices. Gloves would need to be changed each time cash were touched and for each journey.

It should be noted that failure to adhere to good hygiene and social distancing practices in conjunction with the above may still increase the risk to the user.

6. Good ventilation (keeping windows open) may help to reduce the risk of transmission, but common sense should be used and the comfort of passengers ensured. Air conditioning or ventilation, if used, on vehicles must be set to extract and not recirculate the air within the vehicle (where possible).
7. Do not allow passengers to sit in the front seat. Taxi and PHV drivers are still under the same obligation to provide reasonable assistance and make reasonable adjustments for disabled passenger (Equality Act 2010). You or your Operator should carry out a full risk assessment prior to taking a booking that requires use of the front passenger seat and put in place measures to protect yourself and the passenger if there is no alternative available.
8. Regularly disinfect the hard surfaces in your vehicle by using anti-bacterial wipes or a solution of household anti bacterial disinfectant diluted to the manufacturer's instructions which is proven effective against viruses.

After each passenger journey the door handles, both inside and outside the vehicle, arm rests on doors and any window buttons/winders, seatbelt buckles and seatbelt buckle insert/release, card payment devices and any area a passenger may have touched during the journey.

At the end of each working day or shift the vehicle should be given a thorough clean so it is ready either for the next driver to take over or for starting work on the following day

9. Try to avoid handling passengers' bags and other goods if you can. You are still bound by legislation to give aid to those who have a disability and require help to either get into or out of the vehicle or need help with their luggage. Further advice for Operators can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884370/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators.pdf If you do have to touch passengers bags or goods ensure you sanitise your hands both before and after touching them.
10. Let people know about the measures you are taking to protect both you and them from the spread of the virus. You may put signage up in your vehicle outlining the steps you are taking and the steps you wish them to take to comply with the current Government Guidelines and safe practices.
11. Payment of Fare - Encourage passengers to make payment, where possible, when booking their journey. If payment can not be taken at booking or before the journey commences encourage payment by contactless card payment. If you do have to receive cash ensure the passenger, if possible, knows the full fare for the journey and ask them to ensure they pay the correct money so that change does

not have to be given. Have a box or tray that the cash can be put directly into by the customer to eliminate having to handle the cash. If you do have to handle cash from a passenger you should use hand sanitiser immediately after handling it and wash your hands thoroughly at the first opportunity.

You can find more advice from the Government and the NHS by using the links below.

The full Government guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS health advice is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>