



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

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Our ref: AQW/2736/16-21

26th September 2016

Lord Maurice Morrow MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Dear Lord Morrow MLA,

In a recent Assembly Question - AQW 2736/16-21, you asked that I provide or place in the Assembly library copies of all correspondence issued by DVA in respect of the installation and regulation compliance of same.

I have since answered your Assembly Question and I have now placed a copy of the information in the Assembly Library.

CHRIS HAZZARD MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR THE TAXI INDUSTRY

As part of the implementation of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, from 31 May 2016 the way you licence and use your taxi will change. This letter tells you more about how the changes will affect you. More detailed information is available on the nidirect website (www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis). Please familiarise yourself with these changes as early as possible, to ensure a smooth transition into the new licensing system.

We will be providing more detailed information over the coming months. If you want to receive updates by email, please contact us at taxisact@doeni.gov.uk and provide us with an email address.

NEW TAXI CLASSES

The existing PSV licence categories will be replaced by four new classes of taxi licence:

Current Plate / Class	New Class	How the taxi can be used
Public Hire Outside Belfast Private Hire	Class A	Outside the Belfast Zone, Class A taxis will be able to ply for hire, carry passengers for hire or reward and stand at taxi stands. Within the Belfast Zone in addition to carrying passengers for hire and reward, there are specified days and hours when Class A taxis can <u>ply</u> for hire or reward. These taxis must have an approved taximeter and printer installed and, from the date of your next vehicle test, the taximeter must be tested and sealed and a new style roofsign must be displayed.
Belfast Public Hire	Class B	These will be wheelchair accessible taxis, permitted to ply for hire or reward, carry passengers for hire or reward and stand at taxi stands throughout Northern Ireland, including the Belfast Zone. These taxis must have an approved taximeter and printer installed and from the date of your next vehicle test the taximeter must be tested and sealed and a new style roofsign must be displayed (on which the international wheelchair symbol must be displayed).
Wedding & Funeral Cars	Class C	Class C taxis can only be used on a pre-booked basis and must carry details of their booking in the taxi during the journey. Class C taxis must not display a roofsign or advertise as a taxi service, but must display an internal sign. Examples of Class C taxis would be vehicles used for chauffeur services, weddings, funerals and courtesy transport etc.
Taxi Bus	Class D	Class D taxis are Taxi Buses, permitted to operate only on prescribed routes when issued with a Road Service Licence or a permit under the Transport Act (NI) 2011, or in certain circumstances when used for executive or tour services. They are not required to display roof signs, but are required to display internal signs.

The Belfast Zone will be an area of roughly 2 miles radius from Belfast City Centre and includes Taxi Bus routes. The map can be viewed at <https://www.doeni.gov.uk/publications/belfast-taxi-zone-map-december-2015>. Plying for Hire restrictions in the Belfast zone for Class A taxis do not apply from 23:59 on a Friday and Saturday night until 06:00 the next morning and at the same time on public holidays.

DOE approved taximeters and printers fitted in Class A and B taxis must be programmed to operate within a new Maximum Fare structure. A new Fare Card must be displayed from 31 May 2016.

A NEW TAXI TEST

From Monday 9 May 2016 you will only be able to apply for the new style Taxi Licence and test using the new Taxi Application (TL1) which will be supplied with your Taxi Licence Test reminder. There are a number of changes to the test, including:

- Class A and B taxis must have **a new style roof sign, approved taximeter and printer**;
- Depending on the class of taxi licence you have applied for and on successful completion of the test, you will be issued with either a new style taxi plate and/or internal taxi signs; and
- You must produce valid taxi insurance at the time of test; failure to do so will attract a Notice of Refusal and a retest fee.

TAXIMETER TEST

From 4 July 2016 all taximeters must be tested and sealed prior to the new Taxi Licence Test. To have your taximeter tested and sealed, you will need to apply to DVA using the new Taximeter Test Application (TL2). This test will cost £35 and can be carried out at any DVA Test Centre.

IMPORTANT DATES

- The final day for submitting full applications for the current PSV test is **Friday 6 May 2016**. The final day for a PSV retest is **Saturday 28 May 2016**.
- From **Monday 9 May 2016** the Department will only accept applications for the new Taxi Licence Test.
- From **4 July 2016** all taxis presenting for a Class A or B licence test must have their approved taximeter sealed in advance.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

More detailed information on the changes is available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis (or call 028 90 254100). This includes:

- information of new Taxi Licence test requirements;
- a list of DOE Approved Taximeters and Printers;
- information on the New Maximum Fare Structure; and
- a downloadable Fare Card.

An Application Form for the Taxi Licence Test (TL1) will be available to download from this website at the end of March 2016.

An Application Form for the Taximeter Test (TL2) will be available to download from this website at the end of March 2016.

Date: 4 February 2016

IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR THE TAXI INDUSTRY

As outlined in our last bulletin, dated 4 February 2016, as part of the implementation of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, from 31 May 2016 the way you licence and use your taxi will change. This bulletin is to advise taxi drivers, operators and the wider industry of emerging issues around the new requirements and to provide a reminder of the key dates.

TAXIMETERS & PRINTERS

From 31 May 2016 all Private Hire (green plates) and Public Hire Outside Belfast (white plates) taxis will automatically move to the Class A category of Taxi Licence. Belfast Public Hire (yellow plate) taxis automatically move to the Class B category.

From 31 May 2016 it will be a legal requirement for all Class A & B taxis to have an approved taximeter and printer fitted. However following representations from the taxi industry, concerned about the lead in time for the new requirements, a decision has been taken that, until 1 October 2016, in respect of taximeters or printers, enforcement action taken against drivers at the roadside will be limited to education and advice until 1 October 2016. Similarly at the test hall, failure to present your taxi with the required approved taximeter and printer will not be a failure item until 1 October 2016. Enhanced enforcement action relating to these requirements will commence on 1 October 2016.

The requirements in respect of testing and sealing differ depending on when your current PSV licence expires, as outlined below.

PSV licence expires between 31 May 2016 and 1 October 2016 - in addition to ensuring that you have an approved taximeter and printer installed in the taxi, as outlined above, you are also required to have your taximeter tested and sealed by DVA, or face enforcement action from 1 October 2016.

Final PSV licence expires on or after 1 October 2016 - whilst you will need to have an approved taximeter and printer installed in the taxi, or face enforcement action from 1 October 2016, you do not need to get it tested and sealed immediately. However, you need to ensure that you have it tested and sealed by DVA in advance of your Taxi Licence Test.

To avoid any delay and, potentially, being non-compliant from 1 October 2016, drivers will wish to have their taximeters tested and sealed as early as possible after 31 May 2016.

To have your taximeter tested and sealed, you will need to apply to DVA using the new Taximeter Test Application (TL2). This test will cost £35 and can be carried out at any DVA Test Centre.

CHANGES TO THE MAXIMUM FARE

The Department was approached by public and private hire drivers who were concerned at the proposals for both the lack of adequately enhanced rates at Christmas and New Year and the reduced waiting time rate being introduced. As a result of the concerns raised the Maximum Fare Schedule was amended. The new rate is to encourage supply and adequately compensate taxi drivers for providing a service at these times.

The new fare was circulated to all known taximeter manufacturers at the beginning of April. All previously approved taximeter programmes listed on the Department's Approved Taximeter List remain valid. Similarly the Department's Fare Card has been updated and can be accessed at the link below.

REMINDER: A NEW TAXI TEST

From Monday 9 May 2016 you will only be able to apply for the new style Taxi Licence and test using the new Taxi Application (TL1) which will be supplied with your Taxi Licence Test reminder.

There are a number of changes to the test, including:

- Class A and B taxis must have **a new style roof sign**;
- Depending on the class of taxi licence you have applied for and on successful completion of the test, you will be issued with either a new style taxi plate and/or internal taxi signs; and
- You must produce valid taxi insurance at the time of test; failure to do so will attract a Notice of Refusal and a retest fee.

IMPORTANT DATES

- The final day for submitting full applications for the current PSV test is **Friday 6 May 2016**. The final day for a PSV retest is **Saturday 28 May 2016**.
- From **Monday 9 May 2016** the Department will only accept applications for the new Taxi Licence Test.
- By **1 October 2016** all taxis presenting for a Class A or B licence test must have their approved taximeter sealed in advance or the Taxi Licence will not be issued.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

More detailed information on the changes is available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis (or call 028 90 254100). This includes:

- information of new Taxi Licence test requirements;
- a list of DOE Approved Taximeters and Printers;
- information on the New Maximum Fare Structure; and
- a downloadable Fare Card.

This letter tells you more about how the changes will affect you. More detailed information is available on the nidirect website (www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis). Please familiarise yourself with these changes as early as possible, to ensure a smooth transition into the new licensing system.

We will be providing more detailed information over the coming months. If you want to receive updates by email, please contact us at taxisact@doeni.gov.uk and provide us with an email address.

Date: 25 April 2016

Driver & Vehicle Agency
66 Balmoral Road
Malone Lower
BELFAST
BT12 6QL

Customer Information:
<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis>

Your
Ref:
Our Ref: TM1
Date: 18 August 2016

Dear Operator

From 31 May 2016 it is a legal requirement for all Class A and Class B taxis to have an approved taximeter and printer, fitted tested and sealed to their vehicle.

However, to facilitate a lead in time, the Minister decided that no enforcement action would be taken against drivers at the roadside, or any failure notifications issued at the test hall in respect of their taximeters or printers until 1 October 2016.

Our records show that a significant number of Class A and Class B taxis, which have been issued with a Taxi Licence, have not yet applied for the Taximeter Test, making them non-compliant with the new Taxi legislation.

On Monday 8 August, I wrote to taxi drivers due a Taximeter Test advising them to apply for as soon as possible. In order to minimise any inconvenience, I should be grateful if you would also encourage taxi drivers on your Operators Licence to **apply for their Taximeter Test without delay**. Otherwise, I cannot guarantee that an appointment will be available if there is a surge in demand.

From 1 October, we will enforce the new Taximeter requirements. If taxi drivers remain non-compliant this could mean a fixed penalty notice, prosecution through the courts or suspension of taxi licences. All of which would be deeply regrettable, but are avoidable by having Taximeters tested now.

A full list of approved taximeters, fare programme checksums and printers can be found on our website at www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis

Yours faithfully



P DELANEY
Director of Operations

Driver & Vehicle Agency
66 Balmoral Road
Malone Lower
BELFAST
BT12 6QL

Customer Information:
<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis>

Your
Ref:
Our
Ref: TM1
Date: 8 August 2016

Dear Licensee

The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) has recently issued a Taxi Licence for your vehicle. However, our records indicate that the legally required Taximeter Test has not been conducted. Therefore, your taxi is not fully compliant (Class A and Class B taxis are required to have an approved, tested and sealed taximeter from 31 May 2016) with the new Taxi legislation.

In order to minimise any inconvenience, and ensure your Taximeter is approved, tested and sealed before 1 October 2016, I strongly recommend that you **apply for the Taximeter Test without delay**. Otherwise, I cannot guarantee that an appointment will be available if there is a surge in demand in August / September.

From 1 October, we will enforce the new Taximeter requirements. If you remain non-compliant this could mean a fixed penalty notice, prosecution through the courts or suspension of your taxi licence. All of which would be deeply regrettable, but are avoidable by having your Taximeter tested now.

A full list of approved taximeters, fare programme checksums and printers can be found on our website at www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxis

Please ignore this letter if you have already applied for a Taximeter Test, and thank you for doing so.

Yours faithfully



P DELANEY
Director of Operations



An Agency within the Department for

Infrastructure

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