

Private Hire Car Licence or Taxi Licence

What is the difference?

A taxi can be both pre-booked and hailed in the street. A private hire car can only be pre-booked.

Renfrewshire Council currently has a limit on the number of taxi licences which is fully met. No waiting list is operated.

Vehicle Requirements

Renfrewshire Council operate various policies in respect of vehicles. For more details regarding approved vehicle specifications please contact the licensing section at the contact details shown below.

The main policies relating to **private hire vehicles** are as follows:

The holder of a private hire car licence shall use as a private hire car a four door saloon, five door hatchback or estate vehicle with a minimum width across the back seat of 48 inches and an engine capacity 1600cc or greater, or alternatively a multi person vehicle (MPV) of a type approved by the licensing authority. From 1 January 2002 all vehicles to be licensed as private hire cars shall be:

- (i) any colour other than white; and
- (ii) less than 5 years old from the date of first registration, unless the vehicle is a multi person vehicle (MPV) and wheelchair accessible where that vehicle shall be less than 8 years from the date of first registration.

The main policies relating to **taxi vehicles** are as follows:

The holder of a taxi licence shall use as a taxi only an FX4 Metropolitan type vehicle of any other vehicle of a type which has received the prior approval of the licensing authority. From 1 January 2002, all vehicles to be licensed as taxis shall:-

- (i) be coloured white;
- (ii) be wheelchair accessible and either custom built taxis such as FX4's or Metro cabs or alternatively MPV's (multi person vehicles) of a type approved by the licensing authority;
- (iii) be less than 8 years old from the date of first registration of the vehicle where that vehicle is wheelchair accessible and otherwise be less than 5 years old (the latter age limit to apply only from 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2003 to non-wheelchair accessible taxis which were licensed prior to 1 January 2002); and
- (iv) be subject to 6 monthly inspections as from the time they are 5 years old from the date of first registration.

Guidance Notes

Vehicle Inspection

Before any operator application can be lodged, an inspection of the proposed vehicle to be licensed must be performed.

To arrange for an inspection please go directly to the Department of Planning and Transport at Gilmour House, Gilmour Street, Paisley and pay the relevant inspection fee. (To check the current inspection fee please contact the Department of Planning and Transport by phone on 0141 842 5444). You will be allocated an appointment date and time for the inspection to take place.

What documents do I need to submit an application?

You are required to produce the following documents at this licensing office when submitting your application form:

- **vehicle registration certificate**

For Renewal applications: It is a condition of licence that the vehicle registration document is held in the name of the licence holder (unless a lease agreement exists, in which case please see note below). However, if you have submitted a change of vehicle within 6 weeks of your renewal application we will accept a bill of sale or order form.

For New Grant applications: In the event that you do not have the vehicle registration document, a bill of sale or order form may be submitted when applying for your licence. The vehicle registration document must be produced to this office once you receive it from DVLA.

- **MOT certificate (if applicable)**

Applications for a taxi licence require an MOT if the proposed vehicle to be licensed is over one year old. Applications for a private hire car licence require an MOT if the proposed vehicle to be licensed is over 3 years old.

- **insurance and insurance schedule**

Applicants applying for a new licence do not require to submit their insurance at the time of submitting their application. We will request your insurance after a period of 21 days from the date your application is received. However, renewal applications must be accompanied by a valid current insurance certificate, and insurance schedule where appropriate.

- **lease agreement (if applicable)**

It is a requirement that the vehicle registration certificate and insurance certificate must be in the applicant's name. Any documentation exhibited in the name of someone other than the applicant will not be accepted, unless a leasing arrangement is in operation. In this event evidence of this leasing arrangement must be produced.

- **vehicle inspection pass certificate**

This is the pass certificate issued by Planning and Transport Department once your vehicle has been inspected. The date on the pass certificate must be no older than 8 weeks old.

We will not accept your application unless you can exhibit each of the above listed documents, as appropriate. On production of these documents we will copy them and return the originals to you immediately.

Guidance Notes

Applications

Each question on the form must be answered. If a question is irrelevant please mark it “not applicable” unless otherwise stated.

For renewal applications, applicants are solely responsible for ensuring their renewal application form is lodged timeously, ideally around 6 weeks prior to the expiry date of the licence. Failure to lodge the renewal before the expiry date of the current licence will result in the licence lapsing.

Application Fees

Payment is due at the time of lodging the application. For application fees please refer to the licensing fees leaflet. Please note that applications cannot be e-mailed to us. You must print the form, complete it and post it, or hand deliver it, to the licensing office with the appropriate fee.

No refund of application fees will be made for applications which are subsequently refused or withdrawn.

Prior Refusal

If you have applied for and been refused an application for a private hire car licence or taxi licence by Renfrewshire Council then, unless there has been a material change in circumstances, you cannot apply for the same kind of licence within one year of the date of refusal.

Processing your application

When your application is lodged and the appropriate fee has been paid, a copy of your application will be sent to Strathclyde Police. They will carry out their own investigations and report back to the licensing office.

We will usually process your application within 6 to 8 weeks. The legislation allows for consideration of the application within three months and a decision within six months.

If an objection is received in relation to your application you will be sent a copy of the letter of objection. Your application, the letter of objection and your response will then be referred to a Regulatory Functions Board meeting. You will be called to a hearing before the Board and given the opportunity of addressing the Board.

Conditions of Licence

A copy of Renfrewshire Council’s licence conditions for taxi licences or private hire car licences will be issued to you in the event that your licence is granted. The Council requires all licence holders to have a thorough understanding of these conditions and they should be retained as they form part of your licence.

Guidance Notes

Once you are in receipt of your licence you must ensure that it is not altered, erased or defaced in any way. It should be kept clean and legible and must not be lent to or used by any other person. Should the licence be lost or become defaced or illegible you must obtain a replacement from Renfrewshire Council on payment of the appropriate fee (see fees leaflet). Your licence must be produced on request from a police officer, an officer from Strathclyde Fire Brigade or an authorised officer of Renfrewshire Council.

Duration of Licence

Applications for the grant of a licence are generally granted for a period of one year, whilst applications to renew an existing licence are normally granted for a two year period.

Return of Plate(s)

In the case of renewal application, you are required to return your old plate(s) to the licensing section when you call to collect your new plate(s). If you are unable to return the old plate(s) you must confirm **in writing** the reason why you are unable to do so.

Any Further Questions

Should you have a query that is not covered in these guidance notes please feel free to contact the licensing section for further information.

Contact Details

Phone: 0141 840 3272

Fax: 0141 840 3566

Email: licensing.cs@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 8.45am - 4.00pm

Friday 8.45am - 3.15pm

Or write to:

Renfrewshire Council
Corporate Services Department
Licensing Section
Headquarters
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1TT

