

There are two types of licensed vehicles. Hackney Carriages (commonly known as Taxis) and Private Hire vehicles.

What is the difference between a Hackney Carriage and a Private Hire vehicle?

- Hackney Carriages can pick up from taxi ranks and can be flagged down in the street.
- Private Hire vehicles must be pre-booked and cannot be flagged down in the street. It is illegal for a Private Hire vehicle to take a journey which has not been pre-booked or to accept a fare by being hailed.

How do I know I am in a licensed vehicle?

- Any one driving a licensed vehicle must also be licensed as a driver by the same local authority. NWLDC licensed drivers are issued with an identification badge which displays a photo of the driver, an identification number and an expiry date. This badge must be worn at all times whilst the driver is working.

An NWLDC licensed Hackney Carriage (Taxi) vehicle:

- Must display a top sign on the roof
- Must have a taximeter calibrated to the Council's approved hackney tariffs (charges)
- Must display a green rear identification plate
- Do not need an operator
- Can 'ply for hire' on NWLDC designated rank
- Can pick up off the street, e.g. be flagged down by a customer.

An NWLDC licensed Private Hire vehicle:

- Must work for a Private Hire Operator who takes the bookings
- **Cannot** ply for hire
- **Cannot** pick up from the street e.g. be flagged down by a customer
- **Cannot** park or pick up on a designated Hackney Carriage rank
- Must display door signs identifying the company
- Cannot display a top sign
- May or may not have a meter in the vehicle
- A Private Hire Operator can set the tariffs for the vehicles that work for them
- Must display a blue Private Hire rear identification plate

How will the fare be calculated?

NWLDC Licensed Hackney Carriage (Taxi)

- Each Hackney Carriage **MUST** be fitted with a calibrated meter, which must be switched on at the start of the journey. The Hackney Carriage Fare Card is displayed or available inside each vehicle. The tariff is set by NWLDC.
- For journeys within the district of NWLDC the cost of the journey is calculated by the meter.

- A Hackney Carriage cannot charge more than the metered fare for a journey within the district irrespective of how that was arranged (rank, hailed or pre-booked). Before the start of a hiring for a journey which ends outside the district, agreement can be made to pay an amount which is more than the metered fare, but if no agreement is made only the metered fare can be charged.
- Hackney Carriage drivers, can when working, offer a discount on the metered fare (within or outside the district) as long as it is less than the hackney tariff displayed.

NWLDC Private Hire vehicle

- Private Hire Operators may set their own fares. A Private Hire vehicle may or may not have a meter, if a meter is used the current fare chart must be displayed or be available in each vehicle, so that it is easily visible to all hirers.
- For Private Hire vehicles without meters, the passenger cannot be charged more than the fare agreed between the passenger and Operator before the vehicle was hired.

Can animals be carried in Private Hire vehicles and Hackney Carriage vehicles?

- Under the Equality Act 2010 (as amended), licensed drivers are under a legal duty to carry guide, hearing and other prescribed assistance dogs in their vehicle, and allow it to remain under the physical control of the owner without additional charge.
- Therefore, if you travel with an assistance dog they **MUST** be allowed in the Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle, unless the driver has an exemption certificate. An exemption certificate can be issued if the licensed driver has a medical condition made worse by contact with dogs.
- The notice of exemption must be displayed in the vehicle by fixing it facing outwards either on the windscreen or in a prominent position on the dashboard.
- It is an offence for any Private Hire Operator or licensed driver to refuse to carry assistance dogs.

Is there any charge for carrying an assistance dog and or a wheelchair?

- There is no extra charge for assistance dogs, wheelchairs or mobility aids.
- Drivers may carry any animal belonging to a passenger (e.g.pets) at their own discretion anywhere in the vehicle and they shall ensure, where necessary, that such animals are suitably restrained/contained so as not to present a nuisance or hazard to the occupants of the vehicle.

How do I make a comment or a complaint?

Overcharging and time keeping

If your complaint is about over charging or pre-booked Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles not turning up on time you should take your complaint up with the driver or their Operator, quoting the drivers badge number, vehicle plate number and or vehicle registration number.

Road traffic offences

If your complaint is about a road traffic offence, (example: unsafe or erratic driving, a driver using a hand held mobile phone) in the first instance you will need to contact Leicestershire Police on telephone number 101.

Complaints we can investigate

The types of complaints that we are able to investigate are (this is not an exhaustive list);

- equality and diversity issues
- inappropriate behaviour
- over charging
- refusing to carry passengers without good reason
- vehicle defects, including cleanliness
- safeguarding issues
- drivers smoking in licensed vehicles
- incorrect use of meters
- drivers taking an extended route without good reason

All NWLDC licensed vehicles are required to display a notice advising passengers how they can make a complaint about a vehicle or driver. You may wish to contact us by email to licensing@nwleicestershire.gov.uk or contacting our customer service centre on 01530 454545 giving as much information as possible, such as date and time, pick up and drop off points, vehicle licence plate number, vehicle registration and details of the driver.

Can out of town Hackney Carriages work in NWLDC district?

Once a vehicle has been licensed as a Hackney Carriage it is a Hackney Carriage for the duration of that licence and can be used for pre-booked purposes in any district in England and Wales except London. It is not an offence for a licensed Private Hire Operator in North West Leicestershire to take bookings, and then dispatch a Hackney Carriage vehicle, licensed by another district to undertake your journey. A Hackney Carriage can lawfully be used to carry out pre-booked work as a Private Hire vehicle outside its own district.

Useful Information

- An out of town (licensed by another district) Hackney Carriage cannot be hailed on the street or wait on NWLDC Hackney ranks. Only NWLDC licensed Hackney Carriages can wait on NWLDC designated ranks.
- The Hackney ranks cannot be used by Private Hire vehicles to drop off or pick up passengers.
- The drivers may charge you a 'soiling fee' if you soil or dirty the vehicle.
- Private Hire vehicles and Hackney Carriage vehicles are not required to carry child safety seats.
- Hackney Carriage drivers are exempt from wearing seat belts; however Private Hire drivers should wear seat belts unless they are carrying passengers.