

COUNCIL GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO THE DISPLAY OF LICENCE PLATES ON HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

1. Display of Licence Plates

In accordance with Section 38 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, a licence plate issued by the Council must be affixed to hackney carriages. There is no provision for the Council to make exemptions from this requirement and accordingly such plates must be displayed at all times. In this respect, the plate, issued by the Council, must be displayed on the back of the vehicle and securely fixed in such a manner that it can, if necessary, be removed by an authorised officer of the Council. The display of plates in the rear window of a vehicle is not permitted and does not meet the requirements of the Act.

Private hire vehicle plates must be displayed in accordance with Sub-Section (6)(a) of Section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. These plates must be fixed to the vehicle in the same manner as that prescribed for a hackney carriage.

The plate need not be displayed on private hire vehicles during the period that such vehicle is used for carrying passengers for hire or reward to/from or in connection with any wedding ceremony or under a contract for the hire of the vehicle for a period of not less than 24 hours. In addition, Sub-Section (3) of Section 75 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, enables the Council to permit the vehicle to be used on specific occasions without the need to display the plate. Such exemptions are only effective if the Council gives notice in writing to the proprietor of the vehicle concerned. If an exemption is granted the driver does not have to display their driver badge on the specified occasions when the exemption is in force.

2. Applications for Exemptions

Applications for exemption must be made in writing to the Licensing Manager stating the specified occasions for which exemption is sought and give reasons for the application. Applicants should be aware that apart from very exceptional circumstances, the Council would not be prepared to give a general dispensation from displaying a private hire plate. Having regard to the general exemptions mentioned in paragraph 1, the Council will also need to be satisfied that there is sufficient justification for giving exemptions on specific occasions and applicants must therefore give a full explanation of their reasons for applying for an exemption.

Exemption notices, if granted, would be subject to annual renewal. A fee is payable in respect of the issue of the notice but this should not be paid until the application has been approved in principle.

3. General

Failure to display a plate in accordance with the requirements of the Act could result in a fine imposed by the magistrates court of up to £1,000, and it should not be assumed that exemption will be granted merely because an application has been submitted. The plate must be displayed in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraph 1 until notice of exemption has been given in writing to the proprietor. If an exemption is granted, the notice must be carried in the vehicle at all times when the plate is not being displayed.