

TAXIS and PRIVATE HIRE

General Information For New Applicant Enquiries

Vehicles that carry fare paying passengers are licensed by Stroud District Council. They can be licensed as either taxis (also known as hackney carriage) or private hire.

The maximum number of passengers that a taxi or private hire vehicle can be licensed to carry is 8. Any vehicle larger than this must be licensed as a public service vehicle through the traffic commissioners.

Main difference between Taxis and Private Hire

- Taxis can be flagged down, use designated taxi ranks in the district and be pre-booked whereas private hire must always be booked in advance of a journey.
- Taxis must have a meter and the maximum tariff (fare) is set by the Council. The Council does not control the tariff for private hire vehicles.
- Taxis must have a roof sign whereas private hire vehicles are not allowed a roof sign
- Taxi drivers must pass the knowledge test whereas private hire drivers are not required to take the knowledge test.
- Private hire vehicles must be run under a private hire operators licence whereas taxis do not need an operators licence.

Licences issued by Stroud District Council

Stroud District Council issues the following licences.

1. Taxi and Private Hire Drivers Licence

This is a dual licence that allows you to drive both taxi and private hire vehicles.

2. Private Hire Drivers Licence

This licence allows you to drive private hire vehicles only.

3. Taxi Vehicle Licence

As a taxi operator, you must have a taxi vehicle licence for each taxi you own. You do not require a separate operator's licence for a taxi.

4. Private Hire Vehicle Licence

You must have a private hire vehicle licence for any vehicle, other than a taxi mentioned above, that you use for private hire. A private hire vehicle must be operated under a private hire operator licence

5. Private Hire Operators Licence

If you take bookings for a private hire business, you must have a private hire operator's licence.

New Application Requirements

The information below is a summary of application requirements. For full details please read Stroud District Council's Taxi and Private Hire Policies. www.stroud.gov.uk/taxipolicy.

Application forms and current fees and charges are also available on our taxi web pages www.stroud.gov.uk/taxis or by contacting the Licensing Section on 01453 754440 or email licensing@stroud.gov.uk.

Drivers

You must have, immediately prior to applying, held a full valid driving licence for at least 12 months authorising you to drive a motor car in the UK.

You must be 18 years of age or over.

An application cannot be granted unless the Council is satisfied that you are a fit and proper person to hold a taxi or private hire driver's licence. You will be required to complete an application for a DBS Certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) and we will also check your DVLA history. See Information about criminal convictions and driving offences on the page 4 of this fact sheet. We will also check the National Register to see if you have previously had a taxi or private hire driver licence refused or revoked.

You must provide us with proof of your right to work in the U.K.

You must provide a Group 2 medical certificate completed by your own GP or a doctor that has access to your medical records.

You must complete a driver's assessment through an approved provider.

You will be required to complete a Safeguarding and Equality Awareness Course before your licence is issued. You will need to book the test and pay the fee directly to the provider.

You must provide as an appropriate educational certificate for a qualification related to English. Acceptable qualifications may include a GCSE (or equivalent) in a subject such as English language or literature, a degree in a subject containing substantial English content, or an NVQ or BTEC in a subject that requires its students to communicate well in English. If

you are unable to provide an appropriate education certificate you must pass an English Proficiency Test through an approved assessor.

For a taxi and private hire dual driver's licence you must pass a knowledge test. The knowledge test is a written multiple choice examination. A fee is payable to Stroud District Council for the test.

If you are a person who has resided outside the UK for 6 months or more since the age of 18 you will need a criminal record check or certificate of good conduct from the countries you have resided in.

There is a fee for a new driver's application. Additionally, you must pay for the DBS check. See our list of fees and charges for details. You will need to pay the fee for your medical, safeguarding training and driver's assessment direct to the providers.

Vehicles

The vehicle shall be of a suitable size, type and design to be safe and comfortable for passengers. It must be right hand drive. We do not have any restriction on colour or type of vehicle however they will normally be four door saloons; five door estates, multi-purpose vehicles (people carriers), minibuses or purpose built taxis (purpose built taxis cannot be used for private hire). On first licensing a vehicle must not be over 5 years old. On renewal a vehicle must not be over 10 years old.

Please contact the Licensing Section regarding whether a particular make of vehicle is suitable with regard to size and comfort. All vehicles will be inspected by a licensing officer to ensure they are suitable and are in good condition inside and out.

A minibus, or similar, in addition to the driver's door, must have at least two other doors that provide adequate entry/egress to the vehicle for use by passengers. These doors must permit easy access for passengers entering and exiting the vehicle and be readily opened from inside the vehicle.

All vehicles shall be compliant with UK and European vehicle regulations and have a M1 classification "type approval".

A vehicle that has been converted since manufacture, for example, many wheelchair accessible vehicles, must provide one of the following M1 approvals following conversion:

- European Whole Vehicle Type approval (ECWVTA);
- UK Low volume approval (UKLVTA);
- UK Single Vehicle Approval (SVA);
- UK Voluntary Standard Single Vehicle Approval;

To make an application you must be able to provide an insurance certificate or cover note for taxi or private hire use.

All vehicles over 1 year old must have a valid MOT certificate.

Additionally you will have to take the vehicle to one of our designated garages to have a Council Vehicle Test. Please contact the Licensing Section or see our web site for a list of designated garages.

There is an application fee for a new vehicle licence and a plate deposit to be paid. You will have to pay the insurance, mot and council vehicle test fees direct to the providers.

Private Hire Operators

To be a private hire operator licensed with Stroud you must have an operating base within the district. You must keep a record of all bookings made. All vehicles and drivers that you use must also hold licences with Stroud District Council even if their home addresses are outside of the district.

We have to be satisfied you are a fit and proper person. If you have not completed a DBS check as part of a driver's application you must provide a Basic Criminal Record Disclosure.

You must provide us with your proof of your right to work in the U.K.

There is an application fee. See our list of application fees on our website.

The Law and Taxis and Private Hire

Once a vehicle is licensed as a taxi or private hire vehicle it can only be driven by a person holding a taxi driver's licence or private hire vehicle driver's licence, issued by the same Council, throughout the duration of that vehicle licence. This includes when the vehicle is being used for private use. This means that once you licence a vehicle with Stroud District Council it can only be driven by a driver licensed with Stroud District Council. Other persons, for example your spouse or even someone licensed with another authority, **cannot** drive that vehicle at any time whilst the licence is current.

A private hire vehicle must at all times be operated by a private hire operator licensed with the same Council.

Taxis and private hire vehicles are smoke free vehicles by law and neither the driver nor the passengers are able to smoke in the vehicle at any time. Even if there are no passengers the driver cannot smoke in the vehicle.

Convictions Policy

Taxi and private hire drivers are exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act which means we can take account of all convictions including those considered spent under that Act. The Council has a policy that gives guidance on how it will make decisions whether to grant a licence if the applicant has had convictions and/or motoring penalties.

In particular the Council will give serious consideration to offences involving:

- Dishonesty

- Violence
- Drugs
- Sexual/indecency offences
- Drunkenness
- Motoring convictions

An application for a taxi or private hire driver licence is most likely to be refused if you have more than 3 valid points on your DVLA driver licence.

To see the full convictions policy including DVLA endorsements, see our taxi and private hire policy webpage www.stroud.gov.uk/taxipolicy. The convictions policy is included in the Common Standards for Licensing taxi and private hire drivers in Gloucestershire.

Further information

Application forms and full policy documents are available from the Licensing Section or from the Council's website. If you wish to make an application, please contact us using the details below.

Contact Details

Licensing Section
 Stroud District Council
 Ebley Mill
 Stroud
 Gloucestershire
 GL5 4UB

Tel: 01453 754440

Email: licensing@stroud.gov.uk

Web www.stroud.gov.uk