

LICENSING GUIDANCE PROCEDURE

Granting Private Hire Plate Exemption



AUGUST 2014

Application Process for Granting Private Hire Plate Exemption

1. INTRODUCTION

2. PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The plate identifying the vehicle as a Private Hire Vehicle is required to be exhibited on the vehicle pursuant to Section 48(6) of the Local Government (Misc. Provisions) Act 1976 shall be securely fixed to the external front and rear of the vehicle in a conspicuous position and in such manner as to be easily visible by an authorised officer of the Council, or a Police Officer.

However, Cambridge City Council's policy allows proprietors of prestige type vehicles to seek permission to waive the requirement to display plates.

PROCESS

1. Proprietors of prestige type vehicles licensed as Private Hire vehicles, or Private Hire vehicles used in special circumstances, may seek the permission of the Authority to waive the conditions of their licence relating to the display of licence plates.
2. Prestige vehicles remain licensed as Private Hire vehicles and all journeys and contracts must be pre-booked through a licensed Operator, although such vehicles should be used solely to undertake prestige work and should not be despatched to customers in the ordinary way.
3. Proprietors wishing to obtain an Initial plate exemption will be asked to book an Assessment of their Vehicle with the Licensing & Enforcement Manager (LEM). This will allow the LEM to inspect the vehicle and to give further advice on the plate exemption procedure. If the vehicle is already licensed with Cambridge City Council, Proprietors **MUST** schedule the Assessment **AT LEAST** three weeks prior to their vehicle licence renewal date.
4. At the Assessment, the LEM will complete the Assessment Form and decide whether or not the Vehicle is deemed to be a prestige type vehicle. If so, the Proprietor will be given a Plate Exemption Application Form to complete.
5. The Proprietor will complete the Plate Exemption Application Form and submit to the LEM for final consideration (and pay the appropriate fee).
6. Newly licensed vehicles which are accepted as Executive/ Prestige type vehicles for the purposes of vehicle plate exemption will **not be entitled to have a transponder**. Existing vehicles transferring to plate exemption will be required to surrender their transponder. In this event, if the transponder returned is the one which matches with our records and is in full working order then we can make arrangements for the deposit to be refunded to the proprietor (this can take up to 14 working days).
7. In exceptional circumstances, applications may be considered part way through the life of an existing vehicle licence. This is at the discretion of the

Licensing & Enforcement Manager. If an exemption is granted, the remaining term of the exemption will run until the vehicle licence end date.

8. The Licensing & Enforcement Manager will review the exemption application based on the information provided on the application form and the detail given as to why the request is being made.
9. If approved, the proprietor will be notified of the successful application and will be issued with the following:
 - i) An agreement letter detailing that the vehicle is exempt from displaying a Private Hire Plate. The agreement is required to be carried on the vehicle at all times and to be available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Council, a police officer or by the hirer of the vehicle, on request.
 - ii) A windscreen sticker for display in the front windscreen of the vehicle denoting that the same information as a Private Hire Vehicle Plate.
 - iii) A Private Hire Vehicle Plate to be secured/ fixed into the boot of the vehicle.
10. If the exemption request is not approved, the Licensing & Enforcement Manager will write to the applicant giving reasons as to why the application has been refused.
11. Proprietors will make an application in the first instance and will not be expected to renew the exemption on an annual basis. However, in addition to the Mechanical Fitness Test the vehicle will need to be assessed by the Licensing & Enforcement Officer to confirm that it still meets the Plate Exempt Standards, prior to the renewal licence and exemption disc being issued (and a Plate Exemption Assessment Form completed). Before renewal, a separate letter (renewal exemption letter) will be sent to the Proprietor advising of the process which needs to be undertaken.
12. The following conditions will be attached to the licences of private hire vehicles where a plate exemption waiver has been made. These are detailed below:
 - i) Vehicles granted a plate exemption waiver shall be used only for Prestige type hirings and shall not be used for standard private hirings.
 - ii) The Operator receiving a booking for a plate exempted vehicle shall provide the hirer with details of the vehicle registration number and the name of the driver, prior to the hiring commencing.

- iii) The private hire identification disc issued by the Council shall be displayed within the front nearside of the windscreen at all times and legible from outside the vehicle.
- iv) The rear vehicle licence plate shall be securely fixed within the boot of the vehicle in a manner which enables it to be easily inspected.
- v) The driver's badge shall be available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Council, a police officer or by the hirer of the vehicle, on request.
- vi) The Council's agreement to a plate exemption is required to be carried on the vehicle at all times and to be available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Council, a police officer or by the hirer of the vehicle, on request.
- vii) The driver of a plate exempted vehicle shall wear professional business attire.
- viii) The hirer shall not have the facility to settle accounts and / or tender direct payment to the driver by any means. Payment may only be made, either before or after the journey, direct to the Operator or their accounting system.
- ix) No alcoholic drink shall be sold or purchased in or from the vehicle.