

PART I

Additional Policy for the Determination of Applications for Private Hire Vehicle Plate Exemption

Applications should be made on the appropriate form. Each application will be considered on its individual merits by an appropriately authorised officer of the Council. Each vehicle will be inspected by the officer determining the application.

Vehicles

In view of the vast numbers of makes and models of vehicles available it is preferred not to produce a definitive list of vehicle makes and models that might be approved has not been prepared. The granting of an exemption will be based on the cost, reputation, specification, appearance, perception and superior comfort levels of a vehicle. However, the following will be minimum requirements in relation to any vehicle in respect of which an exemption is sought:

1. Executive saloon, hatchback or estate vehicles designed to be licensed for 4 passengers, allowing sufficient space for adult passengers to travel comfortably.
2. Engine size 1900cc or greater.
3. A range of vehicles capable of carrying in excess of 4 passengers will be considered provided they meet a higher specification for that make and model.
4. An exemption will only be considered for a vehicle that can seat more than 4 passengers only where this is provided with comfort. Each seat must be of adequate dimensions and must permit direct access into and out of the vehicle without the need to move, remove, fold down, pass over or slide any seat. No vehicle modifications from the manufacturer's specification are acceptable.
5. The vehicle must have a minimum specification of at least air conditioning, climate control, electric windows, central locking and headrests for each passenger.
6. The vehicle must be in immaculate condition, without damage, dents, defects or blemishes to the external bodywork, trim or seating.

Type of work

Applications will only be considered from the proprietors of vehicles which undertake exclusively "executive" type work, with all bookings to be of an executive nature and made under written contract (which may include bookings made electronically and by email). For example:

1. Corporate bookings to transport employees and/or clients on corporate business journeys; and/or
2. Airport and other 'special' journeys where the client specifically requests a vehicle of a prestige specification at the time of booking and pays a recognisable higher fee for that service compared to that charged for a non exempt vehicle.

Additional Conditions Relating to Private Hire Vehicles with a Plate Exemption

The following conditions will apply to any private hire vehicle which is granted an exemption from the requirement to display the rear licence plate, and are in addition to the standard private hire vehicle licensing conditions applying at the time:

1. The vehicle will only be used for “executive” work, where the booking has been made by written contract and not for any other type of private hire work.
2. The following must be carried in the vehicle at all times and must be produced upon request to an authorised officer of the Council or a police officer:
 - A) The exemption notice.
 - B) The private hire vehicle licence plate.
 - C) The vehicle licence conditions.
3. The (small) internal vehicle identification badge will be displayed in the front window of the vehicle at all times.
4. The vehicle will NOT have a meter fitted.
5. The vehicle will not display any company or third party numbers, adverts or promotional material of any type.

Additional Conditions for Drivers of Exempted Private Hire Vehicles

1. Male drivers are required to wear a suit or jacket and trousers plus shirt and a tie at all times. Female drivers must follow an equivalent dress code, generally recognised as ‘smart office’. This dress code must be followed at all times the vehicle is used to undertake a booking or contract. Jackets may be removed where weather conditions require it.
2. The driver of an exempted vehicle is not required to wear their driver’s identification badge, but must carry their badge with them at all times.

Please Note: Drivers of private hire vehicles that do not display a private hire vehicle plate are not exempt from the seat belt legislation and **MUST** wear a seat belt while driving the vehicle at all times.