



Coventry City Council Taxi
Licensing Office & Childrens'
Safeguarding in partnership with
Accessible Transport Group Ltd



DRIVER TRAINING COURSE NOTES 046

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, DISABILITY AWARENESS, CUSTOMER CARE and LICENSING & ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

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WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

It is important that all hackney carriage drivers, private hire drivers and operators licensed in Coventry understand what is expected of them before they are issued with a licence. This is because there are laws and rules that apply to the holding of these licences.

The Driver Training Course is designed to give an introduction to child sexual exploitation, disability issues, general customer care and licensing & enforcement rules and regulations.

This information should help you to provide the best service you can for your customers. It should help to make your job easier and to provide a safer place for you to work in.

N.B. There will also be a test at the end of the course covering 10 sites/locations and the roads they are situated on. This will be from a database of 80 sites/locations – see Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Driver Sites & their location in Coventry Document 045a.

Disability Awareness and Customer Care Training

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Child Violence & Sexual Exploitation Training

Licensing and Enforcement Training

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WHAT COMES NEXT

This booklet is intended to assist you by providing notes on the Driver Training Course. Please refer to the contents section on this page for further information.

Your Communication & Numeracy skills will also be assessed on the Driver Training Course

DISABILITY AWARENESS ISSUES

Introduction & Background

1 in 20 children and 1 in 10 adults in this country have some form of disability.

Do you know how to help disabled passengers get in and out of your vehicle?

Licence holders should ensure that they are familiar with the laws, conditions and procedures attached to holding a licence.

This includes laws on disability discrimination.

ASSISTING DISABLED PASSENGERS

Responsibilities

As a driver you will occasionally have responsibility for passengers with special needs. You will need to help passengers to get to and from your vehicle, or in and out of it.

The amount of help you need to give will vary from one passenger to the next.

It is essential that you understand how you should do this part of your work, as it will minimise the risk of injury to you and your passenger. In addition it will help you give a better service to your passenger.

Put Simply

It will make your job,
Easier
More worthwhile
And more rewarding.

BEHIND EVERY DISABILITY

Disabled People ARE people

Disabled people are "People" FIRST and "disabled" second. They should be treated with the same consideration as ANY other person.

Some passengers will need a lot of assistance and you should provide them with what they need. However you should remember that many disabled people take great pride in being able to do things for themselves; and your approach should always be to encourage, help and support that independence.

Every passenger who gets into your vehicle **COULD** have some type of disability, BUT sometimes it is NOT so easy to see. No matter who you are dealing with, or what disability they may have, there are two golden rules,

1. *Ask, "How can I best help you?"*
2. *SMILE.*

And REMEMBER – Some people have disabilities you CANNOT see.

DISABILITY AWARENESS

Equality Act 2010



Giving Help

The help you give should suit the needs of this passenger.

REMEMBER – that disabled people may have to work hard to cope with everyday life. Poor or inconsiderate help or the wrong attitude can damage their confidence. Every person should be treated equally and with respect.

Being deaf does not always mean that the person cannot hear anything at all.

Many deaf people can hear something.

*Please remember
Don't SHOUT!*

GENERAL RULES

General Guidance – Best Approach

Always keep to the following rules:

Do not talk “down” to a passenger or talk to someone else, as if they were not there. **EXAMPLE = "Is SHE sitting comfortably?"**

Do not “guess” about how much help a person will, or will not need. **ASK THEM.**

Passenger can be “sensitive” about their problems. – **Try to be sympathetic and understanding when you speak to them.**

Be ready to allow passengers more time. – **Some passengers will be faster than others.**

Keep things simple and deal with one thing at a time. **Example: Don't ask the address they are going to, when they are getting into the vehicle.**

**Every person should be treated equally
and with respect.**

HEARING

Hearing & Hearing Impairments

Being deaf makes many things difficult that are taken for granted by hearing people. These include using a telephone, general conversation, and listening to the radio.

People who become deaf, unlike people who are born deaf, face additional difficulties. They have to learn a new set of skills and can often become frustrated because what used to be simple tasks are now major problems.

Hearing Aids

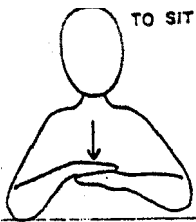
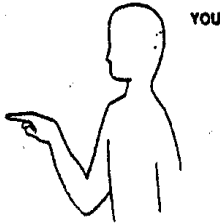
Hearing aids magnify **all** sound, including background noise and are very sensitive to higher frequencies.

Do not SHOUT, Do speak clearly.

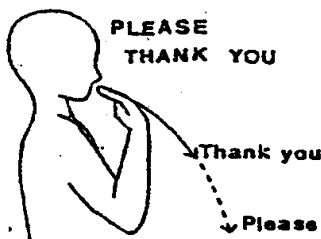
HEARING *Continued*

People who are deaf get the extra information from your facial expressions.

Examples of Sign Language



"Please" & "Thank you" are easy to learn & very useful signs



Voice – Tone & Pitch

Changes in tone and pitch of voice can alter the meaning of what is being said and, therefore, it can affect the way we understand a sentence. A simple question can appear helpful or aggressive. Try changing the way you say the following sentence.....

"What are you looking at? (*say it in a questioning voice*)

"What are you looking at? (*say it in an aggressive voice*)

Facial Expressions and Lip Reading

Your face can give a great deal of information. People who are deaf get the extra information from your facial expressions. Also, if they lip-read, it is only possible for them to tell what you are saying when they can see your face clearly.

It is important, when talking to them that you face them and speak slowly and clearly.

Background lighting, sunlight, shadows, distance or facial hair, will all make lip-reading more difficult.

SIGNING

Sign Language is often used by deaf people to communicate. It is different from the spoken word and sentences are often shortened.

For Example

"Where are you going to?"

Might be shortened to

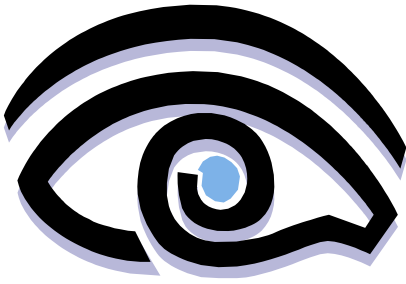
"Where?"

When deaf people use the spoken word they may seem rude or abrupt to a hearing person, because the talk in the same way they sign. Remember this, and do not to be offended.

Practical Ways to Help With Deafness:

- Learn to Sign, even if it is only a little:
Try "Hello" and/or "Good-bye".
- Carry a pen and Paper.
You can then write your question down.
- Speak clearly and slowly; but not too slowly or in an unnatural way.
- Don't shout, your lips become a different shape, and cannot be read, when shouting.
- Let passenger see your lips.
- Use gestures to support your statements.

BLINDNESS



Being blind does not always mean that the person cannot see anything at all.

Many blind people can see something.

A person carrying a stick showing 2 colours, e.g. white and red, will have more than 1 disability.



Ask if a person wants you to guide them, first.

If they do, it is usually best to let them hold your arm.

Daily Life

As with deafness, a large part of daily life is not open to blind or partial sighted people, and many may find getting a taxi frustrating and very daunting.

How Can You Help?

- Behave normally:
Saying, "Did you see.....?", is okay.
- Do not patronise by being overly sympathetic.
- Say who you are:
a blind person may not be able to see your vehicle.
- If you do not know their name, you may touch their forearm to let them know you are speaking to them.
- Remember to tell them what type of vehicle you have and which way it is facing.

GUIDING THE BLIND

Your Aim

Your aim in guiding a blind person, is to allow him or her to walk with you *in confidence*.

If they are along side you, you will have to make sure that both your path and theirs are clear. You will also have to warn them about steps or other obstacles and slow down when encountering hazards.

Arm Grip

Allow the person to grip your arm. This will put the person slightly behind you and will make it easier to sense the direction you are walking. Always ensure that the passenger's feet are facing the same direction as your own before setting off. In areas of increased hazards, like steps etc, slow down.

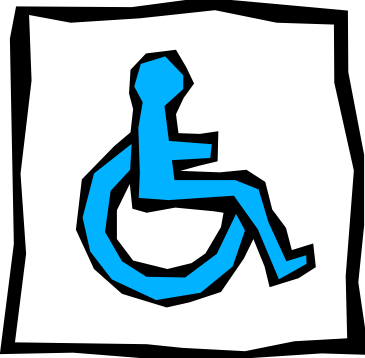
Assisting Passengers to Get In or Out of Your Vehicle

Here are some tips that will help you to assist your passengers.

- *Talk*: ask, "How can I help?" (Build confidence and prevent a rushed feeling.)
- *Advise*: point out the location of handrails, seatbelts etc.
- *Support*: possibly holding a passenger's arm to give confidence and support.
- *Carry*: parcels or bags for the passenger.

ASSISTING WHEELCHAIR PASSENGERS

Are You



Wheelchair
Friendly ?

General Information

In many ways helping with a wheelchair user is less demanding than many other disabilities. However, you will still need to treat each passenger as an individual.

General Wheelchair Safety Rules

Certain parts of a wheelchair are designed to be removed, so do not pick them up by side guards, footrests, or wheels. If in doubt ask the passenger.

Always apply both brakes when transferring passengers from the chair.

Work in partnership with the wheelchair user, - ask how you can help and always let the user know what you intend to do.

WHEELCHAIR Do's & Don'ts

Always tell the passenger what you are about to do.

Listen to what your passenger has to say.

DO

Always tell passengers what you are **about** to do. Speak clearly and listen carefully to what your passenger is saying.

Plan your route when pushing a wheelchair to avoid uneven surfaces. Apply the wheelchair brakes when you stop and when it is secured safely in your taxi. Explain what you are doing when your hands are out of sight, for example when securing the wheelchair or fitting a seatbelt.

Remember that the wheelchair user cannot always see what you can. During the journey in a hackney carriage the wheelchair must be secured with its back to the partition with the passenger facing the rear. Wheelchairs **must not** be put into a hackney carriage facing sideways. Please slow down when cornering.

Ensure that you allow sufficient clearance for the passenger's feet – they may protrude beyond the chair.

DON'T

Move suddenly or without warning.

Allow the wheelchair to tip forwards.

Do not assume that pedestrians will get out of the way, when pushing a wheelchair.

Rush, or try to force the wheelchair if it gets stuck.

Use the foot rests as a battering ram to force doors open.

MANOEUVRING WHEELCHAIRS

10 Golden Rules When helping wheelchair passengers

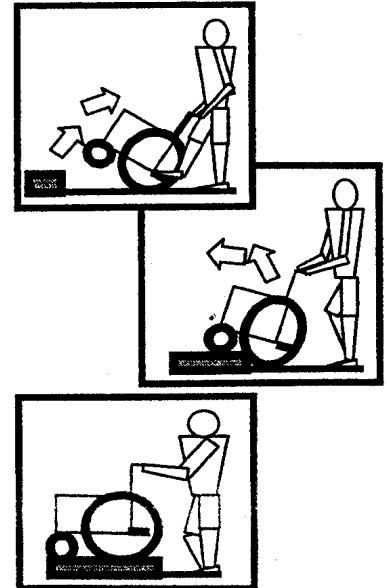
1. Listen to your passenger. Ask them "How can I help"?
2. Always tell your passenger what you are about to do; not what you have just done!
3. Keep both hands on the wheelchair when you are pushing it.
4. Go up a kerb forwards and down a kerb backwards.
5. Never tip a wheelchair forwards.
6. Go down steep ramps or slopes backwards.
7. When stopped put on both of the wheelchair's brakes.
8. Use the vehicles access equipment, for example ramps or lifts.
9. Always secure the wheelchair properly in your vehicle.
10. Always provide a passenger with a seatbelt.

DOWN A KERB

1. Make sure the wheels are square to the kerb – step backwards to the lower level.
2. Supporting the wheelchair, gently allow the rear wheels to roll over the edge of the kerb until they come smoothly to rest on the lower level.
3. Tilt the wheelchair back slightly further to raise the front wheels.
4. Still tilted, move the wheelchair backwards just enough so the front wheels will be clear of the kerb, then gently return the front wheels to rest on the ground.
5. Use the "Tipping Levers" when slowly lowering or raising the wheelchair to or from a horizontal (level on the ground) position.

UP A KERB

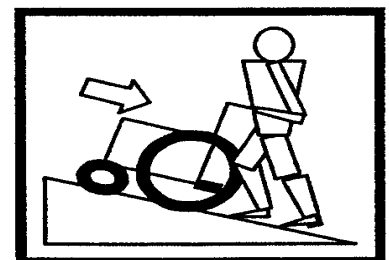
1. With due regard for the passenger's feet – move the wheelchair as close as possible to the kerb.
2. Using the "tipping lever", tilt the wheelchair back just enough so the front wheels are slightly higher than the upper level.
3. Move the wheelchair forwards, until the rear wheels come into contact with the kerb.
4. Lower the front wheels so they rest on the upper level.
5. Lift and push the wheelchair to roll the rear wheels up onto the upper level.



UP A SLOPE

When encountering steep slopes it is better to come down backwards.

The passenger may be able to help your descent by controlling the wheels or brake.



SECURING A WHEELCHAIR IN A TAXI

When Assisting Disabled Passengers

Park your vehicle in a safe position. Where possible this should be:

- *On Level Ground
- *Away From Traffic Hazards
- *Well Lit and Sheltered

Remember!

If the vehicle you drive does not have facilities to allow a wheelchair passenger to remain seated in their wheelchair, you must make sure the wheelchair is carried safely.

You will probably put a wheelchair in the boot, so use a good lifting technique and make sure it cannot be damaged when you are driving.

Talk with your passenger and always ASK

How can I help you?



NO MATTER HOW FIT YOUR PASSENGER MAY SEEM, ALWAYS PROVIDE THEM WITH A SEATBELT.

Loading a "Manual" Wheelchair

- Ensure the maximum floor space is available within your vehicle. In some vehicles you will have to fold up the rear seats and secure them in the upright position.
- Set-up the vehicle's access ramps. Make sure they are secure and give the lowest angle possible. You may be able to use the kerb height to reduce the angle. If the ramps are separate, adjust the width of them to match the wheelchair and ensure that are parallel.
- If it is likely that the passenger may be taller than the doorway, ensure they are able to lower their head before you assist them to get in to the vehicle.
- Assist the passenger to enter the vehicle and manoeuvre their wheelchair so they are sitting with their back towards the driver partition (bulkhead). In some vehicles it maybe necessary to stow the ramps before you finally position the passenger. Apply the wheelchair brakes.

Loading a "Powered" Wheelchair

- Passengers who use powered wheelchairs will probably be able to get themselves into the vehicle and manoeuvre their wheelchair once inside. Always be on hand to assist or advise them, as they may not be able to see all round their wheelchair.

Securing a Wheelchair

- Attach the wheelchair retaining straps to a substantial part of the wheelchair frame and tension the straps. This should be done in line with the vehicle manufacturer's instructions. If the wheelchair is not strapped in then the police may prosecute for an insecure load.
- Ensure that the wheelchair is secure in position, and all locking devices are engaged.
- In some cases you may be able to lower one or more of the back seats once the wheelchair user is in position. Only do this if the seats are required for use. Always make sure you will not hit the passenger's feet when you do this.
- If the ramps are detachable, put them securely in the vehicle's boot.
- When getting the passenger off, reverse the process.
- Remember that wheelchair passengers cannot see where you are going. Keep them informed of things they might wish to know about. For example; speed ramps or changes to the route.

SEATBELTS

Assistance

- Assist the passenger to fit their seatbelt if required.
 - Seatbelts should be undamaged and clean.
 - Free from twists and as straight as possible.

Lap Straps

- The lap strap should go over the passenger's hips and not over the stomach.
- The lap strap should not go over the wheelchair armrests.

Shoulder Straps

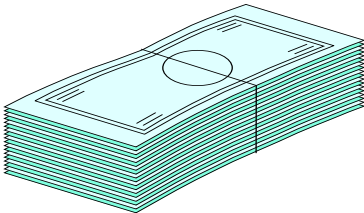
- The shoulder strap should go across the centre of the passenger's chest.
- The shoulder strap should NEVER go across the passenger's neck.

CUSTOMER CARE ISSUES

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Introduction To Customer Service

Whenever we go into a shop or restaurant (for example) we expect the staff to be pleasant, polite and treat us with respect. This demand for a quality of service is growing all the time, and as a service provider you should be thinking about the quality of service you provide to your customers.



Consider A World Without Customer Service

It is only when we consider a world without customer service that the need for it becomes clear. Read the following short story.

You arrive at a railway station in a City you have never visited before. Although a hot day it is raining. As you have 3 heavy bags you need to go to a local hotel by taxi. The rank is outside. The first taxi pulls up. The vehicle is dirty, a flat tyre and a rusty door. The driver does not get out and help you with your bags. You see that inside are cigarette ends and rubbish and the meter is already on. The seats are torn. The driver angrily asks "Hurry up! Get in. Where am I taking you?" and starts moving before you have sat down. The driver is wearing sandals, a dirty white sleeveless top and a pair of cut tracksuit bottoms and is not wearing their identity badge. There are no stickers in the taxi with the vehicle plate number. The driver does not talk and drives fast and dangerously. It is clear that the driver is lost and does not take the shortest route. When you do arrive the driver asks for more money than shown on the meter. Are you happy with this service? Would you tip? Would you pay or complain.?

Think about what you expect

We must think about what we expect from others and ask ourselves;

"Is the level of service I give as good as I expect to get from others?"

Feeling good

There are some things that every business must supply, for example, safety.

EVERY CUSTOMER IS DIFFERENT

We must always remember that every customer is different. They will all want and expect different things. They will come from different age groups, walks of life, cultures, or with different attitudes. We must deliver a service that meets their needs.

In time, experience will help you find out how to help different people. But, you should always think about how you would like someone to speak to you or your family. I imagine you would want respect and to be well looked after.



So....
how should you treat your
passengers?



APPROACH TO CONFLICT

Taking Care

Great care should be taken when dealing with somebody who is aggressive. Think about the following points:

➤ **Don't put yourself at risk**

If a passenger is showing signs of becoming aggressive, do not act in a way that will encourage their anger. For example, if they want you to go a particular way, even though you think your route is better, it might simply be best to accept what they want.

➤ **Is the money worth it?**

If a passenger is becoming aggressive about how much you are charging, consider if it is worth accepting less.

➤ **Don't encourage a dispute**

If a passenger is becoming angry about any part of the service you provide, do your best to calm the situation.

➤ **Should I pick them up?**

The law allows you to refuse to pick up a passenger who is clearly going to be a threat to your safety if you have *reasonable excuse*.

➤ **Take a step back, and stand side on**

Body language says more than words. If we stand too close to a person, they may feel threatened.

➤ **Let others know**

Remember to report any violent passengers to your operator, as this would allow them to involve the police.

Body language

Body language says more than words, so keep your distance.

These two actions also help practically:

1. if you are further back you will have more time to react if a person hits out;
2. standing slightly side-on will make you a smaller target, and will make it easier to run.

LAST WORDS



USEFUL WEBSITES

Department of Transport.
www.mobility-unit.detr.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
www.coventry.gov.uk

Council of Disabled People
www.cdp.org.uk

National Deaf Children's Society
www.ndcs.org.uk

Royal National Institute for the Deaf
www.rnid.org.uk

Royal National Institute for the Blind
www.rnib.org.uk

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR)
www.radar.org.uk

Leave A Good Image

Remember that your passengers only have a few minutes to judge you. If you create a good image, they will remember you and may use you again.

There is no better advertisement for your work than a happy customer.

Providing a good service has many benefits:

More work
Tips
Better public image
Safer workplace

Remember!

As a licensed driver, you are seen as an Ambassador for the City of Coventry.

The way you treat your passengers will make a difference. Remember your thoughts about that café at the start of the Customer Care talk. Would you have spent money in that café?

Give your passengers the service that you would wish to receive.

DRIVERS SHOULD BE?

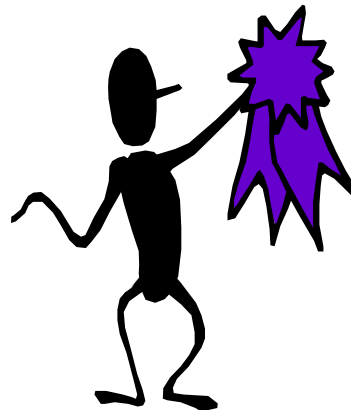
Honest.
Reliable.
Be on time!

Friendly and helpful. Friendly, but not too familiar. Greet your passengers with a smile.

== == == == ==
|| *Be safety aware.* ||
== == == == ==

You and your clothes should be clean, neat, tidy and presentable.

Good communication skills.
Speak clearly and use words your passenger will understand.
Do not use "taxi jargon".



KEEP YOUR VEHICLE IN GOOD ORDER.

KEEP TO ALL SAFETY RULES.

Good driving skills. Smooth driving will impress your passenger, NOT speed and dangerous driving.

Have a good knowledge of the area

LEGISLATION & CONDITIONS

Introduction To Legislation

The main legislation covering licensing is governed by the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Copies of these Acts are available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO). Coventry City's main central library also holds a copy of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Coventry City's Byelaws. These may be useful should you require further knowledge about the trade you are entering.



Caution

Licence holders should ensure that they are familiar with the laws, conditions and procedures attached to a licence.

Attention needs to be paid when more than one licence is held at any one time, for example a hackney carriage badge, and private hire badge.

Staff at the Taxi Licensing Office will assist you on request.

HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE LEGISLATION

LAWS

The main legislation controlling the trade is the **Town Police Clauses Act 1847** and the **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**.

As you can see some of the legislation is very old.

The Town Police Clauses Act 1847 is solely concerned with the hackney carriage trade; the private hire trade being covered by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

BYELAWS

Additional regulations are contained in byelaws specific to Coventry which update the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (further information concerning byelaws is on the next page).

Laws apply to us all, regardless of what job you do. Taking the time to read the paperwork sent to you by the Taxi Licensing Office will help.

The information sent to you is updated regularly and it is produced for the benefit of licence holders. You are encouraged to suggest changes or add information you believe will be useful.

Please contact the Taxi Licensing Office should you wish to contribute.

CONDITIONS

Introduction To Conditions

Conditions are different from Laws and Byelaws. All licences will have Conditions or Byelaws attached to them. Conditions are enforced by the Taxi Licensing Office. Byelaws are enforced by the Taxi Licensing Office or the Police. Licence Conditions or Byelaws are given with each licence and a copy can be picked up from the Taxi Licensing Office.



NAME Rose Buds
NUMBER 05981
EXPIRES 09-09-2001
Coventry Hackney
Carriage
Driver's Badge

BADGES MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES WHEN WORKING, WHERE THEY ARE PLAINLY & DISTINCTLY VISIBLE

THIS APPLIES TO ALL LICENSED DRIVERS

ENFORCEMENT

A failure to comply with a condition, byelaw or a law may result in enforcement action being taken by authorised officers. It may take the form of one or more of the following:

advice, warning, or appearance at City Council Committee or Court.

LICENCE CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS and BYELAWS

The Licensing and Regulatory Committee, with advice from the Council's solicitors, decide on Conditions of Licence that are enforced by the Taxi Licensing Office. Byelaws are enforced by the Taxi Licensing Office or the Police. Only Conditions and Byelaws that are attached to a licence are relevant.

Conditions and Byelaws exist primarily to protect the general public.

Flexibility

Legislation is worded in such a way as to allow each local authority to decide what **Conditions** or **Byelaws** they want.

It is because of this, that local authority conditions and byelaws generally differ from each other. For instance those used by Nuneaton, Coventry, Solihull are all different.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Conditions attached to all licences are found in the information book that you will be given in your information pack. For drivers it is called the Driver Information Document 044 and for vehicles it is called Vehicle Proprietors Information Document 054. For Private Hire Operators it is called Operator Information Document 064.

N.B. A Coventry licensed (plated) vehicle can only be driven by a Coventry licensed (badged) driver.

In Coventry a licensed hackney carriage driver cannot drive a licensed private hire vehicle unless they are licensed as a private hire driver (and vice versa). The correct driver's badge must be worn for the relevant vehicle.

Private Hire Operators

Introduction to Operators

Note. A private hire operator licence is not required in order to pass work to hackney carriage drivers.

Why?

Because the law does not require it.

Why?

Because hackney carriage drivers can ply for hire, which means they do not need an 'operator' to give them work. Compare this with the requirement of a private hire driver who can only accept bookings via a private hire operator.



Explained

A private hire operator is a company/person who is licensed by a local authority to accept bookings to pass to a private hire driver. They can also pass work to a hackney carriage driver.

Records held by a private hire operator

A private hire operator receives certain documents from the licensed private hire driver before work can be passed to the driver. These are **copies of badge , driver paper licence, insurance certificate, and vehicle paper licence**. Show each of these documents to your private hire operator BEFORE you start working for him/her.

A private hire operator cannot legally pass work to a private hire driver without having a copy of the above documents. Always assist a private hire operator with the keeping of current records

Why is this?

Because it is required by law; a private hire operator has to be satisfied that the private hire driver and vehicle are licensed with Coventry City Council. Officers from the Taxi Licensing Office check these records.

No restrictions when providing work – hackney carriage

Hackney carriage drivers do not have to provide a private hire operator with any documents. However, many private hire operators ask hackney carriage drivers for the same documents as those, which are required for private hire (see above question). This practice is encouraged by Officers at the Taxi Licensing Office.

Call Signs

Ideally each driver/vehicle should be given a unique call sign, which usually takes the form of a number. Ideally this call sign should not be shared with another person as all call signs are used for identification purposes (to trace drivers, vehicles and passengers) and to assist private hire operators.

Passenger on Board (POB)

There is a requirement to inform your private hire operator when a passenger is on board. This condition was introduced for both passenger and driver safety.

PLYING FOR HIRE



Plying for Hire

Illegal Plying for Hire is an offence

Plying for Hire in Coventry occurs when;

- A Hackney Carriage licensed by another district picks up flag downs from the streets in Coventry.
- A Coventry Private Hire Vehicle or a Private Hire Vehicle licensed in another district picks up flag downs.
- A Private Hire vehicle picks up customers from a taxi rank.
- A Hackney Carriage licensed by another district picks up customers from a taxi rank.

Remember – it is an Offence

PRE-BOOKINGS ONLY

Insurance

It is a serious matter to illegally ply for hire. It may invalidate your insurance.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

There is a lot of surveillance undertaken in Coventry. It is known as Closed Circuit Television (CCTV).

CCTV can be used to prevent crime and apprehend offenders.

Drivers may be invited to explain their actions if caught on CCTV. The information collected can be used for enforcement purposes.

ENFORCEMENT

Entrapment Explained

Taxi Licensing & Enforcement Officers together with other Coventry City Council employees may act as customers to undertake journeys in private hire or hackney carriages to determine whether the drivers are acting legally or not.

COMPLAINTS

Introduction To Complaints

The Taxi Licensing Office receives many complaints. Some complaints are not serious and can be dealt with quickly. Other complaints can be serious enough to result in an investigation being conducted.



Interview Process – PACE

If a driver is interviewed for a criminal offence, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (known as PACE), will apply.

Interviews are usually conducted on a tape recording system. You will be informed of the allegation made against you. A caution will be given in addition to an explanation of what will happen in the interview. A solicitor or friend can be present or you can be interviewed alone.

ACTION MAY BE TAKEN

It is possible that authorised officers may decide to take further action which can take many forms:

ADVICE;

A WARNING LETTER;

COMMITTEE HEARING;

PROSECUTION IN COURT

Passenger Complaints

Complaints are usually made by passengers in writing to the Taxi Licensing Office. An authorised officer may interview the person making the complaint and the driver that they are complaining about.

The person who is complained about may be interviewed by an authorised officer.

Some complaints do not require an interview.

A Written Result

The results of any complaint are usually (but not always), given in writing to both the driver and the complainant.

When a driver complains

Officers at the Taxi Licensing Office cannot deal with a complaint made by a driver against a passenger. The licensing legislation does not allow for this to take place. It is likely to be a Police or civil matter. However, Officers at the Taxi Licensing Office may offer guidance or advice.

Storage of Complaints.

On Your File

All complaints will remain on your file indefinitely. All complaints and any interview notes may be referred to, at a later date, if a pattern of unsuitable behaviour is seen.

Advice – Cooperate and be honest.

It is better for a licensee to have their comments documented and read along side a complaint than not to comment at all.

PROTECTION OF INFORMATION

Introduction To The Data Protection Act 1998

As part of the licensing process, all applicants will be required to provide personal information to the Taxi Licensing Office.

Legislation governs the way this information is gathered and processed. The law is called the Data Protection Act 1998.

Fair Obtaining Clause

The Taxi Licensing Office is required by law to comply with certain legal requirements when processing and storing personal information. Before an applicant provides personal information they will be shown a Fair Obtaining Clause (seen on all application forms). This will tell you why the information is required, what is done with it and who may have access to it.



How to Access Information Held by the Taxi Licensing Office

The information held about you will only be released to persons entitled to it by law.

Requests are made in writing. There is a charge of £10 and the processing can take a maximum of 40 days. This means that a request for information may take 40 days to receive.

Data Subject

Please note that should you request information about yourself, the £10 charge and the 40 day rule will apply.

Who Could Ask for Your Information?

It is usual for Police Officers and Inspectors from the Inland Revenue to make requests for personal information, which is held about you at the Taxi Licensing Office. But other organisations or people may also be entitled to your information.

Please Note. Information held about you is not necessarily private and confidential

THE FAIR OBTAINING CLAUSE – USED ON Taxi Licensing Office FORMS SAYS

Data Protection Act, 1998. The Council is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers. We use the information/documentation supplied by you or obtained (on your behalf) for the purposes of licensing, enforcement, public protection and for identifying the misuse of public funds. Checks made by this Council are undertaken to confirm identity. Checks are also made to prevent and detect crime and fraud and to apprehend offenders. Information held about you will be shared with other bodies responsible for auditing and administering public funds. Your identity will be used for comparison across the Council and with external organisations. Your information may be shared with other local authorities, enforcement agencies and organisations including (but not limited to) insurance companies, legal practitioners working in connection with legal proceedings (including prospective legal proceedings) if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that you are acting in a criminal or fraudulent manner or bring into question the safety and/or protection of the public. For further information on data matching exercises, see www.coventry.gov.uk/datamatchingandnfi

Public Registers

Public Registers

There are public registers available to view and they are free of charge. Any member of the public may ask to see these registers. Legislation allows for the following information to be released

Hackney Carriage Vehicle Register

1. Plate number licence attached to the vehicle.
2. Vehicle type and registration plate number.
3. Licence period dates with numbers of passengers licensed for.

Private Hire Driver Register

1. The name of the person to whom the driver licence is granted.
2. Licence period dates.
3. Badge number of the licence.

ROAD SAFETY ISSUES

Introduction To Road Safety Issues

We are all drivers. We have all passed our driving test (however long ago that was) so we should all know about the *Highway Code* and safe driving practices.

But when we are all on the roads every day we are more influenced by what is happening around us and within ourselves than by what we know we should do.

SPEED – Why is Speed dangerous?

Everybody is guilty of driving at an inappropriate speed; but is it acceptable?

- Causes (which can be combined)

<i>Human Error</i>	95 %
<i>Poor Environment</i>	25 %
<i>Mechanical Failure</i>	8.5%

Speed increases the likelihood of **life-threatening injury in ALL collisions.**

At 25% above the speed limit, you are 6 times more likely to be involved in a collision.

66% of collisions occur on built up roads ("A"-roads) – *that's 2 crashes out off every 3.*

Things we should know!

What is a safe speed?

For every 1mph increase in speed there is a 5% increase in risk.

- At 40mph – 90% of ADULT pedestrians WILL BE KILLED in a collision
- At 30mph – chance of survival is 80%
- At 20mph – chance of survival is 95%

Can you identify the speed limit?

In a built up area the speed limit is normally 30mph. The law does not require signs. Look for indications like street lighting, no other speed signs, and higher signs on side roads.

How quick can you stop?

Remember the 2 second rule is only for dry conditions. If it is wet double the distance. If it is icy up to 10 times the distance.

Remember your reactions, the condition of the vehicle and tyres, and the weight of the vehicle will affect the stopping distance.

AT 40 MPH

The girl is first hit on her pelvis and her pelvis is broken

She is thrown 28 metres from the car – falls to the ground onto her arm and her head hits the road. This breaks her skull and her arm.

She dies from her injuries.

**It's 30mph for a reason.
It's the difference
between life and death
for pedestrians**



AT 30 MPH

The girl is first hit on her pelvis and her pelvis is bruised.

She is thrown 16 metres from the car – falls to the ground onto her side, her arm is broken, her head hits the road but not so hard but she is only concussed.

She is alive.

WHAT CAN AFFECT DRIVERS?

- *ALCOHOL*
- *MOBILE PHONES*
- *TIREDFNESS*
- *DRUGS*
- *ILLNESS*
- *EMOTIONAL STRESS*

ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Alcohol affects your ability to judge speed & distance & slows down reaction times. The current legal limit in the UK is 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. But there is no failsafe guide as to how much you can drink and stay under the limit.

Drugs can affect your mind & body in a variety of ways that mean you are not able to drive safely. Not only that, the effects can last for hours or even days.

The police are now much better at recognising signs of drug use, so you are more likely to get caught.

SAFETY CAMERAS

There are 2 types of cameras – speed cameras and red light cameras.

DRIVER FATIGUE

1 in 5 road collisions on motorways & other monotonous roads are caused by someone falling asleep at the wheel

your body clock winds down at certain times – driving between midnight & 6am or 3pm to 4pm is particularly risky.

On every journey we will be annoyed by the actions of at least one other driver.

Inappropriate Speed

Travelling too fast for the road you are on, the conditions (like weather) or the hazards you may meet.

Crossing the Path of Another Vehicle

Cutting another driver up, provokes other drivers, causes annoyance and is bad driving practice.

Tailgating

Driving too close to the back of other vehicles means you cannot stop in time. If you crash into the vehicle in front it is your fault. If you are being tailgated don't get annoyed just slowdown and let them pass in a safe place.

Mobile Phones

It is against the law to make, take a phone call, text or even hold a phone when in charge of a vehicle (which can include a stationary vehicle with the engine running e.g. waiting at traffic lights). You could receive a fine and points on your licence.

Drink & Drugs Driving

Any amount reduces driver awareness and the ability to take the right actions. Use zero tolerance because the legal limits are difficult to judge, you may think you know how it affects you but you can't judge yourself.

Tiredness (Fatigue)

Driving when you are tired, driving for too long a time or distance, or driving at the wrong time, are all practices that can cause accidents because of tiredness.

CONSEQUENCES

**It is your livelihood
No DVLA Licence
=
No income**



Insurance Penalties – Premiums – Points!

Insurance companies estimate that Taxi insurance is normally triple that of insurance for your ordinary car driver.

If you were to receive penalty points or be involved in an accident it could mean your insurance premiums (what you pay) become too much to afford or make your income worthwhile.

Injury OR DEATH?

***Physical Trauma. Pain. A stay in Hospital. Treatment. Operations,
Rehabilitation & Physiotherapy. Mental Trauma***

= Would YOU be able to continue to drive? Would YOU be able to continue to work?

***Every serious high speed crash attended costs £100,000 for the NHS.
A real drain on resources***

***Crashes take the Police, Ambulance, Accident & Emergence Teams, Fire Service
resources away from other people needlessly.***

SAFETY CAMERAS

You may call it a "Speed Camera"

Remember they are installed for safety reasons, they are not there to catch you out.

If you are going too fast you will be photographed.

If the camera photographs you, you may get a fixed penalty fine and points on your DVLA driver licence. If you challenge the photograph in Magistrates Court and lose you can get a bigger fine and more points.



DROPPING LITTER

Introduction To Topical Issues

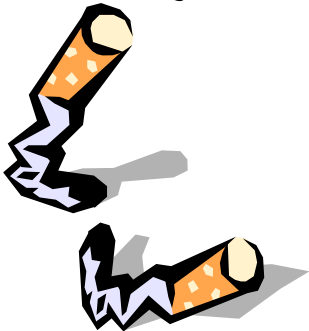
Once you have become licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire driver you may find that there are other issues you may encounter.

This section provided some guidance on these other issues.

THE COST TO YOU OF DROPPING LITTER

**£50 Fixed penalty fines
14 Days to pay
Court if you don't pay
With a fine of up to £3,500**

Littering Cigarettes and chewing gum cause most problems



Introduction To Mobile Phones

The rules for mobile phones mean it is now illegal to use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving. You can receive an instant fine if caught.

If you are involved in an accident your insurance claim could be affected and you or others could be injured. Would you want to risk this or more for the sake of not stopping in a safe place to take or make that call?

What is Litter?

It can be anything from chip packets to cigarette ends or sweet packets etc. The list is endless. The exact definition is likely to be found in Sections 87 and 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Is it an Offence?

It is a criminal offence to drop litter.

If seen you may be prosecuted in the magistrates court.

What could happen?

In the first instance you will be issued with a fixed penalty notice by a Council Officer. This would cost you £50, & it may come in the post. You have 14 days to pay it. If you don't pay you will receive a reminder letter. If you still fail to pay the matter could be presented to committee who can decide if the matter should go to court. It is worth considering that Coventry City Council has a policy to prosecute.

Passenger Problems

Passenger liability may cause you a problem?

If your passenger was responsible for dropping the litter, you may experience problems proving this.

What can you do?

If you see your passenger throwing litter from your vehicle you can report it yourself.

What if you don't want to report them?

You could take a note of what you saw, any personal details, like a description, the pick up and drop off points for the journey, and details your operator may hold (i.e. phone number). Don't forget to note the day and time the litter was dropped.

MOBILE PHONES

Regulations

The current legislation regarding mobile phones applies to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers. Spare a thought for the amount of damage that can be done when things go wrong – death or serious injury. Think of how your life or others could be changed.

Switch it Off before you drive

You could receive an instant fixed penalty fine of £200 & 6 points endorsed on your DVLA licence.

You could receive a large fine and up to 2 years in prison for being convicted of driving carelessly or dangerously as a result of using a mobile phone.

MOBILE PHONES



Safety Comes First

Use common sense! Is it worth it not to?

- **Switch off your mobile & use the voice mail**
- **Keep hands free calls short**
- **Stop in a safe place before using a hand held mobile phone**
- **Switch off the engine if you are going to use a hand held mobile phone**
- **Don't stop on the motorway hard shoulder except for emergencies**

Proper Control

You can also be prosecuted for using hands free mobile phones if you fail to have proper control of your vehicle.

- When using a hands free mobile phone your mind will not be fully on your driving (even if you think it is).
- Avoid taking hands free calls; if you do, end the call quickly.

Best practice

When you are driving you should not be expected to receive calls on a mobile phone from your proprietor or an operator.

Another person who asks you to use your mobile phone whilst driving for business may also be prosecuted.

Introduction To Declarations

On the 1 March 2001 the "Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974" was amended. This change means that the Taxi Licensing Office can request and consider all convictions and cautions no matter how old they are. This rule applies to any application you make and it doesn't matter if you have applied in the past and thought the rules were different then.

This also applies to regrant applications, renewal applications or additional licences applications

DECLARATION

WHAT should I DO?

- All application forms must be correctly and fully completed.
- Read the information provided – it may help you
- Declare all convictions even if you think they are spent, this includes driving convictions, court convictions, or cautions etc.
- If unsure write it on your form anyway. If it doesn't count, we won't use it.
- Ask questions of the licensing staff.
- If you think you have forgotten to put something on your application form (e.g. convictions/cautions) you must put it in writing and hand deliver it to the Taxi Licensing Office IMMEDIATELY.

WHAT NOT to Do

- Fail to declare new convictions, or cautions etc.
- Fail to declare old convictions because you don't think they count.
- Fail to enter anything else on your application form that may be relevant (may affect how your application is looked at).

REMEMBER you can be PROSECUTED In The MAGISTRATES' COURT For Failing To DECLARE ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION On Your APPLICATION FORMS and it may result in you being refused a licence.

TAXI RANKS

Introduction to ranks

Taxi ranks are for use by hackney carriage vehicles only. Drivers must have a hackney carriage driver's licence.

A list of ranks is set out in the Driver Information Document.

The numbers of vehicles permitted on a rank and the times of operational use may vary.

Do not park on a rank

Do not park on a rank and go to the bank or anywhere else.

It is an offence

You can be issued with a penalty charge notice.

Private hire drivers commit an offence if they pick up passengers off the rank or park their vehicle on a rank at any time.

Using the ranks

City Centre ranks such as Rover Road and Palmer Lane can become overcrowded with taxis when drivers illegally queue with their vehicles to get onto the rank. This can cause an obstruction to other vehicles and road users. Enforcement is carried out by Coventry City Council's Civil Enforcement Officers who can issue a Parking Contravention Notice (PCN) to offending drivers.

There are continually new ranks in Coventry. Some of these ranks can be under used. Evidence that ranks are never or rarely used may lead to their removal.

Remember!

When you use a rank, you cannot refuse to take a passenger to any place within Coventry.

You may refuse to carry a passenger if he or she is suffering from the effect of drink or drugs, is abusive or contaminated but in law you must have *reasonable excuse*.

STATION RANK

Provision of ranks

Coventry City Council provides ranks to assist the public in obtaining the services of a hackney carriage.

To use the Station Rank, you will need to obtain a permit from Virgin Trains by making application at the railway station. There is a cost for the permit.

The permit allows you to ply for hire on the Station Rank and the feeder rank in Station Square. You must not cause an obstruction in your vehicle by waiting in no-parking or restricted parking areas.

TRAFFIC SIGNS

Introduction to Traffic Signs

Just like any other driver the general rule is that you must obey all traffic signs and regulations.

Ignoring signs

Failing to comply with traffic signs could lead to a fixed penalty ticket or prosecution.

Local Regulations

These allow drivers of hackney carriage vehicles to use some bus lanes and some routes through 'No entry' signs within the City and for that purpose, the displayed sign 'taxi' means hackney carriage vehicles only.

Drivers of hackney carriage vehicles must confirm that they can use the bus lane or drive through a 'no entry' sign by confirming that the word 'taxi' is displayed on the sign.

Some 'no entry' signs only permit buses as an exemption. e.g.
Daventry Road turning right into London Road.
Ring Road island at Foleshill Road – slip road to Stoney Stanton Road near ambulance station.

Failing to comply with a 'no entry' sign can mean a fixed penalty fine of £60 and 3 penalty points.

Remember!

High Street is unusual in that the sign, which only applies between 10am and 4pm, says 'No entry except for buses and coaches'. This means that no vehicles other than buses or coaches can drive through those signs between those hours.

METERS

Introduction To Meters

Hackney carriage vehicles must be fitted with a meter.

Private hire vehicles are not required to have a meter.

CHARGING OF FARES

Within Coventry you cannot charge more than the meter fare.

Outside Coventry you must charge the meter fare unless you agree a fare or rate of fare with the passenger before the journey starts.

Hackney Carriage Vehicles are fitted with a meter which must be accurate and tested so that it conforms with the 'Hackney Carriages Fare' chart which must be displayed in the vehicle. Testing of the meter is normally carried out by Taxi Licensing Officers and there is no charge, however meter agents will make a charge to calibrate the meter accurately. Once tested, a meter certificate is issued which is displayed in the vehicle.

Private Hire Vehicles are not required to have a meter but if so equipped, the meter must be tested. Meters in private hire vehicles are calibrated according to the same fare chart as hackney carriage vehicles.

Receipts should be given to the passenger if requested – often the Operator will have provided receipt cards giving the Operator's name, telephone number and details of the vehicle which should be completed accurately by the driver. Under the Byelaws Hackney Carriage Drivers must comply with reasonable requests by a passenger and supplying a receipt could be argued to be such a request. A Condition of Licence for Private Hire Drivers is that they must give a receipt if asked by the passenger.

OFFENCES

It is an offence to prolong the journey in distance or time – take the shortest route unless passenger requests otherwise.

It is an offence for a hackney carriage driver to charge more than the metered fare within Coventry or for a journey ending outside Coventry without prior agreement.

SEATBELTS

Introduction to Seatbelts

The rules for wearing seatbelts are slightly different for hackney carriage and private hire drivers.

Regulations

The current legislation regarding seatbelts is shown in the leaflet, 'Seat Belts and Child Restraints'. All legislation applies to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers and their passengers with the following exceptions:

Hackney carriage drivers are exempt from wearing seat belts while working.

Private hire drivers are exempt from wearing seat belts while carrying paying passengers.

Passengers in vehicles are not exempt from wearing seat belts but it is their own responsibility if 14 years old or over.

REMEMBER!

A driver commits an offence if he drives a motor vehicle with a child under the age of 14 years not wearing a seat belt. This includes private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

POLICE

Introduction to Police

The Police have powers to check vehicles, drivers and documents at any time when the vehicle is being used on the road and in certain circumstances, on premises e.g. after an accident.

They have the power to ask you to produce your documents at a police station. They also have the same powers for taxis which means that whatever a Taxi Licensing and Enforcement Officer can do, the Police can do as well e.g. obtain records, suspend vehicles etc.

It is an offence

To wilfully obstruct an authorised officer or constable enforcing the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or the Town Police Clauses Act 1847. If any person in giving such information makes any statement, which he knows to be false, he/she will commit an offence.

PAYING A DEPOSIT

A driver may ask for a deposit to be made against the fare before hiring commences. This is acceptable provided the balance is returned if the fare does not exceed the deposit.

The most likely reasons you will need to call the police or visit the police station are as follows:

Making off without payment (Doing a Runner!)

This offence is committed where a person who, knowing that payment on the spot for a taxi journey is required, dishonestly makes off without making payment and with intent to avoid payment. You can detain them and call the police but you must not use excessive force.

Use common sense! Is it worth it?

Obtaining services by deception

This offence is committed where a person by any deception, dishonestly obtains services (taxi journey) from another.

It must be proved that there was never an intention to pay the fare – (do not confuse with Civil Debt below). You can detain them and call the police or take them to the police station – you must not use excessive force. Once again use your common sense.

At the police station, you will be expected to remain and make a written statement – that will be the case where you make any allegation, which involves the police.

Civil Debt

A journey is undertaken and the passenger(s) refuse to pay or will only pay part. They may allege, whether true or not, that you went the long way or give some other reason for not paying. They do not commit a criminal offence. Taking them to the police station is only wasting your time and theirs!

Avoid using threats, force, violence, intimidation or refusing to let the passenger(s) leave the taxi. Sort it out there and then if you can. Better to accept £5 for a £10 fare rather than end up with nothing.

Assault

An allegation of assault is a serious matter and particularly where there is evidence of injury. The police will investigate. You can minimise the risk to yourself by keeping to the rules e.g. private hire drivers pick up only booked jobs and do not pick up off the street. Make use of modern technology. Consider installing CCTV. Do not carry anything, which may be interpreted as an offensive weapon.

Remember, do nothing to your passengers, which can be interpreted as an assault. If you do end up in a violent situation that you cannot get out of, you are only permitted to use reasonable force.

Traffic Offences

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are expected to obey all of the traffic laws and even more so because as professional drivers in the public eye, there will always be a firmer line taken by the police, and members of the public will always be more willing to make a complaint.

The more common offences regularly committed by drivers are using mobile phones, horn blowing to let customers know they are outside their house, failing to stop the engine while stationary. Make sure that your vehicle is clean and tidy and that it complies fully with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations.

PARKING

Introduction to Parking

The Local Authority is responsible for control of all parking enforcement issues within the boundaries of the City of Coventry.

Before this the West Midlands Police employed traffic wardens to enforce illegal parking issues.

In fact all Local Authorities in the country will be taking charge of the enforcement of parking in their areas. This will give the police more time to deal with other issues.

RED ROUTES

There is currently a four mile Red Route in the City of Coventry between the City Centre and Hinckley Road (via Sky Blue Way, Ball Hill and Ansty Road).

Dependant on any time controls in force and other signage; stopping to park and load/unload is prohibited, also boarding and alighting from vehicles is prohibited except for licensed taxis.

What Civil Enforcement Officers do

- ❖ Reduce the number of illegally parked vehicles
- ❖ Improve the safety of our roads and pavements for everyone
- ❖ Help emergency vehicles and other large vehicles such as buses get around the City more easily
- ❖ Help all traffic travel more easily so improving journey times
- ❖ Improve our environment by reducing damage to pavements and verges

Fines

Coventry City Council Civil Enforcement Officers issue parking contravention notices. They patrol on-street parking and council car parks.

Parking Offences will be classed as a civil offence.

ANY ONE who Parks ILLEGALLY WILL BE liable for a FINE
Remember it is still an offence to park illegally

The Penalty will be £60 (although this will be reduced to £30 if you pay it within 14 days).

What Coventry City Council want Drivers to Remember

- To look at road markings
- To check the signs by the side of the road
- That waiting restrictions apply to the highway, including verges and pavements
- Drivers must not park where it could cause danger to other road users

The Council is serious about taking action against people acting illegally.

THINK B4U PARK

B4U Park make sure you look for any road markings and signs.

Below is a reminder of what they mean.

- ***Single yellow lines mean = there is a restriction on parking.***
There is usually a sign showing the times that parking is not allowed.
- ***Double yellow lines mean = no waiting (or parking) at any time.***
Signs are not required where there are double yellow lines.
 - ***Single red lines mean = no stopping during times shown on sign.***
 - ***Double red lines mean = no stopping at any time***
 - ***White dotted bays mean = parking is allowed for a limited time.***
A sign showing parking time instructions will be provided.
 - ***Red dotted bays mean = Only loading may take place at times shown up to maximum duration of 20 minutes***
 - ***Urban Clearways***
Will only have signs showing parking instructions.

THE SMOKE-FREE (EXEMPTIONS AND VEHICLES) REGULATIONS) 2007

The above law came into force on the 1st July 2007 and both Hackney Carriages (taxis) and Private Hire Vehicles are classified as smoke-free and penalties for breaking the law apply.

PENALTIES

- **Smoking in smoke free premises or vehicles**
A fixed penalty notice of £50 imposed on the person smoking or a maximum fine of £200 if prosecuted and convicted by a court (fixed penalty reduced to £30 if paid in 15 days).
- **Failure to display no-smoking signs**
A fixed penalty notice of £200 imposed on whoever manages or occupies the smoke free premises or vehicle. Or a maximum fine of £1000 if prosecuted and convicted by a court. (Fixed penalty reduced to £150 if paid in 15 days).
- **Failing to prevent smoking in a smoke free place**
A maximum fine of £2500 imposed on whoever manages or controls the smoke free premises or vehicle if prosecuted and convicted by a court.
There is no fixed penalty notice for this offence.

ADVICE

The government provides advice on its website

www.smokefreeengland.co.uk

The helpline is 0800 169 1697