



GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

PROCEDURE FOR ENSURING ROADWORTHINESS OF LICENSED VEHICLES WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION

Procedure Number:

Introduction

South Ribble Borough Council has a responsibility to ensure that all vehicles operating as hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are fit for purpose. This is particularly important for vehicles which have been adapted, converted or modified to carry passengers who use wheelchairs or who have specialised needs.

South Ribble is home to one of the largest number of vehicles which have been self-converted from vans to carry wheelchair passengers. Whilst the current roadworthiness checks ensure that a vehicle is mechanically sound, they do not extend to checking that the modifications have been carried out to the required standard.

Typically the types of vehicles adapted or modified are:

- small vans (N1 vehicles); and
- minibus type vehicles (M2 vehicles) – although these could be classified as a standard M1 vehicle.

Further details on the relevant classifications are given below:

- M1** vehicles designed and constructed for the carriage of passengers comprising no more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat
- M2** vehicles designed and constructed for the carriage of passengers comprising more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat, and having a maximum mass not exceeding 5 tonnes
- N1** Vehicles designed and constructed for the carriage of goods and having a maximum mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes

This policy will apply to **all** vehicles that have been converted, modified or adapted from the original manufacturer's specification since first registration and is intended to provide additional safeguards to ensure that the conversion, modification or adaptation has been completed to the required standard and remains in such state for the period that the vehicle is licensed by this Authority.

This policy will not apply to any vehicle including wheelchair accessible vehicles that are produced for licensing that have not been converted, modified or adapted since its initial registration.

Standards for modified minibuses/PSV's

Vehicles which are described other than M1 on the V5 registration document must enable passengers seated behind the driver to have access to at least 2 doors (side or rear opening) without having to climb over or fold down any seats. Such vehicles must also satisfy the following:

- all retro-fitted seatbelts must meet MOT installation and condition standards;
- the passenger interior floor area must be of a flat, non-slip, non-trip surface. Where wheelchair tracking is fitted, the Council recommends the fitting of blanking strips;
- partitioned rear passenger compartments must be heated and capable of variable control. Such heaters must be linked accordingly to the main vehicle heating system and be capable of variable control. All exposed piping and wiring must be secure and adequately insulated. Water leaks are unacceptable;
- no interior surface within the passenger compartment shall contain sharp edges likely to cause injury;
- all interior trim must match and be fitted to a professional standard. Evidence of obvious work or modification should not be on view;
- all modified seats must be of a matching type. On the initial inspection, seats must not be fitted with removable seat covers;
- all vehicles must be fitted with safety glass containing an approved marking to this effect. Any partition fitted with safety glazing (plastic) must be of a suitable material (e.g. shatter-proof);
- rear compartments entrance/exit areas must be adequately illuminated at floor and at higher levels. Such lighting must operate automatically when each rear passenger door is opened;
- all passenger doors must be capable of being restrained in the open position;
- each rear passenger door aperture must contain at least one grab handle to assist passengers while entering/exiting the vehicle. Each handle must be securely fixed using a substantial mounting such as machine screws that are capable of holding a reasonable force;
- each rear passenger compartment must contain at least two opening windows that can be opened from the interior for ventilation purposes; and
- the maximum height from the road surface to the passenger floor should be no more than 420mm at any point. Vehicles exceeding this figure must have some form of step incorporated into the bodywork (this may be of a retracting or folding type).

Additional requirements for wheelchair accessible vehicles:

- where the vehicle is fitted with a tail lift, a "LOLER" certificate must be obtained prior to the vehicle inspection;
- the rear compartment entrance/exit doors must be of a suitable size to allow access for a wheelchair;
- the vehicle must contain an adequate floor turning area inside the rear passenger compartment to allow a wheelchair room to manoeuvre and face rearwards;
- the vehicle must be capable of adequately securing a wheelchair to the vehicle floor using a suitable type of clamp or restraint;
- appropriate wheelchair restraint(s) must accompany the vehicle when it is presented for test;
- wheelchair ramps must be capable of being securely fixed to the vehicle during use. They must be of a type and length allowing safe and easy use by the person loading the wheelchair;
- wheelchair ramps must be safely and securely stored in a suitable area of the vehicle when they are not in use; and

- seatbelts must be fitted to restrain wheelchair occupants. A single seatbelt must not be used to restrain both the wheelchair and occupant.

Vehicle Certification

Within Europe two systems of type approval have been in existence for over 20 years. The first is based on European Regulations and Directives providing approval for whole vehicles, vehicle systems and components. The second is based on United Nations Regulations dealing with systems and components but not whole vehicles. "Type approval" is the process of ensuring that production of new vehicles, their systems and components have been designed and constructed to meet agreed standards of safety, security and environmental protection.

There are a number of vehicle certifications:

1. European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA)
2. European Small Series Type Approval for cars (ECSSTA)
3. National Small Series Type Approval (NSSTA)
4. Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA)

Requirements for initial licence application

With effect from XX/XX/XXXX vehicles of categories M1, M2 or N1 which have been converted, adapted or modified from the original manufacturer's specification, and which have not previously been licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle by South Ribble Borough Council, will be required to present appropriate certification at the time of application for a licence.

If the holder of vehicle licence has converted, adapted or modified the vehicle him/herself, that person will need to obtain a Voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval. Further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voluntary-individual-vehicle-approval-viva-1>

If the licence holder has purchased the vehicle from a company specialising in vehicle modifications they will issue the licence holder with a certificate to show conformity with either National or European Small Series Type Approval.

Once the certification has been produced, no further formal certification will be required unless the vehicle undergoes further significant adaptation or modification. If this occurs new certification covering the new adaptation or modification must be produced.

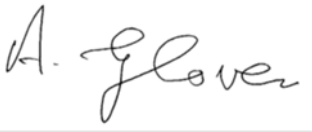
Requirements for renewal applications

This part of the policy will apply to all vehicles converted, adapted or modified after the date of first registration irrespective of the date the vehicle was first licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

With effect from XX/XX/XXXX all converted, modified or adapted vehicles must pass the extended roadworthiness test as detailed in Appendix 1.

This procedure adopted by General Licensing Committee on XX.XX/XXXX

Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A. Glover". The signature is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Interim Licensing Manager

XX.XX/XXXX