

CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFICATION FOR PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

(For vehicles designed to carry up to 8 passengers)

Specification Item 1

A private hire vehicle shall not have an exterior body colour that is any shade of yellow or similar colour that may resemble the approved colour for hackney carriages. Any queries about the suitability of a vehicle colour will be determined by the Group Leader (Taxi Licensing).

Officer Comment & Recommendation:

See comments concerning specification item 2. Recommendation to delete 'or similar colour' or re-word to clarify the need for distinction, for example:

'A private hire vehicle shall not have an exterior body colour that is yellow, a shade of yellow or of which yellow or any shade of yellow may be a primary colour, such that the vehicle may resemble the approved colour for hackney carriages licensed by the Council. Any queries or disputes about the suitability of a vehicle colour will be determined by the Group Leader (Taxi Licensing).'

Working Party Recommendation:

Agreed to amend wording as suggested.

Specification Item 2

The following vehicles will **not** now be approved for licensing as private hire vehicles:

- The Mercedes V Class people carrier, or any conversion or derivative of this vehicle.
- The Peugeot Expert/Combi/E7 or any conversion or derivative of this vehicle.
- The Volkswagen Caravelle/Transporter, or any conversion or derivative of this vehicle.
- Any other vehicle that closely resembles the above vehicles.

Trade Comments:

Why not allow these models now, as they are popular taxi vehicles (DDA compliant etc), so long as they are not yellow in colour and so cannot be confused with a hackney?

I run 2 of these vehicles already for my executive service. (not yellow)

Officer Comment & Recommendation:

Transitional period for the change to yellow hackney carriages has now well expired. Hackneys are easily identified by their yellow colour and roof signs, which indicates they are for hire. The private hire vehicles will have door signs to indicate they are for private hire. Incoming entrants to the trade who already run similar vehicles would suffer significant financial detriment if the provision remains unaltered.

Recommendation is to remove these vehicles from the list allowing them to be licensed and replace the excluded vehicles as follows:

- any derivative of an LTI vehicle
- any derivative of a Metrocab vehicle.

Working Party Recommendation:

Agreed to amend wording as suggested.

Specification Item 4

- (a) The vehicle must have at least two bodyside doors for passengers excluding any rear door.
- (b) For vehicles with three or more rows of seats, rear seat passengers (i.e. all those seated behind the front row of seats) must have direct access to two doors.

Trade Comments:

Chrysler Voyager has adequate gap to allow access.

Officer Comment & Recommendation:

In order to establish whether vehicles with 3 or more seats have direct access to 2 doors, the minimum dimension set out in specification item 16 must be met. Recommend no alteration.

Working Party Recommendation:

Agreed – condition to be unaltered.

Specification Item 8

- (a) The vehicle must have at least four road wheels and carry at least one spare wheel, a jack and brace all securely stored in a position not liable to damage passengers' luggage. The spare wheel must be the same type and size as the four road wheels.
- (b) The four road wheels shall be fitted with wheel trims of a similar pattern.

Trade Comments:

Spacesaver tyres fitted as standard to some vehicles, so no space in some vehicles for a full size spare tyre.

If manufacturer fitting them, must be safe so why are they not acceptable?

Officer Comment & Recommendation:

More vehicles are likely to be coming onto the market fitted with space savers. In many cases there is no space for a full size wheel to be stored, without compromising the amount of luggage space, and preventing the potential soiling of customers luggage. There are limitations on the use of spacesaver tyres however which, from a public safety perspective, cannot be overlooked. They usually have a speed and weight restriction applied to them, compliance with which may be at odds with passenger safety considerations. They also normally require that the vehicle is driven immediately to a place where repairs to deflated tyres can be carried out, or a new tyre purchased. Doing so could conflict with the terms of hire and would put the proprietor/driver in conflict with the hirer.

Recommend to make no change to a) and b), but to add a new c) that reads: 'Where a vehicle's manufacturer specification includes the provision of a spacesaver tyre, compliance with conditions 8(a) and (b), which requires the provision of a full size spare tyre, must not result in the luggage capacity of the storage space being reduced below 300 litres'.

Working Party Recommendation:

Agreed to amend wording as suggested –

'c) Where a vehicle's manufacturer specification includes the provision of a spacesaver tyre, compliance with conditions 8(a) and (b), which requires the provision of a full size spare tyre, must not result in the luggage capacity of the storage space being reduced below 300 litres'.

Specification Item 9

- (a) The interior floor surface of the vehicle must be fitted with non-slip covering and any steps to the vehicle must be fitted with anti-slip treads.
- (b) Where vehicles are fitted with a door step, a step light must also be provided.

Trade Comments:

Request for a garage checklist. Officer to sort.

No action by the Working Group required.

Specification Item 15

The vehicle shall not be fitted with darkened glass on any of the windows or any "darkening" film designed to obscure the interior of the vehicle from external view.

Factory fitted tinted glass will be acceptable, provided that the interior of the vehicle can still be seen clearly from outside the vehicle.

Trade Comments:

Voyager has factory fitted darkened glass as standard. 5 of his contracts request darkened glass, as they request / require privacy.

Council should accept factory fitted glass, surely?

Manufacturer doesn't make standard glass for the Voyager.

Stafford Borough Council and Erewash and other council's allow vehicles with darkened glass. It is the type and style of their type of business. May be transporting sports personalities / celebrities / government officers etc.

Officer Comment & Recommendation:

There may be human rights issues in regard to darkened glass. Permitting Operator discretion to use darkened glass would require the introduction of a condition to be written into the Operator Conditions to ensure that where a vehicle with darkened glass is to be provided for any contract, the customer is notified that the vehicle is equipped with darkened glass and is provided with the option to refuse to conclude the contract. It will also require the introduction of an additional provision to be written into the Operator Conditions that written confirmation is included in the booking records to reflect the question being asked. This gives the customer the option to choose whether or not to hire a vehicle equipped with darkened glass.

Recommend to replace the whole of the original specification in its entirety and replace with –

'Vehicles may be fitted with darkened glass at the discretion of the Operator. If providing a vehicle so equipped for a booking, the Operator shall ensure that the customer is given the option of accepting or rejecting the vehicle before the contract for hire is concluded. A record of the customers response must be recorded in the booking details. For the avoidance of doubt, darkened glass means tinted glass, privacy glass and any proprietary film added to the windows'

Working Party Recommendation:

Agreed to amend wording as suggested.

Note: an alteration to the Operator Conditions has been made to include recording requirements at the time of booking.