



Guidance notes for vehicle applications

The applicant is advised to read these notes and refer to the Council's Private Hire and Taxi licensing policy [Private hire and taxi vehicle licence | Bedford Borough Council](#) **before** completing the form.

1. This form must be completed online at: www.bedford.gov.uk/licensing/taxi-licensing

An application will be considered only when accompanied by the documents and fee(s) listed below. These requirements will be strictly enforced and failure to comply will result in your application being rejected and returned to you. The following must accompany the application form.

- (a) A full Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5) showing the correct proprietor's name and current address **or** the V5C/2 (New Keepers Supplement) provided the Certificate has been sent for updating by the DVLA within the preceding month **or** a new or duplicate Vehicle Registration Certificate (V62) as appropriate. In all cases originals of these documents should be presented, if these are not presented then you must provide a written explanation as to why not.
- (b) Appropriate licence fee.
- (c) Current Certificate of Insurance **or** Cover Note, endorsed to cover the vehicle for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward, in the proprietor's name showing all named drivers. The insurance certificate/cover note must be provided prior to collecting the licence plate.
- (d) **In all cases ONLY original documents will be accepted and all must be in the proprietor's name.**

The Licensing Service may request other information subsequently in support of the application and reserves the right to do so.

Taxi/ Private Hire Policy

2. Subject to compliance with the Taxi/Private Hire policy a vehicle licence will be issued for a maximum period of up to twelve months from the date of application/renewal (replacement vehicles are considered as newly licensed vehicles).

In relation to Taxi Vehicles:

- (a) From 1 January 2012, all Taxi vehicles must be white in colour.
- (b) From 1 January 2012, all Taxi vehicles must be wheelchair accessible (i.e. a vehicle that a person in a wheelchair can remain in their wheelchair and board, travel and alight in safety).
- (c) Replacement vehicles for Taxis must be white and be wheelchair¹ accessible in type.

In relation to Private Hire Vehicles:

- (a) A private hire vehicle must be fitted with a roof sign which shall be of a design approved by Bedford Borough Council and shall comply with the specifications set out at paragraph 17 below.
- (b) The maximum age of private hire vehicles when first licensed by the Council is as follows:

¹Guidance on wheelchair accessible requirements is available by emailing vehicle.licensing@bedford.gov.uk

- Saloon vehicles must be less than seven (7) years old from date of first registration
 - MPVs and wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) must be less than 10 years old from date of first registration
- (c) Taxis and private hire vehicles may be licensed until such time that the vehicle cannot comply with the Council's testing requirements.
 - (d) All vehicles over 3 years old will be required to present the vehicle for an MOT test and submit the pass certificate 6 months into the Licence period.
 - (e) Vehicles that are less than 3 years old will be exempt from having a current MOT pass certificate but will be required to obtain a certificate of compliance.
 - (f) All private hire vehicles must not be white in colour.
 - (g) Purpose built London style cabs will not normally be licensed as private hire vehicles.
 - (h) All other exemption requests must be submitted and approved before the vehicle can be considered for testing.
3. The Council has the power to refuse applications for Taxi licences for the purpose of limiting the number of such licensed vehicles. At the time of issuing this guidance the Council was satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for such vehicles.
 4. The safety, comfort, mechanical condition and suitability of the vehicle will be tested by the Council. These tests take place at the Vehicle Repair Depot, which is in Brunel Road, Bedford.
 5. You are required to source your own roof sign and ensure that it complies with the Council requirements attached to your Taxi / Private Hire Vehicle Licence.
 6. The required roof signs need to be correctly fitted onto the car and safely wired into the sidelight circuit by an authorised fitter. If the vehicle's passenger capacity is unknown, contact us for guidance licensing@bedford.gov.uk. If a vehicle owner RENEWING the licence for the vehicle presents it for testing without the required roof sign, or any of the requirements set out below, it will normally be failed.
 7. **Compliance test bookings will be made by the Licensing Service. No bookings will be accepted directly by the testing Depot.**
 8. Vehicles can be booked in for a compliance test up to 4 weeks in advance of the current licence expiry date. When the current compliance certificate is shown, the anniversary date will be honoured. The earliest that a vehicle can be booked into the depot is 72 hours from submitting the application form, subject to availability.
 9. Cancellation of appointments is subject to a fee, please refer to the fee schedule on the website.
 10. It is an offence under Section 57 (3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to make a false statement or omit to give any particulars requested by the Council in connection with this application.
 11. (a) Applicants must ensure that before a vehicle is presented for test, the bodywork and interior are clean and the engine and other mechanical parts are free from excessive oil, grease and dirt so as to enable a proper inspection to be made.
(b) Any vehicle which does not satisfy this requirement will not be tested at that time and a further appointment (for which an additional fee will be payable) will have to be made.
 12. Any owner who changes his place of abode must give notice in writing to the Licensing Service, Borough Hall, Bedford within 48 hours.
 13. Licence fees - please refer to the website [Online payment | Bedford Borough Council](#) for the latest fee schedule.

14. If you wish to transfer your private hire vehicle / taxi to another person not named on the licence, you must notify the Council in writing, using the transfer application form and paying the appropriate fee. We will require the new proprietor to provide evidence of adequate insurance for the vehicle before the new licence is issued.
15. If an applicant for a private hire vehicle licence intends to obtain bookings from members of the public directly himself, he should apply to the Council for a Private Hire Operators licence. Further to this, you should note that only licensed hackney carriage drivers may drive hackney carriages and only licensed private hire drivers may drive private hire vehicles.
16. Should a vehicle fail a test, but then pass a re-test, the Chief Officer with delegated responsibility for licensing matters may, at their discretion, licence the vehicle for a shorter period than would normally be the case.
17. The items to be inspected by the staff at the testing depot are set out at paragraph 18 below. Applicants should note the following requirements concerning signs:

(a) **Taxi Vehicles**

The proprietor(s) of the licensed hackney carriage shall supply and fit on the vehicle a roof sign and an interior windscreen sign bearing the words "For Hire", such latter sign to be illuminated at all times when the vehicle is plying for hire. Unless the vehicle is a purpose built London Style Cab, or otherwise has an integrated roof sign to the satisfaction of the Council's (Delegated Officer), the roof sign must be of 24" width bearing the words "Borough of Bedford – TAXI" in black lettering on a yellow background.

All taxis are provided with plastic signs, which state "BEDFORD TAXI" which are to be affixed and maintained on the near and offside front or rear doors of the vehicle.²

(b) **Private Hire Vehicles**

A private hire vehicle must be fitted with a **roof sign** which shall be of a design approved in writing by Bedford Borough Council and shall comply with the following specifications:

The dimension of the roof sign shall be a minimum of 600mm in length and a maximum of 620mm in length. The depth of the sign shall be a minimum of 140mm and a maximum of 160mm. The minimum height of the sign shall be 160mm and the maximum height 180mm.

The roof sign shall comprise a green background to the front, top and sides with black lettering only. The rear of the sign shall be black in colour showing red lettering only.

The **front elevation** of the sign shall include in descending order the operator's trading name and telephone number and the words "ADVANCE BOOKINGS ONLY". The operator's trading name and telephone number must be in letters and numbers respectively, the height and width of each letter or number must not exceed 40mm; followed by the wording "ADVANCE BOOKINGS ONLY" which must be in letters of not less than 25mm in height and width.

The word "PLATE" and Licence number must be displayed on the left and right side elevations of the roof sign. The word "PLATE" must be in letters not less than 17mm in height and the Licence number must be in letters not less than 28mm in height and width.

The **rear elevation** of the roof sign shall include the following in descending order: The words "private hire vehicle" in letters not less than 28mm in height and width followed by the words "LICENSED BY BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL TO CARRY X PASSENGERS". The letters

² Taxi door signs are available from the Borough Council at nil cost – the requirement for these signs does not prevent other signs being displayed with prior agreement of Bedford Borough Council.

must be a minimum of 17mm both in height and width. "X" must be substituted by the specified number of persons to be carried as stated in the Private Hire Vehicle Licence.

The word "PLATE" must be displayed on the right side of the roof sign when viewed from the rear of the vehicle and must be in lettering of not less than 20mm in height and width. The Licence number must be in numbers not less than 30mm in height and width.

The registration number displayed on the vehicle must be displayed at the rear of the roof sign and be preceded by "REG NO." and must be in letters and numbers not less than 20mm nor greater than 25mm in height and width.

18. Applicants should also note that the following requirements, which apply to both Private Hire and Taxi vehicles, for all newly licensed vehicles and existing vehicles upon renewal:

- (a) All licensed vehicles should ensure that the two-way radio is firmly secured in the vehicle. The radio must be securely fixed (i.e. with bolts) to prevent it interfering with driving controls.
- (b) All licensed vehicles should ensure that the interior windscreen sticker issued by the Council is not displayed in the windscreen wiper swept area.
- (c) All licensed vehicles are required to carry, in an easily accessible position in the vehicle a 1.75/2.00 litre AFFF foam type or a 1.36kg dry powder type fire extinguisher conforming to British Standard BS5423 or a 1kg ABC Powder Extinguisher (Multi-Purpose) with a minimum fire rating of 8A/55B and conforming to British Standard BS EN3. The extinguisher must either be visible or a sign placed in the vehicle indicating where the extinguisher is carried.
- (d) All licensed vehicles are required to carry, in an easily accessible position in the vehicle a first aid kit with the following minimum contents:
 - (i) 1 first aid guidance card
 - (ii) 6 individually wrapped sterile dressings
 - (iii) 1 large sterile unmedicated dressing
 - (iv) 2 triangular bandages
 - (v) 2 safety pins
 - (vi) individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes
- (e) All forward facing seats in a licensed vehicle are required to be fitted with a seat belt complying with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations current at the time of testing.

Upon the test being completed, the applicant will be given a pass or fail certificate. In the event that the vehicle passes the test, the Licensing Officer will prepare the Licence plate, which will normally be available for collection within 72 hours.

The Council's test for licensed vehicles is certified by the former Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

The Council reserves the right to require the return of Licence Plates at any time and those renewing a vehicle licence will be required to present their 'old' plates prior to or at the same time as they collect their 'new' plates.

19. Before booking a vehicle for a test, the vehicle specifications may be presented to the Licensing Service who will indicate the suitability of the vehicle for licensing purposes and the number of passengers that will be permitted. In the event that a proprietor wishes to licence a vehicle contrary to the Council's policies, they should consult the Licensing Service. Such applications are referred to the General Licensing Sub-Committee to determine prior to any test being arranged.

20. In assessing the number of passengers a vehicle will be licensed for, the testing officer will only consider passenger seats that have immediate access to a door that can be opened from the inside. Only adult specifications will be borne in mind.

21. The Motor Industry Bureau maintains an internet based Motor Insurance Database whereby the insurance details provided by insurance companies and fleet operators are able to be checked. Bedford

Borough Council is prepared to act on your behalf to check whether a vehicle is recorded on the Motor Insurance Database. If you authorise this, the Authority may perform this check at such frequency as it determines. It will advise you if your details are not on the database. It will not normally advise you if your details are on the database.

22. Data Protection Privacy Advice/ Freedom of Information Act 2000

Data Protection

Through the relevant application/notice forms, accompanying documentation and payment facilities associated with this licensing function the Council (the data controller) collects personal data. Personal data may also be collected in respect of further related requests for information from the applicant/person submitting the notice. This is necessary for the performance of legal obligations on it in respect of the relevant licensing function or otherwise necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority. These also form the basis for the further processing of the personal data by the Council in connection with the application/notice, any determination of the same and any subsequent authorisation/appeal and issues that arise during the period of the authorisation/appeal. Beyond that, the Council will retain the records for 5 years and then destroy them securely. The Council will maintain and retain public registers and these are not destroyed. The Council may from time to time extract information itself from those public registers. The Council will share with and receive information from the following:

- Other Council Services (Where appropriate)
- Applicants Insurance Company
- DVLA

In respect of data subjects who are applicants/notice givers and those who hold authorisations. It holds the personal data in a way designed to secure it from unauthorised use, loss or destruction. These measures include recruitment and training of staff, procurement of services and physical/cyber security. The Council's privacy statement for this function is available at www.bedford.gov.uk or upon request from the Council using the address and telephone contact details elsewhere on this form. The Council will update its privacy statement from time to time and you are urged to read that statement. You have information rights that are explained at <https://tinyurl.com/y7uccndm>. You can exercise your information rights by contacting the Council's Data Protection Officer at dpo@bedford.gov.uk or writing to Information Governance, Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP (Telephone (01234) 267422). If you believe that the Council has failed to comply with its data protection obligations you may contact the ICO at 0303 123 1113 or at www.ico.org.uk. Further contact details are available upon request. The full Privacy Statement for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicle applications can be viewed here: www.bedford.gov.uk/gdprprivacy

Freedom of Information

Information held by the Council may need to be disclosed in response to a request for it within the terms of the Freedom of the Information Act 2005. This information excludes that which is in any other way already in the public domain.

23. Right of Appeal

Any applicant refused a Vehicle Licence has a right of appeal to a Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the decision being notified to you.

Whilst you may wish to make reasonable enquiries of the Licensing Authority's staff (and they will be endeavour to be helpful in clarifying areas of doubt), you should take care not to act unreasonably towards them. Aggressive, abusive and intimidating behaviour including persistent shouting will not be tolerated. Such unreasonable behaviour could be grounds to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew / grant a Licence.

PRIVATE HIRE / TAXI ITEMS TO BE INSPECTED

1. **LIGHTS**

Head	Reflectors
Front	Dip
Stop	Rear
Indicators	Interior

2. **STEERING & SUSPENSION**

Track rod	Suspension front
Tie rods	Suspension rear
Steering box	Top suspension
Wheel bearings	Plates
Idlers	Shock absorbers
Joints	
Ball Joints	

3. **BRAKES**

Foot brake condition
Foot brake efficiency
Hand brake condition
Hand brake efficiency

4. **TYRES** (including spares)

Type
Condition

7. **METER TEST** (Taxis only)

Fares for distance – check display of charges
(Meter and Fares List)

8. **INTERIOR**

Door handles, locks, window winders:

Working and all parts intact

Edges of doors, sills, seats, ash trays:

Clean, no sharp edges, free from rust

Upholstery: *clean, free from stains, cuts, rips and abrasive edges securely fixed*

Door panels and dash board:

As upholstery

Carpets and mats: *clean, intact, not excessively worn*

Paintwork: *clean, free from excessive scratches*

Windscreen: *free from insignia (*)*

Boot: *to be clean and tidy*

Estate cars: *to be fitted with a guard-rail of a type approved by the Council to separate the rear loading area from passengers.*

9. **EXTERIOR BODYWORK**

Clean polished finish, free from rust, dents and unsightly scratches

Paintwork to be of a uniform colour.

5. **CHASSIS** (including)

Door sills
Exhaust

Wings – front

Wings – rear

10. **SIGNS**

See note 18 for signage requirements for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles

Note: All repair work must be carried out to a professional finish.

6. **GENERAL ITEMS**

Windscreen wipers
Windscreen washers
Horn
Speedometer

Licence plates
Fire extinguisher
Seat belts
First Aid Kit

} See note 19

(*) Vehicles will be refused if unapproved glass is fitted i.e. Tinted Glass.

Original vehicle specification manufacturer tinted windows are permitted. For non – original manufacturer glass the rear windscreen of any vehicle shall not have been treated so that less than 68% of light is transmitted through it, nor the rear passenger compartment side windows of any vehicle so that less than 68% of light is transmitted through them, unless the following criteria can be met:

- (i) the vehicle is licensed as private hire vehicle only, and is used exclusively for Chauffeur work***
- (ii) the vehicle is a stretched limousine vehicle,***
- (iii) the vehicle will not be engaged at any time for the carriage of school children,***
- (iv) an exemption has been applied for in writing and granted prior to submission of the vehicle for a compliance test. A tolerance of 5% is allowed in respect of the requirement for 68% light transmission. A tint film is not acceptable.***