



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# Guidance – Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Inspections

Inspection and failure criteria

Approved by Licensing Committee on 16 May 2018

Version	Owner	Date
1.1	Head of Commercial Services	21/03/2018
1.2	Corporate Transport Manager & Solicitor (Licensing)	9/05/2018



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## **Introduction**

North Ayrshire Council is the "Licensing Authority" for North Ayrshire under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and is responsible for licensing:

- vehicles to be used as "Taxis" and "Private Hire Cars"
- their drivers.

The Council is legally prohibited from granting a Licence for a vehicle if it is not satisfied that the vehicle is both suitable and safe for use under the Licence.

To comply with licensing conditions, operators are required to present their vehicles to North Ayrshire Council's Transport Hub for inspection on an annual or six-monthly basis.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the Taxi and Private Hire vehicle operators within North Ayrshire and to outline the standards expected for the vehicle inspection. These are carried out by North Ayrshire Council's Transport Hub at the West Byrehill Workshop, Kilwinning.

## **Vehicle inspections for "Taxis" and "Private Hire Cars"**

Inspections are required in addition to the M.O.T test and must take place annually, unless the vehicle is older than 5 years old, where inspections will be conducted every 6 months.

Vehicles can be booked for annual or six-monthly inspections by contacting the Council's Licensing Office on 01294 324305. When booking, the operator will need to produce

1. the DVLA Registration Document ("V5")
2. The Insurance cover-note or Policy
3. If the vehicle has one, the M.O.T. Certificate (under Road Traffic Act, Section 47, a "Taxi" needs an annual test after the first year since its First Registration, which is different from the rule for a "Private Hire Car" where the M.O.T. requirement arises after the third year).

The Garage Inspection test is required to ensure that licensed vehicles are being maintained to a high standard and fit for use as "Taxi" or "Private Hire Car" vehicles. It is to a higher standard than the M.O.T. test.

The test should not be used to identify faults or as a means to bring the vehicle up to the required standard. Vehicle operators should not presume that, if the vehicle has or can pass a standard M.O.T. test, that it will pass the Council test, or that if vehicle has an M.O.T. Certificate but fails the Council test, the Council test has been conducted wrongly.

The vehicle condition required to pass the Taxi and Private Hire Car vehicle inspection is higher than that of a M.O.T test. The list of standards required is set out below (see "Inspection Standards"), but the rule of thumb is that any area within a M.O.T. inspection where a "pass with minor advisory" is awarded will result in a failure. "Pass with Minor Advisory" will alone cause a "fail" of the Taxi/PHC Section 10(2) inspection. The Licensing Committee on 16 May 2018 remitted to the Solicitor (Licensing) and Corporate Transport Manager to amend further the detailed wording of the Inspection Standards in light of changes to the MOT Standards.

The inspection will extend beyond assessing the mechanical condition, and will also cover bodywork condition, cleanliness and suitability to operate as a "Taxi" or "Private Hire Car".

All vehicles will be road-tested to ensure that systems and component parts function properly, and that the vehicle does not display symptoms indicating serious or otherwise undetected faults, for example steering and suspension. Taxis will undergo a combined meter and road-test over a pre-determined route from the Testing Station to the meter markers and return.

Testers responsible for inspecting vehicles are experienced professionals and are trained as DVSA Nominated Testers. They are required to use their judgement when conducting an inspection to determine the suitability and safety of vehicles inspected.

### **The Inspection Process**

The Council's garage has facilities to enable the operator to view the inspection while it is in progress. Operators are encouraged to use these facilities so that, if there is a dispute about a defect, the tester can show it to the operator. Testers will explain defects and advise on the other areas of concern, but any disputes as to the test outcomes and failures should be directed to the Workshop Team Manger in the first instance.

### **Disputes**

If a dispute is not raised at the time, it is possible that the tester will not be available. If a re-test is booked, the operator would have to pay a further booking fee even if the original test outcome is disputed. A dispute will only be considered if the vehicle remains at the Council's Transport Hub pending resolution of the dispute. If a vehicle is removed from there and later re-inspected, the Council does not know that the vehicle has not been repaired or altered in the interval. DVSA has no involvement in setting these higher standards, so any challenge to a decision under them will be dealt with by the Authority, not DVSA.

### **After the inspection**

If the vehicle inspection results in a failure, it is the responsibility of the licence-holder to arrange any remedial work prior to being presented for a re-test.

In addition to the annual / six-monthly inspections, spot-checks on vehicle condition may be conducted periodically by an authorised officer of the licensing authority, or by Police, any of whom can remove licence plates and instruct remedial work to be carried out.

In such a circumstance, the vehicle must be represented to Transport Hub at West Byrehill, Kilwinning before approval and return of licence plate will be granted.

### **Inspection Standards**

Taxis and Private Hire Cars, will be inspected using both:

- the current M.O.T. Inspection Manual – Private Passenger and Light Commercial Vehicle Testing (Class 4) and
- the "Additional Inspection Criteria" set out below.



## Additional Inspection Criteria

### Lights and Electrical system

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check operation of reversing lights	Lights not working
Check operation of spot lights (if fitted)	Insecure, cracked lens Insufficient illumination, water penetration or wrong bulb fitted
Check operation of courtesy lights	Must operate automatically on opening and closing any passenger door (if fitted)
Check battery and terminals	Insecure, leaking Corroded terminals
Check engine wiring wear	Wiring bared or not secure Signs of chafing

### Drivers Compartment and Controls

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check driver compartment is clean and in good condition	Dirty/Dusty Contains any rubbish Contains any items likely to interfere with the proper control of the vehicle
Check condition and security of driver's seat & passenger seats	Seat insecure or structurally weakened Padding or covering is seriously deteriorated Seat belts must be operational and in good condition (not structurally weakened)
Check seat adjustment mechanism	Insecure, ineffective
Check steering wheel and drivers controls	Controls inoperative, ineffective, insecure Damage to steering wheel Movement between shaft and steering wheel Excessive radial movement at top of steering wheel Excessive steering shaft end float
Check Horn	Sound emitted not loud enough to be heard by another road user or pedestrian
Check Speedometer operation	Not working Clearly registering incorrectly

Check the operation of heater and demist fan	Heater doesn't emit heat Ventilation not supplying adequate airflow to windscreen or car interior Insecure vents
Operation of fuel and temperature gauges	Both gauges must work

## Steering, Drive and Suspension

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Steering assembly for damage	Any sign of damage is unacceptable
Steering assembly for wear and leaks	Steering must be positive and free from wear and leaks
Clutch slip / drag / judder (or kick down and change speed operation on automatic)	Must perform to manufacturers guidelines
Propshaft / driveshafts and gaiters for security. Signs of wear and leaks	Excessive play or leak unacceptable, Gaiters insecure or deteriorated to excess
Gearbox operation. All gears must work / engage	All gears must be easily selected. Gear stick must be secure
Transmission / axle noise	Excessive noise unacceptable

## Wheels, Tyres and Brakes

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check tyre type/size	Incorrect type or size (as per manufacturer's standard specification)
Check tyre condition	Tread depth is less than 2.00 mm. across 75% of the centre width of the tyre For the other 25% of the width, the tread must be visible (Unless it is a tyre defined as a raised tread shoulder).
Check wheels	Wheels different from manufacturer's specification Any obvious damage to wheel or rim
Condition of spare wheel	Damaged and unsatisfactory for road use
Space Saver tyres	Slim / space saver type tyre must be to manufactures specification
Tyre inflation devices	Spare tyre may be replaced by an approved specified inflation system



Wheel trims	All wheel trims must match. Fail if damaged or missing
Condition of tools (if fitted)	Must carry manufacturers wheel brace (or acceptable alternative) and jack or B.S alternative. (Jack and wheel brace not required if the vehicle is not fitted with a spare wheel)

### Fuel and Exhaust system

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check fuel tanks	Not original manufacturers equipment Leaking or insecure Tank condition, free of excessive corrosion
Check (all visible) fuel system components	Overflowing, Leaking Fuel accumulating in/on any fitting or receptacle
Check exhaust system	Insecure, leaking / "blowing", excessive corrosion Not standard specification
Smoke emission	Failure to meet specified standards per vehicle type

### Vehicle Cleanliness/Appearance/Structure

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check bodywork security/condition	Bodywork damage Bodywork extensively corroded
Check paint finish	Different colours/shades Not to a uniform finish Surface deficiencies i.e. paint runs, peeling Scratched to the metal Broken paint surface
Check external cleanliness	Dirty/Dusty exterior
Check vehicle underside	Not free from road dirt (Weather conditions will be taken under consideration) Excess grease or oil
Check engine compartment	Dirty, Greasy, Oily Insecure components Any leaks
Check passenger compartment is clean and in good condition	Dirty/Dusty Contains any rubbish

Check interior upholstery for security, cleanliness and condition	Upholstery, trim or headlining is dirty, missing, insecure, torn or in such a condition as to soil clothing or adversely affect passenger comfort
Ramps and steps for disabled access	Incorrectly/unsafely stowed, insecure, not in good condition, unstable
Check roof mounted "Taxi" sign (doesn't apply to P-H vehicles)	Absent Insecure Fails to illuminate Lettering missing / illegible
Check front and rear "Taxi" plate (Rear only for P-H vehicles)	Not displayed Different Not secure Taxi / P.H. stickers incorrectly positioned

### Doors, windows and visibility

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check operation of door opening mechanisms	Inoperative, defective Door seals damaged/ missing
Condition of front and rear wiper blades	Must effectively clear screen. Must operate on all settings
Check windows (including view to front and rear)	Not made of safety glass Crack, scratch or surface damage, which impairs the drivers vision to the front and rear
Window-Tinting (all windows, including the rear and side windows)	any degree of tinting is a reason for failure,  <b><u>except</u></b> where pre-installed by the vehicle's manufacturer
Window obstruction	All windows (including side windows) must be completely unobstructed  <b><u>except</u></b> that each window can have one or more notices which <b><u>both</u></b> :  - are 'permitted signs' (see below) <b><u>and</u></b>  - cover in total no more than 10% of the area of the window.

	<p>A 'permitted sign' is one which shows any one or more of these things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that the vehicle is a Taxi/PHC</li> <li>- the name, telephone number, website or email of the Taxi/PHC business</li> <li>- that the vehicle is available for use by disabled passengers,</li> <li>- the name of the manufacturer or seller of the vehicle,</li> </ul> <p>or which is legally required.</p> <p>'Obstruction' includes a see-through transfer.</p>
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### Meter Testing

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check Taximeter (where fitted), lights, seal and calibration	Incorrect specification Missing or broken seal Failure to illuminate Fails road test Defective

### Approved and Non-Approved additional extras

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Check fire extinguishers	Absent Not easily accessible Not properly secured Discharged or lack of pressure charge Damaged Last maintenance check in excess of 12 months Not conforming to BS 5432
Estate type vehicles only	Dog guard type device not fitted

### Road Test

Inspection	Reason for Failure
Steering	Vehicle veers, pulls or steers to left or right when travelling on the straight

Suspension	The vehicle rolls uncontrollably when driven Shock absorbers don't function properly Noise is experienced indicating a serious or otherwise undetected system defect
Brakes	The vehicle veers or pulls to the left or right whilst stopping Vibration or noise is experienced indicating serious or otherwise undetected system fault
Road Wheels	Vehicle judders or vibration or noises experienced indicating serious or otherwise undetected defects

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Taxi / Private Hire Car Inspection

Form

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Registration No	
Vehicle Make/Model	
Mileage	
Chassis No.	
Plate No.	
Meter Make	
Engine Capacity (CC or BHP)	

Condition Security Malfunction Lighting and Ancillary Equipment	Pass	Fail	Comments
1. Front & Rear Lamps (including Fog)			
2. Head Lamps & Head Lamp Aim			
3. Panel Lights, Warning Lights, Switches, Interior Lights			
4. Stop Lights/ Reverse Lights			
5. Hazard Warning and Direction Indicators			
6. Rear Reflectors			
7. Battery Wiring Engine Compartment Components			
8. Passenger Door Safety Lights			
9. Taxi Sign (for hire) Light, Wiring			
10. Meter Lights Seals Calibration			
11. Windscreen (driver's view of road)			
12. Windscreen (cracks/scratches)			
13. Windscreen wipers and washers (F/R)			
14. Horn			
15. Speedometer Operation			
<b>Condition Security Malfunction Steering and Suspension</b>			
16. Steering Wheel			
17. Steering Mechanism System Turning Circle			
18. Power Steering Operation and Leaks			
19. Transmission Shafts			
20. Wheel Bearings			
21. Front Suspension			
22. Rear Suspension			

23. Shock Absorbers (F/R)			
24. Wheel Alignment			
<b>Condition Security Malfunction Brakes</b>			
25. Controls Foot Pedal/Hand Brake			
26. Service Brake System			
27. Parking Brake System			
28. Hand Brake Pan/ Ratchet			
29. Brake Pipes			
<b>Condition Security Malfunction Fuel System</b>			
30. All Visible Fuel System Components			
<b>Condition Security Tyres and Road Wheels and Trims</b>			
31. Tyre Type			
32. Tyre Size			
33. Tyre Condition / TPMS system			
34. Road Wheels and Nut Wheels Trim			
<b>Condition Security Malfunction General</b>			
35. Vehicle Structure (Chassis Cross Engine Mountings Gear Box)			
36. Exhaust System			
37. Oil Leaks Eng. – G/Box R/Axle			
38. Vehicle Interior Seats/Floor Mats etc.			
39. Wheelchair Equipment/Ramps/Steps			
40. Seat Belts and Fixings			
41. Door Hinges, Weather-Strips, Windows, Locks, CH, Straps, Pillars			
42. Interior and External Mirrors			
43. Registration Plates and Bumpers			
44. Vehicle Paintwork Body Panels			
45. Smoke Emission Petrol/ Diesel			
46. Clutch Pedal Clutch Operation			
47. Fire Extinguisher BS. No.			Licensed to Carry
48. Non-Approved Additional Extras			
49. Is Vehicle Displaying Scale of Charges Inside			
50. Vehicle Displaying Door Lock Safety Signs			Passengers
51. Reg. No. of Taxi Displayed Inside Passenger Compartment			
INSPECTOR NAME		DATE	PASS/ FAIL
INSPECTOR SIGNATURE			

**Yellow – Transport Services Copy; White – Customer; Copy Pink – Transport Garage Copy**