

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does the licence cost?

A list of fees can be found on the Council's website www.westlothianonline.gov.uk.

How long will my application take to process?

The Council has up to six months to determine an application. Each application has to be sent to advisors for comments. The majority of applications are able to be processed within 60 days. However there may be delays if a vehicle test, medical examination or a topographical test is required or if an adverse report is received from advisors. The Licensing Team will contact you when your licence has been granted or if there is any further information required.

How long do I have to have held my DVLA licence before I can apply to be a taxi or private hire car driver?

You must have held a licence issued by DVLA for a continuous period of twelve months before you can apply.

What convictions do I need to declare?

Taxi and private hire car drivers - all crimes and offences including any convictions and penalties, whether for driving offences or otherwise, even where these are considered spent in terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 must be declared.

Taxi and private hire car licences (vehicles) – you are required to declare convictions for any offences (including driving offences), which are not spent in terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. In addition you must declare along with all crimes, offences, fixed penalties, warnings, cautions etc which have been committed or received within the last 5 years.

Will my application be sent to the police?

All applications for the grant or renewal of a licence will be sent to Lothian and Borders Police for background checks.

Will I need a medical to be a taxi or private hire car driver?

You will require to be medically examined if you answer yes to any of the medical questions asked in the application or if you have reached the age of 45 or over when you apply.

What is the difference between a taxi and a private hire car?

A taxi can be hailed in a public place or be engaged for hire from a taxi rank, whereas a private hire car must be pre-booked.

What is the difference between a taxi driver's licence and a private hire car drivers licence?

A taxi driver's licence entitles the holder to drive a taxi or private hire car whereas a private hire car driver's licence can only drive a private hire car. Applicants for taxi driver's licences must pass a topographical test to demonstrate their knowledge of the local area.

Do I have to have a meter fitted in my vehicle once it is licensed?

All taxis must have a meter fitted and this must be used on all journeys. Private hire cars do not require to have a meter fitted but if they do the meter must be used on all journeys within West Lothian. If no meter is fitted private hire car drivers must agree a fare with their passenger(s) before the hire commences.

Will there be any conditions attached to my licence if granted?

Yes, there are a number of detailed conditions which will be attached to your licence. You may obtain a copy of these from the licensing team to start familiarising yourself with these. Copies of the conditions are also available to download from the website. Failure to comply with these conditions may result in you being referred to the Licensing Committee who have power to suspend your licence.

What type of vehicles are suitable for use as a taxi or private hire car?

The types of vehicles suitable to be used as taxis and private hire cars were reviewed in 2009. You can find information regarding these on the council's website westlothian.gov.uk under "law and licensing" or in the notes attached to the vehicle application form.