



Coronavirus – Update 9

This Notice provides updated information for taxi and private hire licensees on vehicle licensing, the 2nd MOT requirement, vehicle age limits, partitions in private hire vehicles (PHVs), face covering compliance activity and the Department of Health and Social Care Asymptomatic Testing Trial.

This Notice should be read in conjunction with [TPH Notice 10/20](#), [TPH Notice 09/20 \(Consolidation\)](#) and [TPH Notice 08/20](#) – which all contain important information, including: Government guidance on the coronavirus, hygiene, social distancing and face coverings.

Vehicle licensing

Further to [TPH Notice 10/20](#), the phased reopening of our vehicle licensing inspection centres continues. Four vehicle inspection centres have already reopened:

- Staples Corner (re-opened on 17 April)
- Canning Town (reopened on 3 June)
- Coulsdon (reopened on 3 June)
- Heston (reopened on 4 July)

The remaining two vehicle licensing inspection centres (Crayford and Enfield) are ready to re-open as and when demand increases. Details will be provided in future TPH Notices.

A number of safety measures have been implemented at the vehicle licensing inspection centres, in line with Public Health England guidance, including: social

distancing markers, hand sanitiser stations, providing PPE to staff and minimising contact between staff and those presenting vehicles for inspection.

Customers presenting a vehicle for inspection should wear a face covering – if you do not, we will not inspect the vehicle. Please familiarise yourself with the other requirements detailed in your vehicle booking confirmation letter.

The most efficient way to make a booking remains the [online booking portal](#) – which allows you to book or reschedule an appointment 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

MOTs

It remains a condition of vehicle licensing that a taxi or a private hire vehicle undertakes **two** MOT inspections per year.

Vehicles that are presented for licensing at reopened vehicle licensing inspection centres will be required to meet all applicable licensing requirements. This includes the production of a valid MOT certificate which took place no more than 14 days prior to the inspection.

The Government recently confirmed that mandatory MOT testing is to be reintroduced from 1 August 2020: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mandatory-mot-testing-to-be-reintroduced-from-1-august>. In line with this, licensed vehicles will be required to have a valid MOT certificate from that date in accordance with licensing conditions.

Transport for London (TfL) will take no action for breaches of the applicable licensing conditions where an MOT was due between 23 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 (inclusive) owing to the exceptional circumstances and the lockdown restrictions introduced by Government.

Vehicle age limits

Taxis and PHVs are subject to maximum age limits. A vehicle's age is determined from the DVLA First Registration date.

In the case of taxis, this is currently 15 years: <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/emissions-standards-for-taxis#on-this-page-3>

In the case of PHVs, this is 10 years: <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/licensing/private-hire-vehicle-licence>

At the height of the coronavirus pandemic and during the Government lockdown, it became necessary to temporarily close the majority of our vehicle licensing inspection centres. During that period, vehicles that had licences that were due to expire between 23 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 (inclusive) remained licensed for a period of six months (pending the full resumption of vehicle inspections and a decision by TfL on the grant of a new licence). The six-month period was added to the date the licence was due to expire.

We recognise that there are a number of taxi and private hire vehicles that have now gone beyond the maximum permissible age to be licensed. In normal circumstances, some of these vehicle licensees may have sought to surrender their licence and obtain one final 12-month licence, to ensure the vehicle could remain licensed until it reached its maximum age limit.

In recognition of these unprecedented circumstances, we have put temporary and special arrangements in place for a limited period. Any taxi vehicle that is now 14+ years old or private hire vehicle that is 9+ years old, that would have sought to surrender and then renew its licence for a final time between 23 March and 30 June 2020, can surrender and obtain a final 12-month licence.

These arrangements are in place for a limited period and the affected vehicles must surrender and then obtain a final licence by 31 August 2020.

As usual, vehicles presented at a vehicle licensing inspection centre will have to meet **all other** licensing requirements and must pay for an annual taxi or PHV

licence. Any vehicle presented for inspection that does not meet the requirements will not be licensed. Therefore, it is important that vehicles are booked in for an inspection as early as possible to allow enough time to rectify any issues that are identified and to book in for a re-test where necessary.

Partition screens in PHVs

As set out in [TPH Notice 08/20](#) it is essential that any aftermarket equipment (e.g. temporary screen or partition) fitted in a licensed private hire vehicle meets appropriate safety standards and that only approved adaptations are made to vehicles. That Notice also sets out an established process for seeking approval for temporary partitions or screens in PHVs, via industry leading automotive testing facilities at Millbrook and HORIBA MIRA.

We have also been working with vehicle manufacturers that are developing specific partitions for their vehicle models and have recently published details of a temporary partition designed by Toyota that meets the criteria. The TfL website (www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-policy) provides details of the Toyota vehicle models, including the RAV4 and Prius+, that can be fitted with the approved partition and how licensees can book in with their [local Toyota dealership](#) to have a temporary partition fitted.

Further information on temporary partition screens can be found on our website: www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-policy.

Face covering compliance activity

[TPH Notice 10/20](#) states that taxi and private hire drivers are expected to wear face coverings at all times when in their taxi or private hire vehicle. This remains the case, unless they have a [valid exemption](#).

We issued this instruction, in [TPH Notice 10/20](#) and [TPH Notice 08/20](#), as a safety measure to protect both licensees and the passengers that are carried in licensed vehicles. It is aligned with the guidance published in the Government's ["Coronavirus](#)

[\(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers](#)”, which contains a specific section on taxi and private hire passengers.

The Government has subsequently provided further information on the wearing of face coverings in public spaces. From 24 July 2020, it will be mandatory for face coverings to be worn in shops and supermarkets.

The Government also strongly encourages individuals to wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing may be difficult and where individuals come into contact with people they do not normally meet. More information can be found [here](#).

The instruction that taxi and private hire drivers are expected to wear face coverings at all times when in their taxi or private hire vehicle has been communicated in [TPH Notice 10/20](#) and [TPH Notice 08/20](#) and via Twitter, in weekly emails that are sent to more than 100,000 licensees and via driver representative groups and unions.

Compliance Officers have been engaging on-street with drivers and passengers to explain the benefits of the widespread use of face coverings.

The majority of drivers that have been observed are complying with the instruction.

Failure to comply, without a [valid exemption](#), will be considered as a refusal to follow a safety direction from the regulator and may result in licensing action.

We are optimistic that licensees and passengers will continue to do the right thing and wear a face covering, for the protection of everyone that chooses to travel in a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle.

Knowledge of London and Topographical Assessments

As mentioned in [TPH Notice 08/20](#), on Monday 15 June we started a phased recommencement of Knowledge of London appearances and on 6 July we started a phased recommencement of topographical assessments.

These assessments take place at 210-212 Baker Street and a number of measures have been implemented to reflect Public Health England guidance and to reduce the risk to staff and candidates presented by coronavirus. Measures include the installation of social distancing markers, hand sanitiser units and the wearing of face coverings.

We have contacted all candidates who had a Knowledge of London appearance cancelled due to the consequences of coronavirus and we are in the process of contacting all Topographical assessment candidates, to re-book their assessment and provide them with details of the measures we have implemented. We will soon be opening additional Topographical assessment centres to increase our capacity and will discuss these arrangements with candidates individually.

Candidates **do not** need to take any action.

Department of Health and Social Care Asymptomatic Testing Trial

As part of an expansion to a national Asymptomatic Testing Trial, being run by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), TfL has been invited to take part. The purpose of the trial, which is aimed at those who regularly come into contact with people, is to find out how prevalent the virus is in the population. The test result is confidential and will only be shared with the person tested.

There are a limited number of places available to taxi and private hire drivers, on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you wish to take part, please email TPHATT@tfl.gov.uk providing your full name and licence number. You'll receive your test through the post with full instructions as to how to take it and return it. Results are usually sent through (by text message) within 72 hours.

Private hire drivers who have already taken part in this trial through a private hire operator should not register their interest.

practitioners and Government guidance on self-isolation.

Licensee Health and Wellbeing

During these ongoing challenging times, it is more important than ever to prioritise your mental and physical wellbeing. It is important to be self-aware and spot any early warning signs of feeling physically or mentally unwell and to seek help and support at the earliest opportunity.

A dedicated [Taxi and Private Hire Health and Wellbeing webpage](#) remains available which lists a wide range of organisations that provide specialist support and advice on mental and physical health, nutrition, debt, bereavement as well as support for anyone affected by a road traffic collision.

We would encourage all licensees to familiarise themselves with the resources available and to seek support where needed.

Financial support

In March 2020, the Government introduced a number of schemes to provide financial assistance to those affected by the coronavirus, including the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, which is a taxable grant worth 80 per cent of a self-employed person's average monthly profits over the last three years, up to the value of £2,500 per month. Details are provided here:

www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-gives-support-to-millions-of-self-employed-individuals

Other Government financial support schemes include:

- Support for those affected by coronavirus:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19

- Financial support for businesses during coronavirus:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme:
www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-the-coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme
- Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS): www.british-business-bank.co.uk/ourpartners/coronavirus-business-interruption-loan-scheme-cbils-2/
- Universal Credit for the self-employed:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-self-employment-quick-guide/universal-credit-and-self-employment-quick-guide

The Money Advice Trust (www.moneyadvicetrust.org), a national charity, is also available to provide advice on tackling debts and managing money. It offers free, independent and confidential advice on personal debt and provides a Business Debtline. It is the UK's only free debt advice service for people who are self-employed and other small business owners.

We will continue to provide important updates and inform licensees of any regulatory and licensing changes via our weekly email to licensees and in future TPH Notices.

Please do stay safe and well.

Graham Robinson



**General Manager
Taxi and Private Hire
Transport for London**

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For previous Notices and additional licensing information, please visit tfl.gov.uk/tph