Private Hire Knowledge Test

Guidance to Candidates

To offer a safe and efficient service to members of the public it is important that private hire (mini-cab) drivers have a general knowledge of the area in which they work. All new applicants for a private hire (PH) driver licence are required to pass a local knowledge test before their licence can be made. Please read these notes carefully to help you pass the test.

What the Test involves
The knowledge test is a 50-minute multiple-choice computer test consisting of four sections. Questions will be asked on the following:

- locations of specific places within Elmbridge and the surrounding area;
- Highway Code.
- Elmbridge Policy and Conditions under which PH driver and vehicle licences are issued and the law relating to PH licensing
- Numeracy

You will be required to demonstrate a level of local knowledge to include being able to identify the locations of certain key buildings or premises in Elmbridge such as pubs, bars, schools, train stations, golf clubs, village halls, supermarkets and business parks etc. You may also be asked to answer questions on key locations outside of the borough such as airports, amusement parks, famous buildings etc. Examples of the type of questions you could be asked are given later in these guidance notes.

Booking or Cancelling your test
Tests take place twice a month. Please book your knowledge test by calling 01372 474748. You will need to pay for the test with a debit or credit card on booking. Cancellations must be made a minimum of 2 full working days in advance otherwise the full fee will be retained.

I want to drive a private hire vehicle (mini-cab), not a taxi. Why do I need to have local knowledge of Elmbridge?

It could be argued that private hire jobs are booked in advance so routes can be studied before a journey. But, as a private hire driver, you are required to collect passengers on time. You may be delayed if you have to keep stopping in between jobs to look at a map. Passengers can also change their minds about routes or add extra drop-off points. They are not always a position to describe to you the route you should take.
Satellite navigation systems should not be relied upon. If you live outside of the area you may not be aware that the road name identified on your system is not within Elmbridge or the surrounding boroughs. The software for such systems can also become out of date very quickly.

It is therefore more efficient for both you and your Operator, if you obtain some local knowledge of the area before you start work.

Why do I need to answer questions on the Highway Code when I have already done this to obtain my DVLA driving licence?

Over time it is easy to forget some of the rules of the road. The overriding concern is for the safety of the public. Questions in the test regarding the Highway Code are a refresher for candidates. Please ensure you re-familiarise yourself with the Code thoroughly before sitting the knowledge test. It can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code

What Type of Questions are in the Test?

Section 1 consists of 40 questions with multiple choice answers about locations of premises and key buildings etc. either within, or just outside Elmbridge. An example of the type of question you could be asked is shown below:

![Question Form]

Section 2 consists of 15 questions on the Highway Code such as:
Section 3 of the test consists of 20 questions about the law relating to private hire, what is required of PH drivers and vehicles licensed in Elmbridge and conditions under which driver and vehicle licences are issued. An Example of the type of question you could be asked is:

The conditions can be found in the document “Policies for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing” available at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing.

Section 4 of the test consists of 5 questions testing numeracy skills to demonstrate your ability to handle and give correct change. An Example of the type of question you could be asked is:
Specific information on additional requirements is available below:

**Information on further requirements for Private Hire drivers**

**Driving Licence**
Your DVLA driving licence must be kept up to date showing your correct address details. This is especially important if you are renewing your licence. You may be required to complete a form authorising the DVLA to supply information held on the DVLA computer to the Council.

**Driver Convictions**
As a PH driver, you must inform the Council within 14 days of any convictions or cautions recorded against you (this includes any points added to your DVLA driving licence). You may also be required to declare any convictions when making a renewal application. This is in addition to any CRB Disclosure application that you are required to submit. Depending on the type of conviction recorded, because of the public safety implications, a PH driver licence could be suspended pending investigation and ultimately revoked.

**Identity Badge**
If a driver licence is granted, an identity badge will be issued to you which you must wear at all times when working as a PH driver. The badge should be clearly visible to members of the public. If your licence expires or it is suspended or revoked, you must return the badge straight away to the Council.

**Renewal and Expiry of Driver Licence**
Applications to renew a driver licence must be complete and be made to the Council a minimum of 10 working days before the licence expires. If you submit a late or incomplete application the new licence may not be issued in time for you to continue working without a break. If your licence expires you must not work until a new one has been granted. Any application made after the expiry date will be treated as new which means you would undergo all of the requirements of a new applicant (such as a knowledge test, a CRB Disclosure application and a medical assessment etc.)
Vehicle Insurance
The vehicle must be insured for the carriage of passengers for hire and reward and this must cover at least third-party risks. Insurance must remain in place at all times when the vehicle is licensed for private hire regardless of whether the vehicle is being used for the same. If you hold a vehicle licence you must produce your insurance certificate at the request of a Council Officer. If you do not produce the certificate you may be prosecuted by the Council.

Condition and Servicing of Vehicles
A PH vehicle must be kept in a sound, roadworthy condition at all times whilst licensed and be serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations. You will be required to have an MOT test carried out on the vehicle a minimum of once every twelve months (once every six months once the vehicle becomes 5 years old) and the vehicle must pass this test for it to remain licensed.

Damage to Vehicles
As the licence holder of the vehicle you must report to the Council any accident affecting the appearance, safety or performance of the vehicle as soon as possible and in any case within a maximum of 72 hours of the accident occurring. This is in addition to notifying the Police. There is a form available to download from the Council website on which to report a vehicle accident.

When you report an accident, you may be required to produce the vehicle for inspection by a Licensing Officer. It may be necessary to have the vehicle repaired before it can be used again for private hire.

Vehicle Alterations
You must not make any alterations to the manufacturer's specifications of your licensed vehicle without first obtaining the written permission of the Council.

Vehicle Licence Plates
A plate will be issued upon the grant of a vehicle licence and the licence holder is responsible for ensuring that it is clearly displayed externally on the back of the vehicle at all times and kept clean so that it can be easily read. The plate remains the property of the Council and must be returned once the licence expires, is surrendered or upon notice of revocation of the licence.

Smoking in Vehicles
Smoking is not permitted in your vehicle at any time regardless of whether you have passengers on board. A no smoking sign must be clearly displayed in each compartment of the vehicle.

Further Reading
All of the information above should be read in conjunction with the conditions contained in “Policies for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing”

On becoming a private hire licensed driver and/or vehicle licence holder you are advised to familiarise yourself with the law relating to your occupation. This includes (but may not be solely restricted to):

- The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (information on offences under this Act can be found online at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis)
- The Road Safety Act 2006
- The Health Act 2006 regarding smoking in work premises or vehicles
Please also make sure you have read our leaflet Taxi Licensing Vehicle Inspections which is included in the driver application pack and is also available online at www.elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing

Information on the Highway Code can be found at https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code-road-safety where you should also find reference to relevant Road Traffic Laws.

**Study Tips**

You will need to obtain a general knowledge of the local area (including key locations outside of Elmbridge) before taking the private hire test.

In order to help you study for your test you should consider the following:

- spending time in the local area and studying a map and;
- researching the names of the roads on which local landmarks or bars, restaurants, schools etc. are situated and;
- asking the operator who will be allocating work to you or an experienced Elmbridge PH driver for advice; and
- re-familiarising yourself with the Highway Code:
- looking at the Council’s web pages on taxi and private hire licensing

**Please note:** We would ask that where possible you avoid telephoning local premises to obtain their locations.

**Instructions for taking the test**

You should bring your driving licence (if you have an old-style paper driving licence you will also need some form of photographic I.D. with you to the test such as a passport).

You will require a reasonable level of written English in order to complete the test.

You must book your place for the test and pay a fee in advance.

The test will be conducted in silence. You may only speak to the invigilator and not to any other applicants who may be taking the test at the same time.

During the test, you will not be permitted to use any of the following:

- mobile phones;
- study notes;
- text books;
- hand held computers;
- satellite navigation devices; or
- any other devices or notes as deemed unacceptable by the invigilator.

Evidence of the use of any of the above will result in your test being cancelled. Fees will not be refunded.

Ordinarily you will not be permitted to leave the room during the test so please ensure that you have taken any comfort breaks before the test begins.
The pass rate for the test is 75%. The Council’s decision as to whether you have passed is final.

You will be notified in writing of the result of your test, usually within 14 days. If you fail you can sit the test again you must rebook and pay in advance. A minimum period of at least 1 month must lapse between tests to give you time to study the relevant information again. The test can be taken up to a maximum of three times in any 12-month period.

A Knowledge Test Pass Certificate will be issued to successful applicants. You must make your application for a private hire driver licence within one year of passing the test.

**Arriving for Your Test**

Please arrive at the Council’s main reception area no later than 15 minutes before the test is due to start. You must bring up to date DVLA driving licence with you (and photographic identification if you have a paper licence). Your invigilator will confirm your identity and take you to the room where the test will take place. If you are late you will not be permitted to enter the test and you will forfeit your test fee.

If you have any queries regarding the private hire knowledge test, please telephone 01372 474750. If you have a disability which you think would exclude you from taking the test, please contact a Licensing Officer to discuss.

Good luck!