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# Taxi and private hire vehicle licence

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Guidance for applicants



**Elmbridge**  
Borough Council

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## Version control

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Version	Initials	Date	Changes Made
V2	AK	01/01/26	New version of guidance following adoption of taxi and private hire policy 2025-2030

You should read this guidance document together with Elmbridge Borough Council's Taxi and Private Hire:

- Licensing Policy
- Convictions Policy and
- Penalty Points Policy.

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## Introduction

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We have produced this guidance document to help applicants and existing taxi and private hire vehicle owners, to apply for a taxi or private hire vehicle licence. We have also included information for existing licensed vehicle owners on how to let us know if your circumstances change, for example if you change your name or address or you are convicted of a motoring or criminal offence.

The guidance and instructions within this document form part of our overall taxi and private hire licensing policy and it links with our taxi and private hire Convictions Policy, our 'taxi and private hire Penalty Points Policy', and the Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Enforcement Policy. Before you apply for a licence, you should read all the above documents to understand the Council's approach to taxi and private hire licensing. All documents are available on the Council's website.

Taxi and private hire vehicle owners have responsibility for the safety and roadworthiness of their vehicles and safety of other road users. Licensed vehicle owners must ensure that the service they supply enables them to transport their passengers comfortably, safely, and conveniently. The Council and passengers expect their general behaviour to be of the highest possible standard and that they are honest and trustworthy.

Public safety is paramount in our approach to taxi and private hire licensing, and it is the basis of our decision as to whether a vehicle is safe and suitable to be used as a taxi or private hire vehicle and an applicant is a 'fit and proper' person to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

We have set out several requirements in Appendix 5 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy, which your vehicle must satisfy before we can decide whether to grant your taxi or private hire vehicle licence. We have also set some requirements that you must satisfy before we can decide whether you are a suitable person to hold a taxi or private hire vehicle licence. We have explained our reason for each requirement in Chapter 3 of our policy.

You must supply evidence that you have completed each of the requirements before or at the time you give your application. The information you supply will help us to decide whether you are a fit and proper person to hold that licence, and to show that the vehicle is suitable for use as a taxi or private hire vehicle.

You are responsible for completing each requirement and for any financial costs associated with demonstrating each requirement. The Council will not refund these costs in any circumstances.

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## Part 1: New vehicle licence

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We will assess the suitability of the vehicle you wish to license as a taxi and private hire vehicle and we will determine whether you are a fit and proper person to hold a taxi or private hire licence.

If you want to apply for a new taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must complete all requirements as shown below.

**Existing taxi and private hire vehicle owners** should also read the requirements below to understand how they apply when you renew your licence.

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## Before you apply for a new vehicle licence

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Before you apply for your taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must complete all the following requirements. Please read Chapter 3 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy for a full explanation of, and our reasons for each requirement. We have supplied more information about each requirement below.

- Requirement 3: Basic DBS disclosure
- Requirement 4: Overseas criminal record check (if applicable)
- Requirement 9: English language requirement
- Requirement 10: Photographs
- Requirement 11: Immigration status check
- Requirement 13: Vehicle fitness
- Requirement 14: Certificate of vehicle insurance
- Requirement 15: Vehicle registration document
- Requirement 16: Letter of consent

Requirement 17: MOT certificate

Requirement 18: Other documents (if applicable)

### Requirement 3: DBS disclosure

#### Your basic DBS disclosure

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides access to criminal record information. You must obtain a basic disclosure (criminal records check) before making your application for a taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

**If you are also a taxi or private hire driver licensed by Elmbridge Council and you have registered for the DBS Update Service, you do not have to complete a basic DBS disclosure (see DBS Update Service below).**

Before completing your basic disclosure application, you should read our Convictions Policy which is available at [elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing)

Further information and a link to apply are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>

When you receive your basic disclosure certificate, you must send the original document to the Licensing Team via the address at the end of this guidance. Please mark the envelope private and confidential. You may wish to take a copy of your disclosure before you send it to the Council as we cannot return the original form.

Please return your basic disclosure at least 10 working days before you send your taxi or private hire vehicle application. This is so that we can assess the information and resolve any queries in advance of you making an application.

**The basic disclosure must have been issued no earlier than three months before the date you give your application. If not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it unless you have signed up to the DBS update service.**

#### DBS Update Service

The DBS update service is an online subscription that lets you keep an enhanced DBS certificate up-to-date and allows the Council to check your certificate during the life of your licence.

You are unable to register for the DBS update service when you are issued a basic DBS certificate. Therefore, paragraph 3.40 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy does not apply to you.

If you are also a licensed taxi or private hire driver and you have registered for the DBS Update Service, you do not have to complete a basic disclosure. Information on registering for the DBS Update Service is available at [gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide](http://gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide)

However, when you apply for your vehicle licence as an existing licensed taxi or private hire driver, you must show that you have registered for the DBS update service and let us know your DBS certificate number, your name as it shows on the DBS certificate, and your date of birth. **If you do not give us this information your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

You must pay all costs incurred in obtaining your subscription to the DBS update service and you must keep your subscription up to date during the life of the licence.

### Requirement 4: Overseas criminal record check

#### Your overseas criminal record check

When you submit your licence application, you must complete a declaration informing us whether you have spent more than three continuous months outside the United Kingdom when over the age of 18 and provide the dates you were outside the UK. **If you do not give us this information, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

If you have spent more than six continuous months outside the United Kingdom when over the age of 18, you must obtain an overseas criminal record check or 'Certificate of Good Character/Conduct'. The certificate must have been issued no earlier than three months before the date you give it to us or your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.

The application process for criminal records checks or 'Certificates of Good Character/Conduct' varies from country to country. You may have to apply in the country or to the relevant embassy in the UK.

Information and guidance on the process to obtain an overseas criminal record check is available at: [gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants](http://gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants)

We recognise that it is not always possible to obtain a certificate from countries that do not have functioning criminal record regimes or refuse to provide these to anyone other than their own citizens.

Public safety is the primary concern for licensing authorities. If you are unable to obtain a certificate we are unlikely to grant a taxi or private hire licence. However, should you choose to apply we will consider your application on its own merits.

### **Requirement 9: English language requirement**

#### **English language requirement**

Taxi and private hire licence holders need to be able to communicate with customers to discuss a route or fare, as well as to read and understand important regulatory and safety information.

It is also important that all licence holders can read and understand information that the Council provides to you. It is therefore essential for public safety that all taxi and private hire licence holders can communicate in English at an appropriate level.

You must show that you have adequate English language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. We do not need you to take a specific test, but you must provide us with information about your qualifications to prove you have adequate English language skills.

**When you apply for your licence, you must send us a copy of your qualifications. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

#### **What qualifications do I need to show?**

If you completed your secondary school education in the UK or have any UK secondary school level qualification which was taught and examined in English, your level of English will be enough. This includes and UK:

- a) GCSE grade G or above
- b) GCE 'O' level grade E or above
- c) Certificate of Secondary Education grade 5 or above
- d) A level or AS level
- e) NVQ level 1 or above including BTEC and City & Guilds

f) Higher National Certificate/Diploma

g) Degree or higher

If you did not complete your secondary school education in the UK, but you were educated to the same level shown above, you can supply evidence of your qualifications if the qualification was taught and examined in English. You may need to obtain a letter from the examining body to confirm this.

### **Secure English Language Test (SELT)**

The Home Office needs certain applicants for a visa to show a certain level of English Language by passing a SELT.

We will accept a Home Office approved SELT certificate as proof that your level of English is enough only if the SELT has assessed your reading, writing, speaking, and listening ability.

Information on approved SELT courses is available at this website.

[gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests)

### **English as a second language or foreign language qualification (ESOL)**

We may accept some ESOL certificates if the examining board has assessed reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English. Please contact us before starting an ESOL course so that we can confirm whether the course satisfies our requirements.

## **Requirement 10: Photographs**

### **Your photographs**

The Council must be able to identify all licence holders to ensure it can uphold its public safety measures and that those measures are robust.

**When you apply for your licence, you must send us an electronic photograph of yourself, which conforms to UK passport photograph standards. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

Information on acceptable photos is available at:

[gov.uk/photos-for-passports](https://www.gov.uk/photos-for-passports)

**Digital photos**

- a) Your photo must be:
- b) clear and in focus
- c) in colour
- d) unaltered by computer software
- e) at least 600 pixels wide and 750 pixels tall
- f) at least 50KB and no more than 10MB

In your photo you must:

- a) be facing forwards and looking straight at the camera
- b) have a plain expression and your mouth closed
- c) have your eyes open and visible
- d) not have hair in front of your eyes
- e) not have a head covering (unless it is for religious or medical reasons)
- f) not have anything covering your face
- g) not have any shadows on your face or behind you

If you are using a photo taken during your application, include your head, shoulders, and upper body. Do not crop your photo – we will do this for you.

Do not wear sunglasses or tinted glasses. You can wear other glasses if you need to, but your eyes must be visible without any glare or reflection.

Your photo must:

- a) contain no other objects or people
- b) be taken against a plain light-coloured background
- c) be in clear contrast to the background
- d) not have 'red eye'

## Requirement 11: Immigration status

### Your immigration status

The Immigration Act 2016 requires licensing authorities now carry out right to work checks when considering applications for licences in the taxi and private hire sector. Licensing authorities have a legal duty not to issue a licence to you if you are disqualified from holding one due to UK immigration status.

**When you apply for your licence, you must supply evidence of your right to work in the UK. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

There are two types of right to work checks;

- a) a manual check (the only option available to British and Irish citizens with a permanent right to work in the UK) and;
- b) an online check.

### Online right to work check

We will not be able to carry out an online right to work check in all circumstances, as you may not have an immigration status that we can check online. The online right to work checking service sets out what information you will need.

Currently, we can only use the online checking service if you hold:

- a) An expired biometric residence permit; or
- b) a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account

If you would like us to check your right to work online, you must provide us with your:

- a) date of birth and
- b) right to work share code

The service works on the basis that you first view your own Home Office right to work record. You may then share this information with the Council if you wish, by providing us with a 'share code', which, when entered along with your date of birth, enables us to access the information.

The share code will be valid for 90 days, after which we will need a new code to conduct an online check.

You can obtain your right to work code at [gov.uk/prove-right-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/prove-right-to-work)

### Manual right to work check

If you are unable to provide us with a right to work share code or you choose not to, we will carry out a manual right to work check.

There are three basic steps to conducting a manual right to work check. We will:

- a) obtain original documents from you and
- b) check the document's validity in your presence and
- c) make and keep a copy of the documents and make a record of the date we checked your documents.

You must provide us with original documents (not copies). If you have a permanent right to remain in the UK, you must provide us with documents from List A below.

If you have a temporary right to remain in the UK, you must provide us with documents from List B below.

**We cannot accept any other form of document other than those listed in List A or List B which is published by the Home Office.**

If there are restrictions on the length of time you may work in the UK, we will not issue a licence for any longer than this period. In such circumstances, we will repeat the check each time you apply to renew your licence. If, during this period, you are disqualified from holding a licence because you have not followed the UK's immigration laws, your licence will lapse and you must return it to the licensing authority.

### List A - Permanent right to Remain in UK

1. A passport (current or expired) showing the holder is a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.
2. A passport or passport card<sup>3</sup> (in either case, whether current or expired) showing that the holder is an Irish citizen.
3. A document issued by the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey or the Isle of Man, which has been verified as valid by the Home Office Employer Checking Service, showing that the holder has been granted unlimited leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU(J) to the Jersey Immigration Rules,

Appendix EU to the Immigration (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Rules 2008 or Appendix EU to the Isle of Man Immigration Rules.

4. A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
5. A current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a government agency or a previous employer.
6. A birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a government agency or a previous employer.
7. A birth or adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a government agency or a previous employer.
8. A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a government agency or a previous employer.

### **List B - Temporary right to remain in UK**

#### **Group 1: Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse lasts until the expiry date of leave**

1. A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is currently allowed to do the type of work in question
2. A document issued by the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey or the Isle of Man, which has been verified as valid by the Home Office Employer Checking Service, showing that the holder has been granted limited leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU(J) to the Jersey Immigration Rules, Appendix EU to the Immigration (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Rules 2008 or Appendix EU to the Isle of Man Immigration Rules.

3. A current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a government agency or a previous employer.

### **Group 2: Documents where a time-limited statutory excuse lasts for 6 months.**

1. A document issued by the Home Office showing that the holder has made an application for leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU to the immigration rules (known as the EU Settlement Scheme) on or before 30 June 2021 together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
2. A Certificate of Application (non-digital) issued by the Home Office showing that the holder has made an application for leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU to the immigration rules (known as the EU Settlement Scheme), on or after 1 July 2021, together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
3. A document issued by the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey or the Isle of Man showing that the holder has made an application for leave to enter or remain under Appendix EU(J) to the Jersey Immigration Rules or Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Rules 2008, or Appendix EU to the Isle of Man Immigration Rules together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
4. An Application Registration Card issued by the Home Office stating that the holder is permitted to take the employment in question, together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
5. A Positive Verification Notice issued by the Home Office Employer Checking Service to the employer or prospective employer, which indicates that the named person may stay in the UK and is permitted to do the work in question.

## Requirement 13: Vehicle fitness

### Vehicle fitness

The Council expects all vehicle owners to properly maintain their vehicles, so they are roadworthy, comfortable, and safe. This ensures that the vehicle achieves the required standard to ensure public safety.

The proposed vehicle must satisfy the requirements of vehicle fitness as set out in Appendix 5 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy.

Before we will license a vehicle for the first time it will need to have passed a mechanical inspection at one of our nominated testing stations. Special requirements may apply for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV's).

The Council's nominated testing stations inspect vehicles for more items that are specific to our requirements of a taxi or private hire vehicle. An MOT certificate (see Requirement 17 below) is issued at the end of a vehicle inspection test (VIT) and ensures that vehicles meet the Council's safety and other standards.

A licensing officer may also visually inspect the vehicle at the Civic Centre before we issue a licence. All WAV's will be inspected by an officer when licensed for the first time.

### The vehicle inspection test

In addition to MOT test and the requirements set out in Appendix 5 of our taxi and licensing policy, your vehicle must meet the following 'minimum' standards to pass the vehicle inspection test:

1. Your vehicle must:
  - a) be right hand drive and
  - b) have a minimum of four passenger doors (excluding the tailgate)

### Convertible vehicles and sunroofs

2. Your vehicle must not be a convertible.
3. The size of any sunroof must not exceed 50% of the area of the vehicle's roof.

### Cleanliness

4. You must ensure your vehicle is clean inside and out.

5. There should be no evidence of smoking in the vehicle.

### Bodywork and wheel trims

6. There should be little or no damage to the bodywork.
7. The vehicle should have all wheel trims in place (unless the vehicle has alloy wheels).

### Fire extinguisher

8. You must supply a fire extinguisher which is easily accessible within the vehicle and available for immediate use. The extinguisher must be in date for test and comply in all respects with the British Standards Institution specification for portable fire extinguishers

### Spare tyre

9. The vehicle must
  - a) be carrying a spare wheel capable of being immediately used and tools suitable for wheel changing; or
  - b) be carrying a space saver spare wheel which is capable of being used immediately and tools suitable for wheel changing or,
  - c) where the vehicle manufacturer supplies repair and inflation equipment as standard with a new vehicle, the vehicle must carry this or
  - d) the vehicle must have run-flat tyres.

### Passenger seats

10. The licence will specify the maximum number of people that the vehicle may carry. In deciding this we will count each separate seat as suitable for one person. Please note that two or more single seats close together do not constitute a bench seat and we will treat these as single seats for licensing. For bench seats we will allow one person for each 410 mm of bench seat.

### Signage or Advertising on Vehicles

11. You can only have signs or advertising on your vehicle if we have approved your application and the sign or advertising meets the Council's advertising requirements.

12. Please see Appendix 6 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about advertising on taxi and private hire vehicles.

### Tinted Windows

13. We will not consider a vehicle to be suitable for licensing if the tinted windows are too dark.
14. The vehicle windscreen must allow at least 75% light through and the front side windows 70%. The rear windows (excluding the rear windscreen) must allow at least 22% light through.
15. The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 only stipulate a tint limit for front windows. We extend that requirement to all other windows.
16. Please see Appendix 5 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about tinted windows.

You must always keep to the above standards when your vehicle is a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle.

## Requirement 14: Vehicle insurance

### Certificate of vehicle insurance

**When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of your vehicle's insurance certificate. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

It is a legal requirement that all taxi and private hire vehicles are insured for use on a road. The insurance policy needs to cover the vehicle for use as a taxi or private hire vehicle. This aims to protect the public by supplying insurance cover for injuries to other road users, pedestrians, and passengers in your taxi or private hire vehicle and for other damage to property.

The proposed vehicle must be insured under a valid certificate of motor insurance for use as a taxi or private hire vehicle. Please note, insurance for a private hire vehicle is different to that for a taxi therefore the certificate must clearly show the cover provided.

This is especially important if you are relying on a cover note, as some insurance agents do not always word the cover note clearly.

We may ask you to produce a valid insurance certificate at any time during the licence period.

### Cover notes

We must always have a valid copy of your insurance lodged on our records you produce a cover note or insurance certificate that is only valid for a few days, you must produce another valid insurance certificate on or before the expiry date of the existing insurance cover.

### Your responsibility

It is your responsibility to make sure that the vehicle is correctly insured throughout the duration of the licence.

If you cancel your insurance policy or it lapses whilst the vehicle is a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle, we may suspend the vehicle licence until a valid insurance policy is in place for the vehicle.

## Requirement 15: Vehicle registration document

### Vehicle registration document

**When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the vehicle registration document (V5) (log book) for the vehicle. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

The vehicle registration document supplies details about the vehicle that we check during the vehicle inspection process. It also supplies details of the person responsible for registering, insuring, and taxing the vehicle, and for informing the DVLA of any changes. This enables the Council to carry out proper regulation of the vehicle requirements.

## Requirement 16: Letter of consent

### Letter of consent

The Council must be satisfied that you can use the vehicle as a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle. This ensures public safety and proper regulation of the licence.

If you are not the registered keeper of the vehicle, you must obtain a letter from the registered keeper of the vehicle, consenting to you licensing the vehicle as a taxi or private hire vehicle.

**When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the letter of consent from the registered keeper of the vehicle. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

## **Requirement 17: MOT certificate**

### **MOT certificate**

**When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the MOT certificate for the vehicle. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

It is vital that taxi and private hire vehicles are always safe and roadworthy. To achieve this, we need all vehicles to undergo a mechanical inspection before we will issue a licence for the first time and then again at intervals throughout the licence period.

You must obtain a valid MOT certificate issued by a Council nominated testing station as part of the Council's Vehicle Inspection Test (VIT) where the period since the date of first registration of a vehicle is greater than one year. The certificate must have been issued within the six calendar months prior to the date of your application.

## **Requirement 18: Other documents**

### **Other documents**

It is vital that modified or converted vehicles have been safely adapted for use as a taxi or private hire vehicle. The documents listed below, in addition to the MOT certificate issued by one of the Council's nominated testing stations, ensure that vehicles meet the Council's safety standards.

If your vehicle has been altered or converted since original manufacture, you must supply the Council with one of the following documents:

- a) Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles – DVSA Certificate M1
- b) Stretch Limousines – DVSA IVA Certificate
- c) Any other relevant conversion document.

Further information on obtaining Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) is available at [gov.uk/vehicle-approval](http://gov.uk/vehicle-approval)

Details of the stations that provide specialist IVA scheme testing for vehicles is available at [gov.uk/government/publications/specialist-schemes-testing-station-map](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/specialist-schemes-testing-station-map)

**If your vehicle has been modified or converted, when you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the IVA for the vehicle. If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

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## Apply for your new vehicle licence online

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### Making your application

Once you have completed all the above requirements, you will be ready to make your application for your new taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

You must use our [online application form](#). You will be able to upload your supporting documents electronically and pay your application fee at the same time.

We recommend that you have your documents ready and in the correct format, before you start completing your application form. We have supplied a document check list on the following page.

When you are ready to upload your documents, you should use PDF format where possible. However, you will have the option to take a 'live' photograph of the document, if it is only one page (for example your MOT certificate).

- We will accept electronic photographs of documents, but only if the document is in focus and the information contained in the document is readable.
- Each document must be one separate file (for example, evidence of your right to work in the UK = one document, application form = one document etc.)

Your application will be invalid if:

- you do not complete your application form correctly, or
- you do not send the correct documents, or
- a document is missing or does not meet the standards set out above.

**We will always reject an invalid application.** If we do, we will refer you back to this guidance, and you will need to re-send us the whole application.

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## More than one applicant

If you are applying for your licence as a company, business, or partnership, more than one person will jointly hold the licence if we grant it. Each applicant must therefore provide copies of their documents.

## Document check list (new vehicle licence)

### You must have copies of your:

- Basic DBS disclosure, or DBS Update Registration and DBS certificate number
- English language qualification
- Photograph
- Evidence of your immigration status
- Vehicle insurance certificate
- MOT certificate

### You might need copies of your:

- Overseas criminal record check
- Letter of consent from the registered keeper of the vehicle
- IVA
- Letter of consent from all applicants (if more than applicant)

### You must send these original documents to us at least 10 working days before you make your application

- Basic DBS certificate (if you are not already registered with the DBS Update Service)

## When you submit your application

When you submit your application it will be checked to ensure it is complete, the payment has been made and all of the relevant supporting documents are attached

and valid. We will only contact you at the submission stage if there is anything outstanding. We will then allocate your application to an officer who will only contact you if they have questions about your application.

We will deal with your applications in the order we receive them. We aim to process your application within our published application timescales which are available at

Sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, we may take longer to process your application. We will inform you if this is likely to be the case.

### **Our decision about your application**

Please read Chapters 10 and 11 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy which explains our decision-making process and your rights if we do not grant your licence.

### **Issuing your licence**

Before we issue your licence, you may need to attend an appointment at the Civic Centre and produce your original documents. We will then be able to verify your identity and inspect your vehicle before we issue your licence and plates for the vehicle.

### **Period of your licence**

We will usually issue a taxi or private hire vehicle licence for a period of one year. Please read Chapter 12 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about period of licences.

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## Part 2: Existing vehicles

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You should read Chapter 9 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about renewing your licence, and Chapter 13 about policy requirements for existing taxi or private hire vehicles. You should also read Part 1 of this document to understand and complete our requirements before you renew your licence.

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## Renewing your vehicle licence

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It is your responsibility to renew your licence before it expires. We will not issue reminder letters, so it is important that you follow the guidance and instructions in this document and submit a valid application.

We also need enough time to process your application before it expires. You must send us your correctly completed application and supporting documents to renew your vehicle licence **at least 20 working days (about 4 weeks) before the licence expiry date.**

We will not accept your application if you send it to us **more** than 40 working days (about 8 weeks) before the expiry date unless there are exceptional circumstances. We will make any such decision to accept an application on a case-by-case basis.

If you send your application late, or if your circumstances have changed and you have not previously updated us, we may not be able to issue your new licence before your existing licence expires. This means that you will be unable to work after your licence expires and until we issue your new licence.

We recommend that before you start completing your application form you have your documents ready and in the correct format, for all persons who will hold the licence if granted.

Your application will be invalid if:

- you do not complete your application form correctly, or
- you do not send the correct documents, or
- a document is missing or does not meet the standards set out above.

**We will always reject an invalid application.** If we do, we will refer you back to this guidance, and you will need to re-send us the whole application.

If you apply to renew your licence after the expiry date, we will treat this as a new application and we may need you to follow all relevant requirements for a new application as outlined in Part 1 of this document. In exceptional circumstances, we may waive or defer any application requirement, but we do not have to do this. We will make any such decision on a case-by-case basis.

Therefore, it is your responsibility to ensure you make your application correctly and in time, as set out in these guidelines.

### Before making your application

Before you apply to renew your taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must complete all the following requirements. Please read Chapter 3 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy for a full explanation of, and our reasons for each requirement. We have supplied more information about each requirement in Part 1 of this document above.

- Requirement 3: Basic DBS disclosure
- Requirement 4: Overseas criminal record check (if applicable)
- Requirement 10: Photographs
- Requirement 11: Immigration status check (if applicable)
- Requirement 13: Vehicle fitness
- Requirement 14: Certificate of vehicle insurance
- Requirement 15: Vehicle registration document
- Requirement 16: Letter of consent
- Requirement 17: MOT certificate

### Your DBS Disclosure

When you apply to renew your taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must always submit a basic DBS disclosure or show that you have signed up to the DBS update service.

If you submit a basic DBS disclosure, it must have been issued no earlier than three months before the date you give your application. **If not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it**

If you are also a licensed taxi or private hire driver and you have registered for the DBS Update Service, you must show that you have registered for the DBS Update Service and let us know your DBS certificate number, your name as it shows on the DBS certificate, and your date of birth. **If you do not give us this information your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

### More than one applicant

If you are applying for your licence as a company, business, or partnership, more than one person will jointly hold the licence if we grant it. Each applicant must therefore submit a basic DBS certificate or show that they have signed up to the DBS update service. **If they do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

### Other information

You must pay all costs incurred in obtaining your basic DBS certificate or subscription to the DBS update service and you must keep your subscription up to date during the life of the licence. Please be aware that if your payment card details expire with the DBS you will automatically be unsubscribed from the update service by them. We recommend you check your account with the DBS at intervals to ensure you card details remain live.

As a taxi or private hire vehicle licence holder, you must inform the Council within 5 working days of any convictions, cautions or penalties recorded against you.

When you renew your licence, you must declare any convictions, even if these are historical. If you have received a conviction, caution, or penalty since we last granted your licence and you have not let us know, we may refuse to renew your licence.

### Overseas criminal record check

When you apply to renew your taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must complete a declaration informing us whether you have spent more than six continuous months outside the United Kingdom since we last issued your licence. **If you do not give us this information, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

If you have spent more than six continuous months outside the United Kingdom when over the age of 18, you must obtain an overseas criminal record check or

'Certificate of Good Character'. The certificate must have been issued no earlier than three months before the date you give it to us or your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.

### **UNLESS**

- a) You completed an overseas criminal record check when you applied for your new taxi or private hire driver's licence

### **AND**

- b) You have not spent more than six continuous months outside the United Kingdom since we granted your existing taxi or private hire driver's licence.

Please read Requirement 4 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about travelling abroad.

**If this applies to you and you do not give us this information, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

### **Companies and partnerships**

This requirement applies to all company directors, the company secretary, and partners.

### **Photographs**

When you apply to renew your taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must **always** send us an electronic photograph which meets the [UK passport photograph standards](#).

**If you do not your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

### **Companies and partnerships**

This requirement applies to all company directors, the company secretary, and partners.

### **Your immigration status**

When you apply to renew your taxi or private hire vehicle licence, you must provide us with proof that you have the right to live and work in the United Kingdom.

### **UNLESS**

- you supplied your status when you applied for your new taxi or private hire vehicle licence and the original documents were copied by us

### **AND**

- your right to live and work in the UK is permanent

**If this applies to you and you do not give us this information, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

### **Companies and partnerships**

This requirement applies to all company directors, the company secretary, and partners.

### **Vehicle fitness**

The Council expects all vehicle owners to properly maintain their vehicles, so they are roadworthy, comfortable, and safe. This ensures that the vehicle achieves the required standard to ensure public safety.

The proposed vehicle must satisfy the requirements of vehicle fitness as set out in Appendix 5 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy. Your vehicle must have passed a mechanical inspection at one of our nominated testing stations (see Requirement 17 in Part 1 of this document).

### **Certificate of vehicle insurance**

When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of your vehicle's insurance certificate. **If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

The proposed vehicle must be insured under a valid certificate of motor insurance for use as a taxi or private hire vehicle.

### **Vehicle registration document**

When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the vehicle registration document (V5) (log book) for the vehicle. **If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

You must produce the vehicle registration document (V5) (log book) for the vehicle to prove that you are still the registered keeper.

### Letter of consent

When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the letter of consent from the registered keeper of the vehicle. **If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

The Council must be satisfied that you can use the vehicle as a licensed taxi or private hire vehicle. This ensures public safety and proper regulation of the licence.

If you are not the registered keeper of the vehicle, you must supply the Council with a letter from the registered keeper of the vehicle, consenting to you licensing the vehicle as a taxi or private hire vehicle.

### MOT certificate

When you apply for your licence, you must supply a copy of the current MOT certificate for the vehicle. **If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

It is vital that taxi and private hire vehicles are always safe and roadworthy. To achieve this, we need all vehicles to undergo a mechanical inspection before we will renew your licence.

You must produce a valid MOT certificate, showing advisories where applicable, issued by a Council nominated testing station as part of the Council's Vehicle Inspection Test (VIT) where the period since the date of first registration of a vehicle is greater than one year. The certificate must have been issued within the six calendar months prior to the date of your application.

If your vehicle is over five years old, we will also check to ensure you have carried out the required six-monthly VIT.

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## Renew your existing licence

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### Making your renewal application

Once you have completed all the above requirements, you will be ready to make your application to renew your taxi or private hire vehicle licence.

You must use our [online application form](#). You will be able to upload your supporting documents electronically and pay your application fee at the same time.

When you are ready to upload your documents, you should use PDF format where possible. However, you will have the option to take a 'live' photograph of the document, if it is only one page (for example your MOT certificate).

- We will accept electronic photographs of documents, but only if the document is in focus and the information contained in the document is readable.
- Each document must be one separate file (for example, evidence of your right to work in the UK = one document, application form = one document etc.)
- We recommend that you give each document a filename that can easily identify the document (for example "Insurance")
- Please submit the document pages in the correct order (for example, pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and **NOT** pages 2, 4, 1, 3, 5)

Your application will be invalid if:

- you do not complete your application form correctly, or
- you do not send the correct documents, or
- a document is missing or does not meet the standards set out above.

**We will always reject an invalid application if it is invalid or if it does not meet the standards we have specified above.**

### More than one applicant

If you are applying for your licence as a company, business, or partnership, more than one person will jointly hold the licence if we grant it. Each applicant must therefore sign the application form. You may do this electronically or by sending the applicant consent form(s) with your application.

### Document check list (renewal)

**You must have copies of your:**

- Basic DBS disclosure, or DBS Update Registration and DBS certificate

number

- Photograph(s)
- Vehicle insurance certificate
- Vehicle registration document
- MOT certificate

### **You must send these original documents to us at least 10 working days before you make your application**

- Basic DBS certificate

### **More than one applicant**

If you are applying for your licence as a company, business, or partnership, more than one person will jointly hold the licence if we grant it. Each applicant must therefore sign the application form. You may do this electronically or by sending the applicant consent form(s) with your application.

When you apply for your licence, you must send us the consent form(s). **If you do not, your application will be invalid, and we will reject it.**

### **When you submit your renewal application**

When you submit your renewal application it will be checked to ensure it is complete, the payment has been made and all of the relevant supporting documents are attached and valid. We will only contact you at the submission stage if there is anything outstanding.

We will then allocate your application to an officer who will only contact you if they have questions about your application. We will deal with your applications in the order we receive them. We aim to process your application within our published application timescales which are available at [elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing/taxi-and-private-hire-guidance-for-applicants/](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing/taxi-and-private-hire-guidance-for-applicants/)

Sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, we may take longer to process your application. We will inform you after we receive your application if this is likely to be the case.

## **Our decision about your application**

Please read Chapters 10 and 11 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy which explains our decision-making process and your rights if we do not grant your licence.

## **Issuing your licence**

Before we issue your licence, you may have to attend an appointment at the Civic Centre to produce your original documents. We may also need to inspect your vehicle before we issue your licence and plates for the vehicle. We will let you know during the application process, if we need you to attend an appointment.

## **Period of your licence**

We will usually issue a taxi or private hire vehicle licence for a period of one year. Please read Chapter 12 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about period of licences.

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## **Maintaining your licence**

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As a professional and licensed taxi or private hire vehicle licence holder, we expect you to keep your vehicle to the highest standard and to ensure it is always safe and roadworthy. We also expect your general behaviour to be of the highest possible standard and for you to always follow the law, the conditions of your licence and the requirements set out in our taxi and private hire licensing policies.

## **Maintenance and testing of your vehicle**

We expect you to maintain your vehicle and service it according to the manufacturer's recommendations. It is your responsibility to ensure the vehicle is always safe and roadworthy.

If your vehicle is five years old and over, you must have the vehicle tested at one of the Council's nominated testing stations at six-monthly intervals. You must then send us a copy of the valid MOT certificate issued by the testing station, within 5 working days of the test.

Where a vehicle reaches five years of age during the period of the licence, the next test will be due on the date of original vehicle registration and at six-monthly intervals thereafter. For example, if the vehicle was 'first registered' on 1 January, the test will be due on 1 January and 1 June each year.

If you do not have the vehicle tested within the required six-monthly period, or you do not send us a copy of the valid MOT certificate issued by the Council's nominated testing station within 5 working days of the test, we may suspend or revoke the vehicle licence until you have completed the VIT and sent us a copy of the valid MOT certificate.

We will always look at MOT 'advisory' notes and may check your MOT history for the vehicle to check you are properly maintaining your vehicle. While you are under no legal requirement to adhere to the advisory notes, there may be long-term implications if you do not do so. For example, your vehicle may fail a later VIT, as well as making your car less safe, even if it is technically roadworthy.

In addition, we can make you present the vehicle for a further three inspections a year, that do not involve an MOT. This may be because we have received a complaint about the condition of a vehicle or the vehicle has been involved in a road traffic incident. We will always inform you in advance, if we intend to carry out another inspection.

### Reporting a driving or criminal conviction

We recognise that sometimes things do go wrong. This does not necessarily mean that you will lose your taxi or private hire vehicle licence but if things do go wrong you must let us know.

.You must notify the Council's licensing team in writing within 5 working days of the event, if you:

- are convicted of **any** offence, or
- accept a formal caution for any offence, or
- receive a fixed penalty notice for any offence, or
- receive and accept an endorsable fixed penalty notice, or
- are made the subject of an ASBO or DBO, or
- receive a CPN, or
- are made the subject of any form of injunction or restraining order

If you are arrested for any matter, you must inform the Council's licensing team within 3 working days of the arrest (whether you are later charged or not).

If you are the subject of criminal proceedings, (including where you are acquitted as part of a criminal case) you must notify the Council's licensing team in writing within 5 working days of being charged or summonsed for an offence.

You should be aware that depending on the type of conviction recorded, and because of the public safety implications, we may have to suspend your licence whilst the matter is under investigation and/or we may revoke your licence.

Please see our convictions policy for further information which is available at [elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing).

### Reporting a road traffic incident

If you or any other person is involved in a road traffic incident that causes damage that materially affects the safety, performance and/or appearance of your vehicle, you must report the incident to us as soon as possible and in any case, within 72 hours using our online reporting form which is available at [elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing). We may require you to provide photographs of the vehicle and copies of any written documentation regarding damage or repairs.

### Making changes to your licence

If you change your name or address, you must inform us in writing within 5 working days, using our online reporting form which is available at [elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing).

Please read Chapter 8 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy for information on making changes to your vehicle licence.

### Vehicle emissions

The Council aims to reduce the levels of harmful emissions produced by taxi and private hire vehicles licensed by Elmbridge. We encourage the use of vehicles powered by alternative low emission fuels such as fully electric or hybrid vehicles at Euro 6 or above. We no longer issue any new licences for diesel vehicles (unless they are wheelchair accessible). We do not issue licences to wheelchair accessible or petrol-fueled vehicles that do not meet the Euro 6 emissions standards as a minimum.

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## Existing vehicles

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From 01 January 2026, the Council will not renew any existing licences for diesel or petrol-fueled vehicles that do not meet Euro 6 emissions standard as a minimum.

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## Temporary vehicles

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Please read Chapter 8 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy.

Sometimes we may temporarily license a replacement vehicle for up to 3 months whilst your existing licensed vehicle undergoes repairs. In such circumstances, the vehicle must be a minimum Euro 4 emission standard or above.

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## Changing your existing vehicle

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If a licence holder wishes to replace an existing licensed vehicle with another, the licence holder must apply for a new vehicle licence using the application form which is available on our website and pay the relevant fee. In order to avoid paying two licence fees in a 12-month period we recommend licence holders timetable the purchase of a new vehicle for around the time that the existing vehicle licence would have been renewed.

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## Advertising on your vehicle

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If you wish to have advertising on your licensed taxi or private vehicle you must apply to the Council before you make any changes to your vehicle. Please see Appendix 6 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy which sets out the Council's policy in respect of advertising.

You should apply for approval for advertising on your vehicle, by using the prescribed application form online at [elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis) and paying the relevant fee.

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## Executive vehicle status

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The holder of a private hire vehicle licence must also apply for separate 'executive vehicle status' by using the prescribed application form online at [elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis) and paying the relevant fee.

As part of the application process, the operator providing the private hire work for the vehicle, will have to supply details of the executive work that the vehicle will carry out. This requires the operator to give a written statement supported by operator records, showing that there is enough 'executive' work for the vehicle and that it falls within the definition of an executive vehicle. Your records must contain the detail required by your licence condition:

- a) date and time of the booking;
- b) date and time of commencement of the journey;
- c) name of the hirer;
- d) place(s) at which the passenger(s) was/ were collected;
- e) place(s) at which the passenger(s) was/ were set down;
- f) PH vehicle licence number;
- g) name and licence number of the PH driver;
- h) fare/fee charged and whether or not calculated by a meter.

The records must cover the period of three months immediately prior to the date of the application for executive status and must show details for all vehicles that you operate.

Please read Chapter 8 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy about executive vehicle status.

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## Other information

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### Updating this guidance

We will review this guidance document from time to time to ensure it still is current. When, and where necessary we may make amendments. If we amend this document, we will republish it on our website.

### Contacting us

- Please do not visit the Civic Centre reception without an appointment.
- You should email us at [licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk) to request an appointment if required.
- When applying for a licence, you **must** use our online application which is available at [elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis](http://elmbridge.gov.uk/taxis) [↗](#).
- If you phone us, you may need to leave a message on our answer phone. We aim to respond to messages within 24 hours (weekdays only). Please call 01372 474748.
- Please **do not**
  - email or copy your email to individual officers
  - phone us or individual officers to chase your application
- You may also contact us by using our [online contact form](#)

### Address for correspondence

You should send all correspondence to [licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk).

If you need to send us your original documents, please address your correspondence to: Licensing Team, Planning & Environmental Health, Elmbridge Borough Council, Civic Centre, High Street, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9SD.

### Customer feedback

We welcome your feedback on our service. If you would like to provide us with feedback please email us at [licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk) including details of the date you applied and the application type. We may not be able to reply directly to individual feedback but we will use it to shape our future service.