



The vehicles must be either –

- **Fully wheelchair accessible at all times.** This means that the wheelchair user must be able to enter and leave the vehicle whilst occupying the wheelchair, and that an appropriate means is provided by which the wheelchair can be secured for the safety of the passenger. Vehicles that require existing seating to be removed before they become fully wheelchair accessible will not be considered to be suitable.
- **Hybrid – Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV).** A vehicle that contains a conventional combustible engine propulsion system with an electric propulsion system. It must have a minimum boot capacity of 300 cubic litres, 5 doors and at least 4 passenger seats; or
- **Fully Electric – Electric Vehicle.** A vehicle that uses an electric motor and is powered by stored electricity and has a minimum boot capacity of 300 cubic litres, at least 4 passenger seats.

Refer also to the Conditions of Fitness of Taxis and Private Hire Cars – this gives you more detailed information of the requirements of the vehicle.

### **Licensed Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles**

Should your application be granted and the vehicle you operate is wheelchair accessible I advise that in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we produce a list of licensed vehicles designated as wheelchair accessible taxis. This list is published on the Falkirk Council website. It gives the licence number and name, vehicle make and model and maximum number of passengers. Licenceholders have the option of giving a contact telephone number.

### **What if I have lived outside the UK for six months or more within the last 10 years?**

If any persons named on the application has lived outside the UK for a period of six months or more within the last 10 years a Certificate of Good Conduct or Criminal Record Certificate from the country you resided in requires to be provided. The Criminal Record Certificate must have been obtained within the last 6 months prior to submitting the application. This is so we can make sure we have the same information about your criminal record as we have for people who have lived in the UK for 10 years. You should contact the Embassy or Consulate to find out how to do this. If the information is not in English then you will need to arrange for it to be translated. You will have to meet the cost of getting this information, along with the costs of any translation.

### **What happens if I have convictions or fixed penalties?**

You need to tell us on the application form of **all** current convictions, conditional offers and/or fixed penalties within and outwith the UK recorded against any person(s) named on the application. If you don't submit all information we will send your application form and fee back to you. If you have a current conviction the application will automatically be determined by the Civic Licensing Committee. If the application is for the renewal of a licence it is only the convictions, conditional offers and/or fixed penalties since the last grant of your licence.

## **How long will it take to process an application?**

We have nine months to make a final decision on your application. No decision can be made on any application until the consultation period of 28 days has passed. In practice most applications take approximately four to six weeks to process unless it has to be determined at a meeting of the Civic Licensing Committee.

The Council can make an application to the Sheriff to extend the nine month determination period if required.

## **How do I make an application?**

Your application should be made on the form that is available to download from our website or enclosed if you have been sent an application pack from the licensing office. You should refer to the Guidance on Completing an application form for a Taxi Operator Licence before completing the form. You will also need to send to us the following with the form:-

- The application fee. This can be paid in cash, by cheque made payable to "Falkirk Council", debit/credit card or postal order.
- Photographic ID
- Proof of address.
- Criminal Record Check (if required)

## **What happens next?**

A copy of your application is passed to Police Scotland for comment.

If the application is for renewal and the licensing section is minded to grant then the licence will be posted to you after the consultation period has passed. Taxi Operator Licences are normally granted initially for 1 year and at the renewal of your licence you have the option to apply for either a 1 year or 3 year licence.

If it is an application for a new licence and the licensing section is minded to grant the licence we will advise you by e-mail or letter after the consultation period has passed. The licence will only be granted subject to you:-

- Purchasing a vehicle that complies with Falkirk Council's policy on licensed taxis.

Getting a Taxi Inspection Certificate for the vehicle. You make an appointment at Falkirk Council's M.O.T. testing station at Dalgrain Industrial Estate, McCafferty Way, Grangemouth, FK3 8EB (telephone number 01324 590 400). Before attending the test, if you are using a meter in the private hire car you should install an appropriate meter in the vehicle and provide a fire extinguisher to (BS 5423 or EN3 standards) and a first aid kit that contains the minimum Health and Safety Executive recommended vehicle kit. You will pay a fee of £65.50 for the taxi inspection test. If the vehicle fails the taxi inspection test, including the MOT, the re-test fee is £32.75. If the failure only relates to the MOT, the re-test fee is £27.40. If the failure only relates to a taxi inspection, re-test the fee is £5.50. You should refer to the Conditions of

Fitness of Taxis and Private Hire Cars – this gives you more detailed information of the requirements of the vehicle.

- Getting the vehicle insured to operate as a taxi.

### **How do I get my licence for a new grant after doing the above?**

You are required to attend the licensing office with the vehicle to be licensed. At this point you will be issued with your taxi operator plates, window stickers and mounting kits along with your licence. A fee of £36 will be required at this point to cover the cost of the plates issued.

### **Do officers of the Council always determine applications?**

Applications are not always determined by officers. Sometimes applications have to go before a Committee known as the Civic Licensing Committee. This happens if there is a possibility of the application being refused.

The application will be determined at a meeting of the Civic Licensing Committee if:-

- you have an unspent conviction(s);
- objections or representations are received;
- you are applying for an additional operator licence;
- you wish to operate a vehicle that does not comply with the current policy; or
- if after 8 weeks of being advised your licence will be granted subject to you presenting a suitably insured vehicle owned by yourself and passing the taxi inspection test and you have failed to do so.

### **What happens if the application has to be determined by the Civic Licensing Committee?**

- You will be advised accordingly after the consultation period has passed that your application will be determined by the Civic Licensing Committee.
- You will be cited to attend a meeting 14 days before the Committee meets. Before the meeting you will also be sent a copy of the report that will be considered in connection with your application.
- At the meeting you will be given the opportunity to speak in support of your application. A decision is generally made on the day of the meeting and you will be advised of this unless the matter is continued to a future meeting.
- If the application is granted you need to present to the licensing office a vehicle which you have purchased, tested and insured as explained above.

### **Are there any conditions attached to my licence?**

If the licence is granted by officers the Standard Conditions will apply. If the licence is granted by the Civic Licensing Committee it will be granted with the Standard Conditions along with any additional conditions that the Committee may apply.

## **What happens if my application is refused?**

If your application is refused, you are not allowed to make another application for this type of licence for 1 year from the date of the refusal unless you can show that there has been a material change in circumstances. You are entitled to ask us within 28 days of the application being refused by the Committee to give reasons for the refusal. A right of appeal to the Falkirk Sheriff can be made within 28 days of the decision of the Committee.

## **Do I have to do anything else during the duration of my licence?**

You have to ensure that the Council always has a copy of your current motor insurance to operate as a taxi and that the vehicle has a current taxi test certificate which lasts for 6 months or 1 year depending on the age of the vehicle. Also, if the taxi is damaged you are required to tell us as soon as possible.

## **Can I change my vehicle once a licence has been issued?**

Yes. Before you purchase another vehicle ensure that it meets the required policy. If you are unsure you should contact the licensing section direct. The vehicle requires to be tested and insured. Once this is done you should visit the licensing office where you will complete a form with the new vehicle details and be issued with new taxi plates, window stickers and door signs. There is a fee of £36 for this. Your licence will also be updated at this point. If you sell or dispose of your vehicle you must return your licence plates and licence to the licensing office within 28 days of the disposal of the vehicle.