

# Taxi Licensing Newsletter



August 2017

## Demonstration of the Nissan Dynamo Electric Taxi



At the Taxi Trade Forum on Friday 4th August Dynamo Taxi Company came to give a demo of their new multi-seater Nissan e-NV200 electric taxi. Trade representatives and members of the Licensing Committee came along to see the vehicle in action and take a test drive.

Further information on the vehicle is available on Dynamo's website at: <http://www.dynamotaxi.com/>

We are looking into arranging a demo of the hybrid LTI TX4 at the next Taxi Trade Forum scheduled for Friday 3rd November. If we are able to set this up then we will let you know—all licence holders will be welcome to attend.



## Important information for drivers of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

In the March 2017 edition of the Taxi newsletter we published an article entitled 'Important Changes to Equality Law'. The article concerned the recent changes to equality law and the duties imposed on drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Following publication of the newsletter it came to light we made an error in this article, which we would now like to rectify.

For clarification, the following requirements for drivers of wheelchair accessible taxi and private hire vehicles are a **policy requirement and not a legal requirement**:

- Transport wheelchair users in their wheelchair
- Provide passengers in wheelchairs with appropriate assistance
- Charge wheelchair users the same as non-wheelchair users

Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles will therefore still need to ensure they observe the above provisions. Failure to do so would mean a driver would likely be subject to the disciplinary procedures contained in the 'Enforcement Management System' and rather than sanctions under the Equalities Act.

## Safeguarding training—Update

Over 270 drivers have undertaken the Customer Awareness: Safeguarding, Equality and Protection training so far.

We have received a lot of extremely positive feedback with attendees finding it useful, engaging and informative.

We have also taken on board the constructive criticism we have received and made the following changes to the course:

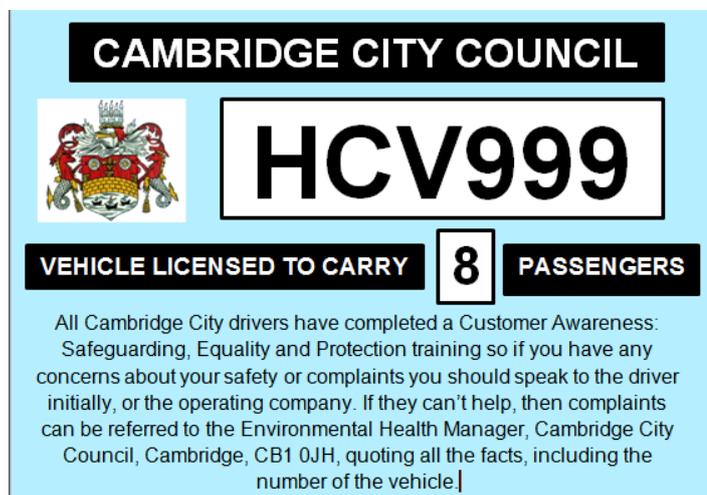
- More information on how drivers can protect themselves and other drivers
- Made breaks optional
- Created morning (10:00am to 12:00pm) and afternoon sessions (1:00pm to 3:00pm)
- All future courses will now take place at the Meadows Community Centre

The next batch of training sessions will take place in September. If you have received a 'Request to Attend' letter then you are asked to make every effort to come to the course. If, however, you are unable to attend then please e-mail us at [taxi@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@cambridge.gov.uk).

Please note that the requirement for non-driver proprietors of vehicle and operator licences to attend the training still applies. Right now we are focussing on delivering the training to drivers and we have in mind to start inviting non-driver proprietors in the November tranche. If, however, you are a vehicle proprietor and would like any non-drivers on the licence to attend the course with you then please get in touch.

The Council would like to thank Panther Taxis and Cambridge Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association for their help and support in arranging the sessions in May and July.

## Interior signs for vehicles



Earlier in the year it came to the Council's attention that interior signage was a condition of taxi and private hire vehicle licences. It used to be the case that fare charts were printed with all the necessary information about the vehicle, but this fell out of practice some time ago.

The conditions for interior signs provide for the following information to be included: the licence number; the numbers of passengers on the licence; and, instructions on how to make a complaint.

At the Taxi Trade Forum on the 4th August 2017 we put two different designs to trade representatives and the consensus was for the plate to the left, which looks similar to an exterior licence plate.

Following feedback from the trade that an A5 sign would be too big we are looking into producing double-sided A6 signs that could be attached to windows or the bulkhead/partition in a multi-seater vehicle. Both the trade and members of the Licensing Committee agreed that the presence of an interior sign would be an additional important safety factor.

We are still reviewing how best to produce and distribute the signs and will be in contact with vehicle licence holders in due course. It is anticipated that the first issue of an interior sign will be free of charge, but where an interior sign goes missing or is damaged then most likely the licence holder will need to pay a fee.

## Vehicle renewals—information for proprietors

**Insurance documents**—please only present a valid insurance certificate at the vehicle renewal appointment with Customer Services. There is no need for you to send in updated documents during the year. You must ensure, however, the vehicle is continuously insured.

**Second vehicle test**—a reminder that when you take the vehicle for its first test at renewal please ensure to book in the second test, in six month's time, with the Garage. Booking at late notice is not advised as there will likely be less choice of appointments available and you could face your vehicle being off the road until a new Certificate of Compliance is issued. You must call the Garage direct on (01223) 458266 in order to book a vehicle test.

## Low Emission Taxi Scheme - Update

We are very pleased to let you know that our bid for funding to cover the installation of taxi-only Rapid and Fast Chargepoints was successful. The Office for Low Emission Vehicles awarded funds for 18 Rapid Charge Points and 3 Fast Charge Points to be installed over the next 4 years, starting before March 2108.

Meanwhile we have discussed power supply with UKPN and we are now discussing the legal agreements required with the site owners. These chargepoints will be reserved for taxi use only. The costs of charging a vehicle will depend upon the service provider but they should be set at an economic level to ensure that they are used.

The Office for Low Emission Vehicles also has funding for the installation of Charge Points in residential areas where off road parking is not available. We are looking at this with the County Council, who plan to programme this work alongside changes to residential parking areas. This will be available to all residents in the relevant parking zones and will be helpful for those who are unable to charge at home. If you would like to suggest any suitable areas, please let me know.

In a change to the earlier plans, the Taxi Top-Up Grant will not be administered by local authorities, but the amount will be deducted from the price of the taxi at point of purchase.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/601894/plugin-taxi-information-sheet.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/601894/plugin-taxi-information-sheet.pdf)

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The Plug in Taxi Grant (PITG) is a national grant covering the UK. Any licensed taxi driver purchasing a new ULEV purpose built taxi can benefit from this grant.

A ULEV purpose built taxi is a vehicle which meets Transport for London's Conditions of Fitness for motor taxis in London as well as meeting the definitions of either category 1 or category 2 of the existing Plug in Car Grant (PICG). A category 1 vehicle must emit less than 50g/km of CO2 and have a zero emission capable range of at least 70 miles. A category 2 vehicle must have CO2 emissions of less than 50g/km and have a zero emission capable range of between 10 and 69 miles.

The PITG amounts for category 1 and category 2 purpose built ULEV taxis are £7,500 and £3,000 respectively. The amount of the grant will be automatically deducted from the price of the taxi when it is purchased. The dealership will complete the paperwork, so there are no application forms for the driver to complete. Both the driver and the vehicle will have to be licenced for the dealer to complete the grant claim.

Two purpose built taxis are expected to come to market in 2017. These are the London Taxi Company's TX5 and Frazer-Nash's new Metrocab built by Ecotive Ltd.

Non purpose built ULEV taxis and private hire vehicles may attract grant funding under the existing PICG. OLEV will review the rate of this grant on a regular basis.

Information from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/601894/plugin-taxi-information-sheet.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/601894/plugin-taxi-information-sheet.pdf)

Anita Lewis-Scientific Officer. E-mail: [anita.lewis@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:anita.lewis@cambridge.gov.uk)

## Taxi Demand Survey—Update

As we currently restrict the number of Cambridge City Hackney carriages we are required at least every 3 years to reassess if we still need to do this. The last demand survey was undertaken in 2014 so in March 2017 Licensing Committee agreed to undertake another survey so we can understand if we still need to restrict numbers.

CTS have been undertaking the survey for us, and as part of this many of you have completed a questionnaire for them. There are several other parts to this work that have been going on or are soon to happen. This includes a survey of public opinions on what they need and think about using taxis in the City, and work to review the how used various ranks are. The rank work in particular helps give us vital information about if there are large numbers of taxis waiting, or members of the public who can't get a taxi. The final report is due to be finished in early December and we will then take the results to Licensing Committee in January 2018.

Thank you for all those that responded to the driver survey and we'll update you on the rest of the work later in the year.

## Communication by e-mail

As part of the Council's strategy to increase the amount of online content and electronic sending of documents we are reviewing how we get in touch with you.

We are therefore looking into sending renewal letters, consultation information and even the Taxi Newsletter by e-mail. In time we are looking to make renewal reminders only available by email with no paper reminders routinely sent at all. Sending out correspondence by e-mail is quicker and cheaper and this could be reflected in your annual licensing fees!

However, in order for us to do this it is crucial that all licence holders keep us up to date with a current and valid e-mail address. You can do this by e-mailing us at: [taxi@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@cambridge.gov.uk) and if you can also say if you are happy for routine correspondence to be only by email please. We will also be collecting e-mail addresses when licensees attend the Customer Awareness: Safeguarding, Equality and Protection training course.

## Consultations

The Council consulted on the following matters from the 31st July to 3rd September 2017:

- Review of the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy—these were proposals put forward by the trade.
- Hackney Carriage Table of Fares—following a request from Cambridge City Licensed Taxis for a fare increase; we have received objections on elements of the proposed fare card and this matter will therefore return to committee for determination.

Thank you for all the responses sent in. These will be put before the Licensing Committee when they next meet on Monday 16th October 2017.

If you are interested in attending and speaking at the committee hearing then please let us know by emailing [taxi@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@cambridge.gov.uk) with any questions you want to raise. We will then let Committee Services know of your intention to attend.

## Enforcement Update

- On the 1st July 2017 a team of Licensing Enforcement Officers undertook night-time enforcement activity in the city centre. One of the prominent issues noted was that of private vehicles blocking rank space, particularly the new night-time rank on Downing Street opposite Revolution. The matter was raised with the County Council at the last Taxi Trade Forum so we are hoping there will be an increased level of parking enforcement on Friday and Saturday nights in the near future. This may include joint operations with officers from the Commercial & Licensing Team.
- Licensing Enforcement Officers are undertaking increased presence at the major taxi ranks around the city during the day and evening. Officers will be checking both taxi and private hire vehicles as well as observing vehicles licensed by other authorities.
- In the last quarter the Commercial & Licensing Team have dealt with 51 driver complaints, the majority of which concerned poor driving, and 9 vehicle complaints. 7 drivers have been referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee where three individuals had their licence revoked.

## Criminal Records Checks for Non-Driver Proprietors

At Licensing Committee on the 24th July 2017 members agreed to change the policy with regard to criminal records checks for non-driver proprietors of vehicle or operator licences.

Any non-driver proprietors attached to vehicle or operator licences will now only need to supply a Basic Disclosure once every three years and not an enhanced check

If you have already provided us with an Enhanced Disclosure then we will shortly be writing to the lead proprietor on the licence to invite those who have undertaken an enhanced check to apply for a refund of the difference between a basic and enhanced check, which is £25.00

If you have yet to provide us with a Basic or Enhanced Disclosure then we will be writing to the lead proprietor to advise a Basic Disclosure is required for all non-driver proprietors attached to the licence as soon as possible.

A Basic Disclosure can be applied for online via the mygov.scot portal. Please see: <https://www.mygov.scot/basic-disclosure/apply-for-basic-disclosure>, for further details. Each application costs £25.00 and they aim to process all applications in 14 days.

Cambridge City Council would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any inconvenience caused to those affected by the change in policy.

### Have your say

If you have any items that you would like to see in the Newsletter then let us know. Are there any areas which you would like to see covered? Any topics which you feel we need to share? If so then please do, get in touch by e-mailing: [taxi@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:taxi@cambridge.gov.uk).