
Taxi and private hire vehicle licence

Guidance for applicants



Elmbridge
Borough Council

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Version control

Version	Initials	Date	Changes Made
V1.0	DC	01/07/2020	New guidance created. In force from 1 September 2020
V1.1	DC	25/08/2020	Added information on exceptions to requirement 4, and updated information on applying for your licence.
V1.2	DC	09/09/2020	Amended information about the DBS Update Service
V1.3	DC	29/10/2020	Added information on applying for and renewing your licence
V1.4	DC	15/12/2020	Added information about planning permission and records to support executive status.
V1.5	DC	19/05/2021	Added information on overseas criminal record checks

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

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

We have actively considered the needs of blind and partially sighted people in accessing this document. We will make this document available in full on our website, and individuals or organisations may download and translate the text for conversion into other accessible formats. If you have other needs in this regard, please contact the licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk .

Introduction

We have produced this guidance document to help applicants and existing taxi and private hire vehicle owners, to apply for a taxi and 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.

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.

We have set out several requirements in our taxi and private hire licensing policy, which you must complete before you apply to help us decide whether to grant your taxi or private hire vehicle licence. We have explained our reason for each requirement in Chapter 3 of our policy and provide further guidance in this document.

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.

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.

Part 1: New vehicle licence

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.

Before you apply for a new vehicle licence

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) supplies 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 licensed taxi or private hire driver 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 DBS application, you should read our Convictions policy which is available at elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing

You must obtain your DBS application form from the Licensing Team.

Further information and step by step guides on how to complete your application form are available at this website: gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-application-forms-guide-for-applicants

Once you have completed your DBS application form and you are ready to send it, please contact the Licensing Team to make an appointment. At the appointment, the Licensing Team will check your form and the relevant identification documents as set out in the DBS guidance above. You will need to pay the relevant fee at your appointment before we send your application to the DBS for processing.

It can take up to six weeks for the DBS to issue your disclosure information.

When you receive your certificate from the DBS, 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 DBS disclosure before you send it to the Council as we cannot return the original form.

Please return your DBS 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 DBS 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 your DBS certificates 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. Information on registering for the DBS Update Service is available at [gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-applicant-guide).

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 DBS disclosure as well.

However, when you apply for your vehicle licence, 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 three 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.

The application process for criminal records checks or 'Certificates of Good Character' 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](https://www.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.

If you are unable to obtain a certificate you must provide a written explanation with your taxi or private hire licence application, which details your attempts to obtain a certificate and confirms why this has not been possible.

We will consider your explanation against the situation in those countries and decide whether to waive the requirement.

If we decide that it is possible for you to obtain a certificate, but you have failed to do so, we are likely to refuse your application

We will consider each case 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

Because of changes made by the Immigration Act 2016, licensing authorities now carry out right to work checks when considering applications for licences in the taxi and private hire sector.

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 manual check and 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) a biometric residence permit;
- b) a biometric residence card; or
- c) status issued under the EU Settlement Scheme (alternatively, you may continue to be able to prove your right to work by presenting your EU passport or ID card until the end of the planned implementation period).

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 30 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.

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.

List A - Permanent right to Remain in UK

1. Current passport showing the holder, or a person as the child of the holder, is a British citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.
2. Current passport or national identity card showing the holder, or the child of the holder, is a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland.
3. Current passport endorsed to show that the holder is either;
 - a) exempt from immigration control, or
 - b) is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or
 - c) has the right of abode in the UK, or
 - d) has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
4. Registration Certificate or Document Certifying Permanent Residence issued by the Home Office to a national of a (EEA) country or Switzerland.

5. Permanent Residence Card issued by the Home Office to the family member of a national an EEA country or Switzerland.
6. 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, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or previous employer.
7. Current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
8. A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the named person can currently stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question.
3. A current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-European Economic Area national who is a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence.
4. 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.

5. A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 18(3) or 20 (2) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, to a family member of a national of a EEA country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.
6. 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.
7. A Positive Verification Notice issued by the Home Office Employer Checking Service issued to the employer or prospective employer, which indicates that 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.

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 VIT and ensures that vehicles meet the Council's safety and other standards.

One of our licensing officers may also inspect the vehicle at the Civic Centre before we issue a licence.

If a licensing officer is unable to inspect your vehicle, we may ask you to provide photographs of your vehicle instead. We will need the photographs to show:

- the front, rear, nearside, and offside exterior of the vehicle
- any damage to the bodywork
- the interior of the vehicle (front seats and back seats)
- the spare wheel
- the fire extinguisher
- the vehicle identification number (VIN)
- taxi sign (illuminated) (if applicable)
- taxi meter (if applicable) showing
 - the word “FARE” displayed
 - the word “HIRED” displayed
 - each tariff displayed

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 vehicles 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 for the first time if the tinted windows are too dark.
14. The vehicle windscreen must allow at least 75% light through and all the other 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 Council needs the insurance policy 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.

For example, a private hire vehicle insurance certificate might say "for hire and reward" or "for private hire". This would not be adequate for a taxi where the wording needs to say, for example, "for public hire" or "public hire as a taxi or hackney carriage" or "hire and reward under the terms of a taxi or hackney carriage licence" or similar wording.

This is especially important if you are relying on a cover note, as some insurance agents do not always word the cover note clearly. If a cover note is not clear as to the cover it provides we will not accept the insurance as valid and we will not accept your application. If there are problems we will not discuss the matter with your broker. This is a matter for you to sort out.

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

Cover notes

If you produce a cover note or insurance certificate that is only valid for a few days, we will need you to 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 will always 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](https://www.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.

Apply for your new vehicle licence

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 have to re-send us the whole application. We will not make any exceptions to this.

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)

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

Vehicle registration document

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)
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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 registered with the DBS Update Service)

How to apply if our online application form is unavailable

If the online application form is not available, you will be able to use our fillable PDF form which will be made available on our website. You must complete the form electronically (not handwritten) and email your completed form to licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk.

- The document must be in PDF format or photos that meet the above standards.
- You should attach and send all supporting documents in one email.
- You should complete the subject line of the email and include the following application type, and your name. Examples of the application type are 'taxi vehicle renewal', 'private hire vehicle transfer', 'accident report form', 'change of address' etc.
- If you are unable to send the documents in one email because the files are too big, you may send more than one email but still follow the information above.
- **If you do not follow the information above your application will be invalid and we will reject it.**

Paying your application fee if the online form is unavailable

When we are ready to process your application, we will contact you by telephone and take your card payment. Please **do not** contact us to make payment before we are ready, as this delays the process.

If you do not answer your phone, or we leave a message and you do not return our call the same day, we will send you an email to arrange a date and time to make payment. If we are unable to take payment within 5 working days of our initial call, we will reject your application.

When we receive your fully completed application form, supporting documents, and relevant fee, we will aim to process it in line with our current timescales. We have published our current fees and timescales on our [website](#).

When we receive your application

When we receive your application by email to licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk, you will receive an automatic reply message from us.

If you do not receive this 'auto reply', it may mean that we did not receive your email or the 'auto reply' has stopped working. If so, please send us your application and supporting documents again. Please do not email or phone us to see if we have received it.

We will allocate your application to an officer who will contact you if they need to, or when they are ready to process your application. We will deal with your applications in the order we receive them so please do not:

- Email us or individual officers to chase your application
- Phone us or individual officers to chase your application

This will delay officers from processing your application and will not speed up the process.

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/

Sometimes in exceptional circumstances, we may take longer to process your application.

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.

Part 2: Existing vehicles

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.

Renewing your vehicle licence

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 30 working days (about 6 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 have to re-send us the whole application. We will not make any exceptions to this.

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 give your application correctly and in time, as set out in these guidelines.

We will not accept your application if you give it more than 6 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.

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.

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. 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 driver's licence, you must you must complete a declaration informing us whether you have spent more than three 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 three 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 three continuous months outside the United Kingdom since we granted your existing taxi or private hire driver's licence.

Please read Chapter 13 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 send us 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

- 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 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 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.

Renew your existing licence

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.)

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 have to re-send us the whole application. We will not make any exceptions to this.

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.**

How to apply if our online application form is unavailable

If the online application form is not available, you will be able to use our fillable PDF form which will be made available on our website. You must complete the form electronically (not handwritten) and email your completed form to licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk.

- **do not** send or copy your application to individual officers as they will not reply.
- the application form must be correctly completed.
- the supporting documents must meet the above standards.
- you should attach and send all supporting documents in one email.
- the subject line of the email should be one of the following:
 - 'new taxi vehicle'
 - 'taxi vehicle renewal',
 - 'new private hire vehicle',

- 'private hire vehicle renewal'.
- If you are unable to send the documents in one email because the files are too big, you may send more than one email but still follow the above information.

We **will** reject your application if your documents do not meet the standards we have set out above. If we reject your application, we will tell you what is wrong with your document, refer you back to this guidance, and you will have to re-send us the whole application and the new documents must meet the standards set out above. We will not make any exceptions to this.

Paying your application fee if the online form is unavailable

When we are ready to process your application, we will contact you by telephone and take your card payment. Please **do not** contact us to make payment before we are ready, as this delays the process.

If you do not answer your phone, or we leave a message and you do not return our call the same day, we will send you an email to arrange a date and time to make payment. If we are unable to take payment within 5 working days of our initial call, we will reject your application.

When we receive your fully completed application form, supporting documents, and relevant fee, we will aim to process it in line with our current timescales. We have published our current fees and timescales on our [website](#).

When we receive your application

When we receive your application by email to licensing@elmbridge.gov.uk, you will receive an automatic reply message from us.

If you do not receive this 'auto reply', it may mean that we did not receive your email or the 'auto reply' has stopped working. If so, please send us your application and supporting documents again. Please do not email or phone us to see if we have received it.

We will allocate your application to an officer who will contact you if they need to, or when they are ready to process your application. We will deal with your applications in the order we receive them so please do not:

- Email us or individual officers to chase your application

- Phone us or individual officers to chase your application

This will delay officers from processing your application and will not speed up the process.

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/](https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing/taxi-and-private-hire-guidance-for-applicants/)

Sometimes in exceptional circumstances, we may take longer to process your application.

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.

Maintaining your licence

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 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 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 will always suspend 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.

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, you receive a CPN, are made the subject of any form of injunction or restraining order you must notify the Council's licensing team in writing, within 5 working days of the event.

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.

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, with 72 hours using our online reporting form which is available at elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing.

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.

Please read Chapter 8 of our taxi and private hire licensing policy for information on making changes to your driving 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 electric, hybrid or liquified petroleum gas (LPG). We no longer issue any new licences for diesel or petrol-fuelled vehicles that do not meet the latest Euro emissions standard.

You should plan for the following changes which will be taking place over the next five years.

Existing vehicles

After 31 December 2025, the Council will not renew any existing licences for diesel or petrol-fuelled vehicles that do not meet the latest Euro emissions standard.

Replacement vehicles

After 31 December 2021, the Council will not issue any licences for replacement diesel or petrol-fuelled vehicles that do not meet the latest Euro emissions standard

Temporary vehicles

Sometimes we may temporarily license a replacement vehicle whilst your existing licensed vehicle undergoes repairs. In such circumstances, we may allow the temporary vehicle not to meet the latest Euro emissions standard for diesel and petrol vehicles. We shall consider each application on a case-by-case basis.

Changing your existing vehicle

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

A taxi or private hire vehicle licence cannot be transferred to another vehicle. However, the Council recognises that there may be occasions when it is necessary or desirable to replace the original vehicle during the term of the licence. This may be because the original vehicle has suffered mechanical breakdown or crash damage, or because the licence holder wishes to replace it with a newer vehicle.

If a licence holder wishes to replace an existing licensed vehicle with another, the licence holder must apply to 'replace a taxi or private hire vehicle' using the application form which is available on our website, and pay the relevant fee.

After 31 December 2021, replacement diesel or petrol-fuelled vehicles must meet the latest Euro emissions standard.

This means that from 1 January 2022, you will have to apply for a new vehicle licence to replace your existing vehicle, and you will have to follow the requirements set out in Part 1 of this document.

If you replace your existing vehicle between the date this policy takes effect and 31 December 2021, the replacement vehicle must meet a higher Euro Emission standard than the existing vehicle.

Advertising on your vehicle

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 elmsbridge.gov.uk/licensing and paying the relevant fee.

Executive vehicle status

The holder of a private hire vehicle licence must also apply for separate 'executive vehicle status' by using the prescribed application form online at elmsbridge.gov.uk/licensing 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 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.

Other information

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 instead of phoning us
- When applying for a licence, you **must** use our online application which is available at elmbridge.gov.uk/licensing/apply-for-a-licence-taxi-and-private-hire/.
- If you phone us, you may need to leave a message on our answer phone and it may take us much longer than usual to respond.
- 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.

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