

Report of: Transport & Parking Business Manager

To: General Purposes Licensing Committee

Date: 29th March 2007 Item No:

Title of Report : Operator Signing on Private Hire Vehicles



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report: To seek the Committee's agreement to amend the Private Hire Vehicle Regulations to ensure that the Private Hire Operator identification stickers required by those Regulations are properly displayed.



Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: N/A



Scrutiny Responsibility:

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:



Graham Smith. Transport and Parking Business Manager
Daniel Smith Legal & Democratic Services
Chris Kaye Finance



Policy Framework: None



Recommendation(s):



The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:-

Agree the proposed amendment to the existing Private Hire Vehicle Regulations.



Background

1. On 20th June 2002 following a request from Private Hire Operators, the Licensing Committee approved an addition to regulations requiring Private Hire Vehicles to display, on the rear doors of their vehicle, details of the Operator through which their bookings were received. This has been a success, providing customers with an easy way to recognise the vehicle they have booked.
2. Although all Operators have provided door stickers that comply with the regulation, recently a few proprietors have taken to altering the provided door stickers on their individual vehicles by cutting out and displaying only parts of the stickers. Whilst this may still comply with the letter of the regulation this practice is making the lettering difficult to read.
3. An addition to the existing regulations is required to stop this practice and is shown below **in bold type**.

Current Regulation and Proposed Amendment

Operator's Sign

- a. A sign must be displayed on the rear doors on both sides of the vehicle containing details of the name of the Operator of the vehicle and any telephone number, fax number email or web address of that firm.
- b. The sign is a requirement of the Oxford City Council and a condition of the licence; it must be attached to the door of the vehicle in such a manner that it cannot easily be removed. Signs with a magnetic backing are not acceptable.
- c. The sign shall be no larger than the door sign supplied by the Council to identify the vehicle and required under condition introduced in April 1993 and amended in September 2000, to be fitted on the front doors of the vehicle.
- d. The sign shall not contain the words "tax", "taxi", "cab", "taxi-cab" or "for hire", whether or not as part of another word.
- e. **The design and size of the sign provided by each Operator shall be approved by the Taxi Licensing Office and may not be altered in any way from that approved.**
- f. **Signs approved after 29th March 2007 shall be no less than 200mm in height or 290mm in length.**
- g. Exemption for the display of the sign will be granted to those vehicles, which have been granted exemption for the display

of a licence plate under s74 (3) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and with the same conditions contained in legislation for that exemption.

Legislation

4. The Council is permitted by Section 48(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to attach such conditions to private hire vehicle licences, as it considers reasonably necessary. Any person aggrieved by any such condition may appeal to a Magistrates' Court.

Consultation

5. A consultation letter giving details of the proposed amendment has been sent to licensed operators, hackney carriage and private hire driver associations.
6. No letters of objection have been received.
7. Letters supporting the application have been received, from 001 Cars, Royal Cars and from ABC Taxis, who also suggested that the signs be the same size and have the same yellow background colour as the Council sign, each with an individual Operator colour.
8. Operators already use individual identifying colours and officers view is that it would be unnecessarily expensive to require a change to the same yellow background colour. The size suggestion has been adopted in the proposed amendment.

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