

Birmingham plying for hire: questions and answers

9 practice questions for the Birmingham City Council taxi and private hire knowledge test, with answers and explanations at the end.

Free from taxiknowledgetest.co.uk. Not an official council document: check your council's current guidance.

Questions

Plying for hire

1. Which of these is a lawful private hire journey?

- ☐ A. Someone waves you down in Broad Street
- ☐ B. Someone outside New Street station asks you for a lift
- ☐ C. A booking made through your operator and passed to you
- ☐ D. A friend of a passenger asks for a lift after you drop off

2. It is late on a Saturday. You have no booking. Which of these could look like plying for hire?

- ☐ A. Driving home at the end of your shift with your door signs on
- ☐ B. Waiting at your operator's base
- ☐ C. Parking at a supermarket to buy food
- ☐ D. Parking outside a busy club so people ask you for lifts

3. You are waiting at the airport for a booked passenger. A traveller asks if you are free to take him into the city. What should you do?

- ☐ A. Refuse, and tell him to contact a licensed operator
- ☐ B. Take him if your booked passenger is 20 minutes late
- ☐ C. Take him, but agree a cash fare before you set off
- ☐ D. Take him, then ask the operator to log the job later

4. A private hire driver slows down next to people on the pavement and calls out "Need a car?". What is he doing?

- ☐ A. Giving good customer service
- ☐ B. Plying for hire, which is unlawful for private hire vehicles
- ☐ C. Nothing wrong, if he has his badge on
- ☐ D. Taking a booking on behalf of his operator, which is allowed

5. A private hire driver is found guilty of plying for hire with no valid insurance. What does Birmingham's committee policy say should happen to his licence?

- ☐ A. Nothing, because it is a police matter
- ☐ B. He should get a written warning only
- ☐ C. It should be revoked
- ☐ D. It should be suspended for 7 days

6. A person flags down a private hire vehicle in the street and says, "It's fine, I'll pay cash." Does that make the journey lawful?

- ☐ A. No, the journey is still not booked through an operator
- ☐ B. Yes, if the fare is paid in advance
- ☐ C. Yes, if the passenger signs a note saying they asked for it
- ☐ D. Yes, if the driver phones the operator first

7. A woman comes out of a takeaway that has a free phone to your operator. She asks you to take her home. Can you take her details and pass the booking to your operator?

- ☐ A. Yes, if your operator accepts it before you set off
- ☐ B. Yes, because the takeaway has a free phone to your operator
- ☐ C. Yes, if she pays the fare before the journey
- ☐ D. No, a driver must not take passenger details for the operator

8. You carry a passenger who did not book through your operator. What is likely to happen to your insurance?

- ☐ A. Nothing changes if the passenger pays by card
- ☐ B. It is likely to be invalid, so you could be prosecuted for no insurance as well
- ☐ C. It stays valid because you were at work
- ☐ D. It is valid if the journey is under 5 miles

9. What does the council say a conviction for plying for hire is likely to bring?

- ☐ A. A warning letter and nothing more
- ☐ B. A large fine, penalty points and possibly a driving ban
- ☐ C. A short training course instead of a fine
- ☐ D. A small fine that has no effect on your licence or driving

Answers

1. **C. A booking made through your operator and passed to you.** You may only collect passengers when the job was booked through an operator licensed by Birmingham and passed to you by that operator.
2. **D. Parking outside a busy club so people ask you for lifts.** You must not park near places such as bars, clubs, takeaways, hotels and hospitals in a way that makes you look available for hire, unless your operator has given you a booking there.
3. **A. Refuse, and tell him to contact a licensed operator.** If a member of the public asks you for a ride, you must refuse and tell them to contact a licensed operator. Taking him would be plying for hire.
4. **B. Plying for hire, which is unlawful for private hire vehicles.** Offering rides to people in the street is plying for hire. It is a criminal offence for a PHV driver to take a fare that was not booked with their operator.
5. **C. It should be revoked.** The council's committee policy says any driver found guilty of plying for hire and making their insurance invalid should have their licence revoked.
6. **A. No, the journey is still not booked through an operator.** How the passenger pays makes no difference. Every job must be booked with your operator before you collect the passenger.
7. **D. No, a driver must not take passenger details for the operator.** A PHV driver may not take passenger details for the operator, even next to a free phone or radio link. You must not pass booking details to your operator yourself.
8. **B. It is likely to be invalid, so you could be prosecuted for no insurance as well.** Carrying a passenger who has not booked is likely to make your insurance invalid. You could then be prosecuted for plying for hire and for having no insurance.
9. **B. A large fine, penalty points and possibly a driving ban.** The council's legal information says a conviction is likely to bring a substantial fine, penalty points and possible disqualification from driving.

Sources

- Private hire legal information, Birmingham City Council, Undated (the PDF file was created on 15 September 2016). Archived copy of 10 May 2026 (live page blocked automated access):
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https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/27022/hackney_carriage_and_private_hire_licensing_policy.pdf