

Licensing law basics: questions and answers

55 practice questions for UK taxi and private hire knowledge tests, with answers and explanations at the end.

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Questions

Hackney carriage or private hire

1. Which licensed vehicle may be hailed by a passenger in the street?

- ☐ A. A private hire vehicle that has its licence plate on show
- ☐ B. Any licensed vehicle, as long as the meter is switched on
- ☐ C. A private hire vehicle, if the driver is wearing a badge
- ☐ D. A hackney carriage, in the area where it is licensed

2. A person waves at your private hire vehicle in the street and asks for a lift home. What should you do?

- ☐ A. Take them, as long as you both agree the fare first
- ☐ B. Take them, if there are no hackney carriages nearby
- ☐ C. Refuse, and tell them to book through an operator
- ☐ D. Take them, but phone your operator to log the job

3. Who may wait at a taxi rank for passengers?

- ☐ A. Any private hire vehicle licensed by the council
- ☐ B. Hackney carriages licensed by that council
- ☐ C. Private hire vehicles waiting for a booking
- ☐ D. Any vehicle at all, for up to two minutes

4. What does 'plying for hire' mean?

- ☐ A. Taking a booking from your operator by phone or by app
- ☐ B. Driving a passenger who has agreed a fixed price in advance
- ☐ C. Putting your operator's phone number on the car doors
- ☐ D. Offering a vehicle for hire on the spot, such as at a rank

5. A council must not license a private hire vehicle that looks like a hackney carriage. Why?

- ☐ A. So that it costs less to insure as a private car
- ☐ B. So that it can carry more passengers than a taxi
- ☐ C. So nobody thinks they can hail it in the street
- ☐ D. So that it does not need a meter or a plate fitted

6. You are at a rank with your hackney carriage. A passenger asks to go to a place inside the council's area. Can you refuse?

- ☐ A. Yes, if the journey is too short
- ☐ B. Yes, if you would rather wait for a longer fare
- ☐ C. Yes, if you are near the end of your shift
- ☐ D. Not without a reasonable excuse

7. Who sets the maximum fares for hackney carriages?

- ☐ A. The council, in its table of fares or byelaws
- ☐ B. Each driver, before the journey starts
- ☐ C. The operator the driver works with
- ☐ D. The Department for Transport, for all of England

8. A hackney carriage journey ends outside the council's area. No fare was agreed before the journey. What is the most the driver can charge?

- ☐ A. The fare shown on the taximeter
- ☐ B. Any fare the driver thinks is fair
- ☐ C. Double the fare shown on the meter
- ☐ D. The fare set by the other council

9. A passenger books a private hire journey. Who is the contract for the hire made with, by law?

- ☐ A. The driver who carries out the journey
- ☐ B. The owner of the private hire vehicle
- ☐ C. The operator who accepted the booking
- ☐ D. The council that licensed the vehicle

10. When must a private hire operator write down the details of a booking?

- ☐ A. Before the journey starts
- ☐ B. By the end of that day
- ☐ C. Within 7 days of the job
- ☐ D. Only if the passenger complains

11. A driver takes a longer route than needed so that the fare is higher. What is this?

- ☐ A. Allowed, as long as the passenger does not complain
- ☐ B. Allowed, as long as the meter is working correctly
- ☐ C. Only a breach of the operator's own rules
- ☐ D. An offence of unnecessarily prolonging the journey

Licences, fit and proper, and DBS

12. Before a council grants a taxi or private hire driver's licence, it must be satisfied that the applicant is what?

- ☐ A. A fit and proper person
- ☐ B. A British citizen born in the UK
- ☐ C. A home owner in the council area
- ☐ D. A member of a drivers' association

13. How long must you have held a full driving licence before you can get a taxi or private hire driver's licence?

- ☐ A. At least 6 months
- ☐ B. At least 12 months
- ☐ C. At least 2 years
- ☐ D. At least 3 years in the UK

14. How long does a taxi or private hire driver's licence normally last?

- ☐ A. 1 year, and the driver must then take the test again
- ☐ B. 5 years, the same as a private hire operator's licence
- ☐ C. 3 years, unless the council sets a shorter period for that case
- ☐ D. 10 years, the same as a photocard driving licence

15. How long does a private hire operator's licence normally last?

- ☐ A. 1 year
- ☐ B. 5 years
- ☐ C. 3 years
- ☐ D. 10 years

16. What is the longest time a private hire vehicle licence can last?

- ☐ A. 1 year
- ☐ B. 6 months
- ☐ C. 3 years
- ☐ D. 5 years

17. The Statutory Standards suggest a question to help decide if someone is 'fit and proper'. What is it?

- ☐ A. Has this person ever had a parking ticket at any time in their life?
- ☐ B. Has this person lived in the council area for at least five years?
- ☐ C. Would you let someone you care for travel alone with them?
- ☐ D. Does this person know every street and every rank in the area?

18. When a council decides whether someone is fit and proper, what standard of proof does it use?

- ☐ A. The balance of probabilities
- ☐ B. Beyond reasonable doubt, as in a criminal court
- ☐ C. Only whether they have a criminal conviction
- ☐ D. Benefit of the doubt always goes to the driver

19. Which DBS check do the Statutory Standards say taxi and private hire drivers should have?

- ☐ A. Basic, which only shows convictions that are not yet spent
- ☐ B. Standard, without any check of the barred lists at all
- ☐ C. None, as long as the driver says they have no convictions
- ☐ D. Enhanced, with checks of the children's and adults' barred lists

20. **How often do the Statutory Standards say a council should check licensed drivers for new DBS information?**
- ☐ A. Every month
 - ☐ B. Every 6 months
 - ☐ C. Every 3 years
 - ☐ D. Only at renewal
21. **What does the DBS Update Service let the council do, with the driver's consent?**
- ☐ A. See the driver's medical records and their GP's notes
 - ☐ B. Check online at any time if the DBS certificate is still up to date
 - ☐ C. Check the driver's bank account for any unpaid fines
 - ☐ D. Track where the driver's licensed vehicle is in real time
22. **A private hire driver is working. Where must their driver's badge be?**
- ☐ A. Kept in the glove box of the car
 - ☐ B. Left at home in a safe place
 - ☐ C. Kept in a pocket, ready to show if asked
 - ☐ D. Worn where it can be plainly seen
23. **A driver has permission to stay in the UK for another 18 months. What does the law say about their licence?**
- ☐ A. It lasts the normal 3 years and the council checks later
 - ☐ B. It cannot be granted until they get permanent permission
 - ☐ C. It lasts 6 months whatever their permission to stay says
 - ☐ D. It must end no later than their permission to stay ends

Suspension, revocation and appeals

24. **Can a council suspend or revoke a driver's licence when the driver has not been convicted of anything?**
- ☐ A. No, a court must convict the driver of a crime first
 - ☐ B. Yes, 'any other reasonable cause' is a ground in law
 - ☐ C. No, the council can only act if the police ask it to
 - ☐ D. Only if the driver has 12 or more points on their licence
25. **Normally, when does a council's suspension or revocation of a driver's licence take effect?**
- ☐ A. At once, on the same day the council decides
 - ☐ B. 21 days after the driver is given notice
 - ☐ C. 7 days after the driver is given the notice
 - ☐ D. Only after a magistrates' court has agreed
26. **When can a suspension or revocation of a driver's licence take effect straight away?**
- ☐ A. When the driver has not yet paid the licence fee
 - ☐ B. When public safety needs it and the notice says why
 - ☐ C. When the driver has missed one booking that day
 - ☐ D. When any passenger has made a complaint about them

27. After suspending or revoking a driver's licence, how long does the council have to give the driver notice of the grounds?

- ☐ A. 7 days
- ☐ B. 14 days
- ☐ C. 21 days
- ☐ D. 28 days

28. Where can a driver appeal against the suspension or revocation of their licence?

- ☐ A. To the local MP's office
- ☐ B. To the Department for Transport
- ☐ C. To their private hire operator
- ☐ D. To a magistrates' court

29. How long does a driver have to appeal to the magistrates' court?

- ☐ A. 21 days from when the notice was served
- ☐ B. 7 days from when the notice was served
- ☐ C. 14 days from when the notice was served
- ☐ D. 6 months from when the notice was served

30. A council revokes a licence with the normal 21-day notice. The driver appeals in time. Can they keep working until the appeal is decided?

- ☐ A. No, they must stop driving on the day that they receive the notice
- ☐ B. No, they must stop driving as soon as the 21 days have ended
- ☐ C. Yes, unless the decision had immediate effect for public safety
- ☐ D. Only if the council writes to say that it agrees to this

31. After a driver's licence is suspended or revoked, what must the driver return to the council when asked?

- ☐ A. Their DVLA driving licence
- ☐ B. Their vehicle's log book
- ☐ C. Their driver's badge
- ☐ D. Their insurance certificate

32. A council officer asks to see your driver's licence and you do not have it with you. By when must you show it at the council offices?

- ☐ A. Within 24 hours
- ☐ B. Within 5 days
- ☐ C. Within 14 days
- ☐ D. Within 28 days

33. During a check, a driver refuses to give a council officer information they reasonably need and then gives a false answer. What is this?

- ☐ A. An offence of obstructing an authorised officer
- ☐ B. Allowed, as the driver can choose to stay silent
- ☐ C. Only a matter for the operator to deal with
- ☐ D. Only an offence if a police officer is there too

34. **A licensed vehicle has an accident that affects its safety. How soon must the proprietor tell the council?**
- ☐ A. Only when the vehicle is next due for its council test
 - ☐ B. Within 14 days, once the vehicle has been fully repaired
 - ☐ C. As soon as reasonably practicable, and within 72 hours
 - ☐ D. Only if the police were called out to the accident

Working across borders, insurance and smoking

35. **For a private hire journey, which of these must be licensed by the same council?**
- ☐ A. Only the driver and the passenger's home
 - ☐ B. The driver, the vehicle and the operator
 - ☐ C. Only the vehicle and the vehicle's owner
 - ☐ D. Only the operator and the place of pick-up
36. **Can a private hire operator pass a booking to an operator licensed by a different council?**
- ☐ A. No, a booking must always stay with the first operator who took it
 - ☐ B. Yes, if the other operator is licensed and accepts it in its own area
 - ☐ C. Yes, but only if the passenger has agreed to it in writing first
 - ☐ D. Yes, and the first operator's drivers can then do the journey
37. **Can a hackney carriage ply for hire in the area of a different council?**
- ☐ A. No, only in the area of the council that licensed it
 - ☐ B. Yes, it can ply for hire anywhere in England and Wales
 - ☐ C. Yes, if the driver lives in that other council's area
 - ☐ D. Yes, but only at night after 11 pm when it is busy
38. **What kind of motor insurance must a licensed vehicle have when it carries paying passengers?**
- ☐ A. Hire and reward insurance that covers the licensed use
 - ☐ B. Social, domestic and pleasure insurance, with no business use
 - ☐ C. Insurance that covers commuting to and from work only
 - ☐ D. Business use insurance for driving to meetings
39. **A council officer asks the proprietor of a licensed vehicle to show documents. Which must they produce?**
- ☐ A. The driver's bank statements and their tax returns
 - ☐ B. The vehicle licence and the insurance certificate
 - ☐ C. The service history and all of the vehicle's receipts
 - ☐ D. The passport and birth certificate of the owner
40. **A passenger in a licensed taxi asks if they can smoke, and the driver does not mind. Is this allowed?**
- ☐ A. Yes, as long as all the windows are fully open
 - ☐ B. Yes, as long as the driver gives permission
 - ☐ C. Yes, if no other passengers are inside
 - ☐ D. No, the vehicle must be smoke-free at all times

41. Can a driver smoke in their own licensed vehicle when there are no passengers on board?

- ☐ A. No, it is used by the public so it is always smoke-free
- ☐ B. Yes, if they are parked and off duty
- ☐ C. Yes, with the windows and roof open
- ☐ D. Yes, between jobs with no passengers

42. A passenger lights a cigarette in your licensed vehicle. What does the law say you must do?

- ☐ A. Charge them a cleaning fee
- ☐ B. Open the windows and carry on
- ☐ C. Nothing, it is their choice
- ☐ D. Make them stop smoking

43. What does the law say about no-smoking signs in licensed vehicles?

- ☐ A. A sign is needed only when a child under 18 is on board
- ☐ B. A sign is needed only in vehicles with 8 passenger seats
- ☐ C. At least one legible no-smoking sign must be displayed
- ☐ D. No sign is needed if the driver tells each passenger

44. True or false: a council can attach its own conditions to driver, vehicle and operator licences.

- ☐ A. True
- ☐ B. False

National safeguards and new law

45. What is the NR3S?

- ☐ A. A national register of driver licence refusals, suspensions and revocations
- ☐ B. A national list of every taxi rank and private hire office in England
- ☐ C. A national register of all fare tables set by councils in England
- ☐ D. A national database of passengers who have refused to pay a fare

46. Before deciding an application or renewal for a driver's licence, what must a council do under the 2022 Act?

- ☐ A. Ask the driver's operator to write them a short reference
- ☐ B. Ask three passengers for their comments about the driver
- ☐ C. Check that the driver has an account with a UK bank
- ☐ D. Search the national database for entries about the person

47. A council in England learns of serious concerns about a driver licensed by another council, who has been working in its area. What must it do?

- ☐ A. Suspend the driver's licence itself, straight away
- ☐ B. Wait to see whether the driver comes back to its area
- ☐ C. Report the information to the council that licensed them
- ☐ D. Nothing, because the driver does not hold its licence

48. Under the 2022 Act, how long does the first council have to pass on that information?

- ☐ A. 48 hours
- ☐ B. 20 working days
- ☐ C. 10 working days
- ☐ D. 3 months

49. How long does an entry on the national database of refusals, suspensions and revocations stay there?

- ☐ A. 11 years
- ☐ B. 2 years
- ☐ C. 5 years
- ☐ D. For life

50. What must councils do with the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards?

- ☐ A. Nothing, as they are only a suggestion written for drivers
- ☐ B. Copy them word for word into each driver's licence
- ☐ C. Have regard to them when using their licensing powers
- ☐ D. Follow them only if the council's own policy agrees with them

51. What is Common Law Police Disclosure?

- ☐ A. Drivers telling the police about passengers who did not pay their fares
- ☐ B. The council telling the police about each new licence it gives out
- ☐ C. Operators sharing booking records with the police every month
- ☐ D. Police telling the council about a risk, for example at arrest or charge

52. The Statutory Standards say a person who is on a DBS barred list should normally be treated how?

- ☐ A. They can be licensed if they agree to take extra safeguarding training
- ☐ B. They should not be issued a licence, except in truly exceptional cases
- ☐ C. They can be licensed if they only do private hire and never hackney
- ☐ D. They can be licensed if they promise not to carry any children at all

53. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 includes new powers for taxi licensing. What will they let the government do?

- ☐ A. Set one national table of fares for every hackney carriage in England
- ☐ B. Take over all taxi and private hire licensing from councils in England
- ☐ C. Set national standards for granting, renewing, suspending and revoking licences
- ☐ D. Remove the need for private hire journeys to be booked through an operator

54. Once in force, what will the 2026 Act let an enforcement officer from any council in England do?

- ☐ A. Suspend a licence from any English council for up to 48 hours for public safety
- ☐ B. Revoke any driver's licence for good, with no need to give the driver notice
- ☐ C. Suspend licences from their own council only, and only for up to 1 hour
- ☐ D. Issue a brand new licence to a driver who is visiting from another area

55. When we checked on 29 October 2026, were the taxi and private hire sections of the 2026 Act in force?

- ☐ A. Yes, they started on the day the Act was passed
- ☐ B. Yes, they started two months after it was passed
- ☐ C. No, and they can only start after a new Act is passed
- ☐ D. No, they will start on a date set by regulations

Answers

1. **D. A hackney carriage, in the area where it is licensed.** Only a hackney carriage may ply for hire, which includes being hailed. It may do this only within the area of the council that licensed it.
2. **C. Refuse, and tell them to book through an operator.** A private hire vehicle must not ply for hire. Every journey must be booked through a licensed operator before it starts. A street pick-up is an offence, and your insurance may not cover it.
3. **B. Hackney carriages licensed by that council.** Ranks (stands) are appointed by the council for its hackney carriages. Private hire vehicles must not use them to wait for passengers.
4. **D. Offering a vehicle for hire on the spot, such as at a rank.** Plying for hire means making a vehicle available to be hired there and then, for example by waiting at a rank or driving around looking for fares. Only hackney carriages may do this.
5. **C. So nobody thinks they can hail it in the street.** A private hire vehicle must not be of such design and appearance that people would think it is a hackney carriage, because only hackney carriages can be hailed.
6. **D. Not without a reasonable excuse.** A hackney carriage driver who refuses or neglects, without reasonable excuse, to take a hirer to a place within the prescribed distance commits an offence.
7. **A. The council, in its table of fares or byelaws.** A council may fix hackney carriage fares and other charges by a table of fares. A driver must not charge more than the table allows.
8. **A. The fare shown on the taximeter.** For a journey ending outside the district with no fare agreed in advance, the driver must not charge more than the meter shows.
9. **C. The operator who accepted the booking.** Every contract for the hire of a licensed private hire vehicle is treated as made with the operator who accepted the booking, even if another person provided the vehicle.
10. **A. Before the journey starts.** An operator must record the particulars of every booking, in the form the council requires, before the start of each journey, and show the record to an officer or the police on request.
11. **D. An offence of unnecessarily prolonging the journey.** A licensed driver must not, without reasonable cause, unnecessarily prolong a journey in distance or in time. This applies to hackney carriage and private hire drivers.
12. **A. A fit and proper person.** A council must not grant a driver's licence unless it is satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person and is not disqualified by immigration status.
13. **B. At least 12 months.** A council must not grant a driver's licence to anyone who has not been authorised to drive a car for at least twelve months.
14. **C. 3 years, unless the council sets a shorter period for that case.** A driver's licence remains in force for three years, or for a shorter period that the council thinks right in the circumstances of the case.

15. **B. 5 years.** An operator's licence remains in force for five years, or for a shorter period that the council thinks right in the circumstances of the case.
16. **A. 1 year.** A private hire vehicle licence remains in force for the period the council sets, which must not be longer than one year.
17. **C. Would you let someone you care for travel alone with them?** The question is: would you allow a person for whom you care, regardless of their condition, to travel alone in a vehicle driven by this person at any time of day or night?
18. **A. The balance of probabilities.** Decisions are made on the balance of probabilities. The applicant should not get the benefit of the doubt, and conduct without a conviction can be considered.
19. **D. Enhanced, with checks of the children's and adults' barred lists.** Councils should require an enhanced DBS check with a check of both barred lists for every driver applying for or renewing a licence.
20. **B. Every 6 months.** Drivers should be required to keep up continuous registration with the DBS Update Service so the council can check for new information every 6 months. Drivers who do not subscribe should still be checked every 6 months.
21. **B. Check online at any time if the DBS certificate is still up to date.** Subscribing keeps a certificate up to date online and, with the person's consent, lets named organisations check its status at any time.
22. **D. Worn where it can be plainly seen.** A driver must wear the badge at all times when working under their licence, in a position where it is plainly and distinctly visible.
23. **D. It must end no later than their permission to stay ends.** If a driver has limited leave to remain, the council must set a licence period that ends at or before the end of that leave.
24. **B. Yes, 'any other reasonable cause' is a ground in law.** The grounds include convictions for offences of dishonesty, indecency or violence, breaking taxi law, immigration offences, or any other reasonable cause.
25. **B. 21 days after the driver is given notice.** A suspension or revocation normally takes effect at the end of 21 days beginning with the day the notice is given to the driver.
26. **B. When public safety needs it and the notice says why.** If public safety requires immediate effect, and the notice says so and explains why, it takes effect when the notice is given.
27. **B. 14 days.** The council must give the driver notice of the grounds within fourteen days of the suspension, revocation or refusal to renew.
28. **D. To a magistrates' court.** Any driver aggrieved by a decision under section 61 may appeal to a magistrates' court.
29. **A. 21 days from when the notice was served.** Appeals under Part II of the 1976 Act follow the Public Health Act 1936: the time limit is twenty-one days from the date the notice of the decision was served.
30. **C. Yes, unless the decision had immediate effect for public safety.** Until the time for appealing ends, or an appeal is decided, the person may carry on the business. This does not apply where the decision has immediate effect for public safety.

31. **C. Their driver's badge.** The driver must return the driver's badge to the council on demand. Failing to do so without reasonable excuse is an offence.
32. **B. Within 5 days.** You must produce your licence either straight away or, for a council officer, at the council's main offices within five days, beginning with the day after the request.
33. **A. An offence of obstructing an authorised officer.** It is an offence to wilfully obstruct an authorised officer or police officer, to fail without reasonable cause to give them information they reasonably need, or to give information you know is false.
34. **C. As soon as reasonably practicable, and within 72 hours.** The proprietor must report any accident causing damage that materially affects the vehicle's safety, performance, appearance or passenger comfort as soon as reasonably practicable and within 72 hours.
35. **B. The driver, the vehicle and the operator.** An operator must not operate a vehicle as a private hire vehicle unless the vehicle and driver are licensed under the 1976 Act. This is read as meaning all three licences come from the same council, often called the 'triple lock'.
36. **B. Yes, if the other operator is licensed and accepts it in its own area.** An operator may sub-contract a booking to an operator licensed in another district, if that operator accepts the booking in its own district. The second operator then uses its own drivers and vehicles.
37. **A. No, only in the area of the council that licensed it.** A hackney carriage licence allows plying for hire only within the area of the council that granted it. Plying for hire elsewhere without a licence for that area is an offence.
38. **A. Hire and reward insurance that covers the licensed use.** Carrying passengers for payment needs hire and reward cover. A council must not license a private hire vehicle without suitable insurance in force.
39. **B. The vehicle licence and the insurance certificate.** The proprietor must produce the vehicle licence and the certificate of insurance when an authorised officer of the council asks.
40. **D. No, the vehicle must be smoke-free at all times.** An enclosed vehicle used by members of the public, whether or not for hire, is smoke-free. Smoking in a smoke-free place is an offence.
41. **A. No, it is used by the public so it is always smoke-free.** The vehicle is smoke-free because it is used by members of the public. This does not stop when the passenger gets out.
42. **D. Make them stop smoking.** The driver has a legal duty to cause anyone smoking in a smoke-free vehicle to stop. Failing to do so is an offence.
43. **C. At least one legible no-smoking sign must be displayed.** The person with management responsibilities for a smoke-free vehicle must make sure at least one legible no-smoking sign is displayed in it.
44. **A. True.** The 1976 Act lets a council attach the conditions it considers reasonably necessary. That is why local conditions differ, and why you must read your own council's.
45. **A. A national register of driver licence refusals, suspensions and revocations.** The 2022 Act requires English councils to record refusals, suspensions and revocations of driver licences on the national database, known as the National Register for Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S).

46. **D. Search the national database for entries about the person.** Before deciding on an application for, or renewal of, a driver's licence, the council must search the licensing information database and consider any information it gets.
47. **C. Report the information to the council that licensed them.** If the council would have considered suspending or revoking the licence had it granted it, it must pass the information to the council that issued the licence.
48. **C. 10 working days.** The information must be provided before the end of 10 working days beginning with the day the council became aware of it.
49. **A. 11 years.** Each entry is removed at the end of 11 years beginning with the day it was first made.
50. **C. Have regard to them when using their licensing powers.** The Standards were issued under section 177 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017. Councils must have regard to them, and the DfT says that means more than a quick look.
51. **D. Police telling the council about a risk, for example at arrest or charge.** Common Law Police Disclosure lets police pass on information about a public protection risk at arrest or charge, rather than waiting for a conviction.
52. **B. They should not be issued a licence, except in truly exceptional cases.** In the interests of public safety, councils should not issue a licence to anyone on either barred list. Any exception must have its reasons recorded.
53. **C. Set national standards for granting, renewing, suspending and revoking licences.** Sections 70 to 74 let the Secretary of State make regulations setting national standards. When we checked on 29 October 2026, these sections were not yet in force.
54. **A. Suspend a licence from any English council for up to 48 hours for public safety.** Section 76 will let an enforcement officer suspend a driver, vehicle or operator licence granted by any English council if public safety requires it. Under section 77 the suspension normally lasts 48 hours. These sections were not yet in force on 29 October 2026.
55. **D. No, they will start on a date set by regulations.** Section 108 says Chapter 6 does not come into force when the Act was passed or two months after. It starts on a day the Secretary of State appoints by regulations.

Sources

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