

## **Safe Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Guidance during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many challenges for the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire service and we recognise that many of you after careful thought and consideration will want to return to work as soon as possible. We want to help you achieve that but it is essential for your own health and that of your families and customers; that you personally risk-assess your return to work so that when you do so, you operate as safely as possible.

The Government is clear that we should all observe 'social distancing' which means staying at least 2 metres apart from other people. However, we understand that as licensed vehicles are different sizes, this may be hard to do.

These guidelines will help protect you, your customers and the wider population from the spread of disease. They will help reassure customers that licensed vehicles can be one of the safer forms of public transport. However, neither these guidelines or the Licensing Department will be able to tell you exactly what to do in every situation - you must take personal responsibility, assess and manage the risk yourself.

**The Council must prioritise the safety and health of everyone locally and therefore all Gloucester City Council licensed operators, drivers and vehicles should rigidly apply the following guidelines and may be updated as further Government advice is published.**

- **Only work if you are not putting anyone at risk.** If you or the people you live with have symptoms of COVID-19, you should not carry out licensed work.
- **Distancing.** Public Health England (PHE) recommends trying to keep a minimum of 2 metres away from people, where possible. Where "social distancing" is not possible, try to minimise the time spent within 2 metres of others – this includes in rest breaks or when talking to other drivers.
- **Face coverings.** Sometimes a face covering may be beneficial to protect others if you are infected but have not yet developed symptoms. This is most relevant for short periods indoors in crowded areas. The Covid 19 '*Safer Travel guidance for passengers*' states passengers should wear a face covering when using Hackney Carriage or private hire vehicles. Risk assess and don't be afraid to ask your customer to wear a face covering. If you choose to wear one (*it may help reassure customers*), it is important to use the face covering properly; wash your hands before putting it on and taking it off and dispose of it safely.
- **Clean the vehicle thoroughly between shifts.** Where possible vehicles should not be shared but cleaning is especially important if a vehicle is shared with another driver. Cleaning must include the steering wheel and all controls. **Wipe down all surfaces that have been or are likely to be touched with disinfectant or alcohol hand gel after each**

**and every journey;** this includes inside and outside door handles and any common contact points e.g. boot/tailgate release, safety belts and grab handles.

- **Equip your vehicle with a bottle of water and soap to enable hand washing. Carry a suitable alcohol based hand gel and/or wipes** and ensure you clean your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds whenever possible – at the start of the day; regularly throughout the day; after going to the toilet or before and after eating and drinking; using a fuel pump or making payment and after assisting a customer physically or having contact with baggage or other items.
- **Provide a suitable alcohol based hand gel for customer use prior to entry into the vehicle.**
- **Avoid touching your face.** If you have to cough or sneeze use a tissue which you then place in a plastic bag, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- **Have plastic bags for you and customers** so that tissues etc. can be bagged. Bags should then be sealed before being disposed of in the correct way.
- **Ask new customers if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 before you agree to carry them.**
- **If carrying more than one customer, ensure they are from the same household.**
- **If passengers are not from the same household you must only carry one passenger and refuse the remaining passengers.** Do this politely and explain why - where possible, try to arrange for other vehicles to assist to help improve the customer experience.
- **Ask customers to sit facing away from you** if possible, and avoid physical contact with a customer.
- **Where it is not possible for customers to sit away, request they sit in the rear passenger seat as far away from you as possible (behind the front passenger seat) and in larger vehicles, as far away from each other as possible.**
- **Carriage of passengers of ill health.** You can still carry passengers of ill health in and out of hospital, subject to checking beforehand if they have or are displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Individual persons should not use Hackney Carriages or Private Hire vehicles if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough or high temperature) or if any member of their household are self-isolating due to experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- **If any person feels unwell during work or journey.** Follow PHE advice to go home. If medical advice is needed contact NHS 111. In an emergency call 999 if seriously ill or life at risk.
- **Increase ventilation by keeping windows open where possible. Only use air-conditioning on “extract” not “re-circulate”.**
- **Passengers with accessibility requirements.** Drivers are still under the same legal obligation to provide reasonable assistance to passengers who may require it. This includes wheelchair passengers. When doing so, the additional hygiene precautions outlined above should be followed.

- **If your vehicle breaks down.** You and your customers should get out of the vehicle if safe to do so and stay 2 metres apart pending recovery or another car arriving to complete the journey.
- **Consider getting contactless/card payment facilities which is safer than handling cash.**

Further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>  
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer travel guidance for passengers'](#)