



# THE DRIVER-GUIDES ASSOCIATION

THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLUE BADGE DRIVER-GUIDES

## Private Hire Vehicle Regulations

### England and Wales

The whole of England and Wales, outside London, comes under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Driver-guides need a PHV operator's licence to accept bookings. They need also PHV driver and vehicle licences. This Act was not properly thought out and local authorities seem free to impose whatever regulations they think fit. These may include the age of the vehicle, colour of vehicle, a taxi-style knowledge test, signage on the vehicle, off road parking etc. Costs vary also from around £150 to £800 per year.

There may be rare instances of driver-guides not requiring PHV licences, in which case written proof is recommended. The Private Hire department at your local town hall should be able to fill you in.

### London

Driver-guides operating from a London borough are regulated by the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.

#### Operator Licence

All driver-guiding assignments must be handled by a licensed operator. The cost of a 5-year licence is £1,137 for operating up to two vehicles and £2,147 for three or more.

To reduce the cost to its members the DGA has an unlimited licence, under which the addresses of participating members are registered as operating centres. The policy of the DGA throughout has been to allow members complete independence so that they may continue to trade under their own names and not that of the DGA. The current licence expires in March 2008.

The cost to each participant is £45. New members pay a further £25, which is the charge for varying the licence.

To be an operating centre you must show:

- ◆ That you have planning permission or a letter from your local authority to say you don't need it.
- ◆ That you keep good accounts
- ◆ That you keep good records
- ◆ That you are registered for VAT or that you earn below the threshold.

You will be visited by a Compliance Inspector twice a year when the same items will be re-checked.

#### Drivers Licence

Because of the time it takes to complete the criminal record check new applicants are issued with a temporary permit which allows them to work as a private hire driver until the full licence is issued. An application pack can be obtained via <https://www.tfl.gov.uk/pco/becoming/apply.asp>

#### Topographical Skills

The need for new applicants to demonstrate topographical skills is being introduced this year. However Blue Badge Guides are exempt from this requirement.

## Cost

The PHV drivers licence is valid for three years and costs:

Application fee	£157
Grant of the licence	£105
Criminal records check	£29
<b>Total</b>	<b>£291</b>

Plus the cost of the medical examination, say £80, which brings it up to £371.

## Vehicle Licence

The PHV vehicle licence is valid for one year and costs:

Application Fee	£75.00
Grant of Licence fee	£25.00
MOT test – 2 @ £44.15	£88.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>£188.30</b>

At the inspection you will need to show:

- ♦ vehicle registration document
- ♦ certificate of insurance
- ♦ current vehicle road fund licence
- ♦ current PHV paper licence (for subsequent applications).
- ♦ MOT certificate, issued with the previous 14 days. Vehicles under one year old do not require an MOT. Vehicles over 12 months old require two MOTs per year.

Bookings for vehicle licence inspections are made through SGS on 0845 378 2345

## London Congestion Charge

Once a vehicle is licensed (under the 1998 Act) it is registered as being exempt from the London congestion charge when being used as a PHV.

## Bus Lanes

At the outset it was suggested that PHVs may be allowed to use bus lanes and this is still the hope. However in the meantime “There are currently no provisions to exempt licensed private hire vehicles from bus lane regulations”. If and when this concession is approved only vehicles displaying the identifier will be eligible.

## Royal Parks

Private Hire Vehicles are not allowed to drive in the Royal Parks when carrying fare paying passengers. However PHVs do use the Royal Parks and the official line is that PHVs “are not being targeted”. So far just one driver has been prosecuted and he was stopped for another reason. High-level representation is being made to have the ban removed.

## Scotland

The DGA has been advised that PHV licences are not required if no more than one driver-guiding assignment per day is undertaken.

## Northern Ireland

The DGA has been advised that driver-guides in Northern Ireland do not require PHV licences.

## Further Information

The DGA contact for PHV matters is Peter Jamieson

Phone: 020-8671 6750. Fax: 020 8674 9613. E-mail: peterj@driver-guides.org.uk

Further information on London licensing may be found on [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)