

Southampton City Council
Civic Centre,
Southampton

Direct dial: 023 8083 3002

Our ref:

E-mail: licensing@southampton.gov.uk

Please ask for: Mr. Bates

29th December 2022

Dear Sir

Consultation on Private Hire Vehicle Livery Condition

Southampton City Council is reviewing and consulting on the requirement in Private Hire Vehicle conditions to display the name and contact details of the operator of the vehicle. The current condition is copied below:

8.7 The name of the operator and their telephone number or domain name shall appear in bold clearly legible lettering in the space 190 mm high by 420 mm in length on the sticker, immediately beneath the wording "Pre-Booked Only"

The purpose of the condition is to promote public safety by clearly identifying the vehicle as a private hire vehicle and which company is operating it. This assists customers identifying their booked vehicle, especially those who experience difficulty with modern technology such as phone apps.

The removal of the requirement to display an operator on the door sticker will allow drivers to work for more than one operator at the same time. This will provide a more flexible work force as operators will have more drivers to choose from. It also provides the drivers with a choice of which hiring to undertake. This increases the risk of drivers being more selective on the work they complete leaving some fares without a vehicle.

To address this risk, if the condition 8.7 is abandoned, it is proposed that both the operator and driver conditions will be updated to protect against abuse of this extra choice. Operators will be required to record incidents of cancelled jobs and have a policy on how to deal with such incidents. Drivers will be required to undertake a hiring once they accept unless there is good cause not to and to report to the operator any incidents where they do cancel a hiring. The operator will additionally be required to report to the authority any incidents where a job is cancelled without proper justification.

Other elements of Condition 8, Identification in the private hire vehicle conditions are proposed to be modified to allow a universal door sticker design to continue to aid the identification of a private hire vehicle licensed by this authority.

To improve the information flow between operators and the licensing authority we are also consulting on adding a condition on operators to report to the licensing authority any complaint that raise concerns over the fitness and propriety of the driver concerned.

Finally to assist with the administration of updating vehicles and drivers being operated it is proposed to amend condition 6 of the operator's licence to allow submissions of the information by way of an API document or weekly spreadsheet as well as individual notifications.

Should the authority decide to remove the requirement to display operator details on private hire vehicles it is proposed to amend the following sections of the policy and conditions:

Consultation letter

If you require this letter or future correspondence from us in a different format (e.g. tape, Braille or disc) please do not hesitate to let us know.

- Private hire vehicle condition 8 covering vehicle identification
- Private hire driver condition 8 on adherence to bookings
- Private hire operator condition 4 on records of bookings

Regardless of the decision on the display of operator details the authority is proposing to amend the following sections of the policy and conditions:

- Private hire operator condition 6 on reporting vehicles and drivers operated
- Private hire operator condition 12 on incident reporting

Details of the consultation and how to respond can be found at <https://southampton.gov.uk/council-democracy/have-your-say/draft-taxi-licensing-policy-consultation/>

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Bates', written in a cursive style.

Phil Bates
Licensing Manager