



Private hire - hackney carriage assessment

All you need to know
about DSA's taxi
assessment services





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Introduction

The Driving Standards Agency is committed to improving driving standards through its testing and assessment activities. All drivers must take responsibility for developing the correct attitude and approach towards safe and considerate driving. This, combined with a sound knowledge of defensive driving will make our roads safer; a safer environment for all road users.

As a professional driver you have a special responsibility to ensure that your passengers have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable journey. You may have years of driving experience and will be able to demonstrate a good standard of driving on the taxi assessment.

The principles of good driving practice are set out in our official publication *The Official DSA Guide to Driving - the essential skills*. Study these principles and by putting them

into practice you can demonstrate to your passengers and other road users that you are a professional driver.

There are millions of journeys made every year by Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. Consider taking on board good sound advice. This will result in these journeys being completed in safety and in comfort by your passengers. This will ensure a service delivered by professional taxi drivers who take pride in their driving and the service they give to their customers.

Rosemary Thew

Driving Standards Agency -
Chief Executive



The Role of the Driving Standards Agency (DSA)

DSA is the only agency in Great Britain charged with setting driving standards and delivering the consistently high quality required to ensure safe driving practice. DSA has a wealth of experience in assessing all types of drivers. It is responsible for 1.6 million driving tests taken in Great Britain each year on cars, motorcycles, LGVs, PCVs and other special vehicles. DSA also trains, tests and monitors the performance of all examiners, sets the standards and syllabus against which all Approved Driving Instructors teach and authorises motorcycle training bodies to provide Compulsory Basic Training.

Your Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Assessment

Before you are issued with a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver's Licence you must pass an assessment. It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the contents of the assessment; these are set out on the following pages. We strongly recommend that you take professional instruction prior to taking the assessment.

Preparing for your assessment

As a professional driver you have a special responsibility to set an example to other road users by driving with courtesy and consideration.

The official range of books from DSA provide expert advice on best driving practices to ensure that you and your passengers have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable journey.



The Official DSA Guide to Learning to Drive

ISBN 9780115528583 Price £7.99

The only official guide which explains the standards required to pass today's practical driving test and assessment for taxi drivers. This latest edition includes references to the current version of *The Official Highway Code*. The book includes information about the 24 key skills examined and the level of ability you need to demonstrate, as a professional driver.

A section on the assessment for taxi drivers covers:

- licensing requirements
- key skills; including taxi manoeuvring exercise and stopping at the side of the road
- what to expect at your assessment and the wheelchair exercise.

The Official DSA Guide to Driving – the essential skills

ISBN 9780115528170 Price £12.99

This indispensable driving manual is packed with advice to help you become a safer driver. A section devoted to taxi drivers covers:

- first steps to becoming a taxi driver – regulations and medical checks
- passenger care – passenger comfort, seat belts and dealing with lost property
- professional driving – skills, environmental consideration, awareness, communication, tiredness and distractions
- driving taxis – stopping at the roadside, manoeuvring
- passengers with special needs and requirements.



The Official Highway Code

ISBN: 9780115528149 Price: £2.50

Essential reading for all road-users in England, Scotland and Wales. This updated edition of the only *Official Highway Code* contains the very latest rules of the road. Many of these rules are legal requirements and must be adhered to in order to avoid penalty - fines, penalty points, disqualification or even prison. *The Official Highway Code* reflects the most up-to-date legislation that road-users must adhere to, advice on road safety and best practice.

Rheolau'r Ffordd Fawr Swyddogol (Welsh Language version)

ISBN: 9780115528606 Price: £2.50

Northern Ireland Highway Code

ISBN: 9780337088865 Price: £2.50

The Official Highway Code Interactive CD-ROM

ISBN: 9780115528460 Price: £9.78

The CD-ROM version of *The Official Highway Code* provides an innovative and interactive alternative for users. It is an engaging, fun, and educational product aimed at accelerating the learning process and providing a thorough understanding of road safety and best practice.

Know Your Traffic Signs

ISBN: 9780115528552 Price: £4.99

Your taxi assessment will include five questions on traffic signs, so pick up the latest edition of this comprehensive guide which explains the vast majority of traffic signs that any driver is likely to encounter. A valuable reference for professional drivers, even those with years of experience.



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N.B. Prices are correct at time of going to press but may be subject to change without notice. Covers of the products are subject to change. Please check you have the most up-to-date edition.

Orders from TSO are subject to a handling charge of £3.50 per order for books and £4.03 for orders including CD-ROMs and DVDs as subject to VAT.

Booking your Assessment

Booking your assessment

Remember, it is important to book your assessment early. The more flexible you can be in selecting a driving test centre where you wish to take your assessment, the earlier we can book you an appointment. Secure an appointment even before your police check or your medical.

Practical assessments are available at some test centres on Saturdays, Sundays and in the summer, on weekday evenings.

Booking online or by telephone

You can book your assessment by either of these methods and you'll be given the date and time of your assessment immediately.

You can book online at www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport

To book by telephone, call 0300 200 1122. If you are a Welsh speaker call 0300 200 1133. If you are deaf and need a minicom machine call 0300 200 1144 to book your assessment.

When booking you'll need to explain that you want to take a taxi assessment and provide

- **your UK driver number (from your licence)**
- **credit or debit card details. Please note that the card holder must be present.**

Booking by post

Fill in the application form for the type of assessment you wish to take and send it, together with the correct fee, to the address shown on the back of the form. You can get application forms from driving test centres, your instructor or by phoning 0300 200 1122.

You may pay by cheque, postal order or with a credit/debit card. Postal orders or cheques should be made payable to the Driving Standards Agency. Please do not send cash. You'll receive an appointment letter within 10 days.

Appointment letter

Whether you book your assessment online, by telephone or by post you will receive an appointment letter or e-mail to take with you when you go for your assessment. It will include:

- **the time and place of your assessment**
- **the address of the test centre.**

Taxi assessment fees

You can change or cancel your assessment online at www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport. Alternatively, you can change or cancel an assessment appointment by calling 0300 200 1122.

You need to give at least three clear working days notice for change or cancellation of an assessment, not counting the day DSA receives your request and the day of the assessment (Saturday is counted as a working day). If you don't give enough notice you'll lose your fee.

The assessment is intended to fulfil one of the requirements under local Council taxi licensing procedures. The assessment will be carried out in accordance with the criteria drawn up by DSA to meet the Local Authorities Service Standards. A certificate will be issued when you pass the assessment and there is no further fee for this.

Taxi assessment fees

		Normal Hours	Out of Hours
Z	Hackney Saloon / Private Hire Saloon Highway Code / Traffic Signs / Cabology Questions.	£78.00	£94.00
Z1	Hackney Wheelchair enhanced Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles Highway Code / Traffic Signs Cabology Questions.	£91.00	£110.00
Z2	Wheelchair Exercise	£26.00	£31.99

Note: Assessment fees are correct at time of publication (1st January 2010) but please check at time of booking.

Taxi fees include VAT.

At the Driving Test Centre

You must bring the following items to your assessment:

- an appropriately insured and taxed / licensed vehicle suitable for the assessment
- your appointment letter
- a UK/NI photo card licence. Both parts of the licence (photo card and paper counterpart) must be presented

OR

- a full British old style paper licence and current passport
- current recognisable EU licence with a UK paper counterpart (and current passport if there is no photo on the licence).

If you do not bring your documents, your assessment may not be conducted and you may lose your fee.

REMEMBER
NO LICENCE - NO PHOTO
NO ASSESSMENT
YOU WILL LOSE YOUR FEE!

If your car has a front passenger seat you will need to provide an adjustable interior mirror for the use of the examiner.

Important information about your assessment

To pass you are permitted to accumulate up to 9 driving faults. If you accumulate 10 or more driving faults you will fail. Any serious or dangerous fault will be immediately recorded as a failure but the assessment will still continue, finally returning to the driving test centre. The taxi assessment is reflective of modern driving practices and the standard is set at a level suitable for full driving licence holders. It is important that you do not adjust your driving to what you may feel the examiner would expect to see, do not drive in an unnatural manner.

- You may be asked to complete an emergency stop, i.e demonstrate that you can stop the vehicle as in an emergency, promptly and under control (avoid skidding).
- You will be asked to carry out two manoeuvres one of which will be your own choice, e.g reverse around a corner. In both cases you will be expected to demonstrate your ability to manoeuvre your vehicle under control and with good all-round effective observations, giving consideration to other road users and pedestrians.
- You will be asked on a number of occasions to pull up on the left at a safe and convenient place, as if a fare is either going to get in or out of your vehicle. Avoid parking next to lampposts and trees - this could be potentially hazardous for your passenger.
- Whenever you have been stationary at the side of the road, remember your important safety check - check your blind spot (look over your right shoulder) before pulling away.
- You need to use all your mirrors effectively (interior and exterior) and at the appropriate times. You should demonstrate that you are aware of what is happening around your vehicle at all times.
- You need to signal correctly and in good time to let other road users know your intention - other road users need to see and understand what you plan to do.
- You will be expected to understand and comply with traffic signs and road markings, as they are there to help you anticipate and plan your journey. You will also need to see and react to signals given by the police, traffic wardens etc. and signals given by other road users.
- You must be able to demonstrate your ability to make progress when the speed signs and the road and traffic conditions dictate it is safe to do so. Equally it is important to demonstrate that you recognise and comply when in lower speed limit areas.
- You need to watch your separation distance from the vehicle in front and also your separation distance from parked cars.
- You need to use sound judgement and planning when overtaking, meeting oncoming vehicles and when turning right in front of oncoming traffic. At no time be in a situation where you cause another vehicle to brake or swerve to avoid you
- You should demonstrate that you are aware of other road users at all times; plan ahead, predict how the actions of others will affect your driving and react in good time. Be aware of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists etc. and act in good time, rather than at the last moment

- You will be asked a few questions on the Highway Code, some general cabology questions and asked to identify a few traffic signs. This may include such questions as the length, width or height, tyre pressures, what to do if you found an item of lost property in your cab.

It is important that you read *The Highway Code* and be familiar with your vehicle. It is strongly advisable to consider taking professional instruction prior to taking the assessment.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

You should demonstrate your ability to

- securely erect the wheelchair ramps (whatever style of ramp is fitted to your vehicle)
- safely install the wheelchair in your vehicle, backing the chair to the fold down seats, then securing both wheelchair brakes
- secure seat belts/safety harness and also secure wheel belts/clamps if fitted to your vehicle
- satisfy yourself that the wheelchair is secure, as if to start a journey.
Then reverse the entire procedure.

It is important that you can demonstrate all the principles of safety and security - if seat belts, wheel belts or wheel clamps etc. are fitted then they should be in good working order and applied, whatever style of wheelchair accessible vehicle you bring on assessment.



Assessment Explained

1a Eyesight test

At the start of the assessment the examiner asked you to read a vehicle registration number. If you need glasses or contact lenses, you must wear them whenever you drive. If you had problems with the eyesight test, perhaps you should consider consulting an optician.

1b Highway Code Safety

You will be asked questions on *The Highway Code*, traffic signs and 'Cabology' (General questions relating to taxis and taxi driving).

2 Controlled stop

You will need to be able to display a high level of skill in bringing your vehicle to a stop, safely, promptly and under full control, avoiding locking the wheels. Remember that in wet weather it can take twice as long to stop safely.

3, 4 and 5 Reverse exercises

You will need to display the ability to control the vehicle safely whilst reversing to the left, right, when parking on the road or into a parking bay.

You must take good effective all-round observation throughout the manoeuvre and show consideration to other road users.

6 Turn in the road

You will need to display the low speed control and observation skills necessary to carry out this exercise safely with due regard for other road users and pedestrians.

7 Vehicle Checks

Not applicable

8 Taxi manoeuvre

You must be able to display the ability to turn your car around by whatever means available, making sure you take effective, all-round observation, showing consideration to other road users and pedestrians.

You should control your vehicle smoothly, making proper use of the clutch, accelerator, brakes and steering. You should not use a driveway or allow your vehicle to mount the pavement as this could damage your vehicle.

9 Taxi wheelchair

You should be able to securely erect wheelchair ramps, safely install the wheelchair and an imaginary wheelchair occupant into your vehicle, ensuring the wheelchair and its occupant are secured in readiness for the journey, then reverse the entire process.

10 Vehicle and trailer combinations

Not applicable

11 Precautions

Before you start the engine make sure that you are comfortably seated and all controls can be safely operated.

12 Control

This section covers, where appropriate, the safe and controlled use of accelerator, clutch, gears, footbrake, parking brake and steering.

Always try and use the vehicle controls as smoothly as possible. This means less wear and tear on your vehicle and a smoother ride for your passengers. Make proper use of your accelerator and clutch to make a smooth start. Always depress the clutch just before you stop. Select the correct gear to match the road and traffic conditions. Change gear in good time but not too soon before a hazard. Do not allow the vehicle to coast by running on in neutral or with the clutch depressed.

There should be no need to look down at the gear lever when changing gear. Use the footbrake smoothly and progressively. Brake in plenty of time for any hazard. Make full use of the parking brake whenever it would help you to prevent the vehicle rolling backwards or forwards, and if you are parking. Steer the vehicle as smoothly as possible.

Avoid harsh steering, or steering too early or too late as it may cause you to hit the kerb or swing out towards another road user.

13 Move off

You will need to demonstrate your ability to move off smoothly and safely on the level, on a gradient and at an angle, taking the correct precautionary observations.

14 Use of mirrors - Rear observations

Use all the mirrors fitted to your vehicle safely and effectively. You must always check carefully before signalling, changing direction or changing speed. Use the Mirrors-Signal-Manoeuvre (MSM) routine effectively.

15 Signals

You must signal clearly to let others know what you intend to do. You should only use the signals shown in *The Highway Code* if it would help other road users (including pedestrians).

Always signal in good time and ensure that the signal has been cancelled after the manoeuvre has been completed. Do not beckon to pedestrians to cross the road.

16 Clearance to obstructions

Allow plenty of room to pass stationary vehicles, obstructions and be prepared to slow down or stop. A door may open, a child may run out or a vehicle may pull out without warning.

17 Response to signs/signals

You should understand and be able to react to all traffic signs and road markings. You must act correctly at traffic lights, and check that the road is clear before proceeding when the green light shows. Obey signals given by police officers, traffic wardens and school crossing patrols. Look out for signals given by other road users, including people in charge of animals, and be ready to act accordingly.

18 Use of speed

You should make safe, reasonable progress along the road bearing in mind the road, traffic and

weather conditions and the road signs and speed limits. Make sure that you can stop safely, well within the distance you can see to be clear. Do not speed.

19 Following distance

Always keep a safe distance between yourself and other vehicles. Remember, on wet or slippery roads it takes much longer to stop. When you stop in traffic queues leave sufficient space to pull out if the vehicle in front has problems.

20 Maintain progress

In order to pass your assessment you must show that you can drive at a realistic speed appropriate to the road and traffic conditions. You should approach all hazards at a safe, controlled speed, without being over-cautious or interfering with the progress of other traffic. Always be ready to move away from junctions as soon as it is safe and correct to do so; driving excessively slowly can create dangers for yourself and other drivers.

21 Junctions (including roundabouts)

You should be able to judge the correct speed of approach so that you can enter a junction safely and stop if necessary. Position your vehicle correctly. Use the correct lane - if you are turning right, keep as near to the centre of the road as is safe. Avoid cutting the corner when turning right. If turning left, keep over to the left and do not swing out. Watch out for cyclists and motorcyclists coming up on your left and pedestrians who are crossing. You must take effective observation before moving into a junction and make sure it is safe before proceeding.

22 Judgements

Only overtake when it is safe to do so. Allow enough room when you are overtaking another vehicle. Cyclists and motorcyclists need as much space as other vehicles; they can wobble or swerve suddenly. Do not cut in too quickly after overtaking. Take care when the width of the road is restricted or when the road narrows. If there is an obstruction on your side or not enough room for two vehicles to pass safely, be prepared to wait and let the approaching vehicles through.

When you turn right across the path of an

approaching vehicle, make sure you can do so safely. Other vehicles should not have to stop, slow down or swerve to allow you to complete your turn.

23 Positioning

You should position your vehicle sensibly, normally well to the left. Keep clear of parked vehicles and position correctly for the direction that you intend to take. Where lanes are marked, keep to the middle of the lane and avoid straddling lane markings. Do not change lanes unless necessary.

24 Pedestrian Crossings

You should be able to recognise the different types of pedestrian crossing and show courtesy and consideration towards pedestrians. At all crossings you should slow down and stop if there is anyone on the crossing. At zebra crossings you should slow down and be prepared to stop if there is anyone waiting to cross. Give way to any pedestrians on a pelican crossing when the amber lights are flashing. You should give way to cyclists as well as pedestrians on a toucan crossing and act correctly at puffin crossings (refer to *The Highway Code*).

25 Position / Normal Stops

Choose a safe, legal and convenient place to stop, close to the edge of the road, where you will not obstruct the road and create a hazard. You should know how and where to stop without causing danger to other road users. See bullet 3 page 95, Learning to Drive.

26 Planning

You must be aware of other road users at all times. You should always think and plan ahead so you can judge what other road users are going to do, predict how their actions will affect you and react in good time. Take particular care to consider the actions of the more vulnerable groups of road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. Anticipate road and traffic conditions, and act in good time, rather than reacting to them at the last moment.

27 Ancillary Controls

You should understand the function of all the controls and switches, especially those that have a bearing on road safety. These include indicators, lights, windscreen wipers, demisters and heaters. You should be able to find these controls and operate them correctly when necessary, without looking down.

28 Eco-safe Driving

Driving skills should demonstrate recognition of the principles of Eco-safe Driving, including appropriate use of the vehicle controls.

Annex 1

Driving Test Centres

Driving Test Centres listed below in bold are able to do the Wheelchair Assessment.

Aldershot (Farnborough)	Eastbourne	North Allerton
Ashford (Kent)	Enfield	Norwich
Aylesbury	Exeter	Nottingham (Chalfont Drive)
Ayr	Farnborough (Aldershot)	Nottingham (Colwick)
Barnet	Folkestone	Nuneaton
Barnsley	Gillingham LGV	Peterborough
Basildon	Girvan	Pontefract
Basingstoke	Glasgow (Shieldhall)	Poole LGV
Barry	Goodmayes	Portsmouth
Bedford	Grantham	Preston
Birmingham (Shirley)	Gravesend	Reading
Birmingham (South Yardley)	Guildford LGV	Redditch
Bishop Auckland	Halifax	Reigate
Bishop Stortford	Hastings	Rotherham
Blackburn	Heckmondwike	Sevenoaks
Bletchley	Hendon	Sheffield (Handsworth)
Blyth	Herne Bay MPTC	Skipton
Borehamwood	High Wycombe (Bucks)	Slough
Bradford (Eccleshill)	Hinckley	Southampton (Forest Hills)
Bradford (Heaton)	Horsforth	Southampton (Maybush)
Bridgend	Huddersfield	St Albans
Bridlington	Hull	St Helens
Bristol Multi Purpose Test Centre)	Kilmarnock	Stevenage
Bristol (Brislington)	Isleworth	Swansea
Bristol (Southmead)	Keighley	Taunton
Burgess Hill	Lee on the Solent	Telford
Burton-On-Trent	Leeds (Harehills)	Tolworth
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk	Leicester (Gipsy Lane)	Tunbridge Wells
Bury, Lancs	Leicester (Welford Road)	Wakefield
Cambridge (Chesterton Road)	Leicester (Wigston)	Warwick
Cambridge (Cowley Road)	Letchworth	Watford
Cannock	Lincoln	Wednesbury
Canterbury	Longbenton	Weston-Super-Mare
Cardiff (Fairwater)	Loughborough	Widnes
Carlisle	Lower Gornal	Winchester
Chelmsford	Luton	Wisbech
Chertsey	Maidstone	Wolverhampton
Coventry (Bayton Road)	Merthyr Tydfil	Workington
Crawley	Middlesbrough	Worthing
Croydon	Nelson	Yeovil
Derby (Sinfin Lane)	Newbury	
Darlington	Newport	
Doncaster	Newton Abbott	

Note: Taxi Assessment Centres were correct at time of press but are subject to change, please check at the time of booking.

Annex 2

Cabology Questions

Only the questions in **bold** print will be used on Black Cab style taxi tests.

Example questions:

Q. What is the length, width and/or height of the cab you are now with?

A. See page 26

Q. What are the correct tyre pressures for the cab you are now with?

A. See page 26

Q. Whilst driving a taxicab, how would you know if the rear automatic door locking system became inoperative?

A. The warning light on the dashboard will illuminate (green with black key icon)

Q. If the tyre pressures of the vehicle you are driving are 35psi at the front and 40psi at the rear, what would you consider the correct pressure for the spare to be?

A. 40psi, because it would be easier to deflate than inflate a tyre at the roadside

Q. As a Hackney Carriage driver, what is your main responsibility?

A. The safety and comfort of your passengers.

Q. How would you show consideration for passengers alighting from your vehicle?

A. Stop close to the kerb and avoid proximity to obstructions (street furniture, trees etc).

Q. As a licensed driver, what must you wear and display conspicuously with you at all times?

A. The Taxi driver's badge.

Q. If you found an item of lost property left in your taxicab, what would you do with it?

A. Either hand it into a Police Station or Local licensing Office within 24 hours, depending on local regulations.

Q. What is the minimum legal requirement of a tyre tread depth?

A. 1.6mm.

Q. If the tyre pressures of the vehicle you are driving are 35psi at the front and 40psi at the rear, what would you consider the correct pressure for the spare to be?

A. 40psi; because it would be easier to deflate than inflate a tyre at the roadside.

Q. As a Private Hire taxi driver, what is your main responsibility?

A. The safety and comfort of your passengers.

Q. How would you show consideration for passengers alighting from your vehicle?

A. Stop close to the kerb and avoid proximity to obstructions (street furniture, trees etc).

1. TAXI SPECIFICATIONS

TX1:

Length 4580m/m 180.45in

Width (mirrors out) 2036m/m 80.22in

Height 1834m/m 72.26in

Tyre pressures: front 35psi rear 40psi

TX11:

As for TX1 except for length, which is: 4575mm
180.00in

LT1. FX4 Fairway:

Length 4580m/m 180.45in

Width 1750m/m 69.00in

Height 1755m/m 69.50in

Tyre pressures: front 35psi front 36psi

Metrocab series 3 & TTT:

Length 4505m/m 177.38in

Width 1770m/m 69.69in

Height 1755m/m 69.50in

Tyre pressures: front 38psi front 38psi



Passed your DSA test?

You could qualify for a **discount**
on **insurance** from
Swinton Taxi Division

Passing your DSA Hackney Carriage Private Hire Assessment test is a fantastic achievement. One of the added benefits is that we could give you a discount on your insurance policy, subject to terms and conditions. The team at Swinton Taxi Division can arrange your insurance quickly and efficiently, so you can get on the road and start running fares.

Swinton Taxi Division can offer:

- same-day document turnaround
- specialist cover for private and public hire vehicles
- cover for MPVs, executive hire and coaches
- 3, 6 and 12 month policies available

Terms and conditions apply



“ I switched to Swinton Taxi Division shortly after my broker shut up shop. I'm over the moon with their service and the £350 I've saved on my insurance policy since. ”

Jan Gillett, Castle Taxi, Rochdale

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or go online to www.swinton.co.uk/taxi



Useful Contacts

Booking practical taxi assessments

Website:

www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport

Phone: 0300 200 1122

Minicom: 0300 200 1166

Driving Standards Agency
PO Box 280
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 1FP

Customer enquiry unit

Email: customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 200 1122

Fax: 0300 200 1155

Driving Standards Agency
PO Box 280
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 1FP

Information about Customer service and
Eco Safe driving can be obtained from
www.dsa.gov.uk

The Driving Standards Agency
recognises and values its
customers. We will treat all our
customers with respect, and
deliver our services in an
objective, polite and fair way.

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