

Section 3: Carrying out Private Hire Journeys

Private hire services are an important part of London's transport network, providing a wide range of services for residents and visitors. This section covers the basic requirements for drivers when carrying out private hire bookings.

Bookings

As a London PHV driver, you can **only** carry out bookings that you have received from a licensed London PHV operator. You must carry out these bookings in a London licensed PHV that has PHV licence discs on display (unless exempt).

TfL's website has a licence checker tool which contains the details of all licensed private hire drivers, vehicles and operators. This is a public register which you and anyone else can use.

You should never accept a booking from an unlicensed operator – if you are in any doubt you should ask the operator for their operator licence number and check their details using the online [licence checker tool](#)

It is important to remember that a PHV **is not** a taxi (black cab). This means that:

- You are **not** allowed to pick people up on the street or at stations or airports unless they have booked you through a licensed operator. This includes the street outside your operator's centre
- You must **not** allow any passenger to enter your vehicle before you have received the booking from your operator
- You must **not** give any sign or say anything to a member of the public that suggests that you are available for hire, without a booking

You must not encourage any member of the public to approach you or your PHV if they don't have a valid booking. If someone does come up to you, you are allowed to hand out a business card with the number of your operator on it or you can provide other contact details such as a website

Booking details

Before the start of each journey, your operator is required to record certain information about the booking. Although you are not personally responsible for collecting or recording these details, you should know about this requirement and let your operator know about any changes. For example, tell your operator if the final destination changes.

The information your operator must record includes:

- The date the booking is made and, if different, the date of the journey
- The name of the person the booking is for

- The agreed time and place for picking up passengers, or, if more than one location, the agreed time and place for picking up the first passenger
- The main destination
- The agreed fare or estimated fare
- The name or other identification of the driver carrying out the booking and
- The registration number or other identification of the vehicle that will carry out the booking

Operating centres in late night venues

If your operator has a licence to operate from a late-night venue, (e.g. a pub or nightclub) the operator can only take bookings inside the venue at the booking location specified on their licence.

You can only accept a fare if the passenger has booked the journey through a licensed London operator. You must not approach people on the pavement or outside a late night venue to offer them private hire services. If you do this, you may be committing an offence and could be [prosecuted](#). If a customer approaches you, then you should tell them to contact a licensed private hire operator to make a booking.

You, as the driver, are responsible for parking your vehicle, the noise it makes and for your own behaviour. Please think about the environment around the operating centre and how noise, traffic and/or customer movement may affect the people living in the neighbourhood.

Do **not** behave in an anti-social manner, do **not** leave litter in the street or road, do not go to the toilet in a public place, and do **not** leave your engine [running](#). Have respect for the area you are working in.

Remember, if TfL or the police get complaints about driver behaviour, they will investigate and, depending on the sort of complaint they receive, it could result in licensing action or prosecution.

Airports

Airports are private property and can make their own rules ([byelaws](#)) about taxis and PHVs.

Heathrow Airport has its own set of [byelaws](#) which you can find [here](#). You should know about these in case you get a booking to or from the airport.

You cannot enter Heathrow Airport to pick up passengers unless you have a booking from your operator or you are parking in an official car park or the [PHV Authorised Vehicle Area](#) to wait for a booking.

When picking up passengers you must always use an official car park.

You should **not** wait in local car parks or residential streets. Remember that the [taxi ranks](#) at Heathrow Airport and London City Airport are for licensed taxis (black cabs) **only**. You must not stop, wait, pick up or [drop off](#) passengers at the airport taxi ranks.

Journeys outside Greater London

As a London licensed PHV driver, in a London licensed PHV, you may carry out a private hire booking (accepted by a licensed London PHV operator) where the pick-up point and/or the destination for the journey is outside Greater London as long as the booking has been accepted by a licensed London PHV operator.

If you have any doubts about whether the journey is legal or not, you should ask your operator.

Fares

TfL has no power to set or control the fares charged by PHV operators. However, it is important that all customers understand the fare they are going to be charged.

Your operator is responsible for either agreeing a fare for the journey with the passenger or giving them an accurate estimate before a journey starts.

If your passenger decides to change the destination of their journey, asks you to pick up extra passengers, or has extra luggage, you should tell your operator as soon as it is safe for you to do so. Your operator will then be able to update the fare or estimated fare for the journey.

You should check with your operator what to do if your passenger disagrees with the fare or is unable to pay it at the end of the journey. You should also check with your operator what the arrangements are for giving out receipts.

Lost property

At the end of the journey, you should remind passengers to make sure they have not left anything behind. You should also check your vehicle for lost property after every journey. If you have put any of the passenger's luggage in the boot, do not forget to check that too.

If you find any lost property you should take it back to your operator. The operator will keep the property and make a record of it. By law your operator must keep a record of any items of lost property they hold. Let your operator know as soon as you find anything in case the passenger has already been in contact about the item.

Suspicious items and behaviour

Terrorist attacks can happen at any time or any place without warning.

Items left in your vehicle are likely to be items passengers have left behind, but if you are suspicious of an unattended item, call the police immediately on 999 and follow their instructions.

Be aware of what is going on around you and of anything that seems different or unusual or doesn't feel right, or anyone that you think is acting suspiciously. It could be someone you know, a passenger or even someone or something you notice when you are driving that doesn't feel quite right. You can report your concerns about suspicious activity to the [confidential](#) police anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321.

Don't worry about wasting police time or getting someone into trouble. The police will decide if the information you give is important and will treat it as private and confidential.

When a booking cannot be carried out

When an operator has accepted a booking and you have agreed to carry it out, you should carry out that booking unless you have a very good reason.

There may be situations where you do not feel able or safe enough to take passengers, for example if they are carrying open bottles or cans of alcohol or anything dangerous or [inflammable](#), or if they are acting in a violent or offensive way. If you do refuse to carry out a booking, be polite and explain why. This could help avoid a complaint.

Make sure you tell your operator the full reasons why you did not carry out the booking. Because the operator accepted the booking, the operator is also responsible for either arranging for another driver to carry out the booking or to make it clear to the passenger that it has been cancelled.

You must not refuse to take passengers because they are disabled or they are travelling with assistance dogs. For more details, see [Section 8: Being Aware of Equality and Disability](#).