

Section 5: Driver Behaviour

TfL expects all licensed drivers to offer Londoners and visitors a professional and safe service. Providing excellent customer service is an important part being a London PHV driver.

This section explains how TfL expects drivers to behave towards passengers and other road users.

Complaints

It is important that each time a passenger gets into a PHV they receive a high quality of service from their private hire driver.

Operators must keep details of all complaints made to them.

Operators must report to the police any complaints that involve possible crimes, so that they can be investigated.

Although your operator will normally deal with complaints, passengers might contact the police or TfL directly. They might also contact TfL if they are not satisfied with the way the operator has dealt with their complaint. In these cases, TfL may carry out its own investigation. If TfL does investigate a complaint that relates to you, we will provide you with the details of the complaint and ask for your comments. As soon as you have had the opportunity to respond to the complaint and TfL has made any other necessary enquiries, TfL will tell you the result of that investigation. Remember, TfL can only make a decision based on the information we receive, so it is important you respond to all our requests for information.

If a serious complaint is made against you, or if there are a number of complaints, or there appears to be a pattern of poor behaviour and all the ways to improve your behaviour have been tried but have failed, TfL may have to suspend or revoke your licence.

Unacceptable behaviour

As a PHV driver, you offer an extremely important service to the travelling public. You have a responsibility to make sure your passengers feel safe when they travel in your vehicle. The way that you interact with them will affect the way they will feel about their journey with you. It is important that you are professional and deal with passengers in a way that makes them feel at ease.

You should never use a passenger's personal contact details to start communicating with them about anything other than the booked journey. Contacting a passenger for personal or social reasons is unacceptable and a misuse of the passenger's personal information.

You should never make comments or jokes about someone's age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Drivers who behave in an unacceptable way will have action taken against them by TfL and/or the police.

Entering the back of your vehicle

Other than in an emergency, you must not get into the back seat of your vehicle while you have passengers on board. If you get into the back seat, you risk making your passengers uncomfortable and your actions may be misunderstood or considered inappropriate.

If your passenger is seriously ill, you should call the emergency services on 999 immediately. You should not try to physically check the passenger or administer first aid yourself unless you are following the instructions of the emergency services or a medical professional, or you have had appropriate first aid or medical training.

If your passenger is ill, or has a disability, and asks you to help them enter or leave your vehicle, make sure you check exactly what help they are asking you for, for example to take hold of your arm to support them. Keep any physical contact to the minimum required to give the help your passenger asks for.

Unacceptable sexual behaviour

No type of sexual behaviour between you and a passenger is ever acceptable, even if both of you agree to it.

TfL takes this issue extremely seriously. TfL or the police will fully investigate all complaints and reports, and they will take appropriate action. You will lose your licence if you are found to have acted in an unsuitable way towards a passenger.

You should never:

- Look at or speak to a passenger in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, for example staring at any part of their body
- Make any sexual remarks or comments about a passenger's appearance or clothing
- Engage in conversation of a sexual nature. This includes asking questions about someone's sex life or telling sexual jokes
- Touch a passenger in an unacceptable way. You should avoid any physical contact with a passenger unless completely necessary (such as helping a person who needs assistance into your vehicle) to reduce any misunderstanding or complaints against you. Touching someone without their permission could be a sexual assault and will be investigated by the police
- Suggest having sex with a passenger
- Offer or accept sex or sexual activity in place of a fare
- Take part in sexual activity of any kind with a passenger (even if both you and the passenger agree to it or the passenger suggests it)

- Watch, display or share pornographic or sexual pictures, or any other sexual material
- Commit any other sexual offence

Your passengers expect to be treated in an appropriate way. Think about your actions and how they might affect a passenger. Avoid any behaviour that might be understood as being sexual, no matter how good your intentions are or how harmless you think your behaviour is.