



St. Helens  
Council

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# **IMPROVING LICENSED VEHICLE STANDARDS**

**GUIDANCE FOR VEHICLE PROPRIETORS WHOSE  
LICENSED VEHICLES DO NOT MEET THE  
EXPECTED STANDARD**

**1 April 2017**

## **Information**

St. Helens Council as the Licensing Authority is committed to a high standard of licensed vehicle being available for hire for those who live, work and visit our area.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage proprietors to maintain their vehicles to a good standard throughout the life of their licence.

The policy is based on the consideration that licensed vehicles are providing a public transport service and as such standards of safety are essential and the vehicle should be in good condition for its use and the mileage it accrues. The appearance of the vehicle, externally and internally, and the level of comfort and cleanliness it offers can adversely impact upon the image of the borough of St. Helens, if the vehicle is shabby. It is also important that vehicles have an acceptable emissions level.

The Council encourages its proprietors to aim for this high standard so that the travelling public will benefit from the standards of safety and comfort being maintained.

## **Your Licenced Vehicle**

The purpose of this policy is to encourage proprietors to service and maintain their vehicles in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions throughout the lifetime of the vehicle.

If your vehicle is well maintained, mechanically sound, has good exterior body and paint work, meets high standards of interior cleanliness and comfort which can be supported by a thorough service history if required, then the changes we will introduce should not impact on you.

## **What will Change**

The changes will take affect from 1 April 2017.

## **Number of Failures per Test**

If your vehicle fails its compliance test on three or more major fail areas, then the retest will be subject to the same fee as the initial test.

Major Fails are noted as National MOT Standards (excluding emissions and foreign objects in tyres);

- Brakes
- Joints
- Lights (not just one bulb) and electrical
- Steering and suspension
- Tyres
- Seat Belts, restraints and ramps

- Exhaust and fuels
- Oil leaks
- Body exterior and interior
- Mirrors

**Requirement of a Retest twice in a two year period**

Any vehicle which fails its first test twice in a 2 year period will be required to undertake a third test.

The third test will be carried out in accordance with the existing compliance test but will also require the vehicle examiner to undertake a much fuller examination of the vehicle and assessment of its fitness to remain on the fleet.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/498457/Categorisation-of-defects.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498457/Categorisation-of-defects.pdf)

The third test would require the proprietor to undertake a full compliance test and be subject to the following;

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>FAIL</b>               | <p>Vehicle is probably beyond economical improvement to meet required standard.</p> <p>Vehicle has indications of sustained neglect.</p> <p>Vehicle falls short and requires significant remedial attention.</p> <p>Vehicle has insufficient service history.</p> |
| <b>IMPROVEMENT NOTICE</b> | <p>Vehicle is in generally good condition but has areas for improvement.</p> <p>Vehicle has a suitable record of servicing validity.</p>  |
| <b>PASS</b>               | <p>Vehicle is in good condition having substantial documentary service history with continuity.</p>   |

The third test would also attract a higher fee than the compliance test as it will require a longer period of assessment and consideration of supporting paperwork.

Please remember that if at the time of inspection the vehicle is considered to have serious deficiencies at any stage of tests, the Vehicle Examiner may issue a suspension notice.

### **Referral to the Licensing and Environmental Protection Committee**

If any vehicle is required to undertake the third test twice in a two year period then an automatic referral to the Licensing and Environmental Protection Committee would be generated to consider whether the vehicle remains part of the existing licensed vehicle fleet.

### **Care of your Licensed Vehicle**

As the proprietor of a licensed vehicle you have a responsibility to maintain your vehicle to a standard suitable for this purpose.

You will be transporting fee paying passengers who will expect high standards of presentation.

Any issues with the vehicle should be actioned immediately so it does not impact adversely on its licensed status or the service users.

Your vehicle should be kept clean and tidy at all times, including the boot and storage areas.

Beware of any products that may cause an unpleasant aroma within the vehicle which may impact on its users.

Check safety devices and ramps regularly to ensure they are working properly.

### **What will this Policy achieve?**

It is anticipated that this new policy will encourage vehicle proprietors to carry out regular maintenance of their licensed vehicles to ensure that the high standards expected are achieved.

### **Frequently asked questions**

*What documents do I need to provide as evidence of my vehicles service history, in line with manufacturers guidelines, and evidence of a schedule of preventative maintenance?*

You must produce the following documentation;

- Current test documents and V5 document in the name of the proprietor.

- The vehicles service book or evidence with dated mileage.
- Receipts for service work carried out, dated with mileage and including parts fitted with relevant receipts.

*Will you be able to take copies of my documents?*

No. You will need to provide copies for us of ALL documents.

*Do I have to present my documents in date order?*

Yes. This simplifies the process and reduces the time taken for the inspection.

*I regularly service and repair my own vehicle, what information do I need to provide to validate this?*

You will need to provide;

- Evidence of your applicable qualifications ie. City and Guilds certificates in the relevant discipline, NVQ level 3 in motor vehicle maintenance, or other approved training.
- A record of all work carried out including service sheets, etc, dated with mileage and including parts (eg: tyres, pumps, brake pads, etc) fitted with relevant receipts.
- All required documentation to be submitted by 9.00am to the Hardshaw Brook Testing Station, the day prior to your third test.

