

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM**  
**SPECIFICATIONS FOR VEHICLES TO BE LICENSED AS WHEELCHAIR**  
**ACCESSIBLE HACKNEY CARRIAGES**

1. Vehicle Type

- 1.1 Any vehicle that has been modified to accommodate a wheelchair user shall have been tested, or retested after modification, to meet the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval standards in the M1 category. As evidence of this, upon first licensing of any new type of vehicle, the manufacturer must supply an entire copy of the European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval Certificate and the first vehicle, and all future vehicles of that type, must carry a second stage manufacturers VIN plate displaying the number shown on the certificate. Vehicle registration documents must also show the same type approval number, the vehicle category must be shown as M1 and the body type must be shown as TAXI.
- 1.2 All vehicles shall be subject to the following additional requirements:
- a. 4 doors (excluding rear doors/tailgate unless accessible without the need to move seats);
  - b. right hand drive;
  - c. vehicles must conform to the Council livery scheme;
  - d. vehicles with seating for more than 5 passengers will only be accepted for licensing following prior inspection of the actual vehicle for compliance and for suitability of seating layout and access.
- 1.3. Once a vehicle has been approved it must remain in that form and no change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made throughout its licensing life without prior written approval from the Council.
- 1.4. Notwithstanding that the requirements of 1.1 and 1.2 above are fulfilled, the vehicle may not be approved for licensing by the Council until it has been inspected by individuals/groups nominated from time to time by the Council to comment on accessibility of the vehicle by wheelchair users and those with other disabilities.

2. Seating Capacity

- 2.1 The vehicle shall have a minimum seating capacity of 5 passengers up to a maximum of 8 passengers to be accommodated in the rear compartment and be capable of accommodating at least 1 wheelchair user. A vehicle where a wheelchair user reduces the overall capacity shall be permitted, subject to fulfilling all other requirements.

- 2.2 Only forward and/or rearward facing passenger seats shall be fitted.
- 2.3 All passenger seats and the devices used to secure them to the vehicle shall comply with the relevant M1 standards contained in European Directive 74/408 EC (as amended).
- 2.4. All passenger seats shall be permanently fixed to the vehicle. Demountable seats that are capable of being removed for the purpose of providing space for wheelchair user shall not be allowed. Fold-away tip-up type seats, shall be permitted providing they remain attached to the vehicle and comply with the requirements of 2.3 above.
- 2.5 All seats shall have a minimum cushion size of 350mm front to rear and 400mm side to side.
- 2.6. Every passenger seat should preferably have the forward edge highlighted in a contrasting colour so as to assist passengers with visual impairment.
- 2.7 The front passenger seat area shall be reserved for the carriage of luggage. Where a seat is fitted, it will not be considered suitable for passenger use and will not be taken into account when determining the maximum passenger capacity of the vehicle for licensing purposes.

### 3. Seat Belts

- 3.1 All passenger seats shall be provided with a lap and diagonal 3 point seat belt appropriate to the type and position of the seat which complies with the strength requirements specified in European Directive 77/541/ EC as amended and Regulations 46 and 47 of the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, whether or not those Directives or Regulations apply to that particular seat or the vehicle.
- 3.2. Each wheelchair user shall be provided with a disabled persons seat belt which fastens to the structure of the vehicle either permanently or temporarily by use of approved fixings appropriate to the position of the wheelchair as laid down in European Directive 76/115 EC as amended and Regulations 46 and 47 of the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, whether or not those Directives or Regulations apply to that particular seat or the vehicle.
- 3.3 All seat belts fitted and available for use shall comply with European Directive 77/541/EC (as amended).
- 3.4 All seat belts shall be fitted to the vehicle with the number of anchorage points appropriate to the type of seat belt. All anchorage points shall comply with M1 standards laid down in European Directive 76/115 EC (as amended by Directive 96/38 EC) or ECE Regulation 14 whether or not those requirements apply to that particular anchorage or vehicle.

#### 4. Wheelchair Restraint(s)/Passenger Safety Equipment

- 4.1 A system for the effective anchoring of wheelchairs shall be provided within the vehicle for all spaces designated as wheelchair spaces. The system and the devices used to secure the wheelchair to the vehicle shall comply with the strength requirements for M1 standards laid down in European Directive 76/115 EC whether or not those directives apply to those devices or vehicle. Wheelchair(s) must only face forward or rearward when the vehicle is in motion.
- 4.2. A full set of restraints shall be available in the vehicle for each wheelchair capable of being carried as permitted by the vehicle license.

#### 5. Wheelchair Space

- 5.1 The vehicle shall have a designated space capable of accepting a reference wheelchair, of at least 1200mm by 700mm (measured front to back and side to side) with a minimum headroom of 1300mm measured from the floor of the vehicle for each wheelchair user. The space(s) shall be immediately adjacent to a vehicle door fitted with the wheelchair access equipment (see 6 below) so as to allow the wheelchair user to board the vehicle and use the anchoring equipment with the minimum of manoeuvring.

#### 6. Wheelchair Access Equipment

- 6.1 The vehicle shall be fitted with the following form of wheelchair access equipment.  
RAMP: A purpose-designed wheelchair single-plate access ramp which must be permanently installed in the vehicle and be lightweight and easy to deploy, An add-on removable section would be deemed to meet this requirement. The ramp must provide a continuous surface of not less than 700mm in width and shall not exceed 1900mm in length when fully deployed. On level ground the ramp shall have a maximum gradient of no more than 33% in the fully deployed position. The installed ramp must have a minimum safe working load of 300kgs and shall be tested to 25% overload and a certificate obtained from the manufacturer installer. By 2010 all new vehicles with ramps and fittings must comply with British Standards 6109.
- 6.2 The wheelchair access equipment shall be fitted such that it terminates at the interior floor level so as to allow for smooth ingress/egress without the need to negotiate any step etc.
- 6.3. The aperture of the door into which the access equipment is fitted shall have minimum clear headroom in its central third of 1200mm. The measurement shall be taken from the upper centre of the aperture to a point directly below on the floor of the vehicle.

- 6.4 The aperture of the door into which the access equipment is fitted shall have a minimum width of 750mm at and below window height so as to allow the easy ingress/egress of a wheelchair.
- 6.5 A mechanism shall be fitted that positively holds the access door in the open position whilst in use and that requires a deliberate effort to close.

## 7. Bulkhead/Drivers Safety Screen

- 7.1 All vehicles shall have a bulkhead/drivers safety screen fitted, it shall be a full width, and full height screen fitted in the vehicle directly behind the driver's seat. The upper section of the bulkhead/safety screen shall consist of a clear vision panel sufficient for the driver to be able to see a substantial amount of the passenger compartment which must include vision of all access doors. A means of passing payment shall be incorporated into the screen to enable payment to be made from within the vehicle.
- 7.2 The vision panel section of the bulkhead/safety screen shall be constructed of safety glass without tint to the standard required for windscreens laid down in Regulations 30, 31 & 32 of The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 or any clear material with at least the same impact resistance and safety qualities as that of safety glass.
- 7.3 Any bulkhead/safety screen system must allow verbal communication between the driver and passenger by way of an intercom system which can be operated by the passenger.

## 8. Hearing facility

- 8.1 An induction loop facility must be installed and clearly signed for the use of passengers with hearing aids.

## 9. General Entry and Exit Requirements

- 9.1 The vehicle shall have a minimum of 2 means of exit from the passenger compartment behind the driver for use in emergency situations. The means of exit shall be free of any obstructions, reachable from all parts of the rear passenger compartment. Any gap through which a passenger can be expected to pass shall be of a minimum width of 400mm through which an adult can pass freely in a normal manner without undue difficulty.
- 9.2 Where a tailgate/rear door(s) are included as an exit, they shall be clearly marked "Emergency Exit" together with clear instructions relating to the means of opening. All markings shall be on the inside of the vehicle in a minimum lettering size of 25mm.

9.3 All vehicles must be side passenger loading. Rear passenger loading vehicles are not permitted.

## 10. Floor Height, Steps and Handrails

10.1 At the main access door into the passenger area of the vehicle, steps shall be provided to aid ingress/egress as follows:

- a. Where the internal floor height of the vehicle exceeds 380mm an intermediate step shall be fitted every 300mm from road level up to the internal floor height. All steps must be capable of supporting a minimum weight of 150kg.
- b. The tread area of all steps must have a minimum depth of 150mm and shall have a slip / resistant surface. All steps, both internally and externally, shall have all open edges highlighted in a contrasting high-visibility colour to match handrails and seat markings.
- c. Handrails must be fitted in appropriate positions in all passenger access doors so as to assist (intending) passengers and to facilitate the use of steps where provided. All handrails fitted shall be highlighted in a contrasting high-visibility colour to match seat markings as shown at 2.6 above and be of a non-slip finish.

## 11. Windows/Ventilation

11.1 The vehicle shall have windows fitted throughout on both sides of the vehicle and to the rear of the passenger compartment. A minimum of one window on each side shall be capable of being opened for the purpose of ventilation and passenger comfort.

11.2 All windows shall comply with European Directive 92J22/EC (as amended).

11.3 Only original manufacturers approved glazing shall be permitted. No aftermarket additions, e.g. film or spray coatings, shall be permitted other than clear additions which are intended to improve driver/passenger safety. All windows and glazing with or without additions designed to improve driver/passenger safety must achieve a minimum of 70% light transmission except where otherwise required by the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.

## 12. Floors and Passageways

- 12.1 All floor areas and passageways between seats through which passengers may be expected to pass shall be free of all steps, encumbrances or trip hazards and shall have a slip resistant surface securely fitted to the floor. Integral step(s) at doorways will not count towards this requirement.
- 12.2 Any gap through which a passenger can be expected to pass shall be of a minimum width of 400mm through which an adult can pass freely in a normal manner without undue difficulty.

## 13. Interior Lighting

- 13.1 The vehicle shall have interior lighting fitted in the passenger compartment sufficient to illuminate the whole of that compartment. The light(s) shall be switched such that they may be turned on and off from both the driving and passenger compartments and shall operate automatically when a door is opened.
- 13.2 A means of illuminating the entrance steps at all access doors into the passenger compartment shall be fitted and switched such that they operate automatically when a door is opened.

## 14. Luggage Space

- 14.1 There shall be a luggage compartment situated at the front or rear of the vehicle. If at the front it must be forward of a bulkhead/safety screen and on the opposite side of the driving compartment. The luggage compartment must be divided off by a barrier capable of preventing any luggage from entering the driving compartment or rear passenger compartment.
- 14.2 The luggage compartment shall have sufficient capacity to accommodate a reasonable amount of luggage for each of the maximum number of passengers that can be carried.
- 14.3 Unoccupied wheelchairs etc carried as luggage shall be securely loaded outside of the main passenger compartment.
- 14.4 A suitable restraint system shall be provided so as to minimise any movement of luggage whilst in transit.
- 14.5 The luggage compartment shall have a permanently fitted light for illumination which operates automatically on opening the door boot lid.

15. Taximeter and Fare Card

- 15.1 The vehicle shall be equipped with a taximeter of an approved type that is fully activated and calibrated to the current fare card (as amended) so as to be capable of charging no more than the permitted rate of fare at anytime.
- 15.2 The taximeter shall be securely fitted in a position such that the fare can be easily and clearly read by any passenger inside the vehicle.
- 15.3 The current fare card shall be displayed in the vehicle so as to be easily and clearly read by any passenger. Where a bulkhead is fitted, an additional fare card shall be displayed in the rear passenger compartment so as to be easily and clearly read by any passenger.
- 15.4 Proper provision shall be made for the display of the fare card to accommodate at least an A5 size fare table.
- 15.5 Proper provision shall be made for the display of the vehicle license plate on the rear of the vehicle.

NOTES:

Any vehicle approved and licensed by the Council, in addition to the above requirements, will also be subject to conditions attached to licences (as amended) and to byelaws in respect to hackney carriages (as amended).