Customer Care Training and Knowledge Seminars – Guidance Notes

The customer care training and knowledge seminars have been developed as part of Leeds City Council’s commitment to increasing the level of professional service offered to the public using taxi and private hire vehicles.

You have been given this training pack at the time of your application. You are expected to study it so that you come to the training, seminars and tests well-prepared. If do not study and prepare, you may fail your tests and your licence will not be granted.

If you have already achieved the recognised VRQ/ NVQ accreditation in Road Passenger Transport, you will not be required to undertake the customer care training and test unless a subsequent training need is identified.

The Process

All new applicants must undertake the training seminar and knowledge testing before a driver licence is issued.

The customer care training covers your role as a taxi or private hire driver and is followed by a multiple choice test. The training is delivered by the Council’s Vehicle Safety Team at their premises 225a York Road and is a full day course, 09:30 – 15:00 with a half an hour break for lunch.

The knowledge seminar is held at 225 York Road. It covers the legislation relevant to taxi and private hire drivers, and a section on driver safety. It is delivered by a council officer and it is followed by a single test on the legislation and 3 geography tests.

Drivers are expected to know the geography of Leeds before they attend. No training is given on geography.

Hackney carriage applicants then leave to prepare for the Hackney carriage local knowledge test which is an advanced knowledge test and requires very detailed and thorough knowledge of routes, roads, landmarks and Byelaws in Leeds.

Private Hire applicants stay for the afternoon session which is a seminar and test on the conditions of holding private hire driver and vehicle licences. This seminar is also delivered by a council officer at the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section.

Hackney carriage applicants will attend 8.30 – 1pm; private hire drivers will attend 8.30 – 3.45 with a break for lunch.

Aims

The aim of the customer care training is to

- help you to provide a high level of professional service to your customers
- ensure your passengers feel safe whilst travelling with you
• assist you in working in a professional way.

The aim of the knowledge seminar and tests is to

• ensure that you understand the basic legislation underpinning Hackney and private hire work
• ensure that you understand some of the risks associated with working as a driver
• help you to take reasonable steps to reduce those risks
• ensure that you have a basic knowledge of the geography of Leeds Metropolitan District and Leeds city centre
• ensure that you can use a basic reference tool (A-Z).

The aim of the private hire knowledge seminar and test is to

• ensure that you understand the conditions attached to holding a private hire driver's licence and the conditions attached to holding a private hire vehicle licence.

Testing

Customer Care - you will be tested on your knowledge and understanding of the information given to you over the course of the training.

Knowledge seminar - you will be tested on your knowledge of basic legislation, health and safety awareness, your knowledge of the districts of Leeds, your knowledge of Leeds City Centre, your ability to locate streets and identify Leeds landmarks in the Leeds & Bradford A-Z.

Private hire driver seminar – you will be tested on the local conditions attached to holding private hire driver and vehicle licences.

Existing licence holder referrals

Existing licence holder referrals who are the subject of a suspension process will remain suspended until a successful pass mark is achieved.

Existing licence holder referrals who are not suspended will have a three month time scale to attend and pass and if not achieved, consideration will be given to the suspension, revocation or non-renewal of your licence.

The Knowledge Seminar Test

The knowledge seminar test consists of 4 modules for Hackney carriage drivers and 5 modules for private hire drivers:

**MODULE 1 - Training Seminar and Testing of Knowledge of Legislation**

This module incorporates questions based on basic primary legislation and health and safety. Drivers can make notes during the seminar.
MODULES 2 & 3 - Geographical Test: Districts of Leeds and City Centre

Locations

In the second module you will be tested on your ability to locate districts within the Leeds area. Contained within your training pack you will find a map outlining the key districts of Leeds. It is important that you study this map carefully as you will be required to locate and identify the districts.

In the third module you will be tested on your knowledge of locations within Leeds City Centre. Again you must study your City Centre map before your test to ensure you are able to locate and identify the key locations within Leeds City Centre.

Both these modules must be passed in the same testing session

MODULE 4 - A to Z questions

In module four you will be tested on being able to identify key locations using an A-Z book.

You will be expected to familiarise yourself with the A-Z book provided within the training pack. You should know how to use the index, and be familiar with the common symbols and abbreviations.

Applicants who have studied the training pack at home will realise that the print in the A-Z index is small. We ask applicants to bring their own reading glasses or magnifying glasses to the tests. These will not be provided by the Council.

MODULE 5 – Conditions of holding private hire driver and vehicle licences
(private hire only)

In this Module you will be tested on the Standard Conditions attached to a private hire driver’s licence and private hire vehicle licence. These Conditions can be found in your training pack. It is your responsibility to study the Conditions in order to gain the knowledge that you will be expected to use while undertaking your role as a licensed driver.

Additional Training Material

Equality is a key issue for Leeds City Council and you will be supplied with a Go Skills disability awareness DVD. This is recognised as an extremely useful training item and you should take time to watch it, understand all the issues and put them into practice as a driver.

In the event of a substantiated complaint or prosecution on a disability issue, if appropriate, drivers will be referred to the Council’s preferred training organisation for formal training. This will be at your own expense, and your licence may be suspended in the meantime.
All the material for the customer care training and knowledge seminar will be provided by Leeds City Council. You should bring your training pack to the customer care training so that you can use it as an additional reference tool.

**Fees**

The cost of the customer care training for a new applicant is £55\(^1\). The cost of the first knowledge seminar and tests is included in the licence application fee.

The accompanying training pack must be purchased at the time of application. The private hire training pack costs £15; the Hackney carriage training pack costs £10.

An application remains valid for one year. However an additional DBS check is required, at your own expense, for any three month period since you last undertook a DBS check prior to the issuing of your licence.

There will be a one-off payment for existing licence holders when required to undertake the testing.

**Time-scales**

If you need to change the training date/s given to you, you must contact the Licensing Office, giving **7 days clear notice**, (not including the test day and day you are rearranging your appointment) to enable us to rearrange the training schedule. If you do not, you will be re-charged the full cost of the training at a later date.

Failure to attend the course on the designated dates may result in the suspension of an existing licence unless there are exceptional and documented circumstances.

**On the Day**

New applicants must present their DVLA photocard to the course trainer at the start of the training as identification. In exceptional circumstances applicants may present their passport.

Existing drivers may present either their DVLA photocard or their driver’s badge to the course trainer at the start of the training.

If you do not present your ID, you will be turned away. If you are turned away it is your responsibility to arrange another training date. You will be charged the full cost of the training.

It is not acceptable to disrupt or delay the training of others due to lateness. If you are late your will be turned away. If you wish to continue your application you will have to rebook the training. You will be charged the full cost of the training.

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\(^1\) All fees are subject to change. The fees quoted were valid for May 2013.
Failure to Pass

There is an 80% pass rate for the customer care training. However there are 3 mandatory questions which the applicant must get right. A wrong answer on any of these would result in the test being failed.

The knowledge seminar test has a pass mark of 90% for each module. It is therefore important that you study your training pack before attending the training and undertaking the test.

If you fail Module 1 (Training seminar and testing of knowledge of legislation) you will be required to re-sit the seminar and be retested on this module.

If you fail either part of Modules 2 - 3 (Districts of Leeds and Leeds city centre) you will be required to re-sit and be tested on all both of these areas.

If you fail Module 4 (Using an A-Z) you will be required to re-sit and be tested on this module.

If you fail Module 5 (Private hire conditions seminar and test) you will be required to re-sit the seminar and be retested on this module. There will be an automatic fail if the question(s) regarding ‘plying for hire’ is (are) incorrectly answered.

If you do fail any of the tests, you will arrange a second training date and pay the appropriate re-test fee. Please be aware that this will delay the approval of your licence as your application will not be considered further until you have successfully passed all the tests.

Hackney carriage applicants must pass modules 1-4 before they can sit the Hackney carriage local knowledge test.

If you fail this re-test you must wait three months before taking the tests again. **You will be charged the full cost for your subsequent test.** This allows us to prioritise applicants who are taking the test for the first time. It allows you the time to study your training material more thoroughly.

In normal circumstances you will receive your results by letter within 10 working days. When you have passed all the tests your file will be checked to see if it complete and all the relevant checks have been carried out. We will contact you if your application is approved.

Good luck. We hope that you will pass the tests and enjoy working as a licensed driver in Leeds.