



The DSA driving assessment for taxis and private hire vehicles

You need a licence from your local authority - or Transport for London (TfL) in London - to drive a hackney carriage (taxi) or private hire vehicle (PHV).

Some authorities will require you to pass a taxi or private hire vehicle driving assessment before they will consider granting you a licence. The test is an additional requirement to the practical test you originally passed to get your full driving licence.

Assessments are carried out by Driving Standards Agency (DSA) examiners. The test is more demanding than the practical test taken by learner drivers, and has elements that relate specifically to driving a taxi or PHV.

This guide explains how to book your taxi assessment with the DSA, and what the test involves. It also explains what to do if you want to change or cancel a test booking.

Driving assessments and general requirements for getting a taxi or private hire vehicle licence

Different local authorities - eg borough councils or unitary authorities - have different criteria for granting taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) driver licences.

Some will insist that you pass the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) **driving assessment**, while others do not. In London, for example, hackney carriage drivers must pass the assessment before Transport for London (TfL) can grant them a licence, but the requirement doesn't apply to PHV drivers.

You should contact the licensing authority in your area to find out whether you will need to take the DSA assessment. You can find your local authority on the Directgov website - [Opens in a new window](#).

General requirements

Before you can apply for a taxi or PHV driver licence, you must:

- be able to work legally in the UK
- have held a full GB or Northern Ireland driver's licence - or a full European Union driving licence together with a UK paper counterpart - for at least 12 months

Other requirements for getting your licence may include passing:

- a criminal record check
- a medical examination
- a 'knowledge' test - to prove you have reasonable geographical knowledge of the area in which you intend to drive

Your local authority will be able to tell you what the requirements are in your area.

You will need to pay a fee to get your first taxi or PHV driver licence, and a renewal fee. Licences are normally issued for a period of 12 months.

Remember that a separate licence will be needed for the vehicle you drive as a taxi or PHV. If you are a PHV driver, you must only take bookings from licensed operator. Both vehicle and operator licences are issued by local authorities.

To find out more about licences for **taxi** drivers and their vehicles, see our guides on taxi licensing outside London and taxi licensing in London.

For more information about **private hire** driver, vehicle and operator licences, see our guides on private hire vehicle licensing outside London and private hire vehicle licensing in London.

How to book your taxi or private hire vehicle assessment

Before booking a **hackney carriage** (taxi) or **private hire vehicle** practical driver's test, you should find out what you will be assessed on. For more information, refer to your private hire/hackney carriage assessment booklet available from your local council.

Before the assessment, you are strongly advised to:

- take lessons with a professional driving instructor
- read the Highway Code
- familiarise yourself with the content of the assessment and your vehicle

Booking your test

Driver assessments can be taken at your local Driving Standards Agency (DSA) test centre. You can find your nearest test centre on the DSA website. - Opens in a new window

You can book your practical assessment:

- online
- by phone
- by post

You will need one of the following:

- a full UK or Northern Ireland licence, both photocard and paper counterpart
- a full British old style paper licence and current passport
- a recognisable full European Union (EU) licence and UK paper counterpart with a current passport if your EU licence does not have a photograph

You will also need a valid debit or credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Delta, Visa Electron, Switch/Maestro or Solo), or for postal bookings a cheque or postal order.

You can book your practical driving test for a taxi on the Directgov website - Opens in a new window.

Booking by phone

You can book over the phone by calling the following numbers:

- DSA Helpline on Tel 0300 200 1122
- DSA Helpline for Wales on Tel 0300 200 1133
- DSA Helpline (Textphone) on Tel 0300 200 1144

Once you have been connected to the DSA helpline, the telephone options you need to follow to book a practical taxi test are 2, 1, 1, 4.

Booking by post

To book your test by post, you will need to download the practical driving test application form from the DSA website - [Opens in a new window](#). (PDF, 168K)

For guidance on filling out the application form, you can download the information sheet DL26/I from the DSA website - [Opens in a new window](#). (PDF, 200K)

You can also request application forms by phone. You can call the DSA Helpline on Tel 0300 200 1122.

Once you have filled out the form, you should post it with a cheque or postal order to:

Driving Standards Agency
PO Box 280
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 1FP

Cash payments are not accepted, but you may make a credit card payment by contacting the DSA over the phone.

Test fees

For details of current assessment fees, see our [guide to fees for driving instructors, motorcycle trainers and taxi drivers](#).

Cancelling or rescheduling your test

You can reschedule or cancel a test:

- online - this service is available from 06.00 to 24.00, seven days a week
- by phone

Providing you give the DSA three clear working days' notice - Saturdays count as working days - you can:

- move or change your test
- cancel your test
- get a full refund of your test fee

You can cancel or reschedule your taxi practical driving test on the [Directgov website](#) - [Opens in a new window](#).

If you prefer to phone, you can call the DSA Helpline on Tel 0300 200 1122.

What the taxi or private hire vehicle driving assessment involves

The standard of the hackney carriage (taxi) or private hire vehicle assessment is set at a level suitable for a full driving licence holder. It is therefore higher than the learner driver test.

The eyesight test

At the start of your practical assessment, you will be asked to read in good daylight a vehicle registration number fixed to a motor vehicle with letters and figures 79.4 millimetres high at a distance of 20.5 metres (20 metres for a new-style number plate). You can use glasses or contact lenses if you wear them.

If you fail the eyesight test, you will be unable to take the driving part of the assessment. However, you will still be able to continue with the wheelchair section if appropriate.

The practical assessment

The practical assessment will last for about 35 to 40 minutes, depending on traffic. Some of the skills you will be assessed on are specific to taxi drivers, such as a taxi manoeuvre and not stopping anywhere that could be dangerous for a passenger getting out of your vehicle.

From 4 October 2010, your practical driving test will include approximately ten minutes of independent driving. This is designed to test your ability to drive unsupervised, and make safe decisions without guidance. You can read about independent driving and how it will be assessed.

The examiner will also ask you a few questions on the Highway Code and ask you to identify some traffic signs and road markings.

During the practical assessment, you will be examined on:

- your awareness and anticipation
- your effective planning of prevailing road and traffic conditions
- your correct use of speed
- an emergency stop (there will be one in the assessment)
- a manoeuvre involving reversing
- a taxi or private hire related exercise
- your passenger safety and comfort
- a wheelchair element (for wheelchair enhanced vehicles if you requested the enhanced assessment)

For more information, refer to your private hire-hackney carriage assessment booklet available from your local council.

If you are taking the taxi or 'black cab' style test, you will need to answer some related 'cabology' questions. Examples of these include the dimensions of your vehicle, its correct tyre pressures and what you should do if a passenger leaves property behind.

For more information, refer to your private hire hackney carriage assessment booklet available from your local council.

To pass the test, you need to complete the assessment with no more than nine minor faults. You will fail if you make any serious or dangerous errors.

The wheelchair exercise

If you asked to take the enhanced assessment, your assessment will also include the wheelchair exercise. For more information, refer to your private hire/hackney carriage assessment booklet available from your local council.

The wheelchair exercise for taxis and private hire vehicles

If you have requested the enhanced assessment, it will include a wheelchair exercise. You will need to provide a wheelchair accessible vehicle for this element of the assessment. This is to show the examiner that you know how to operate this equipment safely. You will need to:

- show your ability to securely erect the wheelchair ramps and floor ramps
 - safely put the wheelchair in your vehicle, and then - for TX-model taxis only - secure both wheelchair brakes
 - fasten the seat belts or safety harness and also secure any wheel belts or clamps if they are fitted to your vehicle
 - reverse the process by taking off the belts, harnesses and clamps, removing the wheelchair from your vehicle and putting the ramps away
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What happens at the end of the taxi or private hire vehicle assessment

When you pass your **practical** assessment, you will receive:

- a pass certificate (form TPH10)
- the offer of a debrief
- a copy of your assessment

When you pass your **wheelchair** assessment, you will receive:

- a pass certificate (form WTPH10)
- the offer of a debrief
- a copy of your assessment

If you fail one or both parts, you will receive:

- the offer of a debrief
- a copy of your assessment
- training advice

If you fail the practical assessment, you might want to retake it at a later date. You must, however, wait a minimum period of three clear working days before you retake it. Saturday counts as a working day. There is no limit to the number of times you can attempt either assessment.

DSA Helpline

0300 200 1122

DSA Helpline for Wales

0300 200 1133

DSA Helpline (Textphone)

0300 200 1144

Related guides on businesslink.gov.uk

Use our interactive tool to work out which forms of insurance you should have for your business

Fees for driving instructors, motorcycle trainers and taxi drivers

Private hire vehicle licensing outside London

Private hire licensing in London

Taxi licensing outside London

Taxi licensing in London

Use taxis and private hire vehicles to run a local bus service

Related web sites you might find useful

Practical driving test for taxis online booking facility on the Directgov website

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/bookpracticaltest>

Local authority search on the Directgov website

<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>

Taxi test centre search on the Driving Standards Agency website

http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/taxi_list_bl.asp?cat=-1&TestType=taxi&TypeID=17

Download a taxi test application form for postal applicants from the DSA website (PDF, 163K)

http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/Documents/bl/dsa_dl26.pdf

Download information sheet DL26/1 from the DSA website (PDF, 625K)

http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/Documents/bl/dsa_dl26i.pdf

Highway Code information on the Directgov website

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm>

Driving test centre search on the Driving Standards Agency website

http://www.dft.gov.uk/dsa/AtoZservices_Bannered.asp?Cat=-1&TestType=taxi&TypeID=17

You can find this guide by navigating to:

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