

Welcome

The dangers of using an unlicensed mini cab are rarely out of the headlines. As a result, Taxiwise still actively campaigns to ensure the safe onward travel for late night revellers.

It is terrible to think that bogus taxi drivers still operate in towns and cities across the UK. We can only hope that Taxiwise, alongside the police and other safety campaigners, can equip the public with the knowledge to recognise and avoid any potentially dangerous situations.

Thanks to their partnership with leading women's magazine Grazia, Taxiwise continues to deliver a positive safety message to large numbers of women nationwide. The safety campaigner has also attracted the backing from an increasing number of celebrities and MPs. It's this level of high profile collaboration that has kept party revellers safe and vigilant when returning home after a late night on the town.

"We want people to arrive home safely," comments Hazel Crawford-Upton, a Taxiwise spokesperson.

"Passengers should always be confident that the taxi they are using is fully licensed and then, if anything should happen, the cab can be easily traced, unlike an unlicensed taxi. It's important that people make safe choices for their journeys home."

"A legal taxi should be carrying a badge stating that they are a registered taxi and this can be requested to be looked at. It should be visible in the taxi, and if people have any trouble or are in any doubt, they should take down the number of the taxi."

Taxiwise actively promotes the safe use of taxis and hopes that passengers continue to remain 'taxi wise' when travelling home at night.

Get Home Safely

- Use a recommended taxi company and keep their number handy
- Always check the back of the taxi to ensure there's an official licence plate attached
- Remember that minicabs that stop in the street may be cheaper, but aren't licensed, so they aren't safe
- Always have your cash ready and get out of the cab before you pay the driver

Inside this issue

- Taxi marshals cut late night crime and disorder
- Driving the seatbelt message home
- New London taxi blurs safety regulations
- Dangers of cherry-picking
- Licensed vs. Unlicensed

Cutting late night crime and disorder



The deployment of taxi marshals allows people to catch licensed vehicles in a controlled and safe environment

Taxiwise welcomes any decision by City Councils to fund initiatives that help people get home quickly and safely after a night out. One such scheme that has been hailed a success since its launch is the Birmingham Broad Street taxi marshalling scheme.

“People using marshalled ranks can be confident that all taxis are fully licensed and insured, helping to prevent the illegal hailing of private hire vehicles.”

Following an initial pilot in 2004, the taxi marshalling scheme was launched alongside other safety improvements to the area including additional street wardens and CCTV. It has helped thousands of people get home safely following a visit to one of the city’s many clubs, pubs and other night time attractions at the weekend.

Managed by four taxi marshals employed by the Council, the scheme improves safety and efficiency in queues during late night peak periods and eases traffic congestion. Wearing highly visible uniforms, each marshal is experienced in crowd control and has direct radio contact with the police.

“Taxi marshals have proven to be very popular with people visiting Birmingham late at night,” said Taxiwise. “People using marshalled ranks can be confident that all taxis are fully licensed and insured, helping to prevent the illegal hailing of private hire vehicles.”

“After a great night out, we want people to get home quickly and safely. Marshalled ranks allow people to do just that. We fully support Birmingham City Council in their continued effort to provide a taxi marshalling scheme and hope that other Councils follow their example.”



Success stories nationwide

Taxi marshals help cut Newcastle crime by 6%

Newcastle City Council and Northumbria Police have agreed to pay £90,000 to keep the city’s taxi marshalling scheme running at three taxi ranks until April next year.

The scheme was launched in October 2005 following concerns about trouble in taxi queues and was so successful in reducing violence and disorder that it has continued, backed by the Safe Newcastle partnership. Partnership leaders say the marshals have contributed to a 6% reduction in violent attacks in the city centre over the past three years, down from 1,742 to 1,641.

Green light for Bath’s Orange Grove taxi rank

Bath’s taxi marshal scheme has proven to be a simple but effective innovation in the management of the area’s evening and night time economies.

Developed by the Bath Doorsafe Partnership, the scheme has proven to be a great success. Residents have said that the area

around the Orange Grove is quieter at night with less vandalism and litter reported. Also, the presence of taxi marshals means that taxi drivers feel safer picking up passengers and vulnerable people are happier waiting at the taxi rank.

Edinburgh taxi drivers win funding

Taxi marshals are set to be deployed at three of Edinburgh’s busiest ranks for another year. Funding for the initiative ran out but money has now been secured for a further year, with Council chiefs aiming to make the service permanent.

Raymond Davidson, secretary of the Edinburgh Taxi Association, said: “This is excellent news. For the last few weeks, passengers and drivers have been asking what has happened to the marshals and that tells its own story. They made such a difference on the ranks and streets. Passengers were using the ranks properly, particularly women on their own, and they were kept in good order. I’m delighted to hear they will be back for the year and I do hope it continues beyond that.”

taxiwise

Driving the seatbelt message home

Taxiwise encourages passengers to belt up

Taxis and private hire vehicles are fitted with seat belts, and all passengers, including children, should use them. That was the message communicated by Taxiwise as around 370* people a year are killed in road crashes by not wearing a seatbelt.

Taxiwise wants to remind passengers to put on their seatbelts, no matter how short their journey is, to avoid injury if involved in a crash. Many people who always wear their seatbelt in their own private vehicle seem to forget to do so or choose not to when travelling by taxi or private hire vehicle.

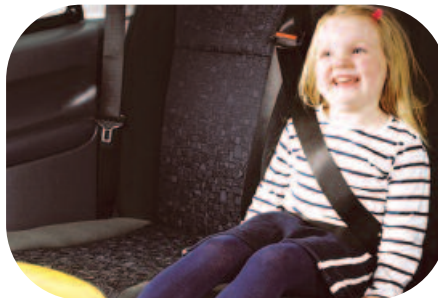
"The safety of all road users is extremely important," said Hazel-Crawford-Upton from Taxiwise. "There is no reason why passengers should fail to put on their seatbelts when they jump in the back of a taxi. The reality is, however, it only takes a second for a car to crash and seatbelts save lives. Our message is don't risk it!"

Recent car laws have done more to protect passengers. Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick commented: "Tens of thousands of lives have been saved since the first law on wearing seatbelts was introduced 25 years ago. Government campaigns have helped increase the numbers of people wearing seatbelts to more than 90% for drivers and front seat passengers, but too many back seat passengers are still not belting up.

"With up to 15 drivers and front seat passengers killed each year by the impact of an unbelted rear seat passenger, it is vital that everyone - young or old, travelling in the front or back - wears a seatbelt."

Taxi manufacturers are responding to the law by producing vehicles that take into account all legislation. One company with an impeccable safety record is LTI Vehicles. The makers of the London taxi have built a vehicle that is safe for all types of passengers, be these small children, the frail or disabled. For younger passengers, LTI have developed a special rear seat belt that can be adjusted for a wide range of children's heights and weights. A wheelchair retention system also holds wheelchairs firm and secure during transit.

**Second Review of the Government's Road Safety Strategy*



Behind the statistics lie stories of anguish

Solihull, West Midlands - Firefighters, paramedics and police were called to an accident between a Saab 900 and a taxi. The stolen Saab had been driving at speed and had overtaken another vehicle before it smashed head-on into the taxi.

The teenage boy who had been travelling in the Saab had suffered life-threatening head, neck and chest injuries. The passenger in the taxi suffered from significant head and face injuries. Both had failed to properly secure their seatbelts.

Solihull Fire Station Watch Commander Stuart Murphy said: "Unfortunately we are finding more and more these days that people are failing to wear seatbelts. This undoubtedly means they will suffer more serious injuries."

BE
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WISE
Get home safely



Blurring safety regulations



With the introduction of a new taxi for use in London, Taxiwise is concerned that by licensing alternative vehicles, rogue drivers posing as cabbies will lure unsuspecting passengers into their vehicles.

Recognisability is a key issue for Councils up and down the country. The classic London taxi is favoured by many as its instantly recognisable shape cannot be mistaken for any other type of vehicle.

In London, passengers have been able to safely differentiate between a purpose-built taxi and the taxi conversions that share the same styling as private hire vehicles. "Know what you are getting into" has been a key safety message from Transport for London in the past as they encourage the safe personal use of the Capital's taxis.

Hazel Crawford-Upton, a spokesperson of Taxiwise said: "The launch of this new taxi conversion for use in London blurs the safety regulations regarding instant recognisability. Also, we may potentially see some of London's licensed taxi drivers becoming private hire operators. This will mean the paying public will have no idea what classification of vehicle they're getting into. We suggest that everyone checks the taxis they use are licensed and legitimate."

Paul Brent, chairman of the Trafford Taxi Drivers' and Owners' Association, said: "Using the purpose-built London taxi meant that, when a woman was attacked after being picked up by a bogus taxi driver last Christmas, police immediately ruled out all black cab drivers as suspects because the vehicle description did not match."



Survey reveals travellers could be at risk

A recent survey carried out on the streets of London has found that travellers from abroad could be the most at risk from using unlicensed taxis.

The survey asked 200 people from across the world to pick from a choice of pictures the vehicle they most recognise as a taxi. A staggering 95 per cent of people chose the traditional 'Black Cab' from the list. Asked which taxi they would hail, and 83 per cent chose the same licensed vehicle. However, of the people who did not choose to hail the 'Black Cab', over half were from outside the UK from countries including the USA, Germany, Australia, Mexico and New Zealand.

In an effort to improve safety, it would appear that some embassies are trying to educate their travellers. For example, the US Embassy in London has issued guidelines for travellers to the United Kingdom on making sure they stay safe on our streets.

Safety tips include educating people on the differences between hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. The fact sheet also looks at the stringent tests for London's fleet of licensed taxis and explains that hackney carriages are the only vehicles that can be legally hailed on the street.

Useful information including taxi booking phone numbers and text numbers are also included in the fact sheet.

To download your copy for yourself or to email a friend travelling in London visit:
http://unitedkingdom.usembassy.gov/cons_new/acs/scs/taxis_and_minicabs.pdf

Licensed VS Unlicensed

Do you know which vehicles are safe to use?

One of the most confusing aspects of the taxi industry is being able to identify the difference between a Hackney Carriage, which can be hailed, and a private hire vehicle, which has to be pre-booked. The difficulty is that there is no national standard for licensing vehicles as local authorities within the UK set their own regulations resulting in a number of different operating systems. Listed below are some simple pointers to help passengers identify the difference between the vehicles available:

Licensed Hackney Carriage

- The instantly recognisable purpose-built taxi
- A Hackney Carriage can also be a saloon car or converted vehicle. All can be recognised by the Hackney Carriage licence plate located to the rear of the vehicle
- It is the only vehicle that can be safely hailed in the street or at a rank
- All Hackney Carriage drivers will carry official identification



Licensed Private Hire Vehicle

- Virtually any type of vehicle can be licensed for private hire use
- Licensed vehicles can be identified by the license plate located to the rear of the vehicles and the usual presence of the company's phone number featured on the vehicle. The driver will also carry identification
- All licensed private hire vehicles must be pre-booked by telephone or at a booking office
- Passengers are not insured if travelling in a licensed private hire vehicle that they've hailed in the street



Unlicensed Private Hire Vehicle

- The vehicle will have neither a license plate nor company number on it
- The driver will not be carrying any official identification
- A passenger will not be insured if they get into the vehicle
- The vehicle is not safe or legal to hail in the street, even if the driver has pulled up and asked if transport is required
- It should not be used under any circumstances



We hope you find this edition of Taxiwise of interest. If you are concerned by any taxi safety issues, please contact us in one of the following ways.

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