



Proposed Variation of Licence Fees

The following are the proposals for varying fees charged for the licensing of Hackney Carriage Vehicles, Private Hire Vehicles, and Private Hire Operators. If you have any objections to these proposals please let us know in writing by 21st March 2008.

	2005 Fee	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
New Grant of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle (including plates, bracket, roundels etc)			
a) Wheelchair Accessible	£190.00	£190.00	£250.00
b) Other Vehicles	£390.00	£370.00	£500.00
New Grant of a Private Hire Vehicle (including plates, bracket, transfers etc)	£315.00	£295.00	£500.00
Renewal of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle (including plates)			
a) Wheelchair Accessible	£190.00	£190.00	£190.00
b) Other Vehicles	£390.00	£345.00	£475.00
Renewal of a Private Hire Vehicle (including plates)	£315.00	£270.00	£475.00
Change of Hackney Carriage Vehicle	£88.00	£85.00	£115.00
Change of Private Hire Vehicle	£93.00	£85.00	£115.00
Transfer of Ownership	£40.00	£40.00	£100.00
Charge For Refer to Drawer/Bounced Cheques			£45.00
Grant of Private Hire Operator Licence (price bands of 5 beyond 2 vehicle as follows)			
1 Vehicle	£131.00	£118.00	£175.00
2 Vehicles	£213.00	£200.00	£250.00
3-7 Vehicles	£489.00	£476.00	£645.00
8-12 Vehicles	£710.00	£697.00	£920.00
13-17 Vehicles	£930.00	£917.00	£1195.00
18-22 Vehicles	£1268.00	£1255.00	£1470.00
23-27 Vehicles	£1494.00	£1481.00	£1745.00
28-32 Vehicles	£1744.00	£1722.00	£2020.00
33-37 Vehicles	£1945.00	£1932.00	£2295.00
38-42 Vehicles	£2155.00	£2142.00	£2570.00
43-47 Vehicles	£2360.00	£2347.00	£2845.00
	Every Additional 5 Vehicles or part a further fee of £200.00	Every Additional 5 Vehicles or part a further fee of £200.00	Every Additional 5 Vehicles or part a further fee of £275.00

Renewal of Private Hire Operators Licence (price bands of 5 beyond 2 vehicles as follows)			
1 Vehicle	£117.00	£88.00	£130.00
2 Vehicles	£185.00	£170.00	£250.00
3-7 Vehicles	£460.00	£446.00	£600.00
8-12 Vehicles	£680.00	£667.00	£875.00
13-17 Vehicles	£900.00	£887.00	£1150.00
18-22 Vehicles	£1240.00	£1225.00	£1425.00
23-27 Vehicles	£1465.00	£1451.00	£1700.00
28-32 Vehicles	£1710.00	£1692.00	£1975.00
33-37 Vehicles	£1920.00	£1902.00	£2250.00
38-42 Vehicles	£2130.00	£2112.00	£2525.00
43-47 Vehicles	£2330.00	£2317.00	£2800.00
	Every Additional 5 Vehicles or part a further fee of £200.00	Every Additional 5 Vehicles or part a further fee of £200.00	Every Additional 5 Vehicles or part a further fee of £275.00
Private Hire Driver Renewal Badge	£65.00	£55.00	£75.00
Hackney Carriage Driver Renewal Badge	£65.00	£55.00	£75.00
Combined Driver Renewal Badge	£80.00	£70.00	£90.00

Background Behind Increases In Fees

Many of the trade will be aware for the last few years trade representatives and some members of the trade have scrutinised our accounts on an annual basis, including making representations to the District Auditor about the accounts.

Following discussions with the District Auditor a thorough review of the transport account has been undertaken this year by the Council's own internal audit team.

This review looked at the way the budget was set and what were reasonable charges to be made against the budget.

The audit discovered that we had been undercharging the transport account for a number of years. Certain charges such as accommodation charges had not been made against the budget and that others, such as officer time had not been appropriately distributed between budget/service areas.

Adjustments have been made to the current years budgets and the proposed budget for next year that have resulted in the proposed increases.

The increase of fees for a proprietor/driver is £3.00 to £4.00 per week or the equivalent of one extra two mile journey at Tariff 1.

Transport fees have always been set in accordance with Section 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, that is we charge such fees for the grant of licences to recover reasonable administrative and other costs in connection with the issuing of licences, provision of hackney carriage stands and enforcement duties with regard to the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

Any surplus or deficit at the end of the financial year is 'ring-fenced' to the transport budget, this means that any balances, whether surplus or deficit are carried forward to the next year. The council does not use any surplus for any other purposes.

There is an anticipated deficit of £79,834 at the end of this financial year and the budget required to provide the service next year is £336,251. The proposed fees have been suggested with the aim of clearing the deficit over a three year period.

Time For A Tariff Increase?

The last Tariff increase was in November 2006 and there have been increases in fuel, insurance and other running costs including the proposed increase in licence fees.

Stockton's fees are currently ranked at 254th of the 378 council's tariffs that are listed in the Private Hire and Taxi Monthly magazine. The table below compares our Tariff One with the average of the 378 authorities.

	Flag	1 Mile	2 Miles	5 Miles	10 Miles	Running Mile
Stockton	£2.00	£2.70	£3.90	£7.50	£13.50	£1.21
Average	£2.32	£3.12	£4.67	£9.37	£17.22	£1.56

We would welcome your views on whether you think the Stockton Tariff should be increased and if so to what level. Please let us know your views, in writing, by 21st March 2008.

Keep Us Informed

It is important that you notify us in writing of any change of address or telephone number as soon as possible to ensure our records are accurate should we need to contact you.

It is also recommended that you advise us if you intend to leave the country for any prolonged period and preferably voluntarily surrender your licence until your return. This will ensure that important documents such as CRB requests are not sent to you in your absence and then remain unanswered which could result in the suspension and possible revocation of your licence.

Hackney Carriages Licensed Outside The Borough Taking Private Hire Bookings

We are aware of a number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and drivers licensed from outside the Stockton District using their vehicles for Private Hire work.

As previously discussed the law currently states that it is legal for Hackney Carriages to take fares from outside of their licensed district. However, the Department for Transport has recently given their view "that **hackney carriage drivers who carry out pre booked hirings in other licensing areas must be within their own licensing district when they agree the hirings.** This does provide their licensing authority a measure of control over them."

"By way of explanation, the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 provides for the licensing outside London of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles. The wording of the relevant provisions allows for licences to be granted "to ply for hire within the prescribed distance". The "prescribe distance" is the area of the local authority or, if the area is divided in to hackney carriage zones, the zone for which the hackney Carriage is licensed. In the Department of Transport's view the word "ply" needs to be given a broad meaning in this context – to include obtaining business through standing, plying for hire, or pre booked hirings, as well as the actual carriage of passengers during a hiring. This follows from the position that a licence is required for all these purposes, and there are penalties for carrying out any of them without an appropriate hackney carriage licence."

Licensing Enforcement Officers will consider taking action against any hackney carriage vehicle licensed by another authority found standing or plying for hire in Stockton. **After completing a booking these vehicles should return to their own licensed district before accepting another fare.**

Operators found using vehicles from outside the area that commit a standing or plying for hire offence may also find themselves charged with aiding and abetting the commission of the offence.