



Private Hire Operator's Licence

Guidance for applicants

Please ensure that you complete every question on the application form. Incomplete applications cannot be processed, and will be returned to you. If there are any questions that you do not understand, please contact us to ask for assistance, rather than leave the question blank.

Before granting an application, the Council must be satisfied that the applicant(s) is a fit and proper person to hold a licence, and the information you give in the form will help us to make this decision.

Giving incorrect information in connection with your application, or omitting key details, may adversely affect your chances of being granted a licence. You may also be prosecuted for the offence of knowingly or recklessly making a false statement or omitting a material particular.

If an application is granted, a licence will be issued to the applicant(s). Small operators (those operating no more than 3 vehicles) will receive a licence for 3 years, while all other operators will be licensed for 2 years. Licences are non-transferrable.

Applicants will have a right of appeal to a magistrates' court against any decision to refuse an application, or if aggrieved by any condition attached to a licence.

Section 1

You need only complete this section if applying to renew an existing licence. Give the details of your existing operator's licence – not of any other type of licence.

Section 2

Please give us details about how people will contact you to book journeys, including the trading names of your business which you intend to advertise under, any telephone numbers used to receive bookings, the address(es) at which telephone bookings are received, details of any public booking offices you provide, freephones, and details of your website, if you have one.

Include as much detail as possible in your answers to this section, as this helps us to identify which operators are responsible for certain premises or telephone numbers, if we receive enquiries. The addresses you provide here will be listed on the licence as places where you are authorised to operate from – if you miss any, you will not be legally able to operate from those locations.

Section 3

You can apply for an operator's licence as an individual, as a partnership of multiple individuals, or as a limited company. Please indicate which of these capacities you are applying in, and complete the appropriate section(s) below.

If the application is made by a limited company, Annex C should also be completed, with details of every director of the company.

This section asks for the driver's badge number of any applicant who is currently licensed by the Council as a hackney carriage or private hire driver. As these applicants have already completed enhanced criminal records checks during their previous applications, basic disclosures will not be required from these individuals (see below for further information about basic disclosures).

Section 4

All operators must keep certain records of every booking they accept, and every vehicle and driver they operate, and details of the information to be kept is set out in our standard conditions. This question asks for details about how the operator is, or intends, to fulfil this requirement.

Section 5

We strongly advise all operators, irrespective of the size of their business, to maintain liability insurance policies, to protect against any injuries, losses or other legal claims which may arise in the course of running the business. A public liability insurance policy will cover claims from any member of the public who suffers damages arising from the business, including while they are present on any premises you operate. An employers liability insurance policy covers claims from the people you employ or engage within your business, such as driver's, telephone operators and office managers, and any major illness or injury they suffer as a result of their work. An insurance adviser will be able to give you advice on the most appropriate type of policy and level of cover.

Section 6

You may need to obtain other authorisations for your business, in addition to the operators licence.

Any premises you operate (car depots, booking offices, call centres, etc) may require planning permission for that usage. Even if you are operating from your home address, you may need to obtain permission, and we suggest that you confirm whether any permission will be required before making your application for a licence.

Although storing details of your bookings and your employees will not generally require you to register under the Data Protection Act, if you are recording or processing data that goes beyond this basic function, you may need to register with the Information Commissioner as a data handler. In particular, if you maintain a CCTV system within your premises, or within some of the vehicles you provide, you will need to register. For further details about registering, visit www.ico.org.uk

If you run a business radio network to maintain contact with your vehicles, you will need permission from Ofcom. They will assign you a particular part of the radio spectrum, by issuing you a licence – this will ensure that no-one else in the area is permitted to broadcast on the same frequency, so as to avoid interference with your signals.

Section 7

This question asks you to stipulate how many private hire vehicles you intend to operate under the licence, if it is granted. We divide operators into 2 groups – 'small' operators, with 1 to 3 vehicles, and 'large' operators, with 4 or more vehicles. Smaller operators will typically be granted a licence for a longer period than their larger counterparts, reflecting the lower amount of compliance work that would typically be expected – however, their licences will be issued with a restriction, prohibiting them from operating a greater number of vehicles than this. A 'small' operator who wishes to expand their business during the course of the licence will need to apply afresh for a 'large' licence – so if you are expecting to substantially increase the size of your fleet in the coming years, you may wish to consider applying for a 'large' licence at this time, to accommodate this.

Section 8

These questions focus on the main reasons why we may decide that an applicant is not a 'fit and proper person' to hold an operator's licence. They are some of the most important questions on the entire application form, and it is vital that they are answered correctly.

All of the questions apply to every applicant or director of a limited company applicant – so if the application is being made by a company with 4 directors and 1 has a criminal conviction, that question must be answered yes, even if the other 3 directors have no convictions. Details of the conviction (including the name of the relevant person) should be given below.

All applicants, or directors of a limited company applying for a licence, will be required to submit basic disclosure certificates with the application, which show any unspent criminal convictions. If an applicant (or a director) is currently licensed by the Council as a hackney carriage or private hire driver, they will be exempted from this requirement, as they will have obtained a more detailed certificate showing a wider range of offences when applying for that licence. Where there are multiple applicants (or directors), each must provide a certificate or hold a driver's licence.

As private hire operators are not specified in legislation as being a profession exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, we will only take into account convictions and

cautions which are not deemed to be 'spent'. The Act provides that convictions may be disregarded and do not have to be declared in certain types of application, after a certain period of time has elapsed, dependent upon the type of sentence received. Some examples of these periods, for adult convictions, are set out below:

Sentence	Rehabilitation period
Imprisonment – 4 years or more	Never spent
Imprisonment – 2½ years to 4 years	Sentence + 7 years
Imprisonment – 6 months to 2½ years	Sentence + 4 years
Imprisonment – less than 6 months	Sentence + 2 years
Fine	1 year
Community Order	Period specified in Order + 1 year
Disqualification, Conditional Discharge, Bind-over	End of period specified in the Order
Absolute Discharge, Simple Caution	Spent immediately

The questions in this section will also apply to convictions, charges, insolvency proceedings or disqualification in any country, not just the UK. This means that any of these proceedings which occurred overseas must also be declared. If an applicant has been living overseas for a substantial period of time, or has only recently moved to the UK, we may ask for a certificate of good character to be produced by that applicant. These are typically obtained from civic offices in the country in question, or from the country's embassy or consulate in the UK, and confirm that no legal proceedings were instituted against that person while resident in that country.

We will undertake searches of public registers, including the Individual Insolvency register and the Companies House disqualified directors register, so as to ensure that the applicant has not been affected by insolvency or disqualification proceedings, and by making an application you are deemed to have given your consent for these searches.

Refusals of applications, or revocations of suspensions of licences, must be declared within the application, regardless of how much time has elapsed. This question is not just limited to Dacorum, but applies to decisions made by any Council in the UK.

Section 9

Please indicate if you are currently licensed as an operator in any Council area.

If you are currently licensed elsewhere, we will expect you to set out how you will ensure that your businesses in other areas are kept separate from your Dacorum business. You will only be permitted to operate vehicles and drivers licensed by Dacorum under our operator's licence, or to sub-contract bookings to other licensed operators. It is against the law to give bookings directly to drivers or vehicles licensed by other councils, even if they work for you in another area.

Section 10

Please see www.dacorum.gov.uk/licencefees for current application fees, or contact us.

Section 11

Please read these paragraphs carefully, and ensure that every applicant signs the form. If the application is made by a limited company, the company secretary or another officer of the company may sign the form on its behalf.

Additional documents

You will need to provide a number of additional documents with your application, as listed within the declaration. These include:

- Annex A of the application form, completed with details of every vehicle you intend to operate under the licence (even if this is just one). We will also accept a printout or copy of your records in this respect, showing the information required;

- Annex B of the application form, completed with details of every driver you intend to employ or engage under the licence (even if this is just yourself). We will also accept a printout or copy of your records in this respect, showing the information required;
- If the application is being made by a limited company, Annex C must be completed with details of every current director of the company, giving their personal details including full name, home address, date of birth and licence status.
- You will also need to provide basic disclosure certificates for the following:
 - If the application is being made by a single individual, that individual;
 - If the application is being made by multiple individuals, regardless of whether they have formed a partnership or not, each of those individuals;
 - If the application is being made by a limited company, every current director of that company.

Basic disclosures

We will only accept basic disclosure certificates which have been issued in the name of the relevant individual, no earlier than 3 months prior to the day on which the application is submitted.

Basic disclosures can be obtained from Disclosure Scotland, either by applying online or by requesting a paper application form. A fee (currently £25) is payable for each disclosure application. Please bear in mind that disclosure certificates can take several weeks to issue, so apply in good time before you need to make your operator's licence application.

However, disclosures will not be required in respect of any individual who is currently licensed by the Council as a hackney carriage or private hire driver. The reason for this is that we will have already assessed that individual's fitness while they were applying for that licence, by requiring an enhanced disclosure, which contains a much greater amount of information and involves more thorough checks.

You can contact Disclosure Scotland using the following details:

Apply online: www.disclosurescotland.co.uk

By phone: 03000 200 040

Licensing Policy

Our Private Hire Operator Licensing Policy sets out in greater detail how we will consider applications for licences, and the matters that we will take into consideration. We strongly advise all applicants to read and familiarise themselves with this document, before making an application. You can find the latest version of the policy on our website, at www.dacorum.gov.uk/licensing

Conditions and enforcement actions

If we decide to grant your application, you will be issued a licence document. This licence will be subject to a number of conditions, including standard conditions, which attach to every licence unless you have requested and been granted an exemption from one or more of them. If specific issues emerged during your application, we may also add further conditions to your licence.

If you fail to adhere to the terms and conditions of your licence, we may suspend or revoke it. We may also refuse future applications from you, including for the renewal of the licence. Certain breaches may also result in prosecution for offences under the relevant Acts.

Operator's licences may also be revoked or suspended as a result of:

- any offence under or non-compliance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976,
- any conduct on the part of the operator which appears to the Council to render them unfit to hold an operator's licence,
- any material change in any of the circumstances of the operator on the basis of which the licence was granted, or
- any other reasonable cause.