

Taxi Tariff Review

On the 12 April 2022 members of Licensing and Community Safety Committee made a recommendation to the Council's Strategy and Resources Committee to amend the Council's Hackney Carriage Fare Tariff. The recommendation was for a 12.3% increase across the table of fares (with exception of waiting time), a figure in line with the Consumer Price Index increase from when the tariff became effective in April 2016 – 2022. In addition the Committee made additional recommendations to:

- bring forward the commencement of night rate from 23:30hrs to 21:00hrs
- increase the valet charge to £100
- increase the fare for non-motorised vehicles to £2 per minute
- add an extra charge to the tariff, whereby 10p be added to the fare price when the South West average price of fuel oil exceeds £1.75 per litre based on the latest available AA Fuel Price Report with a further 10p added for each subsequent increase of 10p per litre.

Moreover, in ensuring that the process is as expedient as possible, members also recommended that the Council's Constitution be updated to delegate to Licensing and Community Safety Committee the setting of hackney carriage fares. In this way to the future there will be no need to make recommendations for ongoing determination by Strategy and Resources Committee.

In terms of the next steps Strategy and Resources Committee are due to consider the above recommendation on the 9 May 2022, after which a statutory process of consultation with the public will take place, and a newspaper advert describing the Council's proposal will be circulated in the district, seeking representations. There is a period of 14 days in which the public and trade may make comment on the proposals. If no adverse comments or objections are received the proposal will take effect on the date specified in the notice. Alternatively if comments are received these will then be considered by committee prior to making any final amendments.

Bank Holiday Rates

Drivers have been requesting information in respect of the above. Meters will not automatically update if they have run out of 'calendar'. Whilst ordinarily the Licensing Team will seal a meter after a calendar change, in light of the recommended changes to the tariff, it is not proposed to require meters to be sealed as a one-off following any calendar updates to meters. This relates solely to the period up until the new tariff is approved and becomes effective.

Moreover, please note that this exemption is in place only provided the 'pulse' figure of the meter remains the same. Amending a meter to add a bank holiday day, should make no change to a pulse, however in case of queries, the Licensing Team will happily provide the pulse that is recorded on the Council's records. In case of doubt please contact a member of the Licensing Team.

Please note that whilst some taxi meters will not recognise the bank holiday dates of the 2nd and 3rd June 2022, some meters (possibly Digitax) may recognise Monday 30th May 2022 as a bank holiday still. If this is the case meters could apply an additional 50% rate, which is inappropriate and will in affect overcharge on this day (and create an offence if a transaction takes place).

If this is the case for your meter you MUST discount the journey at the end and advise your passenger accordingly at the commencement of the journey as to how you will handle the meter inaccuracy on the given day.

Accident Reporting and Inspection following Accidents

We have had to remind a few drivers about the importance of accident reporting. Please be mindful of the following which is specified in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy:

- 12.1 If any licensed vehicle is involved in an accident, this must be reported to the Licensing Office as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case, within seventy-two hours of the occurrence of the accident. Accident reports may be made by telephone, in person or through emailing a specified accident form which can be downloaded from the Council's website ([Apply to licence taxi or private hire vehicle \(northdevon.gov.uk\)](http://northdevon.gov.uk))
- 12.2 Where, following an accident or damage to a licensed vehicle, it is the intention of the owner or operator to continue licensed use, the vehicle must be inspected by either the hackney carriage enforcement officer or an authorised MOT inspector (at the owner's or operator's expense) to determine its fitness for continued use. A Licensing Officer may suspend the use of a licensed vehicle until it is suitably repaired.
- 12.3 A licensed vehicle which has suffered major accident damage or requires substantial mechanical repair may be replaced by a hire vehicle, provided:
 - (i) the damage to, or defect in, the vehicle has been reported;
 - (ii) application is made in the usual way for a change of vehicle (albeit temporarily);
 - (iii) the replacement vehicle meets the licensing criteria, as in this Appendix, and is suitable to be used for hire purposes;

Renewals

Please ensure that you apply for your driver/vehicle renewals in a timely fashion especially now that the requirements have changed regarding the DBS update service.

We have had several driver renewals recently where a new DBS certificate is required, which have been applied for at the same time as submitting a renewal. If you have not already joined the update service, you are required to provide a new DBS certificate as part of your renewal. Failure to do so may mean that you are unable to work if your renewal badge cannot be issued before the expiry date.