

Appendix 1

Taxi /Private Hire Car Testing Regime

The primary purpose of testing vehicles is to ensure that vehicles are suitably maintained for the safety and comfort of passengers and drivers.

Current Position

The current testing regime in West Dunbartonshire operates as follows:-

0 - 1 year old	1 test per year
1 - 8 years old	2 tests per year
over 8 years old	3 tests per year

Benchmarking Exercise

We have benchmarked our testing regime with neighbouring authorities.

North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire and Argyll & Bute require vehicles to be tested once per year.

Glasgow and North Ayrshire require vehicles to be tested twice per year.

Inverclyde require vehicles to be tested annually until they become 3 years old at which point they require to be tested every 6 months.

Renfrewshire, and East Ayrshire require vehicles to be tested annually until they become 5 years old at which point they require to be tested every 6 months.

South Ayrshire require vehicles to be tested annually until they become 6 years old at which point they require to be tested every 6 months.

Stirling require vehicles to be tested twice per year until they became 4 years old. Between 4 years old and 11 years old they require to be test 3 times per year and and once the vehicle reaches 12 years old it requires to be tested four times per year.

Proposals

Having considered both the primary purpose of the testing regime and the benchmarking exercise comparing ourselves to our neighbouring authorities the following proposals are being presented.

0 - 3 years old - 1 test per year

3 - 8 years old - 2 tests per year, reduced to one test if no major failures are incurred

Over 8 years old - 3 tests per year, reduced to two if there are no major failures

The impact on the fleet will be that vehicles aged between 1 and 3 years old will have 1 less test per year and vehicles between 3 and 8 years old or over 8 years old have the incentive of reducing their test frequency by consistently presenting their vehicle in good condition.

Major Failures

Following discussions with the Transport Department it was agreed that the type of failure which will cause a vehicle to be subject to additional tests will be:-

Any brake failure including the handbrake

Any tyre failure

Any incident where a mechanic refuses to carry out a test due to the condition of the vehicle when presented.

Any incident where there is any unacceptable leakage of coolant, fuel, oil or water. The mechanic will request another qualified tester to confirm the decision.

Any failure to carry wheelchair ramps if the vehicle is wheelchair accessible or if the ramps are in any way defective.

In the event that a vehicle fails on a Steering or Suspension item the seriousness of the failure will be determined by the tester who will request another qualified tester to confirm the decision.

In the event of a refusal to test a vehicle, the mechanic will seek a second opinion from another authorised tester to confirm the reason for refusal.

Apart from the proposed changes outlined above, if a vehicle is found to be in a dissatisfactory condition by Officers employed by West Dunbartonshire Council authorised to enforce Civic Government Licensing, any other authorised officer, constable or VOSA inspector, operators may be subject to a random test. If as a result of this test the vehicle fails on any of the fail categories mentioned the vehicle will automatically be subject to increased frequency.

Application

In practice, if a vehicle aged 6 years old (3 - 8 range) which is currently tested twice per year were to pass its next Certificate of Compliance without failing on the items highlighted above the vehicle will immediately go on to 1 test per year.

The same will apply to a vehicle aged 9 years old (over 8 range) which is currently tested 3 times per year which would go onto 2 tests per year.

If a vehicle aged between 3 and 8 years old which is on 1 or 2 tests per year fails either its Formal Inspection or Certificate of Compliance test on any of the above criteria highlighted it will remain or return to 2 tests per year from the date of the failed Compliance or the date of the next Compliance and will only return to 1 test per year if they meet the pass criteria for the two tests throughout the following year.

If a vehicle over 8 years old which is on 2 tests per year fails either its Formal Inspection or Certificate of Compliance test on any of the above criteria highlighted it will return to 3 tests per year from the date of the failed Compliance or the date of the next Compliance and will only return to 2 tests if they meet the pass criteria for the three tests throughout the following year.

The knock on effect may be that operators will not present their vehicles on the date and time requested if they feel it will incur a failure and move onto the more frequent testing regime. Operators who cancel their test **for any reason** will not be allowed to operate until they successfully pass their scheduled or rescheduled test.

Cancellation fees equivalent to half the particular test fee will continue to apply where the operator has failed to give a clear 24 hours notice of cancellation.

Where an operator decides to change the vehicle they use and require a new Certificate of Compliance for the replacement vehicle, the frequency of inspection will be determined initially from the outcome of the first Certificate of Compliance test and then be subject to the same criteria outlined above.

Where a vehicle has been involved in an accident and a temporary replacement vehicle is used while the main vehicle is being repaired, the original vehicle will return to the previous frequency of inspection which was applicable prior to the vehicle being involved in the accident.

In the event that a new licence is granted an operator has to present a vehicle for a Certificate of Compliance inspection. If the vehicle being presented has already been operating within West Dunbartonshire Council, the frequency of inspection will be determined by the outcome of the initial Certificate of Compliance test.

Implementation

It is proposed that the new regime would commence on 1 April 2013 providing that the proposals are approved by the Licensing Committee.

The new regime would be phased in for each individual operator starting from the first Certificate of Compliance following approval of the implementation date. Those vehicles which are currently under 3 years old and have still to undergo a Formal Inspection will not have to present their vehicle until the next scheduled Certificate of Compliance test is due.

A change in the internal procedures will be required regarding the information and paperwork which will have to be provided to the Licensing Team by the mechanics and staff working at Richmond Street.

Practical Procedures

A checklist should be completed for each test carried out.

The result of the test will obviously be either pass or fail.

If a vehicle passes the test, the driver/operator will present the pass certificate to the Licensing Team where the appropriate paperwork will be issued.

If a vehicle fails the test, Transport staff will scan the failure sheet and forward it to staff in the Licensing Team. The checklist completed by the tester will clearly indicate if the failure falls into the categories highlighted above which will necessitate the vehicle remaining or going on to additional tests.