

Blue Lamp Trust guide on how to become a Licensed Taxi Driver

Licensing regulations for taxi drivers may differ from one licensing local authority to another. To learn about the exact licensing arrangements in the area you wish to operate as a taxi driver you should contact the relevant local authority.

All authorities will require you to have:

- A medical check, including an eyesight test. You will have to pay your doctor for this, as such check-ups are not free under current NHS regulations
- Criminal Records Office check
- A current full car driving licence
- A fee for the issue of the licence

Taxi Driver Driving Assessment with the Blue Lamp Trust

Many (but not all) local authorities will require you take a taxi driving assessment test, which will be carried out by a DVSA Approved Assessor. The test will require you to show a level of driving skill and ability associated with that of an experienced driver. You will also need to demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Highway Code.

The standard needed to pass the test will be higher than that of a learner driver taking the standard driving test and will take into account issues specifically related to taxi driving. The main focus of the test will be on road safety and the safe conveyance of passengers. Your passengers must be safe at all times.

The driving test will last for around forty five minutes. You will have to drive on a wide range of roads and in a variety of road traffic conditions and this may include motorways and dual carriageways.

It is recommend that you take a driving lesson with an approved ADI prior to attending the assessment.

Manoeuvres

The test will require you to carry out 2 reversing manoeuvres from the following chosen by the assessor;

- A turn in the road
- A left or right reverse from major to minor road
- Reversing into a car parking space (Bay Parking)
- Reversing into a space at the side of the road (Parallel Parking)

Manoeuvres must be made safely, under control and in accordance with the Highway Code.

Stopping the vehicle

As this is common practice when driving a taxi the examiner will require you to perform two or three stops. You should:

- Pull up at a reasonable distance from the kerb where it is safe, legal and convenient
- Apply the handbrake

- Select neutral gear
- Ensure there are no obstructions, such as a street light, that would stop a passenger opening the door.

The Independent drive

Independent driving forms part of the practical driving test.

It requires the test candidate to drive without being given directions by the assessor by either following a series of street directions, following traffic signs, or a combination of both, for about ten minutes.

It doesn't matter if the candidate doesn't remember every direction, or if they go the wrong way - that can happen to the most experienced drivers. Independent driving is not a test of the candidates orientation and navigation skills, it is about being capable of making their own decisions whilst driving, about their route and how to safely navigate that route without prompts - this includes deciding when it's safe and appropriate to ask for confirmation about where they are going.

When taking the independent driving test:

- If you need to ask the examiner for a reminder of the directions then do so. Once asked the examiner will confirm the route.
- If you go off-route your overall driving test result will not be affected, unless you commit a driving fault. The examiner will also help you get back on the route so you can continue with independent driving.
- If there are poor or obscured traffic signs, the examiner will give directions until the next visible traffic sign.
- A detailed knowledge of the test route is not necessary.
- You cannot use a Sat-Nav

Driving Assessment Marking

- Remember – this is an assessment and involves no element of training or guidance. The assessor is only there to observe your drive and mark accordingly.
- The assessor is independent, accredited by the DVSA and will simply mark your driving against structured assessment criteria.
- The assessor will mark you as they would a learner driver taking the normal practical driving test. For more information check the DVSA website on driving tests.
- If you commit more than 9 minor driving faults you will fail, whereas a learner can score fifteen.
- You will also fail if you score one or more dangerous or serious faults.
- Driving Fault - a non-dangerous fault such as hesitating at a junction or not signalling or signalling too late.
- Serious Fault - a potentially dangerous incident has occurred or where a regular driving fault shows a serious or potentially dangerous weakness in the candidate's driving.
- Dangerous Fault - an incident that caused actual danger while driving.
- The Assessor can only mark what is seen. No matter how many years you have been driving or your previous driving experiences, the assessor will simply mark what you do on your assessment, so if you make mistakes these will be marked.

The Assessment Result

- Remember the standard of driving expected will be higher than that of a learner driver.
- If you commit offences such as driving in a bus lane contrary to a restriction, contravening a traffic light, overtaking contrary to the road marks and other similar actions you will automatically fail.
- If during your assessment you commit more than 9 minor faults, you will also fail.
- If you demonstrate a safe smooth drive without any serious or dangerous faults and 9 or less minor faults you will pass your test.
- In accordance with DVSA practice the assessor's decision is final.
- The assessor will give you your result at the end of the assessment. You will also be given a copy of your assessment sheet at this time.
- From the 1st April 2017, the assessor will also issue a certificate to successful candidates assessed on behalf of the Blue Lamp Trust.