



New Driver Guide

MINICAB4YOU- 2020-2021 V1.2

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Thank You for joining Minicab4You!

In this guide, you will find most of the information you would need to become a minicab driver with us.

Please ensure you read through this to aide you.

Our Contact Details:

Minicab4You/ Mehmet Kirklaroglu

188 Hoxton Street

London N1 5LH

E-mail: info@minicab4you.com

Tel: 020 7613 3333

What does PCO stand for?

PCO stands for the Public Carriage Office. They run a special Department of Transport for London (TfL), which awards a Licence to those who wish to work as mini cab drivers in London. The PCO Licence, also known as Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licence is essential to work as a mini cab driver or a Chauffeur. No operator will hire you without one.

Minicab drivers and Chauffeur drivers are both licensed in the same way and make the same application, the PCO Licence. Hackney carriage drivers (London Black Cab Drivers) have a different licensing procedure, which is essentially called "The Knowledge".

Who can apply for a PCO Licence?

The PCO wants to ensure that all drivers provide not only a professional service but also so that the public is in safe hands when entering into a Private Hire Vehicle in London. If you want to apply for a PCO Licence you will need to meet ALL these requirements.

- You are at least 21 years old.
- You have held a DVLA, Northern Ireland or EEA (European Economic Area) driving licence for the last 3 years at least. All applicants who hold a driving licence issued by another Member State of the European Community (EC) or one of the other countries in the EEA are required to obtain a UK counterpart document (DVLA).
- You meet the [Medical Standards](#) outlined for DVLA Group 2, that are similar to what is required for coach, bus and large goods vehicle drivers. In order to confirm that you meet these medical standards you need to have a full medical check with your GP.
- You must be of good character. For this, you have to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously known as CRB check) with [IMGCRB](#) that proves you are a trustworthy and honest person (Criminal record check).
- You have evidence that you have the relevant Topographical Skills that you have the necessary route finding and map reading skills necessary for working as a private hire or mini cab driver in London.

You must be able to speak, read and understand English, so as to be able to provide a service to the diverse population of London and tourists.

DBS (CRB) Check

As part of the licensing approval process, TfL requires all applicants to undertake an Enhanced Criminal Records Check from the Disclosing Barriing Services (DBS), previously known as CRB. This process is carried out by TfL's Service Provider – [TMG CRB](#).

TMG CRB has been contracted by Transport for London (TfL) to provide a DBS Disclosure application service for Taxi and Private Hire Drivers.

You can either apply online or by post. Details on how to apply are contained in the PCO-Licence Application pack.

The DBS Reference or disclosure number will need to be included in your PHV/203 application form. There are circumstances when an Enhanced Criminal Record Check is not required. Details can be found in the PHV/203 application form.

The DBS Check searches your details against criminal records and other sources, including the Police National Computer and will reveal convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings.

The DBS check is only valid for 3 months, so make sure you send off your PCO-Licence application as soon as you get this reference number. If you leave it too long then you may be forced to get a new DBS check.

Please note with effect from 17/06/2013 only one disclosure certificate will be sent out to the applicant (previously 2 were sent out, one to TfL and one to the applicant) – in the event TfL are informed that the DBS (CRB) has disclosed information to the applicant TMG CRB will write to you and ask you to forward your original certificate. This process will be undertaken on behalf of TfL by TMG CRB, their service provider.

Applicants must respond to any correspondence from TMG CRB. Failure to do so could result in them not being licensed. TfL cannot process any applications until a result has been received on your DBS.

TMG CRB will pass a copy of the disclosure certificates to TfL before returning it to the driver. TfL will then destroy their copy once a licensing decision has been made and TMG will not be retaining any copies.

Medical Fitness

TfL needs to be satisfied that all licensed London Taxi and Private Hire drivers are medically fit. In assessing an individual's medical fitness, TfL applies the standards required for a DVLA Group 2 licence.

Group 2 licences are required for large goods vehicles and buses and the medical standards for Group 2 drivers are much higher than those for Group 1 (ordinary motor cars and motor cycles). This higher standard requirement reflects the view that the nature of a licensed driver's employment places him in the category of vocational driver.

The Medical Declaration form (TPH/204) should be taken to a registered medical practitioner, who has access to your full medical history, typically your GP, for completion. If it is not completed by someone who has access to your full medical history, this could lead to delays in processing your application.

This medical report cannot be issued free of charge as part of the National Health Service. You must pay the medical practitioner's fee, unless other arrangements have been made. TfL accepts no liability to pay it.

What does the medical examination involve?

You should bring the PHV/204 form, with the first section already filled in by you, to your GP appointment. You will be required to give a urine sample as they will be testing for diabetes. The examination will only take around 30 minutes and you will be asked questions about the following topics

- cardiovascular
- endocrine system
- musculoskeletal
- neurological
- psychiatric
- vision

Based on your answers and the results of the tests the doctor will give his opinion as to whether you satisfy the DVLA Group 2 medical standards and he will complete the remainder of the PHV/204 form, sign it, and put their surgery stamp on it. You will then need to send this form back with your PCO licence application.

Exemptions from Medical Declaration

1) If you possess a valid DVLA Group 2 licence or are actively studying the Knowledge (and under 45 years of age), or already licensed by TfL as a MHC ('taxi') driver, you do not need to submit a completed Medical Declaration as you are deemed 'exempt'.

2) Some professions require an in-depth medical to be undertaken (e.g. pilot's licence). Medical advice has been sought and confirmation received that the standard of medical fitness required by the Civil Aviation Authority meets the requirements of the TPH and as such TfL has agreed to grant the exemption. To retain the exemption the applicant in question will have to continue to produce a valid, current pilot's licence issued by the Joint Aviation Authorities whenever TfL requests a further medical.

Should an applicant suggest that a particular licence they hold is at least equivalent to TfL's medical requirements of licensing they should be referred to TPH's medical adviser for advice.

3) After 1 January 1998, any driver who holds a DVLA Group 2 full or provisional licence would have already had a medical prior to being granted this entitlement. This entitlement will be shown on the driver's DVLA driving licence. Any drivers who have this entitlement after 1 January 1998 will not have to complete a Medical Declaration.

Medical requirements for applicants aged 45 and aged 65 and over.

If you are aged 45 or over and you are completing an new application for a PCO-Licence (or even in the case of a PCO-Licence renewal), you must undergo a medical examination (Form TPH/204 must be completed). A medical examination will need to be undertaken at each subsequent renewal of your licence between the age of 45 up to the age of 65.

If you are age 65 or over you will also (as a condition of licence issue) be required to undergo annual medical examinations, during the currency of your licence.

DVLA Group 2 Medical Standards Changes in Standard of Visual Acuity.

Earlier this year (2 April 2013) the DVLA revised the visual acuity standard for holders of Group 2 licences.

The new standard is as follows:

- A visual acuity, using corrective lenses if necessary, of at least 6/7.5 in the better eye and at least 6/60 in the other eye. Where glasses are worn to meet the minimum standards, they should have a corrective power of less than or equal to +8 dioptries. There is no uncorrected requirement.
- It is also necessary for all drivers of Group 2 vehicles to be able to meet the prescribed and relevant Group 1 visual acuity requirements.

In assessing whether an applicant for a PHV driver's licence is medically fit, TfL has regard to the medical standard that would apply in relation to a DVLA Group 2 licence. Therefore any applicant applying for a taxi or PHV driver's licence after 31 October 2012 will be required to meet the new Group 2 standard.

Drivers who were originally licensed under lower standards are allowed to retain these entitlements under '**grandfather rights**'. The standard applied is determined by the date a PHV driver was first licensed.

Retaining this entitlement is dependent on:

- The driver remaining continuously licensed since he or she was first licensed;
- There being no significant deterioration in any other aspects of the driver's vision;
- The driver not having been involved in an accident in the preceding 10 years, in which their eyesight might have been a factor; and
- The driver meeting all of the current Group 1 acuity standards.

The Group 2 standards are set out in full in the DVLA publication 'At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive' that can be found at www.dft.gov.uk/dvla

Vehicle Requirements

After you have obtained your PCO Licence you will need to find a suitable vehicle to start working. You can:

- Hire a vehicle
- Buy your own
- Use your existing Vehicle

If you don't own a vehicle, we recommend you hire one, so that you can test drive and check fuel consumption on various vehicle makes and models.

If you are planning to use your own private vehicle, you will need to make sure that it is suitable for use as a Private Hire Vehicle.

The regulations have changed and from the 1st of April 2012 you will not be able to licence a vehicle for the first time if it is over 5 years old. Any vehicle, which has been licensed prior to April 2012, can remain licensed for up to 10 years from the manufacture date (subject to a yearly renewal). These vehicles will also have to pass the Euro 4 emission standard.

To book your vehicle in for a test please call **NSL on 0343 222 5555**

What documents will I need to bring to the inspection centre?

You must make a booking to have your vehicle inspected. You will need the following original documents as they need to be presented when you take your vehicle in for inspection:

1. Existing PHV vehicle licence (if applicable)
2. V5c DVLA Vehicle Registration Certificate
3. Insurance documents

4. MOT certificate issued within the last 14 days
5. Current tax disk
6. Vehicle modification documents
7. Any other relevant documentation relating to the vehicle, where appropriate, such as Voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (VIVA).

Basic Rules

Driver Accompaniment Rule

Minicab4You does not allow drivers to have an accompanying passenger in the car during work hours.

Dash Cam

While Minicab4You allows dash cams to record all rides, it is imperative that all drivers purchase and attach multiple systems so that the front and rear views are covered for insurance purposes, and the interior is covered from two angles to record all rides for driver security, legal and insurance purposes.

Drivers recording audio as well must notify the passenger of this since audio recording is illegal without the rider's consent.

Notifying passengers of a dash cam is preferred even without audio, since it will make them act with more consideration, in the case of drunks and unruly passengers this can serve as a deterrent to unwanted behaviour.

Using third-party apps and personal calls

Minicab4You does not stop drivers from using any other apps when driving, such as Waze, Mystro, Google Maps, Raydar and more.

Even when using other apps, the GPS system is still working, so Minicab4You will know where and when you are at any moment, which is used to manage trip records for accurate fare estimation.

During the Trips

Once a fare has entered the car, the trip is officially in full ride mode. You passenger in the seat, front or back, maybe alone or with other passengers. Now the fun begins. Depending on the type of ride you are taking, will determine the outcome of your trip.

Just remember the golden rule "Always be Courteous and polite, but firm and direct."

Also, remember that this is where the passenger will rate you and tip you, so whatever happens now is really up to you and how you handle the ride including how you handle an unruly passenger.

The second rule of a safe trip is to have a dash cam recording at all times. This provides recorded evidence for collisions, accidents and passengers behavior as well as your behavior during a trip.

Changing a destination

Destinations can be changed by the driver as well as the passenger, if a passenger makes a destination change request during a trip, the chance is you will have to change it unless they do it in the app while chatting with you.

If you are driving, it is better if you suggest to the rider to make the change by calling the call centre since concentrating on typing and moving the map will divert your attention from the road and the task of safe driving.

On occasions, a passenger will have requested a multi-stop ride, or during a ride make a multi-stop request. That should be fine so long as the passenger understands the extra costs and even more so, understands the importance of safe drop off and pick up locations along the way.

The end of a trip

The trip ends when you arrive at the drop off location. The moment your vehicle stops completely, and you are fully parked you swipe the "end trip" option in the app.

Stop as close to the passenger's location drop off point, but make sure it is in a safe area and also in a parking area that does not have legal or safety issues. Some passengers will know exactly where to park so that you can defer to their judgment. However, if the passenger does not know the end location area, it is better you park as close to where they want to reach but in a safe and legal standing area. In instances where there is a problem, discuss the solutions with your passenger. Take into account traffic, luggage assistance, disabled or elderly passenger assistance and other factors that come into play.

Payment Options

Minicab4You offers several solutions such as Cash, card and account bookings.

All tolls and fees generated during a ride and for your return are paid for in full by the passenger.

Tipping is allowed. Passengers have a choice to give the driver cash.

What to do in an Accident

You must contact Minicab4You or your ride-share company and report the accident

Remember, will deactivate you after an accident until you can prove your car is fit for driving.

When you are involved in an accident, if you are uninjured, or injured lightly (if you are seriously injured you won't need to deal with this since this becomes police jurisdiction) you will need to gather the following:

- License Plate: Write down or photograph.
- Insurance Card: Write down or photograph
- Driver's License: Write down or photograph
- Dashcam recording; Store for the insurance claim or defense (if you are at fault)
- Witnesses (Passengers and pedestrians): Ask for statements, or names if possible. Witnesses are very important, the more witnesses you can find them easier, it will be to prove your claim or help in your defense.
- Police: Call them if necessary, that means in case of a serious accident. You don't need police for a case of whiplash or fender bender since a rear end collision is always the fault of the other driver.
- Maintain your cool at all times, even if the other driver is a total jerk.
- Listen and note all the details you can get from people that saw the accident.
- Never admit fault, even if it is obvious.
- Provide your rideshare insurance coverage, not your personal one.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Box Junctions

We start with the infamous yellow box junctions. Please don't enter until there is enough space ahead to clear your whole PCO car over. You can only stop in the box if you're turning right and prevented by oncoming traffic or by other cars waiting to turn right

Bus Lane Rules

There is plenty of confusion out there regarding how to approach lanes. PCO drivers are strictly not allowed to drive in a bus lane during operation hours but they are allowed to pick up and drop off passengers.

Please don't use this as an opportunity for a break however as this must be a done in good time and you can't hang around or you risk a fine. Drivers

should enter and leave the bus lane in the most direct and safe way accordingly to TfL.

The only exceptions to the rules stated above are the stretches of red route where stopping is not permitted because of the disruption this would cause to already busy roads

Bus Stop Rules

As a simple rule, please don't use bus stops to pick up or drop off at anytime or you risk a unnecessary fine. Even if a customer wants to be dropped off or you're attempting to pick up a passenger, please find an alternative safe location nearby and explain this to the passenger so they're aware of the rules.

Blue Sign Direction

This mistake appeared quite a number of times on our list of fines. Sometimes the blue signs can be easy to miss as they're relatively small. Please pay attention to the signs and the direction you're being told to go.

Pedestrian Zone

Sounds simple enough but this is another classic mistake from PCO drivers. Don't enter a pedestrian zone at any time, even if you're trying to pick up or drop a passenger. Our research showed this fine occurred a lot in Central London where restrictions were more common.

Double Yellow Line

This is another one which causes a lot of confusion amongst PCO drivers. Picking up or dropping off customers is allowed on single and double yellow and red lines, in places where loading is not allowed (shown by markings on the kerb), in parking bays and in bus lanes. Please make sure your hazard lights are on and safely pull in and out.

Single Yellow Lines

Same rules apply as the double yellow lines above.

Limited Waiting Times In Car Parks

You deserve a good rest in-between jobs but please don't get caught out by overstaying in a car park. When you do leave please also check the 'no return' times to avoid an avoidable PCN. Please also be aware of commercial car parks which might require you to buy something in store to be allowed to park.

Illegal Turns

It's the most obvious one yet but important nevertheless. Take the time to check signage around you or you could end up with an unnecessary fine.

Zig Zag Lines

PCO Drivers shouldn't stop where they would cause an obstruction or safety hazard and this includes zig zag lines. Please don't stop on these lines at any time. You also risk 3 points on your licence.

SOS/ Emergency

For any Emergency issues, please contact Minicab4You at your earliest convenience.