

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL

Private Hire Driver Application Guidance

Please take the time to read the useful advice and important information provided below.

How do I become a Private Hire Driver?

Firstly, you will need complete and pass the South Gloucestershire Private Hire Basic Skills knowledge test.

All Private Hire Basic Skills or Dual Knowledge Test bookings are now self-serve and will need to be made through the Eventbrite online booking system available via the Council's website.

You will be required to make payment via debit or credit card to secure a place on the test and the fees will be set at the current rate of [fees and charges](#) for this department.

Please make sure you carefully read through all the information provided on our webpages in relation to becoming a private hire or dual driver. It is your responsibility to be aware of and understand the requirements of an applicant or licence holder.

When you book online through Eventbrite you will be emailed an e-ticket. This will tell you the location of the test and the time you have booked – please keep this safe as you'll require this on the date of your test.

The test is conducted in the English language as it also helps to determine if an applicant has a satisfactory understanding and command of the English language to carry out the role. Licensed drivers must be able to communicate effectively with customers, Police Officers and/or Licensing Authority and other road users, as well as fully understanding road signage.

If for some reason you require a one to one test or any other reasonable adjustment due to medical circumstances, you must put this request in writing to this Licensing Authority, with written evidence from your GP.

I've booked the test, where do I look and how do I revise?

This will be a written test on your knowledge and in order to improve your chances of success it is recommended that you prepare in advance for the test. We suggest that you study the below subjects beforehand:

- [South Gloucestershire Hackney Carriage \(Taxi\) and Private Hire Licensing Policy](#)
- The Highway Code – This is available online via the government website www.gov.uk
- Equalities – Again, information relating to the Taxi and private hire accessibility is available online via www.gov.uk
- Basic mathematics

Questions within the above subjects may be varied for each test. Some questions are multiple choice, others are not.

Should you feel that you require additional help in relation to additional educational courses then you are advised to look into these by either contacting South Gloucestershire Community Learning Department or local schools and colleges.

What sort of questions will I be asked at the Knowledge Test?

The test is conducted in the English language as it also helps to determine if an applicant has a satisfactory understanding and command of the English language to carry out the role.

Questions are varied for each test, some questions are multiple choice, others are not. For Private Hire there are two sections to the test, one is on Basic Maths the second is Private Hire Law and Conditions which will test on the subjects listed previously.

Please see below for two Private Hire Basic Skills test SAMPLE questions;

Basic Maths Section

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER APPLICANTS	
Section - Basic maths	
Please write your answer below the question	
Q1	At the end of a pre-booked journey the taximeter shows £11.65 The customer hands you one £10 & one £5 note. What change is the passenger due?
A	

Private Hire Law and Conditions Section

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER APPLICANTS	
Section – Private Hire Law and Conditions	
(Please tick (X) one box only)	
Q1	When working as a private Hire Driver, where must you deposit a copy of your private hire driver licence?
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) With your Bank
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) With your Doctor
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) With your Operator
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) With the Council

What do I do on the day of the Knowledge test?

On the day of your test, you will be required to bring one form of photographic identification with you. Acceptable forms of identification are either a Passport or EU photographic Driving Licence. You will also need to bring your e-ticket as proof of booking. Failure to supply this documentation will result in you not being able to sit the test on that day and any fees paid will not be refunded.

The test will be completed under standard exam conditions and will last for one hour. By booking and attending the test you are accepting and willing to abide by the rules and procedures required by candidates undertaking the test.

Please arrive promptly at the waiting area adjacent to the test room, where you will be called to begin the test session.

There are toilet facilities available which you may wish to use before you are called into the test room.

Once in the test room you will be asked to present your ID and e-ticket to register your arrival and will also be asked to hand in all mobile phones and any smart devices, (smart watches etc.). You will be given a visitor number which you will need to hand back at the end, when your phones etc. will be returned to you.

Please note that you must arrive promptly, once the session begins the doors to the Test room will be closed. Any late arrivals will not be admitted to the test. This is to ensure there are no disruption to the other candidates. If a candidate misses a test for the reasons of being late any fees paid will not be refunded.

Parking - There may be limited visitor parking on site therefore you should allow enough time for you to find space to park on the surrounding streets and arrive at the test waiting area on time.

What are the Knowledge Test Rules?

Knowledge Test Rules- Private Hire

Before the Test

- All mobile phones (Turned off or placed on silent and not vibrate mode) should have been handed to officers at sign in. These will be placed in sealed envelopes with your name and will be returned at the end of the test. Please note that should a phone vibrate or ring it will be removed from the test room and placed in a secure area for collection after the test.
- All other hand held devices, Smart watches, blue tooth ear devices and digital watches must not be worn or visible, if you have any of these please put away in a safe place or hand to a member of staff before commencement of the test.

- You are reminded that there is a Driver's Code of Conduct Policy and as part of that, any cheating, talking, negative and/or disruptive behaviour or removal of the test papers from the test room, will not be accepted. If any such behaviour is displayed it will result in you being asked to leave the room, by the Officers present and will be disqualified from the test. Should you be disqualified your fee for this test is non-refundable.
- Please note, anyone who is disqualified from the test due the above, may not be able to sit another Knowledge Test for six months. This may have an impact on any of your applications should you pass in the future.
- Once the test is started, you will be allowed one hour to complete it.
- Once you have left the exam room, except in very exceptional circumstances, no candidate will be permitted to re-enter the test.
- If you finish the test prior to the time given, please raise your hand, stay seated and officer will assist further.

During the Test

- Officers will make it clear when they are about to hand out the test, at this point the only thing permitted on the desk in front of you is a pen, any papers the Licensing Authority has given you and your ID. Please note that all notes, calculators etc. must be removed from the desk – failure to adhere to this may result in disqualification.
- Once the papers have been handed out please leave the test paper face down on the desk in front of you and within into plastic wallet until you are told to commence the test. Any candidate who opens the test or turns over the test to read questions prior to the official start will be disqualified.
- There will be no talking from the point that the first paper has been handed out and throughout the test, making contact through verbal or non-verbal means is also not permitted. Should you wish to ask a question, you must raise your hand to attract attention and wait for an Officer to come to you.
- Please note that an officer cannot help explain questions to you.
- Any notes or working out must be made on the paper itself and your answer clearly highlighted. No writing on hands is permitted.
- All sections of the test must be completed.
- Prior to the end of the test a sufficient time warning will be given.

At the End of the Test

- When an officer announces the end of the test and asks for all pens to be put down this must be done immediately. Failure to adhere to this request and if an applicant continues to write on the test paper may result in disqualification.
- At the end of the test, you must leave all the papers and pens on the table in front of you and await our further instructions.

- Until the papers have all been collected exam conditions are still in place and no talking is to take place.
- Once exam papers have been collected you must collect all your personal belongings and sign out.
- You will receive your results by email with the aim to provide a response within 5 working days of sitting the test. Failure to provide an email will result in a letter being sent which may take longer.
- No half marks will be given and answers will be marked against the answer sheet only
- Only one request for a remark will be allowed per test, if it's received within three months of receiving your results and only if you score within 2% of the total required pass mark.

If you pass the test, you will be invited to mandatory training on Child Sexual Exploitation awareness. Please note that the places fill up fast, so you will need to book as soon as possible.

I can't make the Knowledge test I booked, what should I do?

You will need to cancel through the Eventbrite online booking website and request a refund through this service, this will notify the Licensing Service of your intention to cancel. Please note we must receive at least two working days' notice before the test begins, this must be clear working days and not obstructed by Bank Holidays or weekends. If we are not notified within the timeframe above, we will be unable to authorise any refunds requested.

Further tests will require the booking fee again.

I've taken the Knowledge test, when do I get my results?

On completion of the test, it will be marked and you will initially be notified of the result by e-mail within five working days of the test.

The pass mark required for the Private Hire Basic Skills test is 70%.

If you are unsuccessful the email will detail the marks that you received in each section; this will enable you to revisit areas for improvement if you wish to retake. You will not be given a copy of your test papers.

Should you score 68% or 69% you may request a remark of the test. This request must be made in writing to the Licensing Team Leader and clearly state the reasons for making the request. Please note that you will only be allowed one remark per test.

If you have been unsuccessful you can take the test again by following the same process as before and will need to be made through the Eventbrite online booking system available via our the Council's website.

If you have achieved a pass mark of 70% or above then your email will invite you to attend the next stage of your application process.

I've passed my Knowledge test, what's next?

You are now required to attend a safeguarding training session for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) before proceeding with your application. This is a free training session but mandatory for becoming a Licenced Driver.

To book, please visit our [CSE webpage](#), where there will be a list of up and coming training sessions. By clicking of each of the dates, you will then be directed to our booking platform Eventbrite, this is where you can secure yourself a place on the next available training session. Please note, training sessions fill up very quickly so it is advisable to book as soon as you receive your basic skills or knowledge test pass confirmation. If you have not passed your test you will not be admitted to the training session.

At the safeguarding training session you will be asked to complete a DVLA mandate form so it is imperative that you bring a copy of your current driving licence with you.

On completion of the training you will leave on the day with your safeguarding certificate and an application pack.

The pack will include all necessary documentation required to proceed with your application:

- Covering letter, explaining the process of becoming a Licenced Driver
- Application Form
- Disclosure and Barring Guidance notes on how to complete your online application.
- Medical Examination Report that you must get completed by a GP to DVLA Group 2 standard – Please do not use copied from the internet as they may not be correct or current. If you lose this form, please request another from Licensing@southglos.gov.uk
- DBS update service information leaflet

Before I take my Safeguarding Training, can I do anything else?

Absolutely, you can also continue to book your Practical Driving Assessment, to be undertaken with any of the following:

- Blue Lamp Trust – www.bluelamptrust.org.uk
- Green Penny – www.greenpenny.co.uk
- DIAMOND Advanced Motorists – www.advancedmotoring.co.uk

Please note: These certificates are only valid for 3 years from the date of issue

I've completed the Safeguarding Training, what do I do now?

Following the safeguarding training you will receive an email inviting you to apply online for a DBS. The email will provide you with a link, username and password. Please allow up to 5 working days after the training session to receive your email. We always suggest to check junk mail folders as well, the email will come from our DBS team, Integra.

Please follow the instructions on the email, make payment and make an appointment with Integra to submit the required documentation to obtain your DBS certificate.

Your DBS will only be valid for 60 days, unless you sign up to the [DBS update service](#) which can be done within the first 30 days after receiving your certificate.

If you attend a Badge Application Appointment with DBS which is past the 60 days validity period, we will be unable to accept the certificate and your application will be deemed incomplete and you will be asked to rebook for a further appointment. Please be aware if you fail an appointment and you haven't signed up to the DBS update service, you will be required to obtain a new certificate at a further cost to you.

Should you have any concerns in relation to the content that may appear on your DVLA history or Disclosure and Barring history that you wish to discuss, then it is advised that you contact licensing@southglos.gov.uk in the first instance.

I am in the process of applying for my DBS, when can I get my medical done?

You will need to contact a doctor of your choice in order to obtain a medical to DVLA Group 2 standard.

Should you have any questions in relation to a medical condition then you must refer to the DVLA guidance on fitness to drive available online or seek advice from a medical practitioner.

Please be aware that your medical will only be valid for 4 months from the date it was completed. Please note that there may be a long waiting times for collecting badges appointments due to a high demand for service. You should wait until you know your appointment date with Licensing, before you get your medical completed.

If you attend a Badge Application Appointment with a Medical that is over 4 months old or on a form that wasn't given to you at the Safeguarding training or by Licensing Office, your application will be deemed incomplete and you will be asked to rebook for a further appointment. Please be aware if you fail an appointment and you haven't signed up to the DBS update service, you will be required to obtain a new certificate at a further cost to you.

I already have a DBS certificate, will you accept it?

If you believe you have a fully enhanced DBS certificate and entitled to know whether you are barred from working with children and adults. Please send through a picture of the certificate to licensing@southglos.gov.uk where the Licensing Team will determine if the certificate is enhanced enough for us to accept.

We will only accept the DBS certificate if it is in date (a DBS is only valid for 60 days at the time of your Badge Application Appointment) or you signed up to the [DBS update service](#).

I have my DBS back, how do I book my Badge Application Appointment?

Once you have obtained all the required documentation, you should contact the Licensing Service via email licensing@southglos.gov.uk in order to make an appointment to apply and collect your badges. When emailing please provide full details about yourself (full name, full address and contact telephone number). Please try not to email in more than once, as duplicate appointments may be made for you. This will increase the waiting times and cause confusion to yourself and us with multiple bookings.

The Licensing Service will offer you the first date available and will forward you an email to confirm what documentation you will need to provide and the current fee.

Please note that failure to submit all the required information at the appointment may result in the application being deemed improperly made, should this be the case you will then be required to book a further appointment at the Licensing office subject to appointment waiting times.

Should the application be complete with no concerns then your licence will be processed on the day of your appointment.

Should a Licensing Officer have concerns about an application then the licence will not be processed on the day and your file will be passed to a Licensing Enforcement Officer for consideration and potentially a meeting held to discuss the concerns. Please note that if Officers are unable to issue a licence due to the concerns raised then your application will be referred to a Licensing Sub-Committee for determination.

Lastly, please be reminded that becoming a licensed driver is a position of trust and responsibility it is therefore expected that when contacting the Licensing Team or arriving in person that you always act professional and courteous. Rude and abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.

What documents should I bring with me to my Badge Application appointment?

You will be required to bring the following documents with you when you attend the appointment. Further information is provided on the confirmation of booking email

- Application Form
- Practical Test Certificate
- Child Sexual Exploitation Safeguarding (CSE) course certificate of attendance
- Driving Licence photo card – this must be in your current address and match other supporting documentation
- Proof of right to work (Valid Passport, Work Permit, residence permit or UK birth Certificate)
- Proof of Address (utility bill, bank statement, dated in the last 3 months *original copies only – bills/statements printed from the internet are NOT acceptable)
- Proof of National Insurance number (P60, P45, payslip, letter from HMRC, NI card)
- 2 Passport size photo's
- If you have been in the UK for less than five years you will need to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct from the previous country from which you were residing in. checking the webpage, [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#), will assist you further in obtaining this document
- Medical Form - Please be aware that your medical will only be valid for 4 months from the date it was completed.
- DBS Certificate – Valid for 60 days, unless you sign up to the [DBS update service](#) which can be done within the first 30 days after receiving your certificate.

Please note: your requirements will be confirmed with you at the time you make your booking.

I've held my UK Driving Licence for less than one year, is this ok?

Applicants must have held a European Union (EU) full driving licence for at least 12 months. If at the Badge Application Appointment, it is noticed that you have not held your licence for more than 12 months, the application will be deemed improperly made, should this be the case you will then be required to book a further appointment at the Licensing office subject to appointment waiting times.

In addition to the above this Licensing Authority also requires all applicants who hold an EC/EEA driving licence to have a GB counterpart document. This can be obtained from the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) on submission of form D9 which can be downloaded from the DVLA website.

In order to obtain a GB counterpart, the applicant must be resident in the UK.

EU Driving Licences

If your driving licence is issued by an EU country it is recognised throughout the EU. In most circumstances you will not have to exchange your licence.

However if you have an EU driving licence that was issued in exchange for a non-EU licence, and you wish to **move to another EU country with your converted licence**, you should be aware that your new licence **may not be recognised** there. This is determined by each EU country.

Sample story

Angeles is a Chilean who moved to Spain a few years ago. As Spain recognises Chilean driving licences, Angeles was able to exchange hers for a Spanish one after meeting a few administrative formalities.

With this new licence, Angeles can drive around the EU. However, if she ever moves from Spain to another EU country, she will have to check that the authorities there recognise her Spanish licence.

If the new country recognises the original Chilean licence automatically, she will be able to continue driving with her converted Spanish licence. If not, she may have to have her Chilean licence formally recognised or exchanged in the new country.

For further information please see the below two links:

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/vehicles/driving-licence/driving-licencerecognition-validity/index_en.htm

<https://www.gov.uk/driving-nongb-licence>

I have my badge, when shall I make an appointment to book my vehicle in?

You can request a vehicle appointment at any time during your process, but keep in mind if you do not have your badges when you plate the vehicle you will be unable to drive it. You may also struggle to get Private Hire Vehicle Insurance without your badge first.

- The vehicle must be under 5 years of age as per the Date of First Registration.
- Vehicle must have an MOT within 30 days of the appointment date (Not needed if the vehicle is under 3 years for private hire)
- Vehicle must undergo an inspection from the garage at Broad Lane to determine that the vehicle is 'fit and proper'. This must also be dated within 30 days of the appointment.
- Driver must have valid insurance for private hire and reward (Private Hire) at the time and date of the appointment.

Once all of these conditions have been successfully met, we will be able to licence the vehicle for one year. The vehicle can be licensed for a total of 15 years of age from the date of first registration. However, once the vehicle reaches 10 years of age, it will have to undergo 6 monthly inspections in order to determine whether the vehicle is still deemed 'fit and proper'. Upon booking, you will be given the full list of documents you'll need to provide at your appointment.

Final advice for new Private Hire Drivers

When you collect your licence and badges for the first time it is advised that you fully read the current Taxi Policy and licence conditions to ensure that you are aware of your responsibilities as a licensed driver.

Please remember that as a Licensed Private Hire Driver with South Gloucestershire Council you are only permitted to conduct work in a Private Hire Vehicle licensed with South Gloucestershire Council and this work must be through a Private Hire Operator also licensed with South Gloucestershire Council.

Please note that if you do conduct work while driving a vehicle or working under a Private Hire Operator that is not licensed by South Gloucestershire Council you will be committing a criminal offence and may face potential prosecution.

Should this happen you may be placed before a Licensing Sub-Committee to determine your fit and proper status as a Licensed driver.

Should you wish to discuss any of the information above further please feel free to contact a member of the Licensing Service by email licensing@southglos.gov.uk