

New duties on taxi drivers

From 31 March 2001 licensed taxi drivers will be required¹ to carry guide, hearing and certain other assistance dogs accompanying disabled people, and to do so without any additional charge. The dog must be allowed to remain with the passenger.



The Government is committed to ensuring that disabled people are able to enjoy the same opportunities to travel as other members of society. Guide, hearing and other assistance dogs have given many disabled people the confidence to travel independently and for these people taxis can often be a lifeline.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Types of dogs covered

Guide Dogs: trained, by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, to guide a visually impaired person. These dogs wear a harness.

Hearing Dogs: trained to assist a deaf person. These dogs wear a yellow jacket with the words "Hearing Dogs for Deaf People".

Other Assistance Dogs: trained by "Dogs for the Disabled", "Support Dogs" or "Canine Partners for Independence", to assist a disabled person with a physical impairment. These dogs should be wearing a jacket with the name of the relevant charity.

In addition, the owners of all these dogs will carry an identity card with the name of the relevant charity.

It is important to remember that these dogs are highly trained and will remain on the floor of your vehicle. They are very unlikely to damage or dirty it.

Failure to comply with these duties


If you fail to comply with these duties you will be guilty of an offence and on conviction liable to a fine currently up to £1,000 (Level 3 on the standard scale).

Dogs for the Disabled

Exemptions from these duties

Exemption from these new duties can be sought on medical grounds only.


If you have a medical condition, such as severe asthma, which is aggravated by contact with dogs,



or if you are allergic or have a chronic phobia to dogs, it may be possible for you to qualify for an exemption. Applications should be made to the local licensing authority.

Canine Partners for Independence

When considering your application, the licensing authority will need to verify your medical condition and may require you to undergo a medical either by your GP or their own medical adviser. The type of vehicle you drive, i.e. whether the vehicle has a fixed partition segregating you from the passenger compartment, may also be considered.



It is important that you apply for an exemption in good time to give the licensing authority time to consider, and if appropriate, issue you with an exemption certificate before the duty comes into effect on 31 March 2001.

Carriage of Guide, Hearing and Other Assistance Dogs in Taxis

If you use a forged exemption certificate, or obtain one by giving false statements you will be guilty of an offence and liable, on summary conviction, to a fine currently up to £5,000 (statutory maximum), or on conviction to a term of imprisonment of up to two years, or to a fine and imprisonment.

Appeals

If a licensing authority refuses to issue you with an exemption certificate you have a right of appeal to the local Magistrates Court. This right must be exercised within 28 days from the date of the refusal of the licensing authority to issue an exemption certificate.

Further information

For further information about these duties and the DDA or for a copy of the guidance issued to local licensing authorities contact:

The Mobility & Inclusion Unit
Department of the Environment,
Transport and the Regions

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LONDON SW1P 4DR

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If your application is successful and you are issued with an exemption certificate, you will also be issued with a Notice of Exemption, which must be exhibited in the taxi by fixing it, facing outwards, either to the windscreen or in a prominent position on the dashboard.

The front of the Exemption Notice will have the letters "ED", which stands for "Exemption Dogs"

Below is an example of a blank Exemption Notice:

SECTION 37, DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

SAMPLE

(Name of taxi licensing authority) _____

Driver's name _____

Licence No _____

The person named above is exempt from carrying guide dogs, hearing dogs, or assistance dogs in the taxi specified at "A" below or in a kind of taxi specified at "B" below.

A Registration number of specified taxi* _____

B Kind of taxi* _____

(a) Taxis with fixed partition segregating the driver from the passenger compartment

(b) Taxis without fixed partition segregating the driver from the passenger compartment

This notices expires _____ 20 _____

ED

*Delete as appropriate

