

# Frequently asked questions about taxis

[What is the difference between a hackney carriage and private hire vehicle?](#)

## **Hackney Carriages:**

- The vehicles have "Taxi" roof signs
- The vehicle is fitted with a calibrated meter
- A red and white or black and white licence plate is fitted on the rear of the vehicle which displays a licence number
- All journeys within North Somerset are calculated by the meter in the vehicle
- Fares to destinations outside North Somerset can be charged by the meter, or by negotiation with the driver, before the journey starts
- A table of fares should be displayed in the vehicle

## **Private Hire Vehicles**

- They cannot be flagged down in the street or operate from taxi ranks
- All bookings must be made through a licensed operator
- The vehicle does not have a "taxi" roof sign
- Details of the vehicle operator must be displayed on the front doors of the vehicle
- The vehicle must display a green and white or yellow and white licence plate on the front and rear of the vehicle.

[Who sets the fares for taxis?](#)

We set the fares for hackney carriages. Private Hire Vehicle's fares are set independently by the company or person operating the vehicle. Passengers are advised to establish what the fare will be before accepting carriage in a private hire vehicle.

[Why do taxi fares vary for the same journey?](#)

It can depend on which type of vehicle you have travelled in. There will be differences between fares charged by hackney carriages and private hire vehicles due to the nature of how they determine their fares. Differences will also occur if the same journey is taken at different times of the day as fares in the evening or early morning will be higher than those in the normal daytime. If the journey is taken on a Bank Holiday the fare will again be higher than a daytime fare.

[Who do I contact if I have lost something in a taxi?](#)

In the first instance you should contact the taxi company who you hired the vehicle from. If this information is not known you should contact the Licensing Office on 01934 426 800. Hackney Carriage owners are required to return lost property to the Licensing Office within 48 hours on discovering such an item. Unfortunately there are no legal requirements for returning items of lost property to the Licensing Office from Private Hire Vehicles.

## Who do I contact if I have a complaint about taxi or driver?

We would always advise that in the event of a complaint the first contact is made with the person operating the vehicle by you, preferably in the form a letter (with proof of delivery). You will need to have details of the vehicle or driver concerned (e.g. registration or licence number of the vehicle or the badge number of the driver) and the date, time and details of the journey subject to your complaint. If that has not worked, please complete a complaint form and forward it to the Licensing Team.

## What checks are made on taxis and there drivers?

We make extensive checks on both the condition of vehicles and the suitability of persons licensed to drive either hackney carriages or private hire vehicles. The linked pages on this site for vehicles, drivers and taxi operators set out the standards and vetting procedures that we undertake.

## Are there any precautions that can be taken so as to ensure personal safety when using taxis?

Licensed taxis and private hire vehicles are generally a very safe way to travel. Using unlicensed vehicles and drivers puts you at unnecessary risk and we have produced the following tips for staying safe and getting home safely:

### DO:

- Make a note of the number plate and the drivers licence number or name. If you feel uneasy text these details to someone
- Sit in the rear of the vehicle
- Keep your mobile phone where it is easily accessible
- If you have any concerns or complaints about a vehicle or a driver contact the Licensing Office (01934 426 800) or contact the Police

### DON'T USE A CAB IF:

- If the vehicle has no licence plates
- The driver appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- The driver does not seem to know the local area
- The vehicle is in a state of disrepair
- You are uneasy for any reason