



Signage on SGC Licensed Vehicles

Taxi Compliance Officer Information Sheet 19B

*This is a topic that often causes confusion, and with good reason as the law is very old and each Council has its own set of rules. The following information applies to **SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL (SGC) only**. Other Councils have different rules.*

What does the law say ?

HC : The plate must be displayed **AT ALL TIMES** whether you are working or not. – sections 51 & 52 Town Police Clauses Act 1847. Benson v Boyce 1996 Fine of up to £200. Also required under Council by-laws/licensing conditions.

PHV : The plate must be displayed in the manner as the Council decides **AT ALL TIMES** whether you are working or not – section 48(5) Local Government (Misc. Prov.) Act 1976. Hawkins v Edwards 1901 (2 KB 169) Fine of up to £1000. Also required under Council licensing conditions.

What do I need to do ?

Every Council sets its own rules for the signage they require on the vehicle and they vary widely. In the case of SGC the written policy and conditions don't currently match exactly what they expect. However, the plates have to be firmly affixed (i.e. not easily removed). Attached by magnet or string is no longer allowed. Cable ties are acceptable, but must not be placed over the number plate. The plate should not cover the number plate or any lights.

This is what is currently expected :

	SGC vehicles
Operator door signs	Not required – optional for driver/Operator.
Hackney Carriages	The front and rear plates may be displayed as part of the Roof Light, or as below at the choice of the Licence Holder.
Front plate	Displayed outside on the front of the vehicle, all information clearly visible. From June 2023 the Council will supply and fit your new plate, and the plate won't have an expiry date so no need to replace each year.
Rear plate	Displayed outside on the rear of the vehicle, all information clearly visible. From June 2023 the Council will fit the plate for you. The plate will not need to be replaced each year as it has a security seal with the expiry date on which will simply have the new one put over the old one each year.
Roof signs	For Hackney Carriages, the top "taxi" light required to be working, illuminated when plying for hire.. No roof signs are permitted on Private Hire Vehicles.
Private Hire Vehicles	The words "Taxi" or any other graphics to suggest the vehicle is a Hackney Carriage must not appear in any form on the vehicle, including as part of an Operator name.
Graphics	No advertising, signs, notices, plates, marks, letters figures, symbols, emblems or devices unless approved by the Council.
No smoking signs	One sign, a minimum of 70mm, visible to persons inside the vehicle.

What happens if I don't ?

Each case will be treated on its merits, but actions could include words of advice, an Official Warning, Penalty Points (currently 4 per plate) Suspension or Revocation of your licence, or summonsed to Magistrates Court

Can I use a square number plate next to the "taxi" plate ?

Yes, in fact I encourage it as it looks neat and is secure. The square number plate must meet British Standard BS AU 145e. For more information, see Taxi Compliance Officer Information Sheet 21.

Can I get an exemption ?

You can apply to the Council for an exemption for executive work. If granted, then :

- Plates are to be carried in the vehicle.
- Exemption letter must be carried
- Attachment by magnets is acceptable
- Plates must be displayed when doing non-executive private hire work. Some designs of brackets allow a quick release on-off for the number plate/taxi plate which may work for you.

What else should I know ?

- Licence plates are the property of the Council, and must be returned when the licence is revoked, suspended or expires. Any driver can hand them to me for destruction.
- The Police may seize the plates in certain situations.
- Private Hire vehicles must not display the word "TAXI" anywhere.
- Advertising or ANY graphics must be authorised by the Council. Please get this permission before putting a national flag, or sports team logo on your vehicle !
- Both the vehicle licence holder AND the driver are responsible for complying with the rules.

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This is one of a series of information sheets produced for the benefit of Driver, Vehicle and Operator licence holders by Police Constable 4645 Patrick QUINTON, Taxi Compliance Officer, The Bridewell Police Station, Bristol, BS1 2AA

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To join the "Taxi Cop" WhatsApp group, and get information about PC Quinton's work, news updates and licensing/law updates, send a message to 07469 400832. Your details will not be visible to any other members of the group and your privacy is protected.

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Note : In this document, "taxi" means both Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles.

Disclaimer : This is general guidance on the law which may change. This is not legal advice, and you should seek professional legal advice about your individual case or matter.