



Animals in Licensed Vehicles.

Taxi Compliance Officer Information Sheet 23

Drivers are sometimes asked to take animals in their vehicle, and some have lost their Hackney Carriage or Private Hire licence for refusing to carry an assistance dog. This sheet explains when you do and don't have to take a dog.

Do I have to take dogs ?

You do not have to take a dog unless it is an Assistance Dog. The law says you must take an Assistance Dog if you do not have an exemption.

- Law – Equality Act 2010 – fine of up to £1,000. Loss of “taxi” licence likely.

What is an Assistance Dog ?

Assistance dogs are not pets. They are trained to support people with disabilities and medical conditions. Guide dogs, medical alert dogs, hearing dogs and others are all specially trained by approved organisations.

However, “Therapy dogs” and “Emotional Support Dogs” are not assistance dogs. “Service dog” is also not a recognised category in this country.

How do I know if an animal is an Assistance Dog ?

Usually, an assistance dog has an ID booklet or certificate which you could ask for (although the owner doesn't have to carry it or show you). Most dogs are identified by a coloured harness or jacket. You could also ask the owner which organisation has trained the dog.

How do I get an Exemption ?

You can apply for an Exemption Certificate from the Council if you can prove a medical conditions (such as an allergy) which stops you from taking a dog. Exemptions are not given for religious or cultural reasons. Contact your Council to find out more.

What else should I know ?

- You cannot charge extra for an assistance dog, although you can charge if there is any damage caused by the animal.
- South Gloucestershire Council drivers are not permitted to take their own pets in the vehicle.

- Rule 57 of the Highway Code says “When in a vehicle make sure dogs or other animals are suitably restrained so they cannot distract you while you are driving or injure you, or themselves, if you stop quickly. A seat belt harness, pet carrier, dog cage or dog guard are ways of restraining animals in cars. However, because Assistance dogs are highly trained, they are often fine to sit in the footwells of the vehicle. They should be kept near the owner and not put in the boot. You may wish to provide a towel or blanket for the animal to sit on.

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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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