

Knowledge Test

All applicants have to pass a Knowledge Test which covers road traffic laws, our licensing conditions and local knowledge about the Rother area.

Guidance for Applicants

In order to offer a safe and efficient service to members of the public, it is important that Dual Drivers have a good working knowledge of the area in which they work. All new applicants are therefore required to pass a knowledge test before their licence can be granted. The cost of the test is included in the application fee. However, should you be unsuccessful on the first attempt, an administration fee of £50 will be charged for the second test, and £70 for subsequent tests.

To help you pass the test, you should read this page carefully and refer to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Handbook.

What the Test involves

The knowledge test is computer based and comprises 34 questions in 5 categories, with multiple choice answers. Applicants must achieve the following pass mark in each category to pass the test:

- Local knowledge of Rother District (10 questions with a 60% pass mark)
- Traffic law as it applies to licensed drivers and vehicles (8 questions with a 75% pass mark)
- Rother District Council licence conditions (8 questions with a 75% pass mark)
- Traffic signs from the Highway Code (2 questions with a 50% pass mark)
- Vehicle maintenance and best practice (6 questions with a 66.6% pass mark).

When taking the test, you will be required to demonstrate a good level of local knowledge which will include being able to identify the locations of certain key buildings or premises in Rother District, such as pubs, bars, schools, train stations, golf clubs, village halls, supermarkets and business parks etc. In addition, you may also be asked to answer questions on a few key locations outside of the district such as airports or amusement parks and famous buildings. Examples of the type of questions you could be asked are given later in these guidance notes.

The information pack contains guidance notes for new applicants and a copy of Rother District Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook. This includes standard conditions under which driver and vehicle licences are issued, together with some information on the law relating to private hire and

hackney carriage licensing. You should study this information carefully before your test.

Frequently Asked Questions

I want to drive a private hire vehicle not a taxi. Why do I need to have local knowledge of Rother District?

It could be argued that private hire jobs are booked in advance, so routes can be studied on a map by the driver, or simply given to him by the operator before the customer is collected. The local authority recognises that the drivers of private hire vehicles may not need to have as much in-depth knowledge of the area as the drivers of taxis. However, a Dual Driver's Licence gives you the automatic right to drive either a hackney carriage or a private hire vehicle, and every driver is expected to collect passengers on time. On a busy night, you will not be on time for all pick-ups if you have to keep stopping between jobs to look at a map. It is quicker and less stressful for both you and your Operator if you obtain some local knowledge of the area before you start work. In theory, jobs booked in advance with specified locations should be easy enough to carry out but, in reality, this is not always the case. Passengers may change their minds about routes, or ask you to include extra drop-off points, to which they may or may not be able to describe the exact route. The need to study a map could add yet more time to an already extended journey, delaying your next call.

Satellite navigation systems should not be relied upon. For example, if you live outside the area, you may not automatically recognise that the road name identified on your system is not necessarily within Rother District or the surrounding areas. The software for such systems can also become out of date very quickly and the satellite signal can be lost for long periods.

Why do I need to answer questions on the Highway Code when I have already done this to obtain my DVLA driving licence?

Whilst the local authority does not believe there is a need for you to be tested to a great depth on matters relating to the Highway Code, it does recognise that over time it is easy to forget some of the rules of the road. The authority's overriding concern is for the safety of the public and questions regarding the Highway Code are included in the knowledge test to serve as a refresher for applicants. We advise that you therefore re-familiarise yourself with the Highway Code before sitting the knowledge test.

What types of questions are asked in the test?

As shown above, there are five categories of questions and within each category questions are chosen at random by the computer.

Local knowledge of Rother District

Locations of premises, key buildings etc, either within, or just outside Rother District, for example:

Q. Which one of the following public houses is not located in Battle?

A. a) The Senlac Inn, b) The Bull, c) The Jolly Sailor, d) The Kings Head.

Traffic Law

The law as it relates to road users in general and licensed drivers specifically, for example:

Q. Which of these, if any, can park on a taxi rank?

A. a) any licensed taxi, b) any licensed taxi or private hire vehicle, c) only a taxi licensed by the local licensing authority, d) no vehicles.

Rother District Council Licence Conditions

The licence conditions applied to licensed drivers, vehicles and operators, for example:

Q. What colour is the licence plate fitted to the rear of a Rother District Council licensed private hire vehicle?

A. a) white, b) yellow, c) red, d) any colour.

Traffic Signs

You will be shown a traffic sign from the Highway Code and be asked to identify it from four possible answers, one of which will be correct.

Vehicle Maintenance and Best Practice

This will include general questions from the Highway Code and DVLA practical test, for example:

Q. What is the primary function of the anti-lock braking system (ABS)?

A. a) prevents the wheels from locking up to retain steering control, b) prevents the wheels from locking up so that you can stop more quickly, c) prevents the wheels from locking up to allow controlled skidding, d) prevents the wheels from locking to ease wear and tear on your tyres.

General Questions on Hackney Carriage or Private Hire

This includes more general questions on being a driver, for example:

Q. A taxi driver can refuse to take a fare if:

A. a) the journey would take too long, b) the journey is too short, c) the journey would take him/her outside the licensing area, d) the driver has reasonable grounds to refuse.

Study Tips

We advise that you obtain a good working knowledge of the local area (including key locations outside Rother District) before attempting the knowledge test. In order to help you study for your test you should consider the following:

- Spending time in the local area and studying maps
- Using the internet and/or the telephone directory to research the names of the roads on which local landmarks or bars, restaurants, schools etc are situated
- Re-familiarising yourself with the Highway Code.

Please note: We ask that where possible you avoid telephoning local premises in order to obtain their locations.

Taking the Knowledge Test

If you have a disability which you think would exclude you from taking the test, please contact a Licensing Officer to discuss. You should bring some form of photographic ID with you to the test, such as a driving licence or passport. All knowledge test questions have multiple choice answers.

During the test you will not be permitted to use any of the following:

- Mobile phones
- Study notes
- Text book
- Hand held computers
- Satellite navigation devices
- Any other devices or notes as deemed unacceptable by the invigilator.

Evidence of the use of any of the above will result in your test being cancelled. Ordinarily you will not be permitted to leave the room during the test, so please ensure you have taken any comfort breaks before the test begins.

The Council's decision as to whether you have passed is final. You will be notified of the result at the end of the test. If you fail you can sit the test again but we recommend that a minimum period of at least two weeks should elapse between tests, to give you time to study the relevant information again. You must make your application for a Dual Driver's licence within one year of passing the knowledge test.

Booking and Arriving for Your Test

To book your test please, telephone the Licensing Officer on 01424 787528. Tests cannot be booked online. Tests will be conducted at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea TN39 3JX. You must bring photographic identification with you. If you have any queries regarding the Knowledge Test please telephone the Licensing Officer.