

Appendix 2

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE SPECIFICATION

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

1. Introduction

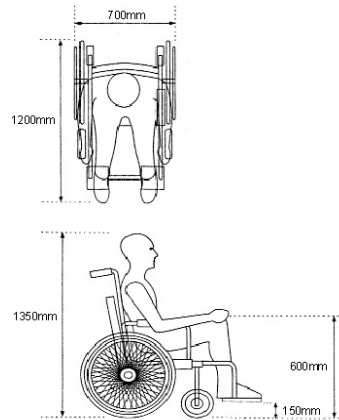
- 1.1 Section 167 of the *Equality Act 2010* permits licensing authorities to maintain a designated list of wheelchair accessible taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 1.2 Inclusion of a vehicle on the designated list triggers the requirements of Section 165 of the 2010 Act on the driver of that vehicle.
- 1.3 The 2010 Act states that a vehicle can be included on the licensing authority's list of designated vehicles if it conforms to such accessibility requirements as the licensing authority thinks fit. This document sets out the general requirements for vehicles to be included on Argyll and Bute Council's designated list. Operators should note that these are general requirements which are subject to the individual circumstances of each vehicle, and regular vehicle inspections which are required by virtue of the taxi/private hire operator's licence conditions.
- 1.4 This document has been prepared having specific regard to the Department for Transport's Statutory Guidance: *Access for wheelchair users to Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles – Moving Britain Ahead*¹, published in 2017. This is a statutory guidance document, issued under Section 167(6) of the 2010 Act and constitutes the Secretary of State's formal guidance to licensing authorities in England, Wales and Scotland on the application of Sections 165 – 167 of the 2010 Act. Local authorities must have regard to this guidance.

2. Vehicles That Can Be Designated

- 2.1 To be placed on the Council's designated list, a vehicle must be capable of carrying some – but not necessarily all – types of wheelchairs.
- 2.2 Accordingly, Argyll and Bute Council have therefore determined that a vehicle will be included on its designated list if it is possible for the user of a “reference wheelchair²” to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.
- 2.3 The dimensions for a “reference wheelchair” are illustrated in the below diagram:

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593350/access-for-wheelchair-users-taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles.pdf (Accessed 1/12/2021.)

² As defined in Schedule 1 of the *Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000/1970*



- 2.4 In order to allow the passenger to enter and exit the vehicle whilst seated in their wheelchair, the vehicle should be fitted with rear or near side loading wheelchair ramps and/or lifts. The vehicle should also be adequately equipped with an appropriate mechanism to secure the wheelchair(s) for the duration of the journey. This all allows the occupant of the wheelchair to complete the entirety of the journey whilst remaining in their wheelchair should that be their preference.
- 2.5 The operator of the wheelchair accessible vehicle must ensure that the vehicle in all respects conforms with such regulations as may be prescribed from time to time; and shall comply with any directions issued from time to time by an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority relating to transportation of wheelchair users.
- 2.6 In particular, the operator must produce copies of all relevant health and safety certificates and related documentation concerning the fixtures and equipment within their vehicle (such as ramps, lifts, hoists, etc.) when their vehicle is undergoing regular inspections as required by the licensing authority.
- 2.7 The operator of the vehicle is solely responsible for ensuring that the vehicle and all equipment and/or fixtures within the vehicle comply with all health and safety regulations and requirements which may apply to their vehicle.
- 2.8 The taxi/private hire operator licence holder shall also ensure that all drivers operating their vehicle are fully trained in the use and operation of the vehicle's ramps, restraints, and other relevant equipment; and shall ensure that said drivers use and operate said ramps and restraints in a proper manner.

3. Ramps

- 3.1 Vehicle ramping systems must be designed to accommodate nearside or rear wheelchair passenger access and egress. Offside systems are permitted but these are only in addition to the main nearside/rear access and egress requirements.
- 3.2 A full width solid type ramp is preferred but lighter twin extendible ramps are acceptable provided these are rated at safe working load of at least 300kg/ramp and can be adjusted to accommodate different widths of wheelchair.
- 3.3 Ramps, irrespective of type, must be secured to the vehicle in such a manner as to prevent movement when in use. Twin ramp securing systems must prevent splaying of the ramps when deployed.
- 3.4 Ramps must allow for both kerbside and ground level access and egress with power assistance provided where ramp angles are considered excessive for safe manual handling.

4. Wheelchair Access, Egress and Headroom

- 4.1 Door entrances dimensions must be sufficient in height and width to allow free and easy movement of a manually assisted wheelchair passenger in and out of the vehicle from ground level.
- 4.2 Ramp and vehicle floor surfaces must be flat and free from obstructions so as not to restrict movement and allow easy positioning of the wheelchair passenger when inside the vehicle.
- 4.3 Floor seat rails, securing points or depressions must be covered so as not to pose a tripping or trapping hazard for drivers, assistants and other passengers
- 4.4 Door entrances and internal layouts must be designed so that seating and other fixings do not impede or restrict the movement of a wheelchair passenger when being positioned in the vehicle.
- 4.5 There must be sufficient headroom available to allow free head movement of a wheelchair passenger when secured in the vehicle and not pose a risk of their head striking the roof when the vehicle is in transit.
- 4.6 Roof mounted fixtures and fittings must be positioned in a manner so as not to pose a risk to any seated passenger whether wheelchair-bound or not.

5. Luggage and On-board Space

- 5.1 Luggage and other on-board space requirements i.e. spare wheel, ramp storage and passenger comfort must not be compromised in order to accommodate a wheelchair bound passenger.
- 5.2 With a wheelchair passenger secured in position, the vehicle seating arrangements must allow for at least one other seated passenger to accompany the wheelchair using passenger.
- 5.3 Seats which have to be moved or removed to accommodate the wheelchair must be capable of being stored safely in the vehicle. If seats have to be removed then the health and safety of both driver and passengers has to be considered and if compromised will require the seat(s) to be permanently removed from the vehicle. This will result in a reduction in the maximum number of licensed passengers the vehicle will be authorised to carry.

6. Wheelchair and Wheelchair Passenger Security

- 6.1 Wheelchair securing systems must prevent undue movement of the wheelchair when the vehicle is in transit. Four point securing systems are preferred but other options will be considered acceptable provided these do not compromise passenger safety.
- 6.2 Irrespective of wheelchair security device fitted, the system must provide for forward or rearward facing of the wheelchair only; no side-on positioning of the wheelchair is permitted.
- 6.3 Wheelchair passenger belts or alternative securing devices must be adjustable to accommodate a range of passenger requirements, be comfortable when fitted and not constrain arm or head movements.