

Travelling with Assistance Dogs in Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles – Advice for Disabled People



Department for
Transport

Introduction

This booklet is aimed at assistance dog users who travel in taxis and private hire vehicles (more commonly known as minicabs) to explain the duties that drivers and operators of these services are under.

Many people are unaware of the difference between taxis and minicabs.

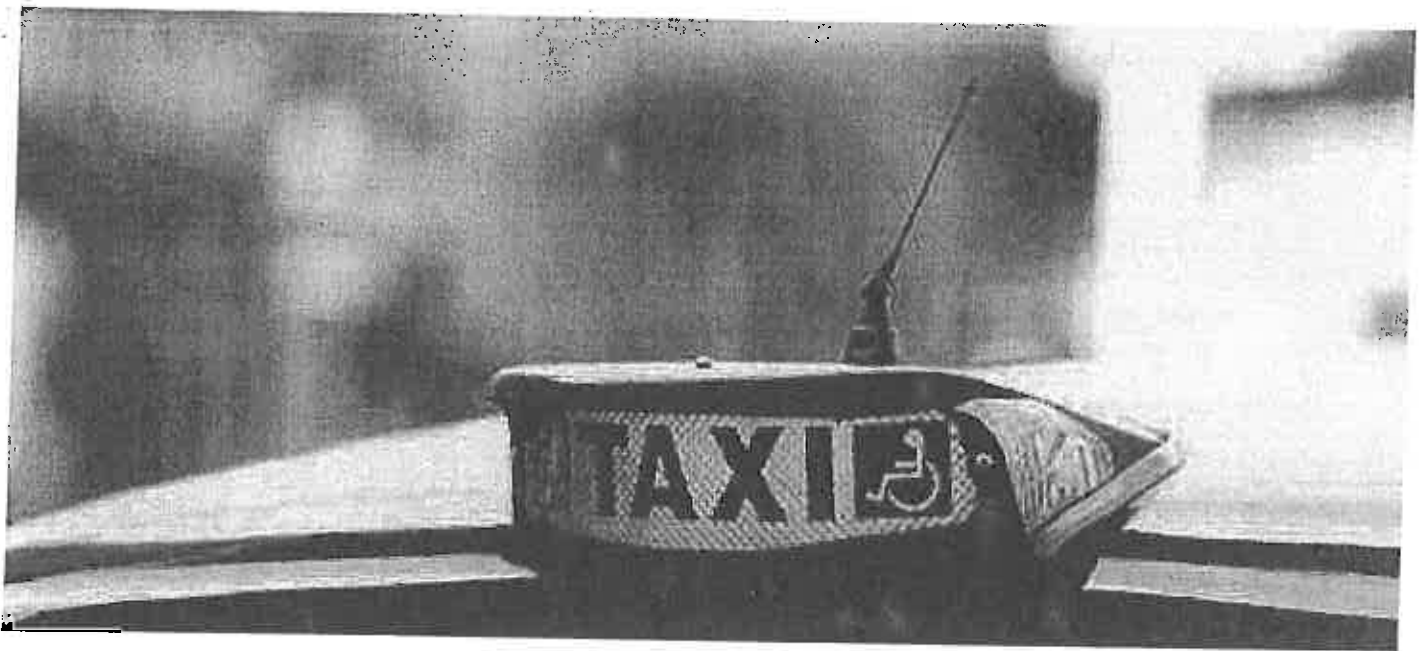


A taxi normally has a 'Taxi' sign on the roof and a numbered plate on the back showing that it is licensed to carry passengers. Taxis can be hailed on the street, picked up at ranks or pre-booked. Minicabs must always be booked in advance.

The drivers of taxis and minicabs are under a duty to carry, free of charge, any guide, hearing or certain other assistance dogs in their vehicles.

In addition, minicab operators are under a duty not to refuse bookings made by you, on your behalf or by someone travelling with you and are committing an offence if they refuse to do so because you would be accompanied by your assistance dog. They are also under a duty not to make an additional charge for carrying your assistance dog.

Taxi and minicab drivers can still refuse to carry you for the same reason they



might refuse any other passenger, for example if your destination is outside their licensing area.

What types of dog are covered?

Guide dogs:

those trained by Guide Dogs.

Hearing dogs:

those trained by Hearing Dogs.

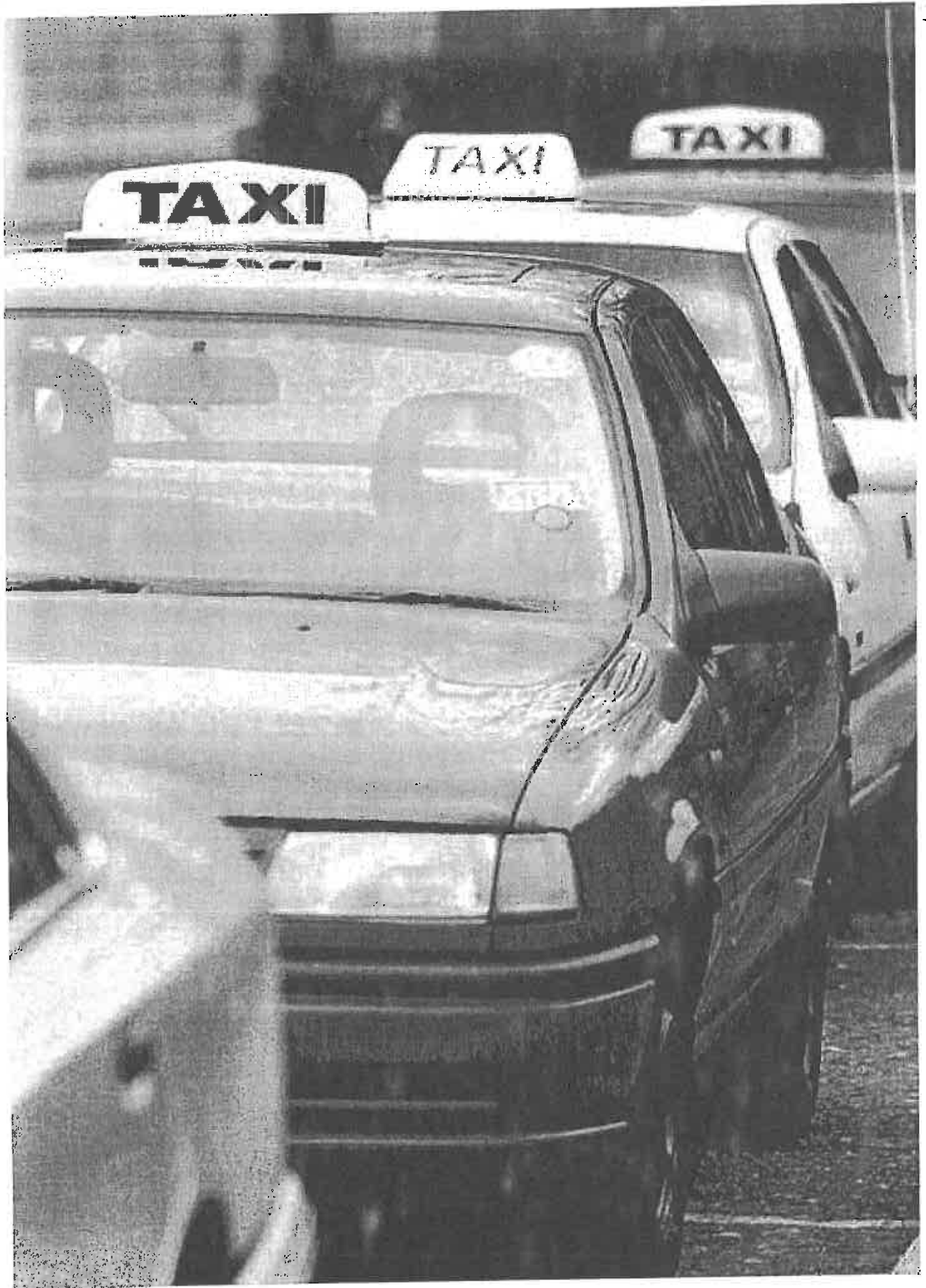
Other assistance dogs:

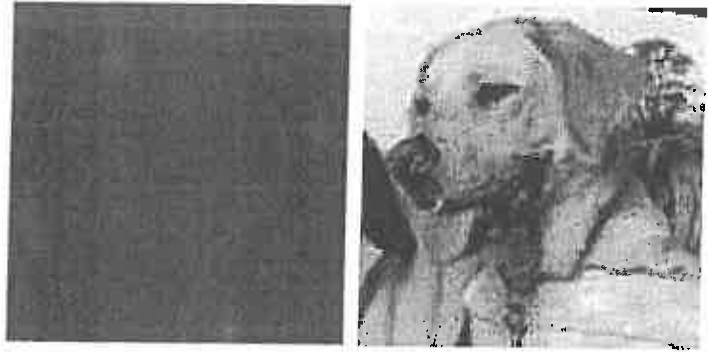
those trained by Dogs for the Disabled, Support Dogs or Canine Partners to assist other disabled people.

Taxi and minicab drivers have been told how to identify these animals, so it is important that your guide dog wears its harness or, if you have one of the other assistance dogs, that it wears a jacket showing the name of the charity which has trained it. If you have an identification card for your dog, please carry it with you.

Some drivers, particularly those with saloon cars, are concerned that your dog may damage or dirty their vehicle. We have assured them that these animals are highly trained and should remain on the floor not the seats. Please ensure that your dog stays under control at all times. If your dog does cause any damage to the vehicle, the driver could ask you to pay for it.







What if a minicab operator refuses to take my booking?

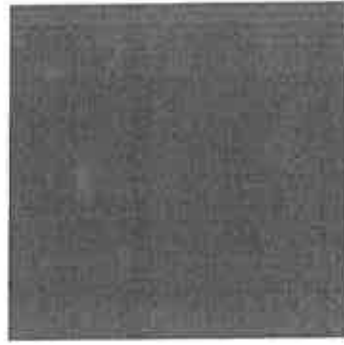
If they fail or refuse to accept a booking from you, or someone requesting a booking on your behalf, they will be committing an offence and could be fined up to £1,000. This also applies if they refuse a booking requested by someone who wishes to travel with you. An offence is committed if the reason for refusal is because you would have been accompanied by an assistance dog.

What if a taxi or minicab driver won't take my dog?

A driver who refuses to carry your dog, or makes a charge for doing so, is guilty of an offence and could be fined up to £1,000. A small proportion of drivers will be exempt from this duty (see overleaf).

Reporting problems

You should report any problem or refusal to carry your dog to the local licensing authority (part of your district or borough council, or unitary authority) or The Public Carriage Office in London. Their telephone numbers will be in your telephone directory or on the council's website. To assist their investigations, it would be helpful if you could supply as many details as possible about the incident, such as the vehicle's registration number and taxi/minicab licence number, the taxi driver's badge number or the minicab operating firm name.



Other duties

Who is exempt?

Drivers of taxis or minicabs who can prove to their licensing authority that they have a medical condition, such as severe asthma, which is aggravated by contact with dogs, will have been given an exemption certificate.

If a driver forges or alters exemption documentation or lends these to another driver, they are guilty of an offence for which they could be fined up to £5,000 or even sent to prison.

How will I know?

A driver who has been granted an exemption will display a yellow 'Notice of Exemption' on the near side of the windscreen of their vehicle. The front of the notice will have the letters 'ED' (Exemption Dogs) and will show the driver's licence number.

The 'right of access' all disabled people have to goods, services and facilities has now been extended to transport services. As well as the duty to carry assistance dogs, taxi and minicab drivers must also ensure that they do not discriminate against you, treat you less favourably or fail to make a reasonable adjustment to their service. More information about these duties is available from the Accessibility and Equalities Unit (see overleaf).



Example Notices of Exemption (not to scale):

Taxi in England

SECTION 37 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Name of taxi licensing authority _____

Driver's full name* _____

Licence No.* _____

The person named above is exempt from carrying guide dogs, hearing dogs, or assistance dogs in the taxi specified at "A" below or in a kind of taxi specified at "B" below.

A Registration number of taxi _____

B Kind of taxi* _____

(a) taxi with fixed partition segregating the driver from the passenger compartment

(b) taxi without fixed partition segregating the driver from the passenger compartment

This notice expires* _____ 20_____

*Dates as appropriate to be completed

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Taxi in Wales

ADRAN 37 DEDDF GWAHANIAETHU AR SAIL ANABLEDD 1995
 SECTION 37 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995
HYSBYSIAD EITHRIO
 NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Enw'r awdustrad lwyddoedd (Name of taxi licensing authority) _____

Enw'r awn y gyrrwr (Driver's full name) _____

Rhif y Drewyddad (Licence No.) _____

Mae'r awn i enw'r uchod wedi'i eiddo _____ i gyswrtio, awn i'r byddar neu'n ymwith yn y taxi a nodir yn "A" isod.

The person named above is exempt from carrying guide dogs, hearing dogs, or assistance dogs in the taxi specified at "A" below or in a kind of taxi specified at "B" below.

A Rhif cofrestru (Registration number) _____

B Math o taxi (Kind of taxi) _____

(a) Taxi gyda partiad ffrwythlon i wahanu'r awnwr o'r cerbydwr

(b) Taxi heb partiad ffrwythlon i wahanu'r awnwr o'r cerbydwr

Mae'r hysbysiad hwn yn dirwyn i ben yn _____ 20_____

*Deddfau sy'n berthynol i ddiweddau

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Minicab in England

SECTION 37A DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Name of private hire vehicle licensing authority _____

Driver's full name* _____

Licence No.* _____

The person named above is exempt from carrying guide dogs, hearing dogs, or assistance dogs in the private hire vehicle specified at "A" below or in a kind of private hire vehicle specified at "B" below.

A Registration number of private hire vehicle _____

B Kind of private hire vehicle* _____

(a) Private hire vehicle with fixed partition segregating the driver from the passenger compartment

(b) Private hire vehicle without fixed partition segregating the driver from the passenger compartment

This notice expires* _____ 20_____

*Dates as appropriate to be completed

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Minicab in Wales

ADRAN 37A DEDDF GWAHANIAETHU AR SAIL ANABLEDD 1995
 SECTION 37A DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995
HYSBYSIAD EITHRIO
 NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Enw'r awdustrad lwyddoedd cerbydau hir a phreifat (Name of private hire vehicle licensing authority) _____

Enw'r awn y gyrrwr (Driver's full name) _____

Rhif y Drewyddad (Licence No.) _____

Mae'r awn i enw'r uchod wedi'i eiddo _____ i gyswrtio, awn i'r byddar neu'n ymwith yn y cerbyd hir neu'n ymwith yn y cerbyd hir preifat a nodir yn "A" isod.

The person named above is exempt from carrying guide dogs, hearing dogs, or assistance dogs in the private hire vehicle specified at "A" below or in a kind of private hire vehicle specified at "B" below.

A Rhif cofrestru cerbydau hir a phreifat (Registration number of private hire vehicle) _____

B Math o cerbydau hir a phreifat (Kind of private hire vehicle) _____

(a) Cerbydau hir a phreifat gyda partiad ffrwythlon i wahanu'r awnwr o'r cerbydwr

(b) Cerbydau hir a phreifat heb partiad ffrwythlon i wahanu'r awnwr o'r cerbydwr

Mae'r hysbysiad hwn yn dirwyn i ben yn _____ 20_____

*Deddfau sy'n berthynol i ddiweddau

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Further information

If you have any questions about travelling with your dog, or about the wider provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, please contact:

The Accessibility and Equalities Unit

Department for Transport

Zone 4/23

Great Minster House

76 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 8035
Minicom: 020 7944 3277
Fax: 020 7944 6102
Email: aeu@dft.gsi.gov.uk
Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk/access

For further information about assistance dogs, please contact:

Guide Dogs: 0870 600 2323

Hearing Dogs:

01844 348100 (tel/minicom)

Dogs for the Disabled:

0870 077 6600

Support Dogs UK: 0114 257 7997

Canine Partners: 01730 716000

Further copies of this leaflet are available from: Department for Transport Free Literature Service, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB, Tel: 0870 1226 236 (Minicom 0870 1207 405), Fax: 0870 1226 237, Email: DFTINF@capita.co.uk. Please quote product code DP23.

Alternative formats of this leaflet are available from the Accessibility and Equalities Unit (as above) in audio and Braille.

This leaflet is also available on the Department for Transport's web site at www.dft.gov.uk/access

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