

## Taxi & Private Hire Driver Safety

The safety of all licensed taxi and private hire drivers is always of concern for Transport for London (TfL) and the incidents where one driver was murdered and another seriously assaulted highlight the importance of making sure drivers do all they can to stay safe when working.

To help drivers stay safe when working TfL, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, is advising all drivers to follow the advice below.

### Do Make Sure You:

- Carry the following items with you when working:
  - A mobile phone
  - A notepad and pen to record any incidents
  - A spare key, in case an attacker throws your keys away
  - A card carrying your name, date of birth, blood group, allergies and a contact number for emergencies
- Install a CCTV system in your vehicle – further information can be found on our website at [tfl.gov.uk/tph](http://tfl.gov.uk/tph)
- Keep all of the doors locked when carrying packages or parcels
- Report any change of destination during a private hire journey to your operator so the new address can be recorded as part of the booking
- Follow these steps to help reduce the risk of conflict:
  - Be ready to explain the fare structure to passengers – taxi drivers should have a copy of the fare card available and private hire operators should confirm the fare when accepting a booking
  - Bilking (leaving the cab without paying) is a criminal offence – report incidents to the police and be prepared to make a statement
  - Communication with the passenger is important – be polite and pleasant
  - If you are going a long way round (for example, in order to avoid roadworks) explain the route you plan to take – this should help avoid a dispute over the fare
  - Make sure you are not tired – you need to be alert at all times
  - Make eye contact with the passenger when they get into your vehicle – this helps you establish a relationship with them and also lets them know that you could identify them afterwards if need be
  - Private hire drivers should ask passengers to sit in the rear of the vehicle whenever possible and only open windows enough to speak to people without them being able to reach in

**Do not:**

- Carry too much cash – bank or drop off cash at home, or with your operator if you are a private hire driver. If you can't drop off your cash, keep it hidden from view in a secure box.
- Carry weapons – under Common Law you have the right to use reasonable force to protect yourself but you must not carry weapons or any items that can be used as a weapon as you could be liable to arrest by the police plus there is also the risk that they will be used against you
- Pick-up passengers who have not made a booking with the operator if you are a private hire driver – this is illegal and without the booking information it may be impossible to trace the passenger if something does happen to you or you are attacked

**If you feel threatened then:**

- Try to stay calm and take slow, deep breaths – this may help to lessen your anxiety
- If you can, drive to a brightly-lit, busy place, as these are often covered by CCTV
- As taxis have a purpose-built screen, taxi drivers are likely to be safer staying in their vehicle than getting out
- Do not try to run after a passenger who owes you their fare – your safety is more important than the money

**If you are attacked:**

- Gather as much information about the person as you can (for example their clothes and accent)
- Use your horn and lights to attract attention and call 999 for help
- Private hire drivers should contact their operator and taxi drivers contact their radio circuit if they work for one

**If something does happen then make sure you:**

- Write down everything about the incident including a description of the passenger and what they said and did
- Report all violent incidents to the police
- Be prepared to make a witness statement. It may take time, but it may prevent an attack in the future – for you and other drivers

- You may be able to recover the costs of damage to your vehicle through the small claims system

Operators and controllers can help by making sure that when taking a booking they record clearly and fully the passenger's name, pick-up address, full destination address and telephone number. If something does happen to one of your drivers having this information available will help trace the person responsible.

Operators should also consider the safety of staff in the office, especially those in offices with public access and which are open 24 hours a day. Think about how you could improve safety by looking at outer-door security and fitting safety screens, alarms and CCTV. Information about safety and security is available from your local police Crime Prevention Officer.

Private hire operators should make sure that all of their drivers have a copy of this notice.



**John Mason**  
**Director**  
**Taxi and Private Hire**



**Joe Royle**  
**Chief Superintendent**  
**Safer Transport Command**

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