

**Licensing Authority, Chichester District Council, East Pallant House,
East Pallant, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1TY**

Guidelines for Private Hire Vehicle Safety Partition Screens

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of these guidelines is to provide private hire vehicle owners, drivers and operators with guidance as to Chichester District Council's requirements in relation to the use of safety partition screens.
- 1.2 The installation of safety partition screens in vehicles used for private hire is supported by Chichester District Council for the purposes of improving the safety of private hire drivers and reducing the threat of attack from passengers. However Chichester District Council also recognises that in fitting and using such devices, together with other measures such as good ventilation and positioning of passengers, they may provide some degree of protection from and control of infection e.g. COVID-19.
- 1.3 All newly manufactured vehicles have been rigorously tested (NCAP) and achieved European Whole Vehicle Type Approval. Changing or adding to the interior of the vehicle can alter the 'type approval', and may also have consequences as to what might happen inside the vehicle in the event of a collision.
- 1.4 These guidelines apply to all safety partition screens which are installed after the original manufacture of the vehicle.

2. General requirements

- 2.1 Due to the broad range of vehicles licensed by Chichester District Council, and the different types of safety partition screens available, it is not possible to offer specific purchase or installation advice in respect of these devices.
- 2.2 Whether a safety partition screen should be installed is a matter for vehicle owners, drivers and/or operators to consider. In making this decision, Chichester District Council considers that a number of matters must be considered including, but not limited to, the following.
 - i. Ensuring that all relevant safety legislation, [UK and European Community (EC)] is complied with.

- ii. Consideration of their general health and safety responsibilities together with their personal liability to employees, hirers and passengers.
- iii. Informing insurers of the intention to fit such a device, and obtaining written confirmation of their agreement and providing this to Chichester District Council.

3. Specific Requirements

- 3.1 If a safety partition screen is installed in a vehicle being used for private hire purposes, Chichester District Council requires the following specific requirements to be satisfied.
- i. The installation and/or design of the device must not adversely influence or interfere in any way with vehicle type approval.
 - ii. Installation and maintenance of the safety partition screen must be in full accordance with the manufacturer's specification and recommendations.
 - iii. The device installed must not be significantly changed or modified from the original manufactured design. In cases where it is necessary to modify the original design of the device (for example, to facilitate installation of the device in the vehicle), assurances must be sought from the supplier/installer that the modification does not raise any concerns in relation to safety of the device, and complies with the relevant UK and EC safety legislation.
 - iv. Devices must be rigid, remain clear and be resistant to scratching or clouding, and no stickers or any other item may be affixed which might in any way impede the driver's vision.

4. Approval Process

- 4.1 A safety partition screen may only be installed with written approval given by Chichester District Council. Installing a device without permission would constitute a breach of licence condition and a Vehicle Licence would have to be Suspended until such time that the device had been completely removed.
- 4.2 Written information about the proposed safety partition screen to be installed (including links to any websites which may provide images or specifications for the device) must be provided to Chichester District Council in order that an initial proposal can be properly considered. Please email all information to: taxilicensing@chichester.gov.uk. This is absolutely crucial as, without written information, a proposal will not be considered.
- 4.3 Once a written proposal has been considered, this will often include liaising with our colleagues at the Westhampnett Depot who undertake inspections of all our Licensed Vehicles, we will confirm in writing whether or not the proposed safety partition screen meets with these guidelines and, in the case that it does, permission will be given to proceed to have the device installed as per the agreed specification.

- 4.4 Once the installation is complete, the vehicle will need to be presented at the Westhampnett Depot for inspection. Currently there is no charge for this service, however this may change. At the end of the inspection the engineer who has inspected the safety partition screen will provide a written report which will confirm whether or not the installation is acceptable.
- 4.5 Where an installation has been approved, then the Licence Holder or their duly authorised agent will need to sign the inspection form and return this to the Licensing Team at Chichester District Council and this will be held on file. In the event that an installation is not approved, then immediate remedial action will need to be taken to resolve the issue(s) of concern or alternatively the entire screen removed. Chichester District Council will also consider whether it is appropriate to Suspend the Vehicle Licence until such time that the matter has been satisfactorily resolved.

5. Compliance

- 5.1 Private hire vehicle owners, drivers and operators who have installed an approved safety partition screen must fully comply with these guidelines at all times.
- 5.2 If, during the annual licensing inspection (or during a compliance inspection) of the vehicle, it is found that these guidelines have not been complied with, the vehicle will not be re-licensed, and an existing licence will be Suspended.
- 5.3 After each journey is completed, the Licensed Driver must ensure that along with the interior of the vehicle in general, that the safety partition screen is thoroughly cleaned to minimise the risk of cross contamination to the public.
- 5.4 It is also a requirement that any automatic locking of rear doors is disabled at all times where a safety partition screen has been installed. This is to mitigate the hazard of the device preventing emergency egress through the front of the vehicle.