



English Language Requirement – Update (September 2020)

This Notice provides an update on the English Language Requirement (ELR) for London private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers. This Notice supersedes [TPH Notice 02/19](#).

The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on London's PHV industry have been significant and the pandemic has had other impacts which have made complying with the ELR more difficult. Drivers have been unable to take a Secure English Language Test (SELT) during recent months owing to the temporary closure of the testing centres and we recognise that recovering evidence of qualifications has been difficult because many academic institutions have also temporarily closed.

The SELT centres have only recently reopened and English language testing has resumed, albeit with our providers unable to offer the same number of tests as they were prior to lockdown, owing to the need for social distancing.

The pandemic has also had an impact on Transport for London's (TfL) resources. Prior to the pandemic we were exploring alternative ways that drivers could demonstrate their English language skills. These plans were put on hold so we could focus our resources on critical licensing activities and supporting the industry throughout the pandemic.

In July, the Department for Transport (DfT) also announced new statutory standards for taxi and private hire drivers. This includes a requirement for licensing authorities to test English language proficiency for taxi and private hire drivers.

In light of these factors, we have decided to extend the deadline for compliance with the ELR to 30 September 2021, giving drivers a further twelve months to comply.

Therefore, anyone whose application for a London PHV driver's licence (including a renewal) that was received by TfL on or after 14 October 2016 has until 30 September 2021 to provide evidence that they comply with the ELR, either by submitting documentary evidence of a qualification or passing a SELT with one of TfL's appointed providers.

Further details of how an applicant can satisfy the ELR is provided here:

www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/english-language-requirement

No further action is needed by any licensee or applicant who has submitted satisfactory evidence that they comply with the ELR, whether this takes the form of documentary evidence of a qualification or a certificate from one of TfL's appointed SELT providers. TfL will contact these licensees or applicants should we need anything further from them.

If a licensee or applicant has not yet provided evidence, they now have until 30 September 2021 to do so. Anyone applying for a new licence, or seeking to renew their licence, on or after 1 October 2021 will need to satisfy the ELR before a licence is granted.

We are currently considering all of the new [Statutory Standards](#) announced by the DfT and will make further announcements about how TfL, as the licensing authority, will comply with the new standards.

Graham Robinson

**General Manager
Taxi and Private Hire
Transport for London**

16 September 2020

Previous TPH Notices can be viewed [here](#); for additional licensing information, please visit tfl.gov.uk/tpH