



Guidance for private hire operators on Disclosure and Barring Service checks

This guidance is for all individuals associated with a private hire operator's licence, and is about the requirement to provide basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

TfL has changed its approach to ensuring all private hire operators are fit and proper persons to hold a licence, given the important role they play in ensuring the private hire industry is safe for the travelling public.

Since **1 July 2024**, all individuals associated with an existing private hire operator's licence¹ or who are applying for a new or renewed licence are required to provide basic DBS checks.

Background

Following our consultation on implementing the Department for Transport's [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#), we introduced a number of new requirements to ensure new and renewing applicants for operator licences are fit and proper persons and that they remain so throughout the life of the licence.

What are the new requirements and when will they apply?

Unless exempt, all:

- **New applicants** for a London private hire operator's licence must provide a basic DBS check for all individuals who are associated with the licence with their application (this will replace the self-declaration of unspent cautions and convictions)
- **Renewing applicants** for a London private hire operator's licence must provide a basic DBS check for all individuals who are associated with the licence with their application (this replaces the self-declaration of unspent cautions and convictions)
- **All licensed private hire operators** are required to provide a basic DBS check for all individuals associated with the licence on each anniversary of the start date of their licence (See Annual DBS checks section below).

What is a basic DBS check?

DBS checks contain information on any criminal history the applicant may have in the UK. There are three levels of DBS check: basic, standard and enhanced. Details

¹ [The Private Hire Vehicles \(London\) \(Operators' Licences\) Amendment Regulations 2023](#) defines who the individuals associated with a PHV operator's licence are



of the information disclosed by the different levels of DBS check are set out in Annex A.

The [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#) enables criminal convictions to become 'spent', or forgotten, after a rehabilitation period, which is a set length of time from the date of conviction.

A basic check contains details of convictions and conditional cautions considered to be 'unspent' under the terms of the Act.

Who needs to provide a DBS check?

To be licensed as a private hire operator, we need to be satisfied all individuals associated with the operator² are fit and proper persons.

Unless exempt (see below), all individuals associated with a private hire operator's licence must provide a basic DBS check with the application and then on an annual basis.

Changes in the individuals associated with a private hire operator's licence

During the life of a licence, where there is a change in the individuals associated with that licence, those wishing to be added to it will be requested to provide a basic DBS check as part of their application, and then again on the anniversary of the date the licence was granted.

Should the anniversary be within four months of adding the individual to the licence, the DBS check used as part of the application will be acceptable for the purposes of the annual check.

Is anyone exempt?

Any individual who is currently licensed by us as a taxi or private hire driver does not need to provide a basic DBS check, as they will have already provided us with an enhanced DBS check.

Any individual who ceases to be licensed by us as a taxi or PHV driver, must provide a basic DBS check on each anniversary of the start date of the private hire operator's licence and also provide a basic DBS check when the private hire operator's licence is renewed.

How to apply for a DBS check

Our application packs and reminder letters will contain detailed information about how to apply for your DBS check.

All individuals associated with a private hire operator's licence must apply for basic DBS check through our contracted service provider, or it will not be

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accepted. This ensures that the correct identity checks and the correct level of DBS check are carried out and reduces the risk of fraud.

To apply for a basic DBS check online follow these six steps:

1. Go to [our contracted service provider's website](#) and select Register, using the PIN code and secret word included in your application pack or annual DBS check reminder letter
2. Complete the application online with all your details
3. Select the relevant identification documents for verification using the online help tool
4. Present the barcoded sheet (printed from the online system) and your original identification documents (ID) to be verified at the Post Office
5. Pay for the DBS application at the Post Office
6. You will be issued with an E-number three working days following ID verification at the Post Office. The E-number will be your confirmation that you have applied for your DBS check and will also allow both you and us to track the progress of your application via the online portal

To apply online for a basic DBS check the following is needed:

- All addresses for the last five years, including the dates of residence at these addresses
- National Insurance number
- Passport
- Driving licence
- Means of payment

Basic DBS checks obtained through our contracted service provider currently cost £33³. This includes the cost of an in-person ID check at a Post Office.

Most applications for basic DBS checks will be processed within 10 days.

Applications

Whether you are a new or renewing applicant, all individuals associated with a private hire operator's licence must provide a basic DBS check with their application. If any individual fails to provide a DBS check, the application will be treated as incomplete and may be withdrawn.

³ Correct at time of publication



Any DBS certificates submitted to us must have been issued no more than four months prior to the date of application for a licence.

Annual DBS checks (licence condition)

This condition applies to every licensed operator from 1 July 2024. All individuals associated with an operator's licence are required to obtain a basic DBS check every year, within 28 days of the anniversary of the start date of their licence.

You can read the full wording of the licensing condition by visiting:

[Private Hire Vehicle \(London Operator Licences\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023.](#)

An annual DBS check is not required on the final anniversary of the licence start date, i.e. the date the licence expires. At that point the licence will expire and if renewed, a new DBS check will need to be obtained as part of the renewal application.

As an example, a private hire operator with a five-year licence must provide:

- **Application:** Basic DBS check with the application for their private hire operator's licence
- **1st anniversary:** Basic DBS check 12 months from the start date of the licence
- **2nd anniversary:** Basic DBS check 24 months from the start date of the licence
- **3rd anniversary:** Basic DBS check on 36 months from the start date of the licence
- **4th anniversary:** Basic DBS check on 48 months from the start date of the licence
- **5th anniversary:** Current licence expires, a basic DBS check will only be required should the private hire operator licence submit a renewal application
- **Renewal application:** Basic DBS check with the application to renew their private hire operator's licence

Shortly before each anniversary of the start date of your licence, we will contact you to advise you that DBS checks are due for all individuals associated with the private hire operator's licence. Our letter will include detailed information about how to apply for a basic DBS check via our contracted service provider.

Where there is more than one individual who needs to obtain a DBS check, it is the responsibility of the nominated representative of the operator to ensure all individuals associated with the licence apply for their DBS checks and their DBS certificates are sent to us, where requested.

If any individual fails to provide the DBS check, appropriate licensing action may be taken, such as the suspension or revocation of the licence.



What happens next

Once the DBS checks are complete, the individuals associated with the private hire operator's licence will receive a DBS certificate. In addition, our contracted service provider will be informed whether the check has disclosed any convictions or cautions. If there are none, no further action will need to be taken.

Should the DBS check disclose details of unspent convictions and/or cautions for any individual associated with the private hire operator's licence, they will be requested to send the DBS certificate to our contracted service provider within seven days. Our service provider will then provide us with a copy, and we will review the information disclosed and assess whether you remain a fit and proper person. Our contracted service provider will return your DBS certificate to you.

What do we do with the information?

We use the information on the DBS checks to assess the character of an individual associated with an operator's licence and whether they are 'fit and proper'. In determining whether an operator application should be refused or approved based on disclosed convictions, we will consider both the number and nature of convictions for each individual, as well as the overall total number of convictions recorded against the individuals associated with that operator.

In line with DBS requirements, we will destroy any copies of DBS certificates at the end of the licensing decision-making process.

Individuals who do not live in the UK

We recognise that some individuals associated with a private hire operator's licence do not live in the UK. However, they must still comply with the new requirements and provide a basic DBS check.

Any person associated with an operator's licence who is currently living abroad should contact us by emailing tphoperators@tfl.gov.uk and we will provide further guidance.

Individuals who do not live in the UK and spend three or more continuous months outside of the UK will also need to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct (CoGC) from the countries they live in. A CoGC will be required from each individual associated with the operator when the application for an operator licence is made or if an individual becomes associated with the licence once the licence has been granted. Further information is available in the separate guidance about the [CoGC requirements](#).

If you have any questions please contact us by emailing tphoperators@tfl.gov.uk.

Version control

This document will be kept under review and may be altered or amended to reflect any changes in the law or Transport for London policies and guidance.



Version	2
Date	17 July 2024
Summary of amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Replaced reference to the anniversary of a licence being linked to the date of the PHV operator licence was granted, to the start date of the PHV operator licence – Added a link to the additional CoGC guidance available for individuals who do not live in the UK – Removed reference to section b and section c forms, and replaced with email address to contact for further guidance on DBS checks – Changes to reflect that this requirement is now live



Annex A - Disclosure and Barring Service information⁴

Information included	Type of check			
	Basic DBS check	Standard DBS check	Enhanced DBS check	Enhanced DBS (including barred list) check
Unspent convictions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unspent cautions ¹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spent convictions ²	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spent cautions ^{1&2}	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional police information ³	No	No	Yes	Yes
Barred list(s) information ⁴	No	No	No	Yes

1. Does not include fixed penalty notices, penalty notices for disorder or any other police or out of court disposals.
2. Spent convictions and cautions that have become protected under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order) 1975, as amended, are not automatically disclosed on any level of certificate.
3. This is any additional information held by the police, which a chief officer believes to be relevant and should be disclosed.
4. This is information as to whether the individual concerned is included in the children's or adult's barred lists maintained by the DBS.

⁴ A guide to DBS checks, 16 May 2024, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6229db7e8fa8f526d45ab5a6/Quick_Guide_to_DB_S_checks.pdf