

One Call Taxis Ltd Driver Handbook

Welcome to One Call Taxis Ltd!

This handbook provides essential information and guidelines for all self-employed drivers working with One Call Taxis Ltd. It covers key policies and procedures designed to ensure a high standard of service, driver safety, and customer satisfaction. Please read this handbook carefully and familiarise yourself with its contents.

1. Complaints Policy

One Call Taxis Ltd is committed to providing excellent service. We understand that sometimes issues may arise, and we value all feedback, positive or negative, as an opportunity to improve. This policy outlines our procedure for handling customer complaints.

1.1 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, verbally or in writing, about the service provided by One Call Taxis Ltd or its associated drivers.

1.2 Handling On-the-Spot Complaints (Driver's Role)

If a customer expresses a complaint directly to you during a journey:

- Listen calmly and professionally to the customer's concerns.
- Apologise for any inconvenience caused.
- Do not engage in arguments or aggressive behaviour.
- If the issue can be immediately resolved (e.g., adjusting temperature, changing route if safe and agreed), do so.
- If you cannot resolve the issue immediately, or if the complaint is serious, advise the customer to contact One Call Taxis Ltd office directly using the contact details provided on our website or booking confirmation.
- Make a note of the complaint's details (customer name if provided, time, nature of complaint) and report it to the office as soon as safely possible after the journey concludes.

1.3 Formal Complaint Procedure (for Customers)

Customers wishing to make a formal complaint should:

- Contact One Call Taxis Ltd office by phone or email (details available on our website).
- Provide as much detail as possible, including:
 - Date and time of the incident.

- Pick-up and drop-off locations.
- Driver details (if known, e.g., vehicle registration number, driver name).
- A clear description of the complaint.
- Any supporting evidence (e.g., photos, screenshots).

1.4 Internal Complaint Handling (Office Process)

Upon receiving a formal complaint, One Call Taxis Ltd office will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 2 working days.
- Conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, which may involve reviewing booking data, GPS logs, and speaking with the driver and customer.
- Aim to resolve the complaint fairly and promptly, typically within 10 working days. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed.
- Communicate the outcome of the investigation and any actions taken to the complainant.
- Maintain confidentiality for all parties involved, where possible and appropriate.

1.5 Driver Responsibilities Regarding Investigations

- Cooperate fully and honestly with any internal investigation into a complaint.
- Provide any requested information or explanations promptly.
- Understand that repeated complaints may lead to a review of your association with One Call Taxis Ltd.

2. Vehicle Daily Check List (Self-Employed Drivers)

To ensure safety, compliance, and a professional image, all self-employed drivers must conduct the following checks daily before starting their shift. Any defects must be rectified before commencing work.

Exterior Checks:

- **Tyres:** Check for correct pressure, tread depth (minimum 1.6mm across the central 3/4 of the tread, around the entire circumference), and any cuts, bulges, or damage.
- **Lights:** Check all exterior lights are clean and working (headlights, sidelights, brake lights, indicators, fog lights, reverse lights, number plate lights).
- **Wipers & Washer Fluid:** Check wipers are intact and functioning correctly, and that the washer fluid reservoir is adequately filled.
- **Mirrors:** Check all mirrors are clean, correctly adjusted, and undamaged.
- **Bodywork:** Check for any significant damage, dents, or sharp edges that could pose a risk.
- **Number Plates:** Ensure they are clean, visible, and securely attached.

Under the Bonnet (Quick Check):

- **Engine Oil:** Check level (ensure it's between min/max markers).

- **Coolant:** Check level (ensure it's between min/max markers).
- **Brake Fluid:** Check level (ensure it's between min/max markers).

Interior Checks:

- **Brakes:** Test foot and handbrake for effectiveness.
- **Steering:** Check for any excessive play or unusual noises.
- **Horn:** Ensure it is working.
- **Seatbelts:** Check all seatbelts are operational and undamaged.
- **Warning Lights:** Ensure no warning lights are illuminated on the dashboard (e.g., engine, oil, brake, ABS).
- **Cleanliness:** Ensure the interior of the vehicle is clean, tidy, and free from debris.
- **First Aid Kit & Fire Extinguisher:** Check they are present, in date (if applicable), and easily accessible. (Recommended, not always mandatory depending on licensing body).

Documentation:

- **Driving Licence:** Ensure it is valid and accessible.
- **Insurance Documents:** Ensure you have valid private hire insurance.
- **Vehicle Licence:** Ensure these are current and displayed as required.

Action on Defects:

- If any critical safety defect is found (e.g., brake failure, tyre blowout), **do not operate the vehicle**. Arrange for immediate repair.
- For minor defects, rectify them as soon as possible.
- Report any persistent or significant issues to One Call Taxis Ltd office for their awareness, even if you are arranging the repair yourself.

3. Drugs and Alcohol Policy

One Call Taxis Ltd is committed to ensuring the safety of its passengers, drivers, and the public. Operating a vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate termination of your association with One Call Taxis Ltd.

3.1 Prohibited Conduct

- **Alcohol:** No driver shall consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol while working for One Call Taxis Ltd, or within a reasonable period prior to commencing duties (typically 8-12 hours, or as stipulated by law).
- **Illegal Drugs:** The use, possession, distribution, or sale of illegal drugs while working or on company premises/associated locations is strictly prohibited.
- **Prescription/Over-the-Counter Medication:** Drivers must exercise extreme caution when taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications that may impair their ability to drive safely. It is the driver's responsibility to consult with a medical professional

and notify One Call Taxis Ltd if medication may affect driving performance. Failure to do so, resulting in impaired driving, may lead to immediate termination of association.

3.2 Consequences of Violation

Any violation of this Drugs and Alcohol Policy will be treated with utmost seriousness and will result in the immediate termination of the driver's association with One Call Taxis Ltd. Legal action may also be pursued where applicable.

4. Code of Conduct

All drivers associated with One Call Taxis Ltd are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, ensuring passenger safety, comfort, and satisfaction.

4.1 General Conduct

- **Professionalism:** Always maintain a professional and courteous demeanour with passengers, other road users, and One Call Taxis Ltd staff.
- **Appearance:** Maintain a clean and tidy personal appearance, and ensure your vehicle is clean both inside and out.
- **Respect:** Treat all passengers with respect, regardless of their background, beliefs, or destination.
- **Confidentiality:** Respect customer privacy and confidentiality at all times. Do not share personal information about passengers or their journeys.

4.2 Safe Driving Practices

- **Prioritise Safety:** Always prioritise the safety of yourself, your passengers, pedestrians, and other road users.
- **Adhere to Laws:** Strictly adhere to all UK traffic laws, speed limits, and road regulations at all times.
- **Defensive Driving:** Drive defensively, anticipating potential hazards and reacting appropriately. Maintain a safe following distance from other vehicles.
- **Fatigue Management:** Ensure you are adequately rested before commencing duties. Do not drive if you are feeling drowsy or fatigued.
- **Weather Conditions:** Adjust your driving style and speed according to prevailing weather conditions (rain, fog, ice, etc.) to maintain control and safety.
- **Passenger Comfort:** Drive smoothly and avoid sudden braking, acceleration, or sharp turns, which can cause discomfort to passengers.

4.3 Mobile Phone Use Policy

The safe operation of a vehicle requires a driver's full attention. Distracted driving is a serious safety hazard.

- **No Touching While Driving:** Drivers must not touch, hold, or use a mobile phone (or any handheld device) for any purpose while the vehicle is moving or

stationary in traffic. This includes, but is not limited to, making or receiving calls, texting, checking messages, browsing, or using navigation apps.

- **Safe Use of Navigation:** If using a mobile device for navigation, it must be securely mounted in a cradle that does not obstruct your view, and the route must be set **before** commencing the journey or only adjusted when the vehicle is safely parked with the engine off.
- **Emergency Calls:** In a genuine emergency, if it is absolutely necessary to use a phone, the vehicle must be brought to a complete and safe stop before making or receiving a call.
- **Hands-Free:** If you must take a call, it must be through a completely hands-free system (e.g., Bluetooth). However, even hands-free conversations can be distracting, and drivers should minimise their use during a journey.

4.4 Consequences of Violation

Breaches of this Code of Conduct, particularly the Safe Driving Practices and Mobile Phone Use Policy, will be taken very seriously and may lead to disciplinary action, including a review of your association with One Call Taxis Ltd and potential termination of your contract.

5. Safeguarding Children and Young People & Sexual Exploitation

(L & R 30th March 2015)

As members of the general community, drivers of hackney carriages and private hire cars are in a good position to help to keep children and young people safe. Drivers work with all sorts of members of the public, and will often see things that seem strange or troubling, but they do not necessarily know what to do about it. The following advice is given in order to help licensed drivers to help us protect the children and young people in our area.

Child protection is the business of all members of every community. If a driver sees anything that seems troubling or wrong, he or she has a responsibility to report this to the relevant authorities, so that the child might be helped. People are often unwilling to get involved, but without the help of all members of the public, social workers and the police have no way of knowing which children are at risk.

The things that could indicate that a child or young person is at risk or being mistreated could include the following:

Someone punching or kicking a child or young person, or hitting them in a way that goes further than reasonable chastisement or normal physical discipline

A child or young person with physical injuries

- Someone screaming or shouting at a child or young person in a way that seems more than just a person telling a child off. This can involve calling the child nasty names and speaking in a way that would be very distressing to the child or young person, and would be likely to make them feel worthless and unloved
- A child or young person who looks very poorly dressed, perhaps, for example, a child who is wearing clothes that don't seem warm enough in the cold winter weather
- An adult bullying a child or young person
- A child or young person who seems hungry
- A child or young person who seems scared and cowed
- A child or young person who looks dirty and neglected, or is smelly and unkempt
- A child or young person who seems to have nowhere in particular to go
- A young child in the care of someone who seems to be so drunk or drugged that they are not in a fit state to look after them properly
- A child or young person who seems to be going somewhere they shouldn't, such as places where there are known dangers

If a driver should see anything similar to the above, or anything that gives them a sense of real unease about a child, then they should ring the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, (the MASH) and report their concerns. The number for the MASH is DPA **If, of course, you feel a child or young person is in serious danger of immediate harm, you should call the emergency Police telephone number 999.**

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is another area of child protection where licensed drivers may help to protect our children and young people.

Child sexual exploitation is widespread across all communities, and presents a very real risk of harm to our children and young people. Children and young people of any class, race, age, religion or culture are equally vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation, and both boys and girls are at risk. Similarly, those who sexually exploit children and young people can be from any class, culture, race, religion or background, and both men and women might be involved in the exploitation of children and young people.

The following is a list of things that might indicate that a child or young person is being sexually exploited:

- Drug or alcohol use
- Physical injuries
- The child or young person has run away from home or care
- Involvement in offending and criminal activities
- Repeated sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy and termination, especially a pattern of this
- School truancy
- Change in physical appearance
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from family
- Receiving gifts from unknown sources
- Having money from unknown sources
- Poor mental or emotional health
- Self harm

- Thoughts of suicide or attempts to commit suicide
- Children or young people who may seem to be getting others involved in situations that are exploitative

If you pick up a child or young person who seems to be involved in these kinds of activity or situations, you can do a lot to help us to help them. It is very useful to Police and Children's Services if you make a note of anything worrying that you see or hear that makes you suspicious that a child or young person may be involved in sexual exploitation. The sort of information that would be very helpful would include things like

- Anything that is said that makes you suspicious
- Any names that are mentioned
- Descriptions of the children, young people and adults involved in the suspicious activity or conversations
- Addresses of pick up and set down. This could be houses and flats, or might be, for example clubs, pubs or fast food or other premises
- Dates and times of when you have seen and heard suspicious things happening or being discussed.

If you have any information that makes you concerned that a child or young person is being sexually exploited, there is a special phone line to use, so **please ring 101 to pass on any concerns regarding possible sexual exploitation of children.**

Alternatively, ring the MASH on DPA.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO NOTICE THINGS THAT COULD BE STOPPED IF REPORTED AND HELP KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE.

6. Lost Property Policy

One Call Taxis Ltd and its drivers are committed to ensuring the safe return of any property accidentally left in a vehicle by a customer.

6.1 Driver Responsibilities

- **Immediate Check:** After each journey, especially when a passenger has exited the vehicle, drivers should visually check the passenger compartment for any items that may have been left behind.
- **Securing Property:** If lost property is found, the driver must secure it safely within the vehicle to prevent loss or damage.
- **Reporting to Office:** Drivers must report any found lost property to the One Call Taxis Ltd office as soon as reasonably possible after the journey concludes, providing a description of the item, the estimated time/location it was found, and the relevant journey details.
- **Returning Property:**
 - **Direct Return to Customer:** If the customer's contact details are readily available (e.g., via the booking app/system, with office approval) and it is safe and practical to do so, drivers should attempt to return the property directly to the customer. Any costs incurred for returning property directly should be agreed with the office.
 - **Handing to Office:** The preferred method for returning lost property is to drop it off at the One Call Taxis Ltd office during opening hours at the earliest opportunity. The office will then manage the return to the customer.
 - **Police Station:** If an item is valuable (e.g., wallet, phone, jewellery) and cannot be immediately returned or delivered to the office, drivers should take it to the nearest police station and obtain a receipt. Drivers must then inform the One Call Taxis Ltd office immediately, providing details of the item and the police station where it was deposited.

6.2 Office Responsibilities

- **Logging:** The office will maintain a log of all reported and received lost property.
- **Customer Liaison:** The office will handle customer enquiries regarding lost property and facilitate its return.
- **Disposal:** Unclaimed lost property will be dealt with in accordance with local licensing regulations, typically after a specified period (e.g., 28 days) by donating to charity or lawful disposal.

7. Important Information

- **Communication:** Keep the office informed of any significant delays, incidents, or issues affecting your ability to fulfil bookings.
- **Change of Address:** It is the driver's responsibility to inform the office immediately of any change of personal address. This includes emailing a new copy of your updated

driver's license and taxi license, clearly stating your driver number, to ensure our records are accurate and compliant.