



## **Carriage of disabled passengers in taxis and PHVs**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the DDA 2005 make it unlawful for taxi and private hire drivers and private hire vehicle operators to discriminate against disabled people.

Specific requirements that affect taxi and private hire services on a day to day basis include:

- all taxis and private hire vehicles must carry a disabled person's assistance dog, allow it to remain with the passenger and to do so without additional charge;
- all private hire vehicle operators must accept bookings by or on behalf of a person who is accompanied by an assistance dog and to do so without additional charge;
- all taxis must carry wheelchair ramps at all times and they must be in working order;
- all taxis must accept a hiring by a wheelchair user if the journey is within the usual compellability rules.

Drivers can only seek exemption from these requirements on medical grounds. Any driver who has a medical condition that will prevent him or her from fulfilling their legal obligations should apply to the PCO using the appropriate form which can be obtained from the driver licensing teams on 0845 602 7000.

Despite these provisions, the PCO is receiving an increasing number of complaints from passengers who have been refused bookings or hirings either because they have an assistance dog or use a wheelchair. Where drivers fail to comply with their legal requirements under the DDA, the PCO will carry out a full investigation which may result in prosecution.

In the last 12 months seven licensed drivers have been prosecuted for DDA offences. Penalties have included fines of up to £300 and disqualification from driving. A further two drivers and one operator are awaiting court hearings.

PCO Notice 01/06 provided advice and guidance to operators and drivers regarding the carriage of assistance dogs in taxis and private hire vehicles, including grounds for exemption. All PCO Notices can be read at [www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpartners/1414.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpartners/1414.aspx)

More information on assisting disabled passengers can be found in the PCO booklet 'Getting in Right' and on the GoSkills/PCO DVD 'This Time Every Time' which has been provided to every licensed driver.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Dowdye', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval shape.

**Mary Dowdye**  
**Head of Standards & Regulations**

**25 July 2007**