

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

LONDON SERVICE PERMITS

Including a copy of the Guidance Document adopted by the Mayor of London

1 INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide information on the London Service Permit system operated by London Buses on behalf of Transport for London.

2 WHAT IS A “LONDON SERVICE PERMIT”?

Transport for London provides a comprehensive network of local bus services within Greater London, normally through a process of inviting tenders to operate services or by way of ‘London Local Service Agreements’ (previously known as Section 3(2) Agreements). These services form the ‘London bus network’.

Local bus services that are not part of the ‘London bus network’ can only be provided in accordance with a London Service Permit. This London Service Permit system is replacing the previous system that involved the granting of London local service licences by the Traffic Commissioner. These licences will continue to their original expiry date whereupon an application must be made for a London Service Permit.

For the purposes of this document a ‘local service’ has the meaning given to it by Section 2 of the Transport Act 1985 and a ‘London local service’ means a local service with one or more stopping places within London.

You must have a permit to operate a London local service that is not part of the London bus network.

Unlicensed express services, which by definition must carry fare-paying passengers for more than 15 miles, and rail replacement services are not deemed to be London local services.

Where a local service operates partly within Greater London and partly outside, a valid permit must be held for the section within London.

A London Service Permit is not required if the service is provided free of charge to all passengers and does not entail any pre-paid arrangement.

3 DURATION

A London Service Permit can be valid for a period of up to five years. A longer period is not permitted under the Greater London Authority Act. At the end of the period a new permit must be applied for three months prior to expiry if the service is to continue.

4 REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for a successful application take account of standards set by national legislation regarding bus operation, the statutory duties and powers of Transport for London and the Transport Strategy of the Mayor of London. Key requirements are set out in the following sections.

4.1 Licences

Applicants must be in possession of a valid PSV operators' licence or, where appropriate, a community bus permit granted under Section 22 of the Transport Act 1985, or be able to demonstrate a capability to obtain a licence or permit before commencing operation of the service.

An exception is where a local education authority is authorised to provide a service falling within Section 46(1) of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 (no requirement for a PSV operators' licence where a school bus is being used to provide a service).

4.2 Environmental

All vehicles will be expected to comply with statutory requirements regarding exhaust emissions. Over time these requirements are leading to a progressive reduction in exhaust emissions from new vehicles.

In addition, Transport for London wishes to see a parallel reduction in exhaust emissions from vehicles already in existence, particularly in central London. Progressively raising minimum standards for existing vehicles and encouraging operators to develop strategies for reducing emissions will achieve this.

From 7 July 2008, all vehicles operating on services provided under London service permits are expected to be registered as Euro 3 or higher standard, or be a Euro 2 vehicle which has a valid Reduced Pollution Certificate (RPC) and a valid Low Emission Certificate (LEC).

Applications for services (in particular services that enter central London) may be expected to include a strategy designed to reduce emissions during the life of the permit. Implementation of this strategy may be attached as a condition of granting the permit. Such strategies could include improvements to vehicles, use of alternative fuels as well as training drivers in techniques that reduce emissions. Grants to fund technological solutions may be available from the Energy Saving Trust's CleanUp campaign.

4.3 Access & Mobility

The Mayor's Transport Strategy includes an Accessibility Action Plan with timetabled proposals to comprehensively improve the accessibility of transport in London. The plan includes improvement in vehicle design and staff training.

All vehicles must comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which requires that new vehicles should be fully accessible and that existing vehicles should comply by 2016.

Transport for London would wish to see applications where existing vehicles, whilst not necessarily fully accessible, include features to aid disabled and mobility impaired passengers.

Transport for London would also expect that all staff involved with the service should receive mandatory disability equality training.

4.4 Health & Safety

First-time applicants must submit a summary of their Health and Safety arrangements and may be required to co-operate with follow up visits and to embrace a Health and Safety policy, engineering standards and maintenance, driver training, risk assessment and incident records.

4.5 Stopping places, terminals and route

Transport for London must ensure that granting an application will not prejudice safety or cause delay or inconvenience to other road users, pedestrians and cyclists. Applicants will be expected to operate services in a manner that does not prejudice this requirement. Consideration will be given to the proposed stopping places, terminals and route with respect to:

- Their physical suitability.
- Safety both for users of the proposed service and the safety of other road users who might be affected either directly or indirectly.
- Their compliance with existing traffic regulation Orders.
- Any Transport for London and/or local council proposals to amend the highway layout or traffic regulation Orders.

- Existing levels of usage and congestion and the impact of the proposal thereon; and
- Any other issues relating to the safety and capacity of the public highway (i.e. including footways).

Details of stopping places, terminals and the route to be followed will be required in the application and may be subject to conditions if the permit is granted. Procedures must be in place for the navigation of vehicles not operating along fixed routes.

4.6 Information

Better information is seen as an important component of a strategy to improve public transport and in particular information should be integrated with Transport for London information where appropriate.

Transport for London may take responsibility for providing passenger information depending on the nature of the service, the nature of the information available and the use of new technologies in providing information. Such information could include roadside publicity, local travel guides, travel information services and use of the Internet.

It is prepared to be flexible where there is a clear case for the operator assuming responsibility.

4.7 Service Levels

Information on frequency and times of operation will be required as part of the application. For certain kinds of service where demand fluctuates in an unpredictable way, for example sightseeing tours, the facility will exist to grant an application based on minimum and maximum frequencies.

4.8 Route Numbers

Where route numbers are allocated to proposed services, applicants must take account of existing route numbers to avoid situations of two or more services with duplicate route numbers operating within the same locality. Transport for London reserves the right to allocate an appropriate route number.

5 THE PROCESS

5.1 How to apply

Applications should be made to The Licensing Manager of London Buses, whose contact details are given at the end of this document, using a standard form to be available on request.

5.2 When to apply

An application for a permit should, if at all possible, be submitted at least three months before the proposed start date of the service. In certain cases, e.g. where there is a clear need for a service to begin operation as quickly as possible, a shorter period of notice may be allowed at the discretion of Transport for London.

Where the application includes operation along roads not currently served by buses a longer period of notice would be desirable.

In the case of services which cross the London boundary, the services must be registered with the appropriate Traffic Area. Transport for London will liaise with the neighbouring Traffic Areas to ensure proposed start dates meet the requirements of all parties as far as possible.

5.3 Who will make the decision?

The decision as whether to grant or refuse the application and what conditions might be imposed will be taken by London Bus Services Ltd under powers delegated by Transport for London.

As part of the decision making process London Buses will consult with the following bodies before reaching the decision:

- The London authorities (London Boroughs and City of London) affected.
- The Commissioner or Commissioners of Police affected.
- London TravelWatch.
- Traffic Commissioners and neighbouring authorities affected by the proposal.
- Any other person or body considered relevant.

5.4 Attachment of conditions

When granting or renewing the permit, conditions may be attached. These could include:

- The size and dimensions of the vehicles used.
- Provision of adequate route identification.
- That passengers are only taken up or set down at specified points.
- No stopping or standing other than at specified points which may be subject to maximum time limits.
- That steps are taken to secure the safety and convenience of the public, including those who have mobility difficulties.
- A code of practice relating to particular aspects of the operation of the service.
- Measures to reduce vehicle emissions.
- Measures to improve access and mobility.

5.5 Publication

Where Transport for London grants a London Service Permit it will send notice of the grant, including particulars of the services authorised, to the London authorities affected, the Police and the London TravelWatch. The appropriate Traffic Area will also be notified in cases of cross-boundary services.

Where Transport for London refuses to grant a London Service Permit, it will issue a notice to the applicant stating the reasons for the decision.

Details of applications, permits granted and refused may be published every two weeks. This information may be available in paper form and posted on the Internet.

5.6 Fees

A non-refundable one-off fee of £150 including VAT will be charged to process the application. There will be no further charges within the duration of the permit.

6 DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PERMIT

6.1 Making changes

Operators may propose changes to services during the life of a permit. Such proposals will normally be dealt in a similar manner to a new application. An exception may be made if the change is relatively minor or uncontentious.

Transport for London does have the right, at any time, to vary a London Service Permit by altering or removing a condition attached to the permit or by attaching a new condition. Such action might be prompted by changed circumstances such as changes in national legislation, recognition that the condition was no longer appropriate or in the interests of the safety and convenience of the public.

6.2 Monitoring

Monitoring of services may be conducted on a regular or ad-hoc basis in response to particular issues or concerns.

6.3 Communication with the public

Operators will be required to have mechanisms by which the public can make comments, suggestions and complaints relating to the service direct to the operator. Transport for London will refer any comments or complaints it receives on permit services to the operator but will expect them to be properly investigated and dealt with in a timely manner.

6.4 Revocation

A permit may be revoked or suspended on the grounds that there has been a contravention of any condition attached to it.

In justifying revocation, Transport for London will need to be satisfied in regard to:

- The frequency of the breach of conditions, or
- The breach having been committed intentionally, or
- The level of risk to the public involved.

Should a permit be revoked notice will be sent to the London authorities affected, the Commissioner of Police, London TravelWatch, the appropriate Traffic Commissioner and any other relevant person or body.

6.5 Expiry of permit

When a permit is due to expire an application for a new permit must be made prior to that expiry date in order for the service to be able to continue.

7 RIGHT OF APPEAL

Before considering refusal to grant a London Service Permit, Transport for London will negotiate with the operator and affected authorities to try and resolve any conflicting issues. In the event of Transport for London refusing to grant a London Service Permit, it will inform the applicant of the reasons for its decision

Similarly, if it attaches any condition to a permit or alters or removes any condition or revokes or suspends a permit, it will inform the permit holder of its reasons for doing so.

If the applicant or permit holder is dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal may be made to the Lord Chancellor's Department under Section 267 of the Transport Act 2000.

8 LEGISLATION

The primary legislation covering the London Service Permit system is contained in sections 185 to 195 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

9 HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

The first point of contact for London Service Permit issues at London Buses is:

The Licensing Manager
TfL Surface Transport Communications
Consultation and Engagement Centre
11th Floor, Zone G2
Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London
SE1 8NJ

Telephone: 020 3054 0163
Fax: 020 3054 2002

Contact can also be made via e-mail at lsp@tfl-buses.co.uk

If applicants are unclear about any aspect of the requirements they are advised to contact The Licensing Manager in advance of submitting an application.