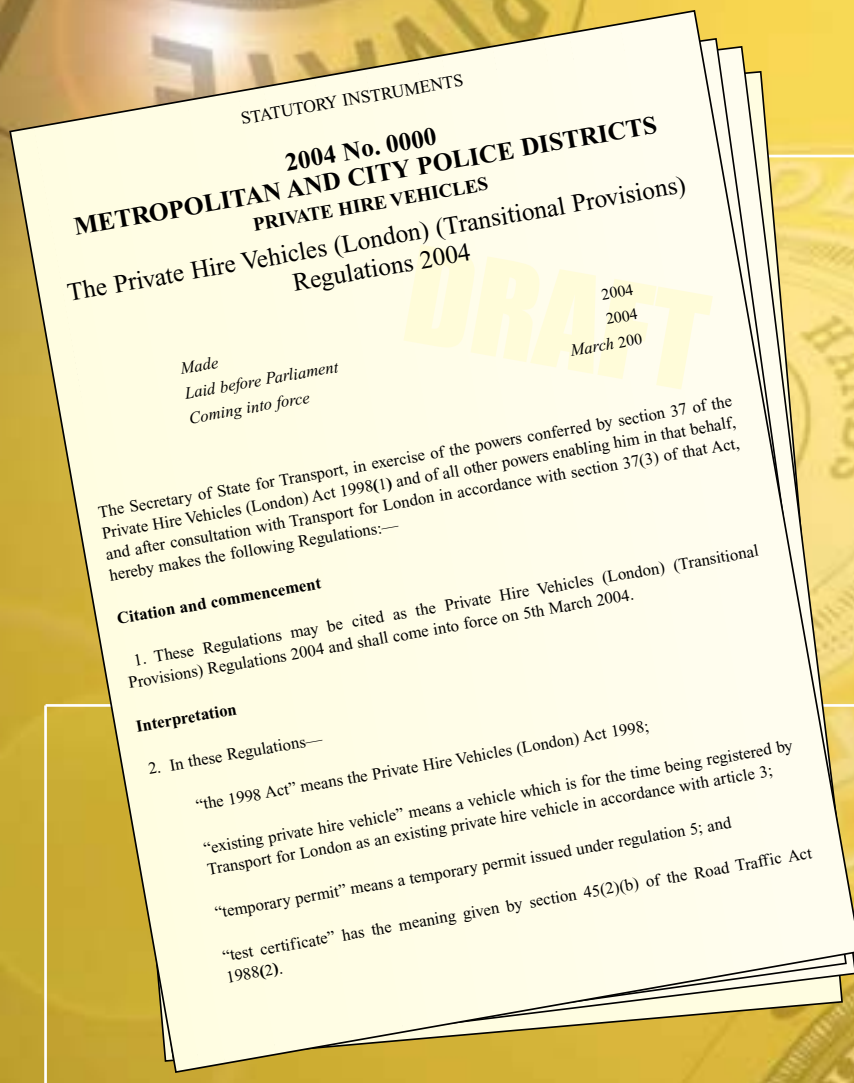


PRIVATE HIRE NEWS

The news magazine of the Graded Private Hire Companies
Incorporating the London and Southern Private Hire Car Associations



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BUS LANES



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Driver I.D. badges
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Safer travel at night
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MORE POWER
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FUEL CONSUMPTION IN MPG (l/100 km) FOR S80 D5 S (MANUAL): URBAN 24.8 (11.4), EXTRA URBAN 41.5 (6.6), COMBINED 33.2 (8.5). CO₂ EMISSIONS IS 226 G/KM. Car featured is S80 D5 S with metallic paint (£500), headlamp wash wipers (£100) and alloy wheels (£300) at £23,820 on the road.

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PRIVATE HIRE NEWS

WINTER 2004
ISSUE 26



**The news magazine of the Graded Private Hire Companies
Incorporating the London and Southern Private Hire Car Associations**

Welcome to *Edition 26 of Private Hire News* and yes we've done it. After a year long campaign to bring some sanity into the driver regulation process in London, The LPHCA's long campaign has finally brought about a change in driver regulations.

Way back in December 2002 I presented the likely scenario of massive driver shortages in London to The GLA Transport Scrutiny Committee at City Hall. In that presentation which was archived as a webcast, I said that if driver requirements were unrealistic and too onerous there would be a serious shortage of drivers.

This had been supported by our consultation responses that pleaded for the 'light touch' for an industry that had become successful as a direct result of the lack of constraints on legitimate operators.

In February this year I wrote the first of a series of letters to Ed Thompson TfL's Director of Taxis and Private Hire (which were published with replies in our last edition) pleading for a re-think on driver regulations.

Whilst we were unsuccessful on the transitional arrangements but successful in other areas, I did secure a commitment from PCO Private Hire and Taxi Director Ed Thompson, that TfL would review the position, once things were underway.

Knowing there would be problems because of the inflexibility and timescales of the transitional regulations, The LPHCA conducted its own research into the effect of the regulations with our Graded Company members. The research conclusively proved that a driver shortage crisis was happening and the information was fed back to TfL and The Department for Transport.

The PCO commissioned its own research, which backed up what we had been saying from the beginning – the new Driver Regulations were too onerous for The Private Hire Industry in London and there was a serious problem recruiting drivers.

Once this second piece of evidence was to hand, we contacted The Mayor's advisors and The Department for Transport to warn of the potential catastrophe that was looming.

We hastily convened a meeting of The Private Hire Board. The LPHCA then met with Under Secretary of State for Transport Tony McNulty MP, who has responsibility for Taxis and Private Hire nationally and is also Minister for London.

The Minister was very positive and helpful about the problem and this was what we needed as he would ultimately be the person to sanction any changes in regulations.

Lawyers then put together potential regulation changes and Ken Livingstone formally wrote to Tony McNulty to request a change to the transitional arrangements for Private Hire Drivers in London.

With a supportive and understanding Minister and the personal request from the London Mayor, we were now very close to securing the much-needed changes.

After a few agonising weeks we finally got the news that we wanted, Alistair Darling Secretary of State for Transport had signed the regulations off and they would happen a week before Christmas. This was not ideal but better than we could have hoped for during the nightmare which started on June 1st when the new rules came in.

Details of how the new regulations will work and how we've changed driver recruitment from a 4 to 6 month process into a two to three week process appear elsewhere in this edition of *Private Hire News*.

A cautionary note - these arrangements only last until March 2006. That means there is a lot of work to be done by The LPHCA and The PCO to ensure that legitimate drivers can enter the industry in days, rather than weeks and months when these transitional arrangements end.

I would like to thank Mayor Ken Livingstone and Transport Minister Tony McNulty for making this happen. I would also like to acknowledge that significant help was given by The Private Hire Board, The PCO, Mayors advisors, Department of Transport Officials, The GLA Transport Scrutiny Committee and our members who supported our campaign for changes.

We still have a significant amount of work to do and a number of other campaigns running and starting up. We are able to do this because of our Graded Membership, however we need to grow and become stronger to fulfil all that is being asked of us so if you are not Graded or Registered yet, please consider joining and playing your own part in your future destiny.

Steve Wright

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