



MEETING THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PASSENGERS

Taxis are an invaluable means of door-to-door transport for many people. For a large and growing number of elderly and disabled people, they are quite literally a lifeline. Often taxis provide the only means of accessible local transport, or the only accessible link to long distance transport, for example, by rail or air. In fact, they are the most flexible form of public transport there is.

Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences will not be issued (other than by way of renewal) to vehicles being presented to be licensed to carry 5 or more passengers unless such vehicles are wheelchair accessible

It is not a necessity for **Private Hire Vehicles** to be wheelchair accessible – this is up to the individual Operator.

Boston Borough Council's recommendations with regard to wheelchair accessible vehicles are:-

- a) That it can accommodate a disabled passenger whilst seated in his/her wheelchair (there must be adequate headroom for the passenger).
- b) That the rear/side door used for wheelchair access must be capable of opening as wide as the aperture. The doorway should provide a minimum of 117cm (approx 46") high by 68cm (approx 27") wide of unobstructed space.
- c) There should be sufficient space within the vehicle for the wheelchair to turn. The area required for the wheelchair should be at least 70cm (approx 27") x 120cm (approx 47") with minimum headroom over the area of 131cm (approx 52").
- d) Means of securing for both the wheelchair and its occupant must be provided.
- e) Additional hand-holds and a step should be provided.
- f) A ramp, or ramps, must be carried with the vehicle and a means to secure the ramp/ramps safely away be provided. A lift for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant may be fitted in place of the aforementioned ramp/ramps. Any such lift must be capable of being secured in a suitable satisfactory position when the vehicle is in motion.

THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 will require all newly licensed hackney carriage vehicles to be disabled/wheelchair accessible as from a set date. A date will also be set by which **all** hackney carriage vehicles must be accessible. The required dates have yet to be set by the Government. A technical specification with regard to the dimensions and standards required of a disabled/wheelchair accessible vehicle will also be introduced by the Department of Transport under the terms of the Act, at some time in the future.