

Appendix 4b

2.4 Maximum Age of Vehicles

2.4.1 The Department of Transport Best Practice Guidance reminds licensing authorities that it is perfectly possible for an older vehicle to be in good condition and the setting of an age limit beyond which they will not licence vehicles may be arbitrary and disproportionate. The licensing authority has regard to the objectives set out in paragraph 1.2 above and considers that a policy on the age of vehicles can assist in their promotion. Further see paragraph 2.5 below with regard to a greater frequency of testing for older vehicles.

2.4.2 Local licensing authorities are also advised to consider how far their vehicle licensing policies can and should support any local environmental initiatives by, perhaps, setting vehicle emissions standards or promoting cleaner fuels.

2.4.3 A further government report suggests that, by adopting targeted air quality policies for road transport, significant reductions can be achieved for noxious pollutants in the atmosphere. It highlights the impact European wide emission limits are having on improving air quality. In private cars these standards are introduced for new vehicles as follows:

Euro 1 Technology – became mandatory for new cars from 1993 (light goods vehicles 1994)

Euro II Technology – became mandatory for new cars from 1997 (light goods vehicles from 1998)

Euro III Technology - became mandatory for new cars from 2001 (light goods vehicles from 2002)

Euro IV Technology - became mandatory for new vehicles in 2006

Air quality improvements are clearly hampered through the length of time it takes for vehicles to be retired. As an example, even with a maximum vehicle lifetime of 15 years, vehicles will only begin to meet the minimum Euro I standard from this year.

2.4.4 Consideration needs to be given as to whether, in the interests of the environment, tougher emissions standards should be introduced for all licensed vehicles and, in particular, whether it would be appropriate to shorten the period of time from when new standards are introduced to when full fleet compliance with those standards is achieved. Any introduction of emissions standards would, however, need to be phased, to ensure that operating profits were maintained. This would mean, not only following the adoption dates for Euro standards, but also introducing strict retirement dates for vehicles that fail to meet the latest standards. It is proposed that the pit test be extended to include testing the vehicle's emissions.

2.4.5 It is proposed that any application for the grant or renewal of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence, where the vehicle in question is more than 15 years old (it is intended to reduce this age limit by one year annually until a maximum age of 10 years is reached in 2013*), shall not be granted subject to the vehicle satisfying an exceptional quality policy (see paragraph 2.4.6) which will be developed to exempt from the age policy certain vehicles over 10 years. This provision will not apply to non-motorised vehicles.

*This means that vehicles 15 years old as of 2008 will be required to meet the minimum Euro I technology. By 2013, vehicles will have to meet the minimum Euro III standard.

2.4.6 The exceptional quality policy (see appendix) details the standards to be reached by a vehicle if it is to continue to be licensed. In addition to meeting emissions standards, vehicles are required to meet minimum standards with regard to the condition of both the interior and exterior of the vehicle.

Cars manufactured up to and including 1996 are required to meet emissions limits as set by the Euro I technology. New cars from 1997 up to and including 2000 are required to meet emissions limits as set by Euro II technology. New cars from 2001 up to and including 2005 are required to meet emission limits as set by Euro III. New cars from 2006 are required to meet Euro IV technology up to the introduction of Euro V technology.