

Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers: Guidance on registering with the DBS Update Service

Introduction

From 26 February 2024, all new and renewing taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers will be required to register with, and maintain a subscription to, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update Service. A licence will not be granted without confirmation that the subscription is in place.

Once drivers are registered with the Update Service, we will undertake six-monthly checks with the DBS to see if their DBS record has changed.

This guidance explains what the new requirements are and is designed to help applicants and licensees to comply with the new requirements.

All fees were correct at the time of publication¹.

Background

As the licensing authority for London's taxi and PHV services, Transport for London (TfL) must consider a full a range of information that is available to us to ensure a licensee remains suitable to hold a licence.

To help assess the fitness and propriety of taxi and PHV drivers, we require all new and renewing applicants for a taxi or PHV driver's licence to provide an enhanced DBS check, that includes checks of the barred lists.

In addition to this level of DBS check, the [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#) recommend that all licensed taxi and PHV drivers should be required to evidence continuous registration with the [DBS Update Service](#) to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months.

Following our consultation on implementing the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, all taxi and PHV drivers licensed or re-licensed on or after 26 February 2024 must maintain continuous registration with the DBS Update Service.

The DBS Update Service enables anyone who applies for an enhanced criminal record check to then pay an annual subscription which will allow them to keep their criminal record certificate up-to-date and employers to carry out a status check on the certificate. Once you have subscribed to the Update Service, you will only be required to provide a new criminal record check if the DBS tells us

¹ See [Disclosure and Barring Service \(www.gov.uk\)](#) for the current DBS fees

something has changed. So unless something has changed, this will save you both time and money, as when you apply to renew your licence you will not have to apply and pay for a new enhanced DBS check.

The new requirements

Taxi drivers

A new prescribed licence condition will require any taxi driver granted a licence (new or renewal) on or after **26 February 2024** to maintain continuous registration with the DBS Update Service. The condition means that you must maintain continuous registration throughout the life of the licence.

Failure to comply with the licence condition and maintain continuous registration with the Update Service may result in licensing action.

In anticipation of the new requirement, any existing driver applying to renew their licence should register with the Update Service when making their renewal application.

Similarly, new taxi drivers applying for their first licence, having completed the Knowledge of London, which will be granted on or after **26 February 2024** should register with the Update Service when making their application.

From **26 February 2024**, we will check every application for evidence of registration with the Update Service before we grant a licence and unless the driver is ineligible to register, we will **not** grant a licence to anyone who has not registered with the Update Service.

As it is likely to be several years before they become licensed, these requirements will **not** apply to prospective taxi drivers applying to start the Knowledge of London. When applicants complete the Knowledge and apply for their first licence, these requirements will then apply.

PHV drivers

From **26 February 2024**, all new and renewed PHV driver licences will be granted with a condition that the licensee maintains continuous registration with the DBS Update Service. The condition means that you must maintain continuous registration throughout the life of the licence.

Failure to comply with the licence condition and maintain continuous registration with the Update Service may result in licensing action.

In anticipation of the new requirement, any existing driver applying to renew their licence and all new applicants applying for their first licence should register with the Update Service when making their application.

From **26 February 2024**, we will check every application for evidence of registration with the Update Service before we grant a licence and unless the

driver has been informed by the DBS that they are ineligible to register, we will **not** issue a licence to anyone who has not registered with the Update Service.

How to register for the Update Service

You can register for and subscribe to the Update Service [here](#).

There are limited application windows when you can register with the Update Service (see below) and it is extremely important that you do not miss the opportunity to register.

The two opportunities to register with the Update Service are:

- When you are applying for your enhanced DBS check, and
- When you have received your enhanced DBS certificate

We recommend that you register at the earliest opportunity i.e. as soon as you apply for your next enhanced DBS check.

The table below sets out what information is needed to register and the timescales for registering.

| Opportunities to register | Information needed | Timescales |
|--|---|--|
| When you are applying for your enhanced DBS check | <p>You can register when you are in the process of getting your enhanced DBS check.</p> <p>You will need your application reference number, this is the 'form ref' number located at the top right-hand side of your application form.</p> <p>You can use the DBS tracking service to check the progress of your DBS check.</p> | <p>The DBS must receive your application to register with the DBS Update Service within <u>28 days</u> of you applying for your enhanced DBS check.</p> |
| When you have received your enhanced DBS certificate | <p>If you have already received your enhanced DBS certificate you can register with your certificate number.</p> <p>Your certificate number is located at the top right-hand side of your DBS certificate and referred to as 'Certificate Number'.</p> | <p>To register using your certificate number, your enhanced DBS certificate must have been issued within the last <u>30 days</u>.</p> |

Subscription to the Update Service currently costs £13 per year and you can pay by debit or credit card.

If you have already applied for and obtained your DBS check as part of a new or renewal application and have missed the window to register with the Update Service, you will need to apply for a further DBS check and then register with the Update Service before we can issue a licence. You will need to provide us with your new DBS application reference number to evidence that you have applied for the DBS check.

If you need help when registering with the Update Service, please contact DBS customer services by emailing customerservices@dbs.gov.uk or calling 0300 0200 190.

Drivers who have been informed by the DBS that they are unable to register with the Update Service

In rare circumstances, the DBS is unable to automatically issue a DBS certificate and will instead issue a certificate manually. Unfortunately, where a manual certificate has been issued, the individual is unable to subscribe to the Update Service. If this is the case, you will be informed when you try to register with the Update Service.

More information on manual DBS certificates can be found on the DBS [website](#).

If you are unable to register with the Update Service we will not be able to undertake six-monthly status checks via the Update Service tracker. You will therefore be required to obtain a new enhanced DBS check every six months.

If this applies to you, we will write to you when the check is due. We will also ask you to provide your DBS application reference number to evidence that you have applied for the DBS check.

All new enhanced checks must be obtained through our contracted service provider. Information on how to apply will be provided when we write to you.

If the enhanced DBS check discloses any information, our contracted service provider will ask you to send them the certificate. Our contracted service provider will then take a copy, pass the copy to TfL and return the original certificate to you.

On receipt of the new certificate, we will assess the information disclosed in line with our licensing policy.

If you fail to send your certificate to our contracted service provider when requested to do so, we may have to consider taking licensing action.

If you are required to provide a new DBS check every six months, you are entitled to a refund from the DBS of their fee, which is currently £38. The refund is

available directly from the DBS, and when issuing the new DBS certificate, the DBS will advise you how to apply for the refund.

Maintaining continuous subscription to the Update Service

A subscription to the Update Service lasts for one year and can be renewed automatically by choosing automatic renewal when you first register.

We recommend that you choose to renew automatically. This avoids the risk that your subscription lapses.

Alternatively, you can renew your subscription through the Update Service, up to 30 days before your current subscription ends, by signing into your account - but you cannot renew on the last day of your subscription.

Shortly before the annual subscription fee is due, the DBS will email you with a reminder. It is important that you do not ignore this reminder.

If you do not renew your subscription before it ends, you'll need to apply for a new enhanced DBS check and register for the Update Service again. If the DBS check discloses any information, you will also have to provide us with a copy of your new DBS certificate.

It is very important to note that if you choose to renew automatically and your debit or credit card details change or your card expires, you will need to sign in to your account to update your card details. Failure to do so will result in your subscription lapsing, and you will have to apply for a new enhanced DBS check and re-register for the Update Service.

Details of how to obtain a new enhanced DBS check can be found on our [website](#). All DBS checks must be obtained through our contracted service provider.

Failure to maintain continuous subscription

All licensed drivers must maintain their subscription to the Update Service. This is to ensure that drivers' criminal record certificates are up-to-date and to reduce the number of DBS checks they have to apply for.

If a licensed driver fails to comply with the licence condition to maintain continuous registration with the Update Service they will have to apply and pay for additional DBS checks, it may delay their renewal application, and ultimately it may result in suspension or revocation of their licence.

In the first instance we will ask any driver who has failed to maintain continuous registration to apply for a new enhanced DBS check and then to re-register for the Update Service.

If evidence of re-registration is not provided in a timely manner, we will consider licensing action.

Failure to comply with the licence condition may also be taken into consideration when considering the ongoing fitness of the driver to remain licensed.

Changes to personal information or contact details

You can change your email, mobile phone number or correspondence address at any time by logging into your DBS account.

You can also amend your payment details, however this can only be done within 30 days of the renewal date of your subscription, and if you have selected to automatically renew.

If you change your current address, your DBS certificate will still be valid. Your address is just one piece of information used when searching the Police National Computer for conviction information. If you are convicted of an offence when subscribed, the DBS will link the offence to you and cause the status of your DBS certificate to change.

You can amend your address details in your account. This does not update your DBS certificate which would still be at your old address.

If you change your name you will need to apply for a new DBS check to replace existing, linked certificates. Once your new applications are linked to your Update Service account you can remove your old certificates.

If the names declared on a certificate attached to a subscription change or are incorrect, the DBS reserves the right to cancel the incorrect DBS certificates attached to that subscription.

Routine status checks with the DBS

Once drivers have registered with the Update Service, we will then routinely check with the DBS for new information every six months starting from the date their next licence is issued. This is known as a status check.

We will commence six-monthly status checks on **24 August 2024**. From this date we will undertake a status check **every six months** after each licence that was issued with the condition that the driver maintains continuous registration with the DBS Update Service.

In the event that the six-monthly status check discloses a change in the information recorded against a driver DBS, we will write to them advising that they must apply for a new enhanced DBS check and provide evidence that they have registered for the Update Service within the timeframe specified. The driver will need to provide us with their new DBS application reference number or the new DBS certificate number to evidence that they have applied for the DBS check.

Details of how to obtain a new enhanced DBS check can be found on our website (see [Apply for a taxi driver licence](#) or [Apply for a PHV driver licence](#)). All DBS checks must be obtained through our contracted service provider.

Once the check has been completed, our contracted service provider will ask the driver to send them the certificate. Our contracted service provider will then take a copy, pass the copy to TfL and return the original certificate to you.

On receipt of the new certificate, we will assess the information disclosed in line with our licensing policy.

If you fail to send your certificate to our contracted service provider when requested to do so, we may have to consider taking licensing action.

Retaining certificates

In line with our existing process, if your next enhanced DBS check discloses any information, our contracted service provider will ask you to send them the certificate. Our contracted service provider will then take a copy and pass this copy to TfL and return the original certificate to you.

On receipt of the copy, we will assess the information disclosed against our licensing policy in place at the time. However, we reserve the right to immediately review all licences in the event that we change any policy. To allow us to do this we will need to retain a copy of any DBS certificate where criminal history is disclosed, so that it can be re-assessed against a new policy.

The certificate will need to be retained for the entire period the person is licensed, or until such time as a new DBS certificate is provided, whichever is earlier.

Drivers who have already registered with the Update Service

If you have already registered with, and subscribe to, the Update Service you will not need to do anything more at this time.

We will undertake a status check when you next apply to renew your licence and then commence six-monthly status checks six months after your next licence starts.

Refusals, revocations and surrendered licences

In the event that your licence application is refused or your licence is revoked (and any appeal has been completed), or if you surrender your licence for any other reason, it will no longer be a requirement for you to maintain a subscription to the Update Service. Unless you need it for any other purpose, you should consider terminating your subscription to the Update Service. However, if you terminate your subscription and then re-apply for a licence at a later date, you will need to provide a new enhanced DBS certificate and re-register with the Update Service.

Next steps

We will monitor compliance with these requirements. We will also keep the requirements under review in the light of compliance and other feedback.

This guidance will be kept under review and may be updated from time to time.

Transport for London
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