



## Safety advice for drivers

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As a taxi or private hire driver, you are likely to be working alone, sometimes late at night when the passengers you pick up are likely to have been drinking.

Follow our advice to help you stay safe.

### Install CCTV

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Installing a CCTV system in your vehicle has been shown to reduce threats to and violence against drivers.

[Find out more about fitting CCTV](#)

### Don't carry too much cash

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- Bank or drop off cash, either at home or with your operator if you are a private hire driver, during your shift so that you carry as little money in your vehicle as possible
- If you can't drop off your cash, keep it hidden from view in a secure box
- Make sure you also keep all of the doors locked when carrying packages or parcels

### What to carry with you

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- A mobile phone
- A notepad and pen to record any incidents
- A spare key, in case an attacker throws your keys away
- A card carrying your name, date of birth, blood group, allergies and a contact number for emergencies
- Don't carry weapons - under Common Law you have the right to use reasonable force to protect yourself but you must not carry weapons or any items that can be used as a weapon as you could be liable to arrest by the police plus there is also the risk that they will be used against you

### Dealing with passengers

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#### All drivers

- Make sure you are not tired - you need to be alert at all times
- Make eye contact with the passenger when they get into your vehicle. This helps you establish a relationship with them and also lets them know that you could identify them afterwards if need be
- Be ready to explain the fare structure to a passenger and have a copy of the fare card so they can see it
- If you are going a long way round (for example, in order to avoid roadworks) explain the route you plan to take. This should help avoid a dispute over the fare
- Communication with the passenger is important. Be polite and pleasant
- Bilking (leaving the cab without paying) is a criminal offence. Report incidents to the police and be prepared to make a statement

### **Private hire drivers/operators**

- Only let passengers sit in the front if you wish and only open windows enough to speak to people without them being able to reach in
- Report any change of destination during a journey to your operator so the new address can be recorded as part of the booking
- Do not pick-up passengers who have not made a booking with your operator - this is illegal and without the booking information it may be impossible to trace the passenger if something happens to you
- Record fully the passenger's name, pick-up address, destination address and telephone number when taking a booking
- Protect the safety of office staff with outer-door security, safety screens, alarms and CCTV. Get more information about safety and security from your local police crime prevention officer

### **What to do**

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#### **If you feel threatened**

- Try to stay calm. Take slow, deep breaths - this may help to lessen your anxiety
- If you can, drive to a brightly-lit, busy place, as these are often covered by CCTV
- As taxis have a purpose-built screen, taxi drivers are likely to be safer staying in their vehicle than getting out

- Do not try to run after a passenger who owes you their fare. Your safety is more important than the money

### **If you are attacked**

Gather as much information about the person as you can (for example their clothes and accent).

- Do not try to fight back - it is likely to make the situation worse for you
- Use your horn and lights to attract attention
- Call 999 for help
- Private hire drivers should contact their operator and taxi drivers contact their radio circuit if they work for one

### **After an incident**

- Write down everything about the incident including a description of the passenger and what they said and did
- If you did not call them at the time, report all violent incidents to the police
- Be prepared to make a witness statement. It may take time, but it may prevent an attack in the future - for you and other drivers
- You may be able to recover the costs of damage to your vehicle through the small claims system

[Find out more about driver safety](#)