

Taxi Assessment Guide (Class A and Class D only)

This guide has been produced to assist the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) examiners with their initial assessment of a motor car to determine its suitability as a Class A or Class D taxi. It focuses on the vehicle's general construction as it affects passenger access, egress and seating capacity. The guide should be read in conjunction with The Taxi Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Taxi Inspection Manual.

It will be applied to a vehicle at the time of its initial taxi licensing assessment. This guide may also provide customers with advanced knowledge of the DVA's taxi inspection criteria.

The Detail

Vehicle length

All taxis must be a minimum of 3.96m in length. There is no maximum vehicle length other than what is quoted in the Construction and Use Regulations.

Tyre loads

Where quoted, record the axle weights and tyre load indices on the Inspection Report (TL3 or TL6), having confirmed that the tyres are suitable for the vehicle weights.

Steering wheel

The steering wheel must be on the right hand side of the vehicle when viewed from a forward facing front seat

Steps

The maximum distance from the ground to the top tread of the lowest step of every passenger entrance or exit on a vehicle must not be more than 435mm. For the tread area (area on a vehicle that is immediately below a closed door), to be regarded as a suitable step/platform, it **must** be capable of supporting and assisting a passenger to safely alight from the vehicle.

Where the original step/platform of the entrance or exit exceeds 435mm from the ground (measured at the highest point on the vehicle where a passenger's foot would have to cross whilst entering/exiting) an additional fixed (including retractable/folding step) step must be provided at each passenger entrance or exit.

A step must not project beyond the body of the vehicle, unless it can be repositioned so as not to extend beyond the body whilst the vehicle is in motion. This requirement does not apply to a vehicle fitted with a step supplied by the vehicle manufacture as original equipment, provided all other step requirements are met. Electrically operated steps must be capable of being controlled from the driver's seat.

NB: A fixed step is acceptable if it extends beyond the body of the vehicle, but is retained within the width of a folded mirror, provided that mirror has been fitted at the time of the vehicle's manufacture.

- Each step must be a minimum of 95mm in width and have the tread area covered in a slip-resistant material.

It is not necessary for the full 95mm step width to project outwards beyond the sill of the vehicle; it is acceptable for not more than 20mm of the step to be 'inset' from the outer edge of the sill, provided the complete step is sufficient to accommodate a person's heel. However, it is important to note that where the step is used to exist from the 3rd row of the vehicle, the full 95mm step width must project outwards beyond the sill.

- Where a vehicle is fitted with a retractable/folding step, the vehicle must have an automatic warning device fitted to it (buzzer or warning lamp) to warn the driver that the step is deployed.
- There must be a band of colour of between 45-50mm across the front edge of each step, and the band of colour must contrast with the remainder of each step
- Each step must be soundly and properly constructed and fitted in such a manner that it is unlikely to injure a passenger or other road user.

Handholds and Handrails

Where a passenger steps into a vehicle other than directly from the ground, a handhold or handrail may be provided, where necessary, to assist passengers to safely access or egress the vehicle. All handholds and handrails must be capable of being easily and firmly gripped. Examiners are advised to pay particular attention to the need for handholds, where the minimum step width only, is provided.

Permanent Top (roof)

All vehicles must be fitted with a permanent top (roof) *i.e.* the roof is not capable of being positioned to completely uncover all seats.

Doors

All vehicles must have at least four doors, two of which must be located on each side of the vehicle. Passenger doors must be capable of being readily opened from the inside and outside of the vehicle by one operation of the latch mechanism, and must be capable of being opened independently from each other.

Luggage

When all passenger seats are occupied, the vehicle must have a luggage capacity of 80 litres; the luggage space should be separate from the passenger's compartment and be broadly equivalent to two small-medium sized 'carry-on' suitcases.

For vehicles that have a 3rd row of passenger seats (MPV/ people carrier) the required luggage space may be achieved by folding the 3rd row of seats, provided there is no obvious risk to the passenger's safety (examiners must continue to include the 3rd row of seats when determining the maximum passenger capacity).

Examiners are advised to use discretion when assessing the luggage space.

N.B. The luggage capacity for most vehicles may be obtained from manufacturers' sales brochures or through internet searches which may be relied upon for assessment purposes.

Where the luggage compartment is used to accommodate the spare wheel (e.g. an LPG tank has been located in the spare wheel well), a volume of 35 litres may be assumed for the spare wheel. Therefore, the luggage compartment must be assessed capable of carrying the 35 litre spare wheel, plus 80 litres of luggage.

Other acceptable methods of achieving the luggage capacity:

- A roof-rack
- An open boot lid that is capable of providing a safe and secure luggage carrying platform (the number plate must be easily read when the boot lid is used for this purpose)
- Where a partition is fitted between the driver and rear passenger compartment, the front passenger seat can be tipped-up to provide the required luggage space (any luggage carried must be capable of being safely secured).

Seating

Seating assessment involves a range of elements that must be considered simultaneously:

1. Cushions
2. Contoured seating
3. Width of seats (including folding seats)
4. Retractable/fold-up armrests
5. Access to the rearmost row of seats (including MPV's)
6. Protrusions in the passenger compartments
7. Leg room
8. Headroom

Examiners are advised to position the seats in compliance with the minimum dimensions recorded at the Annex, prior to assessment, and to note that it is acceptable for the back rest of any seat to be positioned not more than 90 degrees from the horizontal plane.

Cushions

All seats must be properly cushioned and upholstered in cloth, leather or artificial leather. All cushioned seats must provide reasonable comfort for passengers

Contoured seating

The space between two contoured seats may be assessed suitable as a seat when it complies with all of the above requirements, including the requirement for reasonable passenger comfort.

Width of seats (including folding seats)

The width of every allocated passenger seat shall be **at least** 400mm, and

A continuous seat accommodating 3 passengers must have a minimum dimension of 1200mm measured across the front edge of the seat cushion. In addition, there must be a minimum dimension of 1300mm measured around 150mm forward of and parallel with the seat back, at a height 600mm above the uncompressed seat cushion (passenger shoulder location); a back rest measuring less than 1300mm may be accepted (see the Annex dimensions for E, F and G).

The depth of any passenger seat cushion (distance between front edge of seat cushion and the seat back rest) must be assessed on an individual basis as related passenger comfort is interdependent on available leg room.

Retractable/fold-up armrests

When assessing the suitability of a seat backing incorporating an integrated arm rest, examiners must ensure that the seat back provides adequate passenger comfort when the arm rest is in the raised position.

Access to and from the 3rd row of seats, where all vehicle seats are forward facing

There are several elements to the assessment of the 3rd row of forward facing seats, all of which must be considered simultaneously and ultimately considered capable of providing passengers with reasonable access/egress without assistance.

Access and egress must be provided to both side doors only, and can be accepted if achieved by:

- Removal of one outer seat or the centre seat, in the 2nd row of seats to provide a suitable and safe access, or
- Tilting of the seats on the 2nd row to provide safe and reasonable access to the 3rd row of seats; *when exiting from the 3rd row, a passenger must be capable of positioning the seats to afford reasonable access to all side doors in the passenger compartment. The instructions for moving the seats must be clearly marked on the back **and** side of the seats as appropriate (a pictogram providing clear instruction is acceptable).*

When considering seat access the examiner must also consider:

- The size and suitability of the passage-way when the 2nd row seats are displaced
- Hand holds that may be required to assist a person when exiting from the 3rd row of seats
- Suitability of steps

Not more than a double seat may be tilted to provide a suitable passage-way/access to the side door. The examiner shall decide if the type of seats are acceptable; there are two different types of seat systems for consideration, however, **where any of the outer seats in the 2nd row of seats have seatbelt systems that require the belts to be disconnected from the seat to allow the seat to tilt, this seat system is considered unacceptable:**

Note: it is not acceptable to have detachable seatbelts fitted to the outer seats in the second row, where their fitment prevents reasonable access/egress to the 3rd row

- Standard seating provided in mass produced vehicles are considered acceptable (provided the seatbelt system complies with the above requirements, and all seating and interior dimension requirements are met) and where the tilted seats expose fixtures in the flooring; these should be ignored for assessment purposes.
- Alternative type approved seating; It is impossible to make a blanket judgement on this type of seating as they can be so varied they can only be assessed on an

individual basis. The examiner's decision will be based on a passenger who is not familiar with the vehicle being able to understand the process of how to tilt the seat (the complexity of the tilting mechanism) and the ease in which it tilts (the weight of the seat).

The passage-way to the door aperture must be of an adequate size to allow a person to access the doorway. At the doorway, a **departure area** must be provided to allow a person to stabilize themselves before exiting safely from the vehicle. If the departure area is not capable of accommodating both of the passenger's feet at the same time, suitable **handholds must be provided** to ensure that a person can stabilize themselves before and during the exiting process.

Where the departure area is in a lowered 'footwell' the datum for the maximum step height measurement of 435mm shall be taken from the highest edge where a foot would have to cross whilst entering or exiting from the vehicle.

The '**departure area**' is a rectangular space to simulate an area where a passenger could stand with both feet side by side prior to departure from the vehicle; it should be predominantly flat and have a minimum dimension of 300mm x 200mm, the smaller side (200mm dimension) shall be between parallel and 45 degrees from the door aperture and the same side shall be not more than 200mm from the outside edge of the vehicle.

Leg room

The following minimum leg room requirements must be available to ensure reasonable passenger comfort:

- There must be a space of at least 275mm measured between the vehicle floor and the top foremost/centre edge of each uncompressed seat cushion (see the Annex dimension C), this requirement does not apply where the presence of a transmission tunnel reduces the leg room.
- There must be a clear space of at least 630mm measured longitudinally from the lowest central position of each passenger back rest (see the Annex dimension A).
- There must be a clear space of at least 200mm measured longitudinally from the foremost edge of each passenger seat cushion (see the Annex dimension D); this requirement does not apply to any area directly above a transmission tunnel. In addition, the 200mm clear space requirement may be reduced to 150mm, where a

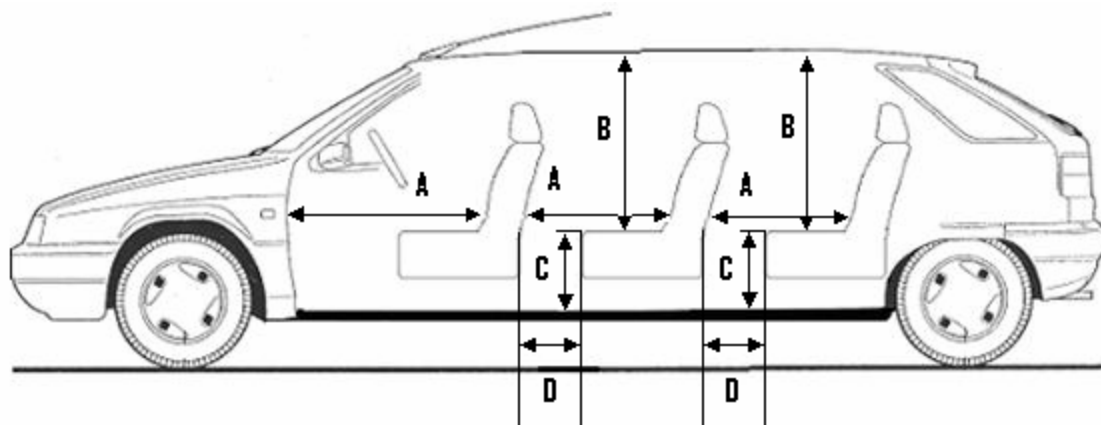
centre console (located between the front seats) protrudes into the rear passenger compartment.

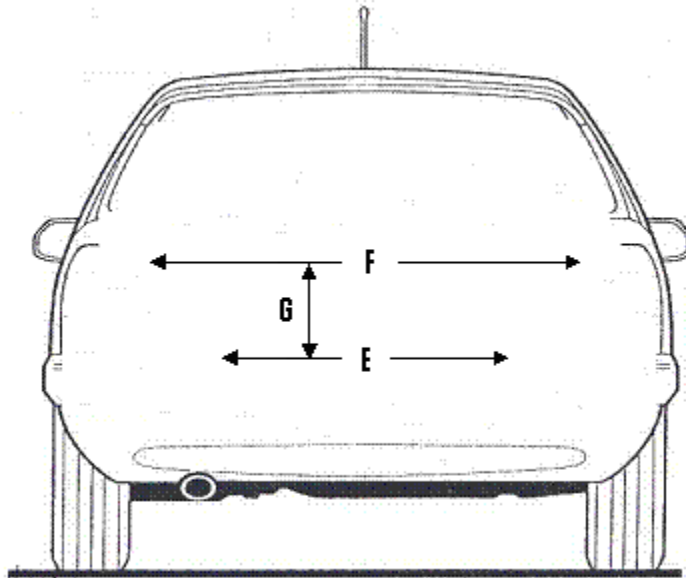
- There must be a space of at least 400mm measured between the foremost edges of each opposing passenger seat cushion.
- Where a passenger's legs are required to straddle the transmission tunnel, that tunnel must not exceed 300mm in width at its highest point.

Headroom

There must be a minimum height of 880mm measured vertically from the lowest central position of each uncompressed passenger seat cushion to the head cloth (see the Annex dimension B)

The Annex





<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>mm</u>
A	Front seat minimum dimension between the seat back cushion and the dash	630
A	Minimum distance between seat back and seat cushion rearward of it	630
B	Minimum headroom	880
C	Minimum height of seat squab; Cushion not compressed	275
D	Minimum distance for leg room	200
E	Minimum width for 3 continuous seats	1200
F	Minimum width for 3 passengers at shoulder height	1300
G	Distance between seat cushion and shoulder height dimensions	600

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Record of Revision

Revision	Date	Description of Change
1	04/05/18	Add text concerning, the 2nd row of seats which have seatbelt systems that require the belts to be disconnected from the seat to allow the seat to tilt. Note: there would be no reasonable access/egress to third row of seats. With seatbelt connected.
	05/01/23	Issue 2 Document reviewed January 2023 no changes made