

Tactile Medical Exemption Certificates

The Equality Act 2010 states taxis and private hire vehicles (PHV) must carry assistance dogs unless they have been issued with a medical exemption certificate. It is currently very difficult for people with vision impairments to verify the validity of these certificates. This can be overcome through the creation of tactile medical exemption certificates.

Benefits of tactile certificates

- They empower assistance dog owners to know that if a taxi or PHV driver prevents an assistance dog from travelling in their cab on medical grounds, the claim is genuine.
- Accessibility best practises are met for people with vision impairments.
- It presents positive publicity opportunities for councils – Guide Dogs are happy to produce a joint press release regarding the use of these certificates.

Is braille necessary?

No, only around 5% of people registered blind and partially sighted in the UK read braille (RNIB, 2011). A raised or embossed "E", for example, will suffice. This would be larger than braille, and much simpler for those who do not read braille, making the certificate more accessible. However, both can be used.

Card Creation

- Certificates cost as little as £20 for 20.
- Cards can be ordered online from printing companies; the embossed E can be done either by the printing company or by using a stamp (similar to a Company Seal which can also be ordered online).
- We recommend councils work with local people with sight loss on the design but Guide Dogs is happy to support and advise.

Case Study and Example Card

Aberdeen City Council was the first authority to introduce a tactile medical exemption certificate. The card was designed in consultation with local disabled people, it is large print, on a yellow back ground and has an embossed E in the corner indicating authenticity. Other requirements included that the certificate must be affixed either to the vehicle windscreen or dashboard facing outwards in order that it may conveniently be read from outside the vehicle and must be made available to inspect upon request. An example of Aberdeen's medical exemption certificate can be seen to the left.

The image shows a yellow rectangular card with black text. At the top left, it says 'TAXI DRIVER'. To the right is the Aberdeen City Council logo. Below that, it says 'ASSISTANCE DOGS EXEMPTION' and 'ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL'. A large, embossed letter 'E' is in the bottom right corner. At the bottom, there are three white rectangular boxes for 'TD LICENCE No.', 'VALID TO', and 'SIGNATURE'.

Mary, a guide dog owner involved in the design said: "It's always been a concern to us that we have no way of knowing if a driver who refuses to carry our dog has a doctor's certificate. Now, they will be issued with a certificate with an embossed 'E' in the corner that we can feel. It would be great if other local authorities would follow Aberdeen City Council's lead".

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