



Drug Screening Requirements

Notes of guidance for applicants and licence holders

Introduction

As an applicant or existing holder of a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence, you are required to demonstrate that you are medically fit to drive by having a medical check with your Doctor. Guidance notes in relation to the medical check and the medical examination report form for your Doctor are available separately from the Licensing Service.

Although drug screens are primarily undertaken on drivers, we reserve the right to request that either vehicle proprietor(s) and/or operators submit to a drug screen as required.

Drug Screening

In addition to undertaking a medical examination, you **must** produce evidence of satisfactory negative drug screening (normally for drivers under the age of 65) as part of your overall medical fitness. These screening checks are required when you first apply for a licence, then every 3 years thereafter until you reach the age of 65.

Additionally, there may be occasions when you will be required to undertake drug screening outside of these times. Licensing Enforcement Staff will remain proactive and carry out random drug screening on drivers, proprietors and operators or following an instruction by the Licensing Committee.

Screening is normally required for the following drug types:

- Amphetamines (to include methamphetamines)
- Cocaine
- Opiates
- Cannabinoids
- Benzodiazepines
- Methadone

¹ The Council may review the current provisions for drug screening specifically in relation to age requirements.

Obtaining drug screening services

Portsmouth City Council (PCC) has not prescribed an individual clinic for the purposes of drug screening. You are at liberty to consult your Doctor or local pharmacy for advice about local testing clinics or to make your own enquiries for obtaining such services locally via the web or other media.

However, having listened to the views of applicants and licensed drivers, we have introduced a system and procedure so that you can obtain the provision of drug screening services directly from us.

Drug Screening facilities from the Licensing Service

Subject to receiving your formal written consent, trained licensing staff will collect a saliva sample by way of a mouth swab. The sample will then be sent to an analytical laboratory to be screened and a certificate of analysis will be returned to the council. This process is subject to very strict "chain of custody" procedures to ensure that the sample is not interfered with between collection and arrival at the laboratory.

Prior to testing at the lab, your saliva sample is split in two to create "A" and "B" samples. The "A" sample is tested whilst the "B" sample is left sealed and stored. If you dispute the confirmed result, you can request the "B" sample for independent analysis (**any such costs arising from this will not be met by PCC**).

The collection of the swab will be conducted on a one to one basis. You will be given the choice of an officer of the same sex when collecting a sample. We can also carry out "instant" screens on occasion.

Important Information

YOU MUST NOT EAT, DRINK OR SMOKE FOR AT LEAST 20 MINUTES BEFORE THE TEST.

YOU MUST ALSO PROVIDE DETAILS OF ANY PRESCRIBED OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICINES YOU ARE TAKING

You will be advised of the current costs at the time you submit your application.

Days and times for screening services by PCC

Licensing staff will be available to collect samples for analysis Monday to Friday. Please ring for an appointment.

Use of other drug screening services

You are under no obligation to use the service made available by PCC and you are free to choose alternative service providers to obtain any necessary drug screening reports.

However, in order to be satisfied that the screening has been obtained from a reputable and reliable source, the following requirements must be adhered to otherwise we will reject any reports submitted.

If you obtain a drug screening report other than from PCC then the report must be in writing and contain the following information:

- Confirmation that photographic ID to prove your identity was produced at the time of testing (including details of what ID was supplied);
- Details of any prescribed or “over the counter” medication that you are or have taken;
- Address and contact details for the clinic undertaking the screening; and
- Name of the person undertaking the screening on behalf of the clinic.

Please be aware that all fees associated with the drug screening process are payable direct by you. PCC is not responsible for incurring any costs arising from this process.

Problems arising from screening results

If you are an applicant for a private hire or hackney carriage driver’s licence and your test results are positive then you will **NOT** be granted a licence without referral to the Licensing Committee who will decide whether or not to grant you a licence.

If you are a licensed driver and provide a positive test result then your licence may be suspended or revoked after consideration on individual merit.

Any “positive” certificates of analysis will be accompanied by a supporting statement indicating the illicit drug(s) and will be given to you upon request.

Failure to undertake drug screening

If you refuse, without satisfactory or reasonable excuse, to provide a sample for analysis then your application for a licence will not be processed or, if you are an existing driver, your licence may be suspended or revoked. It is also an offence to obstruct or to make a false statement to an authorised officer.

Portsmouth City Council will process your personal information in accordance with data protection law. The personal details provided by you will be used for licensing service purposes. Your details will be held on a database and where the law allows, may be shared with other departments within the council to update details they hold about you. The council may also be required to disclose personal information to third parties (such as Police, Department for Work and Pensions or for the National Fraud Initiative) for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime or apprehending or prosecuting offenders.

For further information about how the Council collects and uses personal information please visit our website: <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/the-council/data-protection-privacy-notice>

Our contact details:

Licensing Service
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Guildhall Square
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PO1 2AL

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You can get this Portsmouth City Council information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 9283 4073.



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