

Partitions or screens in licensed vehicles

Introduction

There has been an increase in interest about the use of partitions or screens in licensed vehicles as a way of providing physical separation between drivers and passengers in order to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. There is no evidence available that demonstrates that partitions in vehicles reduces the risk of transmission of infection, as they do not provide a fully sealed compartment which completely separates the driver from the passenger. Therefore, whilst it is possible that partitions may reduce the risk of transmission of infection, please note that the risk would not be eliminated entirely.

At this stage, we do not require any vehicles to have partitions or screens, this will be a matter for proprietors and operators. However, you are required to obtain permission prior to making any vehicle alterations.

The guidance on this process is temporary and for the purpose of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will keep this matter under review and will update as and when any safety issues come to light or any guidance from the DfT (Department for Transport) is given. We will not accept liability in circumstances in which a screen causes injury to a passenger or driver. We may require the removal of screens if we have cause for concern, and if so we shall give reasonable notice.

Specification

Any partition or screen must meet the following specification:

- Comply with the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations
- Be professionally and securely fitted in accordance with the screen manufacturer's instructions
- Be fitted in such a way so as not to affect the structural integrity of the vehicle or interfere or affect any manufacturer fitted safety equipment or features including headrests, seatbelts, airbags, egress points and CCTV
- Remain clear and be free of scratches, clouding, signs or stickers which would impede the drivers or passengers' visibility
- Rearward vision should not be distorted when using interior rear view mirror
- Be cleaned regularly, including between passenger journeys and changes of driver.
- Communication between driver and passengers must not be severely compromised
- Entry and exiting of the vehicle by drivers and passengers should not be compromised
- Must not wrap around the driver seat and create a partition between the two front seats, in addition to the rear cabin area

Partition material is not mandated, but materials such as polycarbonate and PETg may be suitable, depending on the supporting data that is available from the material manufacturer. Please choose from the following two sections the one that is relevant to the type of screen you are considering. The M1 category DVSA IVA manual referred to in the below sections can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/iva-manual-for-vehicle-category-m1>

Rigid plastic glazing – specific requirements

- All screens and interior fittings should be securely fitted within the vehicle in accordance with regulations UN ECE R43.00 and R21.01 and Section 12 of the M1 category DVSA IVA manual.
- Comply with the material and installation requirements of ECE R43.00 (Annex 14) for rigid plastic glazing acting as a partition or separating window. Where rigid plastic glazing is used; it must meet the requirements for exterior or interior forward facing panes (/A)
- Comply with ECE R21.01 for interior fittings and Section 12 of the M1 category IVA manual

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Flexible plastic glazing – specific requirements

- All screens and interior fittings should be securely fitted within the vehicle in accordance with regulations UN ECE R43.00 (Annex 15) and R21.01 and Section 12 of the M1 category DVSA IVA manual.
- Comply with the material and installation requirements of ECE R43.00 for flexible plastic glazing acting as a partition or separating window
- Comply with ECE R21.01 for interior fittings and Section 12 of the M1 category IVA manual
- Material should have a minimum thickness of 0.35mm

Approval procedure

In accordance with the conditions attached to vehicle licences, permission must be sought prior to any vehicle alterations, including installation of a partition or screen. Such requests must be made in writing (including email), together with the following:

1. Technical specifications of the partition or screen
2. Written confirmation that any partition or screen shall be installed by a competent, trained professional, in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements and specification and so as not to compromise the integrity of the vehicle structure, and
3. Written confirmation that the vehicle's insurance cover will not be affected by the installation of the partition or screen.

We reserve the right to seek any additional information that we might require in order to assess the request.