

Outdated rules over tinted windows on taxi cabs relaxed

Outdated rules over tinted windows on taxi cabs have been relaxed after claims drivers were having to spend thousands of pounds changing newer vehicles.

Midlothian councillors heard that some new cabs came with factory standard windows which breached its current rules by allowing in less light through rear glass.

Midlothian Taxi Owners Association called on elected members to update the restrictions after revealing one of their members had to change the windows on their vehicle adding without a 'light meter' it was hard to know if glass met their standards.

In a letter to the council's general purposes chairperson Councillor David Virgo, the association said: "We feel a relaxation of the strict vehicle window tinting requirements would form best practice and save operators money and improve safety.

"We recently had an owner change the rear windows in their vehicle to meet requirements. This cost was in excess of £2k. Unless you own a 'window tint light meter', then it's often very difficult, if not impossible, to tell if windows are compliant or not when purchasing a vehicle for use as a private hire."

Councillor agreed to introduce a new minimum light level for

rear windows, excluding tailgate glass, of 65 per cent rather than 70 per cent previously required.

Councillor Stuart McKenzie pointed out that in parts of the United States they were now producing cabs which did not have drivers at all as he questioned why the council's standards went against the manufacturers.

And fellow councillor Russell Imrie agreed adding: "If they (the vehicles) are coming off the assembly this way it seems mad we are getting involved in a debate about this. We have to move with the times and help the taxi trade."

The committee unanimously approved the changes to the regulations.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter