

New recruits keeping cabs compliant

The first wave of new compliance officers are clamping down on illegal taxi and private hire vehicle activity.

THE first 50 officers hit the streets last week to tackle issues such as touting and plying for hire. They are also carrying out vehicle checks and ensuring drivers are licensed and have the correct paperwork.

The new recruits will join the existing team of 82 compliance officers, with a further 200 to join over the next six months, bringing the number to more than 300 by the summer.

Officers have spent an intensive period of training, both in the classroom and out on



patrol, learning about legislation, regulations, health and safety, and vehicle standards.

TfL carries out regular operations with its partners to deter and disrupt illegal private hire (minicab) activity in the capital and protect the public from touts. Operation Neon is a joint project between TfL, the Metropolitan Police Service and Westminster City Council that takes place every weekend.

Staying safe

New compliance officer Lesley Haggerty explained that she was surprised by the amount of legislation that is in place: 'Every aspect is

extremely important because it's the public's safety we're looking out for, as well as safeguarding genuine drivers and operators.'

'We need to make sure drivers are licensed and the vehicles they use are safe and roadworthy. If they're not, action will be taken.'

Mayor Sadiq Khan announced the plans to expand the team just four months ago. He said: 'Drivers who are unlicensed or flout the rules not only pose a risk to Londoners' safety, but also undermine the work of the

hard-working and professional drivers who provide a vital service to millions of Londoners every year.

'Every Londoner and visitor to our city must feel safe getting around London. The roll-out of more compliance officers over the coming months will be crucial in driving up standards and ensuring Londoners remain safe.'

TfL recently launched its latest Safer Travel at Night (STaN) campaign, which highlights the ways that people can keep themselves safe when using taxis and private hire.

■ For more information on keeping yourself safe when travelling at night, visit, tfl.gov.uk/safer-travel

Driving taxis forward

A programme of improvements for London's taxi fleet was outlined in TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan.

Actions include opening up more bus lanes to taxis, using technology to give customers information on how to get a taxi quickly and easily, and increasing the number of taxi ranks by 20 per cent by 2020.

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Getting home safe

TAXIS are different to private hire vehicle. They can be approached on the street or at taxi ranks and do not need to be booked in advance.

If you're using a private hire vehicle, book it through a licensed operator, via an app, phone, email or at a minicab office. When booking, you should receive a confirmation highlighting driver and vehicle details as well as the driver's photo.

Private hire operators will have a record of the journey, the driver and the vehicle used so the driver can be traced if there are any problems.

With the launch of the Night Tube, passengers are reminded to plan how they will get home from the Underground station late at night. To support this, TfL has opened a number of new taxi ranks, which can only be used by taxis.

The Piccadilly line, which launched an all-night weekend service last week, has 24 taxi ranks along the line to help customers get home safely.

■ To find your nearest Night Tube taxi rank, visit tfl.gov.uk/nighttube



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