**Highland Council – HMRC Check Codes for Licence Holders Applying for Renewal**

**What is the new HMRC Check Code?**

In Scotland from 2 October 2023, certain types of **licence holders seeking to renew** need to complete tax checks with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) before applying to the Council to renew their licence. The tax check confirms that you are appropriately registered for tax with HMRC. You will be asked to answer a few questions to tell HMRC how you pay any tax due on income you earn from your licensed trade. HMRC checks affect the following licence categories:

* taxi and private hire drivers
* booking offices
* scrap metal dealer sites
* mobile / itinerant scrap metal collectors

Highland Council requires a tax check code from you if you are:

* renewing a licence in the above categories; or
* applying for the same type of licence you previously held, that became invalid less than a year ago; or
* applying for the same type of licence you have already held with another licensing authority.

If this is your first time applying for one of the above licences, you **do not** need to provide us with a tax check code. However, we must ask you to [read the HMRC guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/confirm-your-tax-responsibilities-when-applying-for-a-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence) on what you need to do to be properly registered for tax in the future. We must confirm you have done so. A declaration has been added to the forms to comply with this requirement.

**How to obtain your tax check code**

Before submitting your renewal application to Highland Council, [complete the tax check online on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-a-tax-check-for-a-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence), via your Government Gateway account. If you do not already have a Gateway account, you should create one. **As the applicant, you must carry out the tax check yourself. You cannot ask Highland Council, a tax agent or adviser to do this on your behalf.** There is guidance on GOV.UK, and anyone who needs extra support can complete the tax check by phone through HMRC’s customer helpline.

**What HMRC needs from You**

To carry out your tax check, you will need:

* a Government Gateway user ID and password
* to know when you first got your licence
* the length of your most recent licence
* how you pay tax on the income you earn from your licensed trade

When the tax check is completed, you will get a 9-character code. You must give this code to us, and the code must have been obtained no more than 120 days before the date of your Highland Council application. The relevant Highland Council application forms and guidance notes have been updated for you to enter the code.

**How does this change the process for renewals?**

Highland Council licensing staff will go online to GOV.UK confirm that you have carried out your tax check\*. The other information we require for this step is either your company registration number or your date of birth, so please ensure you have fully completed the application form.

**\*Note:** We will only receive confirmation from HMRC that you have completed the tax check, we do not have access to information about your tax affairs.

**If You Don’t Provide a Check Code on Your Licence Renewal Application**

Highland Council cannot process your licence renewal until your tax check is completed and we have received the code from you. We will ask you for a tax check code if you have not included it with your application, (and you are not exempt from providing it e.g. first time licence applicants).

If you have been unable to get a code because the HMRC online service was unavailable, we will:

* ask you to re-try again to complete a tax check for 5 days in a row; and
* if after retrying on 5 consecutive days, we will then check that the service was unavailable on these days.

If Highland Council are able to confirm the HMRC service was unavailable, then a tax check no longer applies, and we can continue to deal with your application without it. However, if our checks show that the service was available, we will tell you and ask you to try again for a tax check code.

**Still No HMRC Code - When will my current licence expire?**

If you do not provide us with a valid tax check code, your existing licence will expire on whichever date is the **latest**:

* 28 days after we asked you for your tax check code; or
* the date your current licence expires.

If you hold a temporary licence and do not give us a valid tax check code, the licence will expire on whichever date is the **latest**:

* 7 days after we asked you for your tax check code; or
* the date your current temporary licence expires.

**Applications from Partnerships**

If your renewal application is on behalf of a partnership, you must include confirmation that each Partner *in the application* has completed a tax check for themselves on the application form. For example, if:

* you are the partner making the application *on behalf of* the partnership, you must get a tax check code for yourself only;
* more than one partner is submitting the partnership’s application, each partner must obtain a tax check code for themselves and each tax check code must be entered on the application form.

**Applying for more than one licence?**

**Same type of licence:** You can use one tax check code for more than one licence application if all your applications are for the same type of licence (for example, you are applying for separate taxi driver licences with different local licensing authorities). Again, the code should be obtained less than 120 days prior.

**Different types of licence:** If you are applying for different types of licence (for example, a private hire driver licence and a private hire vehicle operator licence), you must complete a separate tax check for each application.

For queries and assistance with obtaining your tax check code, or any income tax, PAYE or corporation tax queries, [contact HMRC](https://www.gov.uk/contact-hmrc).

For licensing queries in the Highland region, [contact Highland Council](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1125/licences_permits_and_permissions/304/licensing_offices) Licensing Department.