



24th August 2009

SAFETY ISSUE --- SEATING LAYOUT OF KIA SEDONA MPV LICENSED FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE PURPOSES

It has come to our attention that Kia Sedona motor vehicles are being licensed to carry 6 passengers by this authority. The criteria for multi purpose vehicles such as the Kia Sedona has always been that if passengers have to climb over a seat or their egress from the vehicle in an emergency is restricted that the vehicle will not be licensed. See part 3 paragraph 4 of our policy which states:-

"... Every passenger must have easy egress from the vehicle. Vehicles that have to tip a seat forward to allow passengers to exit will not be licensed by Torfaen County Borough Council"

To overcome this problem it has been the procedure that if the seat nearest the exit door is removed to allow free access by all passengers wherever they are seated within the vehicle then this would be acceptable and the vehicle licensed for the number of seats that remain, or the second row of seats turned around facing rearwards to create a conference seating arrangement.

A 2001 registered Kia Sedona was originally licensed by this authority as a 6 seater as it was then considered that the gap between the 2 second row seats was just sufficient to allow for the rear seat passengers to escape from the vehicle in an emergency.

Later models of the Kia Sedona have also been licensed on the same criteria, however on inspection of the vehicles this month it is apparent that the interior dimensions and the design of the seat has reduced the escape potential from the rear seats. In fact if there are passengers in the 2 middle row seats it would be impossible for the rear seat passengers to escape.



Therefore with immediate effect the Kia Sedona MPV will only be licensed to carry 5 passengers requiring one of the middle row of seats to be completely and permanently removed from the vehicle.

Alternatively

The second row of seats and all seat belt mountings may be reversed to create conference seating layout, the vehicles may then be licensed to carry 6 passengers subject to inspection and testing.

Existing licensed vehicles will not be re-licensed for 6 seats with the manufacturers seat configuration when the licence comes up for renewal, they will be licensed for 5 seats or 6 if the seats arranged as detailed above.

In the meantime whilst the existing vehicle licence is valid it is strongly recommended that the seating capacity is immediately reduced to 5 seats or the seating configuration altered as this authority considers that the current configuration to be unsafe.



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