

Short Distances Exemption

Frequently Asked Questions

The information in these FAQs relates to the Short Distances Exemption mentioned in the Department for Transport's updated guidance on the use of section 19 and 22 permits. For more information on the guidance see: <https://bit.ly/2McDR2X>

What changes do I need to make now?

The exemptions become directly applicable in October 2019, so until then you do not have to make any immediate changes to your services to fit with the exemption. However, you may wish to consider your current services and how you could adapt them to fit within the exemptions come October. In particular thinking about any contracts which you provide for your local authority where you could start to work with them now to write into the contracts the radius or distance the contracts covers.

I understand that the Department for Transport will automatically recognise a ten mile radius/straight line as a 'short distance'. Is there any scope to increase the mileage on this automatic distance?

The Department of Transport have now issued the Statutory Instrument (SI) which will give legislative effect to the 'short distance' exemption in October 2019. As the SI has now passed the parliamentary process, there is no scope to increase the ten mile distance.

However, there is some flexibility within the exemption for those who operate in less densely populated areas. If this is the case for your organisation, you may be able to apply for an extension to the ten mile distance.

I operate in a less densely populated area and believe I may be eligible for an extension. How can I apply for this?

Extensions to the ten mile distance will need to be made to the permit issuing body once the 'short distance' exemption comes into effect in October 2019. However, the Department have not yet made clear what the application process will involve or what evidence will be required at the point of application.

What happens if we need to occasionally run a service outside of the ten mile automatic distance?

The guidance allows for services which are defined as ‘special occasional services’ to be operated outside of the ten mile distance. The guidance suggests this will be based on the frequency that the service is offered but currently doesn’t offer any further information as to what types of service will fit within this definition. CTA expects services such as one off trips to the seaside or Christmas lunch to be permissible under the exemption. It is currently less clear if this will include group travel where an organisation provides their own driver.

Do I have to meet the non-commercial exemption, too?

You will only need to meet one of the exemptions in order to be eligible for a section 19 or section 22 permit. If all of the services you provide meet the short distances exemption you will not need to meet any other exemption to operate those services.



We are currently working on potential ways we can maximise the flexibility within the exemption for community transport services, so if you have any examples of how the exemptions might relate to your services, we’d love to hear from you – please email any thoughts into hello@ctauk.org.