STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2026 No. 439

ROADS

The Automated Vehicles (Permits for Automated Passenger Services) Regulations 2026

Made - - - -	*20th April 2026*
Laid before Parliament	*23rd April 2026*
Coming into force - -	*15th May 2026*

The Secretary of State makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 88(5), 89(1), (2), (3)(c) and (d) and (6) and 97(4)(b) and (c) of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024(**a**).

As required by section 97(2) of that Act, before making these Regulations, the Secretary of State has consulted with such representative organisations as the Secretary of State thinks fit.

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Automated Vehicles (Permits for Automated Passenger Services) Regulations 2026 and come into force on 15th May 2026.

(2) These Regulations extend to England and Wales and Scotland.

(3) These Regulations apply in relation to—

(a) an automated passenger service provided in England, Wales or Scotland(**b**) in a vehicle that, by virtue of its use in providing that service, would count as a public service vehicle within the meaning of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981(**c**) (assuming that section 83 of the 2024 Act did not apply), and

(b) any other automated passenger service provided in England.

Interpretation

2. In these Regulations—

"the 2024 Act" means the Automated Vehicles Act 2024;

"applicant" means a person who applies for the grant, variation, suspension or withdrawal of a permit(**d**);

(**a**) 2024 c. 10.
(**b**) "Automated passenger service" and a service "provided in" an area are defined in sub-sections (1) and (3), respectively, of section 90 of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10).
(**c**) 1981 c. 14.
(**d**) "Permit" is defined in section 90(1) of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10).

"consenting authority" means—

(a) in relation to a permit to which section 85 of the 2024 Act (consent requirement for services resembling taxis or private hire vehicles) applies, each licensing authority in whose area the service may be provided under the permit or the proposed permit;

(b) in relation to a permit to which section 86 of the 2024 Act (consent requirement for services resembling buses) applies, each relevant franchising body;

"expiry date" means the last day on which a permit is valid;

"licensing authority" has the same meaning as in section 85(6) of the 2024 Act (meaning of "taxi or private hire vehicle licence" and "licensing authority");

"relevant franchising body" has the same meaning as in section 86(4) of the 2024 Act (meaning of "relevant franchising body").

Maximum validity period

3. A permit may be valid for a maximum period of five years.

Renewal of a permit

4.—(1) A permit holder(**a**) may apply during the renewal period for a permit to be renewed.

(2) In this regulation, the "renewal period" is the period that begins six months before the expiry date and ends two months before the expiry date.

(3) Subject to regulation 3 (maximum validity period), if a permit holder has applied for a permit to be renewed but the Secretary of State has not yet determined the application, the permit remains valid after the expiry date until the Secretary of State determines the application.

Circumstances in which a permit may be varied, suspended or withdrawn

5.—(1) The Secretary of State may vary, suspend or withdraw a permit with the permit holder's consent.

(2) The Secretary of State may vary, suspend or withdraw a permit without the permit holder's consent in any of the following circumstances—

(a) the permit holder breaches a permit condition(**b**);

(b) a vehicle to which the permit applies commits a traffic infraction that the Secretary of State considers is serious or repeated;

(c) multiple vehicles to which the permit applies commit the same, or similar, traffic infractions;

(d) the permit holder does not fulfil an undertaking given to the Secretary of State;

(e) during the application process, the applicant made a material statement of fact that (whether to the applicant's knowledge or not) was false;

(f) during the application process, the applicant made a material statement of expectation, and that expectation has not been fulfilled;

(g) since the permit was granted, there has been a material change of any circumstances that were relevant to the grant of the permit;

(**a**) "Permit holder" is defined in section 90(1) of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10).
(**b**) "Permit condition" is defined in section 90(1) of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10).

(h) the Secretary of State reasonably believes, in relation to a vehicle to which the permit applies, that—

(i) there are serious safety concerns about the vehicle,

(ii) the vehicle has caused or will cause serious or repeated disruption to traffic, or

(iii) the vehicle has caused or will cause an unacceptable delay to an emergency worker who is responding to emergency circumstances;

(i) a vehicle to which the permit applies is in an unroadworthy condition within the meaning of section 75 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (vehicles not to be sold in unroadworthy condition or altered so as to be unroadworthy)(**a**).

(3) In this regulation—

(a) an "application" means an application for the grant, variation, suspension or withdrawal of a permit;

(b) a vehicle "commits a traffic infraction" if it does anything that would, were an individual in control of it—

(i) amount to the commission of an offence by that individual, or

(ii) cause a person to become liable to pay a penalty charge under an enactment relating to road traffic;

(c) an "emergency worker" means a person who is—

(i) acting in the capacity of a constable,

(ii) acting in a capacity mentioned in section 1(2) of the Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act 2006 (obstructing or hindering certain emergency workers responding to emergency circumstances)(**b**), or

(iii) acting in a capacity mentioned in section 1(3) of the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 (assaulting or impeding certain providers of emergency services)(**c**), other than that of a constable;

(d) a person "responding to emergency circumstances" has the meaning given in section 1 of the Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act 2006.

(4) For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b)(i), it is to be assumed that nothing can be proved about the mental state of the notional individual.

Procedure for varying a permit with the permit holder's consent

6.—(1) The Secretary of State may not vary a permit without the consenting authority's consent if—

(a) the Secretary of State intends to vary a permit in the circumstances described in regulation 5(1) (circumstances in which a permit may be varied, suspended or withdrawn with the permit holder's consent), and

(b) the grant of that permit required the consenting authority's consent.

(2) A consenting authority is to be taken to have given consent under paragraph (1) if—

(a) the Secretary of State requests consent in writing, and

(b) within the relevant period, the consenting authority either—

(i) fails to give or refuse consent, or

(**a**) 1988 c. 52; section 75 was amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 (c. 40), sections 16(2) and 83 and Schedule 8.
(**b**) 2006 c. 39; section 1(2) was amended by the Armed Forces Act 2016 (c. 21), section 16(5).
(**c**) 2005 asp 2; section 1(3) was amended by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (asp 5), section 38(2), the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (asp 8), Schedule 7, paragraph 67, and S.S.I. 2008/37.

(ii) refuses consent but fails to give written reasons for doing so.

(3) In paragraph (2), the "relevant period" is the period of six weeks that begins with the day on which the request is made.

Ordinary procedure for varying, suspending or withdrawing a permit without the permit holder's consent

7.—(1) Before varying, suspending or withdrawing a permit in any of the circumstances described in regulation 5(2) (circumstances in which a permit may be varied, suspended or withdrawn without the permit holder's consent), the Secretary of State must—

(a) issue a notice under paragraph (2) to—

(i) the permit holder, and

(ii) the consenting authority, and

(b) consider any representations made by those persons in response to (and in accordance with) that notice.

(2) A notice under this paragraph is a notice that—

(a) states the Secretary of State's intention to vary, suspend or withdraw the permit,

(b) explains the Secretary of State's reasons for intending to vary, suspend or withdraw the permit, and

(c) specifies the time by which, and manner in which, representations may be made.

(3) Paragraph (4) applies if, having complied with paragraph (1), the Secretary of State decides to vary, suspend or withdraw the permit.

(4) The Secretary of State must, in, or in a document issued together with, the notice by which the variation, suspension or withdrawal takes effect, explain the Secretary of State's reasons for the decision.

Procedure for urgently suspending or temporarily varying a permit

8.—(1) If the Secretary of State considers that the need to suspend a permit is too urgent to follow the procedure in regulation 7 (ordinary procedure for varying, suspending or withdrawing a permit without the permit holder's consent)—

(a) that regulation does not apply, and

(b) paragraphs (2) and (3) apply instead.

(2) The Secretary of State must—

(a) in, or in a document issued together with, the notice by which the suspension takes effect—

(i) explain the Secretary of State's reasons for suspending the permit, and

(ii) specify the time by which, and manner in which, representations may be made, and

(b) as soon as reasonably practicable after suspending the permit—

(i) consider any representations made by the permit holder and the consenting authority in response to (and in accordance with) that notice, and

(ii) decide whether to lift the suspension.

(3) If, having complied with paragraph (2), the Secretary of State decides not to lift the suspension, the Secretary of State must, as soon as reasonably practicable, issue to the permit holder a notice that—

(a) states the Secretary of State's decision, and

(b) explains the Secretary of State's reasons for the decision.

(4) The preceding paragraphs apply in relation to temporary variation as they apply in relation to suspension, and for that purpose the references to lifting the suspension are to be read as references to reversing the variation.

(5) In this regulation, a reference to the permit holder in relation to a suspended permit is a reference to the person who was the permit holder immediately before the suspension took effect.

Reviews of decisions

9.—(1) An applicant or a permit holder may request an internal review of a relevant decision.

(2) The applicant or the permit holder who requests the internal review must—

(a) do so before the end of the period of 28 days that begins with the day after the day on which the decision that is to be reviewed was sent to the applicant or the permit holder, and

(b) when requesting the internal review, state in writing any representations that the applicant or the permit holder wishes to make to the Secretary of State.

(3) If an applicant or a permit holder requests an internal review, the Secretary of State must—

(a) confirm receipt of the request, and

(b) confirm in writing to the applicant or the permit holder the date no later than which the Secretary of State anticipates sending to the applicant or the permit holder the outcome of the internal review,

before the end of the period of 14 days that begins with the day after the day on which the Secretary of State receives the request.

(4) Subject to regulation 3, a permit holder's permit remains valid during the review period where—

(a) a permit holder applies for a new permit,

(b) the permit holder's existing permit is still valid, and

(c) the permit holder has requested an internal review of a relevant decision in relation to the new permit.

(5) In this regulation—

(a) a "relevant decision" means the Secretary of State's decision—

(i) to refuse to grant a permit,

(ii) to refuse to renew a permit,

(iii) to impose a permit condition,

(iv) to refuse to vary or remove a permit condition,

(v) to vary a permit condition other than at the permit holder's request,

(vi) to withdraw or suspend a permit, or

(vii) as to the details specified in the permit in accordance with section 82(4) of the 2024 Act (details that a permit must specify);

(b) the "review period" means the period that begins on the date of the relevant decision to be reviewed and ends when either of the following criteria is satisfied—

(i) the applicant or the permit holder has requested an internal review of that decision within the period in paragraph (2)(a) and the outcome of that internal review has been sent to the applicant or the permit holder;

(ii) the applicant or the permit holder did not request an internal review within the period in paragraph (2)(b) and that period has passed;

(c) a reference to the permit holder in relation to a suspended or withdrawn permit is a reference to the person who was the permit holder immediately before the suspension or withdrawal took effect.

Disclosure and use of information

10.—(1) Where a permit condition requires the permit holder to share any of the information(**a**) described in paragraph (2), the recipient(**b**) may disclose that information to any person for any purpose.

(2) The information in this paragraph is—

(a) information about routes, stopping places, timetables, fares and tickets,

(b) information about changes or proposed changes to routes, stopping places, timetables, fares and tickets, and

(c) information about the operation of services, including—

(i) live information, that is to say information provided immediately it becomes available about the location of vehicles operating the services and the time at which they stop, or are expected to stop, at stopping places, and

(ii) information about the operation of services in the past.

(3) Where a permit condition requires the permit holder to share information about accidents with the police, the recipient may use that information for any purpose for which the recipient could use a report made under section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (duty of driver to stop, report accident and give information or documents)(**c**).

(4) Paragraph (5) applies where a permit condition requires the permit holder to share information with a person listed in paragraph (6) to enable that person to respond to incidents in a way that prevents or minimises the risk of damage, injury or fire.

(5) Where this paragraph applies, the recipient may disclose the information to any other person listed in paragraph (6) for the purpose of preventing or minimising the risk of damage, injury or fire.

(6) Those persons are—

(a) an ambulance service;

(b) a fire and rescue service;

(c) a police force.

(7) Where a permit condition requires the permit holder to share information about safety-related incidents with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State may, for the purpose of providing information about safety-related incidents, disclose that information to any person if the Secretary of State considers it would be in the public interest to do so and the information disclosed is factual.

(8) Where a permit condition requires the permit holder to share information with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State may disclose that information to—

(a) the police, the Health and Safety Executive or any other prosecuting agency for the purpose of investigating potential criminal offences;

(**a**) "Information" is defined in section 94 of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10).
(**b**) "The recipient" is defined in section 88(4) of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10).
(**c**) Section 170 was amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 (c. 40), Schedule 5, paragraph 72, and S.I. 2000/726 and 2019/1047.

(b) a traffic commissioner, a court or any other appellate body for the purpose of any appeal or court proceedings for which the information is relevant.

(9) Where—

(a) a permit condition requires the permit holder to publish information,

(b) the permit holder has not published that information, and

(c) the permit holder has shared the information with the Secretary of State,

the Secretary of State may disclose that information to any person for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the permit condition.

(10) Where the permit holder provides a complaints-handling organisation with information about a complaint, that complaints-handling organisation may disclose that information to the complainant.

(11) In this regulation—

"ambulance service" means—

(a) a relevant NHS body providing ambulance services (including air ambulance services), or a person providing such services pursuant to arrangements made by, or at the request of, a relevant NHS body;

(b) a person acting for the Scottish Ambulance Service Board in exercise of the function referred to in article 4(1)(a) of the Scottish Ambulance Service Board Order 1999 (exercise by the Board of function of providing ambulances and other means of transport for ill and other persons);

"fire and rescue service" means—

(a) a fire and rescue authority in England and Wales, which has the meaning given in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004(**a**);

(b) the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, which has the meaning given in the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005(**b**);

"relevant NHS body" means—

(a) the Secretary of State in the exercise of public health functions;

(b) NHS England;

(c) an integrated care board;

(d) an NHS foundation trust;

(e) a National Health Service Trust;

(f) a Special Health Authority;

(g) a Local Health Board.

(12) In paragraph (11), paragraphs (b) to (g) in the definition of "relevant NHS body" have the meanings given in the National Health Service Act 2006(**c**).

(**a**) 2004 c. 21.
(**b**) 2005 asp 5.
(**c**) 2006 c. 41.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State

Simon Lightwood
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Transport

20th April 2026

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations detail certain procedural and administrative matters to enable the permitting regime for automated passenger services in Part 5 of the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 (c. 10) to function. An automated passenger service is a service that consists of the carrying of passengers in a road vehicle that is designed or adapted to travel autonomously or is being used for a trial with the aim of developing vehicles that are so designed or adapted. These Regulations apply in relation to bus-like services in England, Wales and Scotland and taxi- and private hire vehicle-like services in England.

Regulation 3 provides that a permit may be valid for a maximum period of five years. Regulation 4 sets out that a permit holder may apply to renew a permit between six months and two months before the permit expires, and that the existing permit remains valid until the Secretary of State determines the renewal application (subject to the maximum five-year validity period).

Regulation 5(1) sets out that the Secretary of State may vary, suspend or withdraw a permit with the permit holder's consent. Regulation 6 deals with the procedure for doing so.

Regulation 5(2) lists the circumstances in which the Secretary of State may vary, suspend or withdraw a permit without the permit holder's consent. Regulation 7 details the ordinary procedure for doing so, and regulation 8 details the procedure for urgently doing so.

Regulation 9 details the mechanism for an applicant to request an internal review of a decision, which a permit holder may request within 28 days of the Secretary of State sending the decision. Paragraph (4) sets out that a permit holder's permit remains valid while an application for a new permit is reviewed (subject to the maximum five-year validity period).

Regulation 10 authorises the recipient of information to disclose that information to another person for a purpose specified in the regulation.

A full impact assessment of the effect that this instrument will have on the costs of business, the voluntary sector and the public sector is available alongside this instrument on www.legislation.gov.uk and from the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR. An Explanatory Memorandum is published alongside this instrument on www.legislation.gov.uk.

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