

Renting a car: Tips for consumers

Check the details when you are hiring a car.

Renting a vehicle isn't always straightforward. Not every rental quote includes the same features, which makes it tricky to compare deals.

Here are some points to look out for before, during and after the rental.

Always check what's included in the initial price you're quoted: it may not be the final price you end up paying.

All compulsory charges should be included in the price you're quoted, but look out for extra charges like 'one way fees', 'premium location' fees, or 'Young Driver Surcharges'. They can quickly add up.

Best practice is that companies should offer you the option to return the vehicle with a full tank of fuel, rather than empty, if you want to.

Check the details of the terms and conditions you're signing up to at the time of booking and again at the rental desk - they may differ.

Work out what you might be liable for if the car is damaged during the rental.

Check what cover for loss, theft or damage is included in the basic price, the excess amount that you will be liable for if you damage the car and any exclusions that apply. Be clear on what you'll have to pay if something goes wrong – damage to windscreens, tyres, the roof and undercarriage are often not covered.

If you want to reduce your liability for the excess, you don't have to buy a waiver from the rental company; consider shopping around for alternative insurance from an independent provider.

Remember, many companies 'pre-authorise' an amount to cover any damage on your credit card – this means you won't be able to use this credit for anything else until after you return the car damage-free.

You shouldn't be charged for damage without being told about it and given evidence – but it's always a good idea to check the procedure for checking the car for damage when you pick it up and drop it off, and to take your own photos of the vehicle as evidence.

When you get home, keep an eye on your bank or card statements for additional charges.

If you have a dispute that you can't resolve directly with the hire company, consider using the conciliation services listed opposite.

Always take time to check the details of what you're signing up to when you hire a vehicle



Where can you go for help with a problem?

If you have a dispute with a rental company, check if they belong to the **British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association**. If they do, you can use their conciliation service.

If you rented your car in Europe and have a dispute with the rental company, you can get help from the **UK European Consumer Centre**. They can offer practical advice and support.

For more information and help, you can go to:

BVRLA Conciliation Service

<http://bit.ly/BVRLACS>

UK European Consumer Centre:

www.ukecc.net or

08456 04 05 03

European Car Rental Conciliation Service:

www.ecrcs.eu

Citizens Advice:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

or in Northern Ireland,

ConsumerLine on

0300 123 6262

These materials do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such.