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Renting a car is the most practical way of getting around for a growing number of consumers. During these difficult financial times consumers are eager to save money and want their rental to be a hassle free experience. To avoid extra costs and unexpected surprises, consumers should be on their guard and bear in mind the problem areas that are most complained about to ECC Ireland and to use the tips in our Guide to Renting a Car.

- [Problem Areas](#)
- [Guide to Renting a Car](#)
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1. Charges for damages on return
A consumer's credit card is charged, without prior notification, for alleged damages.
 2. Additional charges
The price quoted does not include all charges, which are not optional, and the consumer has to pay more than expected when collecting / returning the car (location surcharge, insurance, fuel).
 3. Car rental distribution websites
Inaccurate information is provided by the car rental distribution websites about the terms & conditions of the partner car rental companies (age restrictions not explained, wrong opening hours, wrong type of vehicle or different cost of extras and insurance).
 4. Faulty car
A rented vehicle breaks down and is immobilised for reasons outside the consumer's control. Due to a lack of proper assistance the consumer incurs unnecessary costs.
 5. Accident
The consumer is involved in an accident during the rental period and, being unaware of his/her rights and obligations, he/she may incur higher costs than necessary especially if the accident was caused by a third party.
 6. Fuel policy
The consumer is forced to accept a prepaid tank of fuel costing more per liter than on the market and no refunds for unused petrol at the end of the rental period are possible.
 7. Insurance coverage
The scope of insurance policy may be unclear or additional insurance is automatically attached to the car rental contract and further charges are imposed on the consumer.
1. Before hiring a car
 - When looking for the best bargain, bear in mind that very often prices quoted online only contain the basics so make sure you check what is included in the final quote and what is not. Pay special attention to airport and other location related surcharges as well as the insurance coverage.
 - Always check the cost of extras that you will need during your rental: child seat, additional driver, extra insurance etc.
 - Pay special attention to the fuel policy and make sure it is explained to you clearly before you confirm the booking:
 - COLLECT FULL RETURN EMPTY POLICY implies that no refunds will be paid for unused fuel even if the whole tank was paid for upfront. As it is impossible to return the car empty, especially during short rentals, an alternative policy should be available on request.
 - COLLECT FULL RETURN FULL POLICY means that the vehicle should be provided with a

full tank of fuel. Unless the consumer was clearly notified in the Terms & Conditions when booking the car, fuel should not be prepaid. It should be consumer's responsibility to refuel the car with correct fuel type before it is returned. If the vehicle is not returned with a full tank, the consumer should bear the cost of refueling.

- Check age restrictions
 - Make sure you are familiar with the cancellation policy
 - When renting abroad, familiarise yourself with the rules of the road.
2. Collecting the car
- Make sure you understand what is covered by your insurance and what is left out. It is also very important to know the excess amount that could be charged to your credit card in case of an accident.
 - Always ask about the company policy in case of the car breaking down or in case of an accident.
 - A staff member should check the condition of the car on collection and mark all damages to the exterior and the interior on a diagram. If you are not provided with a special check-list or diagram, make sure that you note any damage in writing and have it signed by an employee of the car rental company.
 - Make sure you know the type of fuel you can use in your rental car.
3. During the rental
- If the car breaks down, call the car rental company and follow the instructions provided. Do not repair the vehicle yourself without prior authorisation.
 - In case of an accident, you should always note down the names and addresses of everyone involved. If anybody is injured, or when there is a dispute over who is responsible, you should notify the police. Contact the car rental company immediately.
4. Returning the car
- Try to return the car during the working hours of the car rental company and have it inspected by a competent employee. The condition of the vehicle should be confirmed in writing and signed by the representative of the company and the driver.
 - If you are returning the car outside the working hours of the car hire company, you should park it in the designated area. You can take pictures of the vehicle as confirmation that it was returned in good condition.
 - Cars returned outside working hours are inspected for damage on the following day and therefore the excess can still be charged to a consumer's credit card.

At the moment there is no industry specific legislation in the car rental sector. Consumers are protected by other instruments with more general scope.

[Unfair Commercial Practices Directive 2005/29/EC](#)
[Directive 93/13/EEC on Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts](#)

[Car Rental Council of Ireland](#)

[National Consumer Agency in Ireland](#)

[British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association](#)

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