



UK European Consumer Centre

Car hire across the EU

What you should know

UK European Consumer Centre

Every year UK consumers find themselves in dispute with EU car hire companies over a range of problems - from fuel policies to insurance disputes and post-hire damage charges to excessive mystery fees.

We're here to help.

Car hire confidence

Complaints about car rental in the EU are increasing every year, although of course not every car hire ends in tears. Like any transaction, car hire has risks associated with it, but you can follow the UK ECC's car rental 'hints and tips' to become more confident when hiring a car across the EU:

- Shop around for the best rate (if booked online, you have no right to cancel and claim a refund).
- Read all paperwork before signing, including terms and conditions.
- Check what is and isn't covered on the insurance.
- Confirm the company's fuel tank policy.
- Check any extra charges you may be liable for.
- Do pre and post-rental vehicle inspections (with photos where possible) and ensure both parties sign these documents at the time and retain a copy.
- Allow enough time to drop the car off.
- Research the country's highway code and local road legislation.
- Request evidence of disputed charges.





Your rights

As a consumer shopping in the European Union, you have certain rights. The advice and support given by UK ECC consumer advisors is based on European contract law.

Your 'basic consumer principles' include: buy what you want where you want; if it doesn't work, send it back; contracts should be fair to consumers; you should not be misled, and effective redress for cross-border disputes.

Quite naturally, you will often have your guard down and be more trusting when on holiday - just when you might be hiring a car. But it's worth remembering:

- Consumers are advised when buying goods costing more than £100 and less than £30,000 to use a credit card, as section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 may place equal liability with the seller on the credit card company.
- A 'contract' may be breached if the car hire company does not do what its terms and conditions say.

- A car rental company must follow the code of conduct of any trade association it belongs to (check what membership applies before you sign).
- Under the EU Services Directive 2009, your place of residence/nationality should not affect the price you pay.
- If you register a complaint with the trader, they must respond 'within a reasonable time' under EU law.
- Check terms and conditions before booking your hire car - that way you'll know who has the right to charge you for the car rental.
- A new European Car Rental Conciliation Service (ECRS) is being trialled by some of the big car hire companies for customers who have booked cars direct, NOT through a rental broker or travel agent. It has been partly created by the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA).
- Call the UK European Consumer Centre for practical advice and support on disputes involving EU traders.



Offering
support and advice
for **consumers**
shopping across
the EU

A stylized, semi-circular globe in a dark purple hue, showing the outlines of continents and a grid of latitude and longitude lines. Overlaid on the globe, specifically over the European continent, are twelve yellow stars of varying sizes, arranged in a semi-circular pattern that mimics the flag of the European Union.

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UK European Consumer Centre - Delivered by the Trading Standards Institute

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To find out more about what the UK ECC can do for you, visit our website www.ukecc.net. Please remember that the information in this leaflet can provide general guidance only.

Sign up to the UK ECC newsletter, 'your update' through our website www.ukecc.net

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