



TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

THE BUSINESS TRAVEL MANAGERS

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## **Car Hire Confusion....? Tops tips to consider when hiring a car**

Car Hire is quite often one of the elements of a trip which the traveller may book at the last minute – but it is also commonly one of the major headaches for travellers in terms of the inconvenience that it causes when it goes wrong....

In this article we have included some top tips to consider when hiring a car.

## **Before you book- do you have all of the required documents to rent a car?**

Before you book a car hire reservation, make sure that you have all of the mandatory documents that are necessary to avoid you being turned away at the car hire desk.

- Drivers will need a valid Driving license to drive abroad, you may also need an International Driving permit in some non EU Countries.
- The car hire company may also ask you for a 'car check code' so that they can view your driving record. Drivers are advised to obtain their code prior to travel, once obtained it is valid for 21 days. Drivers can apply via <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>
- An International Driving Permit may be required to drive outside of the EU/EEA and can be obtained from the post office.
- The car hire company will often require a credit card in the drivers name to be produced at the time of car collection - to pre authorise any insurance excess etc.
- Under 25? To rent a car in the UK and many other countries you have to be over 21 and held a driving license for a minimum of one year. Drivers under 25 are limited to a selected of cars and will have to pay a young driver surcharge.

## **Booking your car hire - do you really need super collision damage waiver.....?**

Once the above is in order you are now ready to book your car hire reservation. The adverts for car hire quite often make this process appear easy and hassle free – but make sure that you read the small print to try and avoid unnecessary additional charges.

- Book using a reputable and well known supplier. There are plentiful car hire booking agents and franchises, but be mindful that more suppliers added to the communication chain leads to an increased chance of something going wrong.
- Rate appears too good to be true..? check where the car hire depot is located – not all of them are located at the airport and may involve a taxi ride to an off airport site to collect your car.
- Check your personal and your organisations insurance cover to determine the exact level of car hire insurance that you need. This should be included within your company travel policy.
- Car Hire rental desks will try and sell you Super Collision Damage Waiver whereby the excess can be reduced to zero - but with a hefty fee! It may be beneficial for you to purchase an independent annual car hire insurance policy.
- If your organisation is frequently booking car hire you should have a corporate agreement in place with a car hire organisation whereby you receive preferential rates and additional benefits including a fast track service at the car hire desk.



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- If you are booking your car hire for over 28 days - you will need to look for a longer lease agreement to avoid the driver having to frequently return the car hire to the depot to extend the agreement and to avoid additional charges.
- Check the cancellation policy – try to obtain a deal whereby you can cancel within 24 hrs of collecting the car, also note that many car hire companies impose a late return fee.
- When requesting additional extras such as sat navs and child seats, consider taking these items with you to avoid the car hire surcharges for these items. There is also no guarantee that these additional items will be available at time of collecting the vehicle.
- Research the legal requirements with regards to driving in the country that you are visiting and ensure that you are prepared. For example in France it is a legal requirement to have a number of items within the vehicle, including a Hi Viz vest and a breathalyser. The car hire company should have these inclusions but it is advisable to be knowledgeable of the legal requirements. You are also permitted to have a 'pollution sticker' on the vehicle when entering certain cities in France.

### **Collecting the car**

Hopefully you haven't endured lengthy queues at the car hire desk and persistent staff trying to sell you plentiful additional extras and you are now ready to collect your car! Take a few moments to take some precautions to protect yourself from any eventualities.

- Check the car hire firm's policy concerning refueling the car. Some car hire firms have a 'full to empty policy' whereby you collect the car with a full tank of fuel (usually at an inflated price) and you can return it empty. It sounds convenient but does add additional cost, particularly if you are not going to use the full tank that you have paid for.
- When you collect the car from the parking lot – make a note of every blemish or scratch (interior and exterior) on the rental agreement. Check that the spare wheel is inflated and undamaged and record the mileage. Take pictures/video's of the car as additional proof and get the rental desk to sign the agreement after the above has been identified.
- Ensure that you have contact details of who to contact in an event of an emergency and if you require road side assistance.

### **Returning the vehicle**

- Be sure to return the vehicle by the agreed date and time to avoid late surcharges and an additional day's rental charge. Call the car hire company to extend your rental if you do need to amend your car hire agreement dates.
- Car hire branches have individual opening times - so factor these in to ensure that you are not left with additional charges or waiting around.
- Abide by the refueling options that you have agreed to refrain from hefty refueling costs.
- It may be possible for you to return your car to a different location, subject to the supplier's policy, the vehicle type you are hiring and the route that you intend to take – a one way fee may apply for this service.



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- Take pictures/videos of the car exterior/interior and record the mileage to use as evidence in case of any claims etc.

The above is only a snapshot of what to take into consideration when hiring a car but we hope that it was a useful insight into factors to bear in mind when arranging car hire reservations.

ACE Travel manages the travel polices, traveler safety issues and budgets for clients in both London and Essex and have a range of products and services to assist clients with their corporate travel requirements.

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