

Hiring a car can be a cheap and practical way to travel if you do not own a car. It can sometimes be a more affordable option than taking your own car when travelling abroad. However, when hiring a car, it is essential to know the full terms and conditions of the contract and the costs and implications if there are any problems. It is also essential to make checks at different points. Where possible, [read reviews](#) about companies so you can compare offers and contract agreements.

The point at which you book a car

- Check the vehicle is suitable for your needs
- Check you hold a licence that allows you to drive it. (You cannot drive a manual car if you only have an automatic licence.)
- Check all the costs involved, including fuel policy, maximum mileage, out of hours fees, taxes, premium location fees, and additional driver fees.
- Check the insurance excess – This is the amount you will have to pay if the car is stolen or damaged. (Cheap hire can often mean a high excess.)
- Check if there is a pre-authorized payment on your credit card and know what this involves.
- Check what the insurance does and does not cover - you will need to get a driving licence code to share your driving record with the car hire company <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>

The point at which you collect the car

- Check the paperwork is what you agreed to – take a copy of the booking confirmation with you.
- Check the car is what you booked or at least very similar (as specified in many contracts).
- Check if there is no damage to the car. Ask the provider to mark it down on the paperwork if you see any. Take photos if possible.
- Check the fuel level and confirm what the fuel policy is.

The point at which you return the car

- Make sure you have complied with the contract you agreed to
- Make sure you have refilled with the correct fuel if this was required
- Make sure you point out any damage and be present when the provider does the final check.
- Make sure you have signed copies of the paperwork.

Gov.uk provides more information

www.gov.uk/government/publications/renting-a-car-advice-for-consumers

Get advice from the Citizens Advice consumer helpline 0808 223 1133

Welsh-speaking adviser 0808 223 1144. Relay UK - if you can't hear or speak on the phone, you can type what you want to say: 18001 then 0808 223 1133.