

The 10 top tricks of the car hire scammers

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Dirty car hire tricks could leave thousands of British tourists out of pocket this Easter

Unscrupulous car hire companies are using dodgy tactics to part holidaymakers from their cash.

Experts at [Economy Car Hire](#) have identified the top 10 car hire scams to watch out for when hiring a car for your holiday. These include hidden extra fees, being charged for pre-existing damage and extortionate insurance excesses.

1 - Extra charges - You're tempted by cheap prices, only to discover once you've signed up that you have to pay extra locally for insurance and breakdown services.

- **-Top tip:** Read the rental contract carefully when collecting the car. If there are any surprise charges, raise them with the car rental company or contact the broker you booked the car through.

2 - Steep insurance excesses - Prices often state that they include "full insurance", but there's actually an excess – the portion of any insurance claim you must pay yourself – of anything up to 3,000 Euros.

- **-Top tip:** Make sure you check the excess amount before driving away. Remember that damage to the wheels, glass parts and the underside of the car are usually excluded from standard insurance.

3 - Speedy sign-ups - Some companies expect you to sign the rental agreement before you can read it, so you end up agreeing to unexpected terms.

- **-Top tip:** DON'T be bullied into signing anything until you are ready to do so.

4 - 'Collect full, return empty' fuel policies - On arrival at the airport, you're told you have to pay for a full tank of petrol before you can pick up the car. You are then charged much more than it would have cost to fill up at a local petrol station. There's no refund for returning the car with unused fuel.

- **-Top tip:** Find out what the fuel policy is before booking. If online information isn't clear, phone the company and ask them.

5 - Expensive 'upgrades' - You arrive at the rental counter to be told "we're giving you an upgrade", only to find out later you've been charged for the upgrade without your permission.

- **-Top tip:** Always ask if an upgrade is free, or if you're going to have to pay for it. Refuse it if you are going to be charged.

6 - The insurance hard-sell - Local reps who are paid commission pressurise you into buying additional insurance which cannot be refunded or cancelled retrospectively.

- **-Top tip:** Stand your ground if you don't want to take out extra insurance. Check the rental contract carefully before signing in case the supplier has tried to add the cost of cover onto the price anyway.

7 - Pre-existing damage - You're made liable for damage which was already on the car when you collected it.

- **-Top tip:** Check the car thoroughly for existing damage before you drive away and make sure the car rental supplier marks this down. When collecting and returning the car, take photos of the vehicle including any damage if applicable.

8 - The exchange rate sting - When paying for additional extras such as child seats and Sat Nav upon collection, you are not given the option to pay in local currency. You are forced to pay in sterling, with a poor exchange rate applied.

- **-Top tip:** Always opt to pay for additional extras in local currency. Use a credit card that does not charge commission or fees for currency conversion.

- **9 - High deposits** - You're asked for a big deposit to cover the excess and potential parking fines. If you refuse, your only other option is to take out the expensive local additional insurance, costing as much as 15 Euros per day in Europe.
- **-Top tip:** Take a valid credit card with sufficient available funds when collecting your rental car as the supplier can use this to authorise a security deposit.

10 - Hefty repair costs - If your hire car is damaged, and it's not covered by the insurance, you're charged significantly more for repairs than they should actually cost.

- **-Top tip:** If you are charged for damage, ask to see a breakdown of charges, and a repair invoice. If the amount is unnecessarily high, ask the broker you booked through to challenge this with the rental company.

Rory Sexton, Managing Director of Economy Car Hire, said; "With car rental prices dipping to new lows of €1 per day, it's hardly a surprise that car hire suppliers are having to find new ways to increase their profits. Consumers need to familiarise themselves with the terms of their booking, and make sure that they read the rental contract when collecting the car. If there are any concerns or surprise charges, this is the time to raise the issue with the car rental company or contact the broker. We also advise customers to book through a broker in the UK which can provide the protection of UK consumer law."

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We are happy to provide comparisons of car hire prices worldwide upon request plus additional information on driving abroad.

To link to our website please use www.economycarhire.com

Notes to editors:

About Economy Car Hire

Economy Car Hire is an award-winning, family-run holiday car hire specialist providing inclusive car hire services worldwide including the UK, Europe, USA, Australia and beyond. Based in the UK and established in 2000, Economy Car Hire has grown to become the largest independent car hire broker in the UK arranging around 100,000 car rentals a year.

Working with some of the biggest brands in car hire, including Hertz, Avis, Alamo and Europcar, we are proud to be Which? magazine's best rated car hire broker for 2013, 2014 and 2015 and offer a value-added product with a strong customer focus. Our inclusive car rental service provides peace of mind with 24 hour telephone support and offers excellent value with built-in excess protection, FREE additional driver and unlimited mileage.

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