

---

# Zest Car Rental's Complete Guide to Car Hire.







## Who are Zest?

Founded as a family-run business in 2000 (previously known as Economy Car Hire), we have grown to become the largest independent car hire broker in the UK.

## Why the guide?

As your holiday approaches, as does the time for you to book your car hire. For some people, this is a regular occurrence which happens more than once a year. For others, this may be your first time. To help all our customers understand the options on offer and have an enjoyable time with your hire car, we've compiled a list of the top car hire queries and issues.

## Contents.

- 3** Why do I need a credit card?
- 4** How far in advance should I book my car hire?
- 5** What's CDW and why do you sell top-up insurance?
- 7** Why do I need to leave a security deposit?
- 9** Why is the car hire priced in GBP and the extras in the local currency?  
  
I want to add an extra to my booking but I don't want it for the whole duration- is this possible?  
  
What are the differences in fuel policy on offer?
- 10** I'm collecting my hire car late at night- why do I have to pay an out of hours' fee?  
  
I'm going to be late collecting my car, will the supplier wait for me?
- 11** How do I collect my hire car?
- 13** I think there was an extra charge on the rental agreement when I signed it- can I get this refunded?
- 14** The vehicle the car rental provider has given me isn't the one I booked – what do I do?  
  
I need to extend my rental- can I do this?
- 15** I've damaged my hire car – what's the process?
- 17** What happens if I'm going to be late returning my hire car?  
  
I can't find where I'm supposed to return my car!  
  
I don't feel comfortable leaving the vehicle as requested by the car rental provider.

---

## Why do I need a credit card to hire a car?



This is the most commonly asked question our Customer Support Team face. Through Zest, it's a basic requirement from all the car rental providers that we work with for a security deposit to be authorised on a credit card. If you don't have one, make sure you apply for one as soon as possible and be sure that it will have enough credit limit on it to cover the security deposit needed.

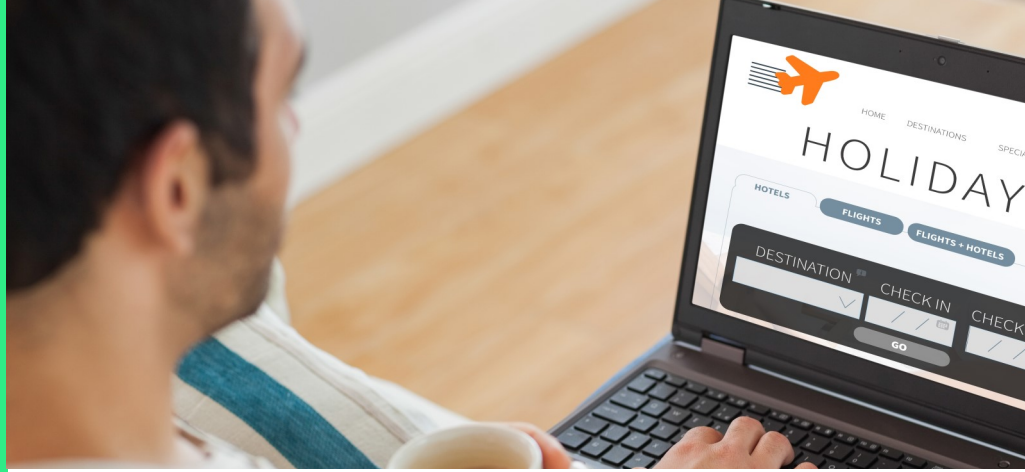
Having a credit card offers both you and the car rental provider more protection. You can read our full blog on why you need a credit card and the benefits [here](#).

It is not possible to make a booking on the Zest website without acknowledging that you have a credit card. Failure to present a credit card on collection of the vehicle could result in the vehicle being refused to you.

This will mark you as a "no show" and there will be no refund due.

---

## How far in advance should I book my car hire? Why do you work on a request basis?



We work on a request basis with all the car rental providers that we operate with. This means that when you submit your booking to us, it's sent onto the car rental provider for them to confirm. This ensures that they have the requested vehicle category available for your selected dates and times, and reduces your disappointment should you arrive and they can't meet your requirements. Once they have confirmed the booking, the cost of the rental will be deducted from your account. No money is processed until the car rental provider has confirmed the booking. In most cases, confirmation is received within a few hours, however, where there is a significant difference in time zone or holiday/weekend, this could be longer.

In the unlikely event that the car rental provider declines a booking due to lack of availability, a member of our Customer Support Team will call you to discuss alternative options.

To guarantee availability, we would recommend booking as far in advance as possible.

We discuss the benefits of booking your car hire in advance, rather than arranging it on arrival in your destination, [here](#).

---

**What's CDW  
and why do  
you sell top-up  
insurance?  
Will the car  
rental  
provider force  
me to buy  
their  
insurance?**



Car hire bookings made with Zest include Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) and Theft Waiver (TW) with either no insurance excess liability, or, where there is an excess, we include a standalone Excess Reimbursement Insurance policy (ERI) which provides a refund for any charges incurred in the event of Collision Damage or Theft.

Some items are excluded from the CDW cover such as wheels, tyres, and the glass parts of the vehicle. You can see a list of excluded items in our terms [here](#).

### **Top-up insurance**

We sell a top-up insurance product to cover damage to these excluded parts. This is a reimbursement policy so you would pay the car rental provider for any repairs needed and then make a claim back on the top-up insurance post-rental. This top-up insurance is supplied through a third party who stipulates some exclusions as to who can take out this cover. If top-up insurance is not offered to you on Step 2 of the booking process then unfortunately you don't meet the eligibility criteria required by the third-party

---

**What's CDW  
and why do  
you sell top-up  
insurance?**

**Will the car  
rental  
provider force  
me to buy  
their  
insurance?**

supplier. It is possible to source an alternative product elsewhere.

#### **Local insurance products**

As the top-up insurance is separate from the car rental provider, they won't be aware of what cover you have in place. Therefore, they may try to sell you their own local insurance product. Should you have our top-up insurance in place, or a policy from elsewhere, you can decline the local product. If you feel uncomfortable or pressured by the manner in which the local product is being offered to you, please don't hesitate to contact us at the time for assistance. A "hard sell" approach is certainly not the level of service we expect from the car rental providers that we work with and we are more than happy to liaise with them on your behalf.





---

**Why do I need to leave a security deposit?**  
**Will taking out top-up insurance remove the need for one?**



All the car rental providers that we work with require a security deposit to be left. The amounts required will vary between provider and location. The type of CDW included (whether it is no insurance excess or ERI) will have an impact on the amount.

The security deposit is initially to ensure the return of the vehicle. It also covers damage to uninsured parts of the vehicle, fuel charges if applicable, and in the unlikely event that a claim is made when the insurance has been invalidated. Taking out our top-up insurance will not remove the need for the deposit. The car rental provider may not require a security deposit if you take out their local product.

### **Security deposit refunds**

In the majority of cases, security deposits are only pre-authorised on your credit card. This means that the amount doesn't leave your account but is simply set aside for the car rental provider should it be needed. Once your vehicle is returned, the pre-authorisation is cancelled (as long as there is no damage to the vehicle). The length of time it

---

## **Why do I need to leave a security deposit?**

## **Will taking out top-up insurance remove the need for one?**

takes for this amount to show as available in your account depends on your bank provider and can take up to 10 working days. If your deposit has been debited, this should be refunded back to you on return of the vehicle.

Should your security deposit have been debited, be aware that any differences in the amounts may be due to the currency exchange rate. You may also face bank charges for currency conversion. Unfortunately, we have no control over this. If you want to check whether a car rental provider may debit your security deposit, please contact our Customer Support Team before placing your booking and they'll be able to advise you.

Should you have any queries over the return of your security deposit, please don't hesitate to contact our Customer Support Team upon your return on [customersupport@zestcarrental.com](mailto:customersupport@zestcarrental.com).



---

## **Why is the car hire priced in GBP and the extras in the local currency?**

As we are a UK based car hire broker, all of our rental prices are quoted and processed in Great British Pounds. We display the '£' symbol beside all of the rental prices shown on our website. Charges which are to be paid locally, such as fuel, the security deposit, or charges for extra equipment, are to be paid to the car rental provider in the local currency on collection of the vehicle.

---

## **I want to add an extra to my booking but I don't want it for the whole duration - is this possible?**

Unfortunately not. Any extra equipment hired from the car rental provider must be rented for the whole duration of the rental, not one part of it. This includes child/booster seats and SatNavs.

If there's a daily charge for a border exit then you will need to pay as if you were using it for the whole trip. This ensures that unplanned/extra travel is covered by the car rental provider's insurance.

---

## **What are the differences in fuel policy on offer?**

We cover the various different approaches to fuel for your hire car in a previous blog post which you can visit [here](#). When booking through Zest, you will always get a fair fuel policy.

---

## **I'm collecting my hire car late at night - why do I have to pay an out of hours' fee?**

It is common for car rental providers to charge a fee to customers who request a vehicle collection or return outside normal operating hours. The fee covers the time necessary for the representative to be available to go over the paperwork with you and survey the vehicle.

If your party is collecting more than one car, the out of hours' fee will be charged per vehicle. This is again to cover the additional time required for each vehicle.

---

## **I'm going to be late collecting my car, will the car rental provider wait for me?**

If you will no longer be collecting your car at the time you have booked, you need to let us know immediately. Don't assume that the car rental provider will hang around for you, even if you have provided your flight number. The provider may not be able to track flights, especially in peak season. If they are not aware that you are delayed, they will mark you down as a "no show" and may refuse you the car when you arrive, or charge you extra.

You also need to be aware that if you arrive outside the normal office hours of the car rental provider due to a delay, even if you haven't requested an out of hours' collection, you will have to pay the surcharge on collection. This out of hours' fee covers the time required for the provider's representative to stay and complete the handover of the vehicle.

---

## What do I do on arrival

## How do I collect my hire car?



Depending on where you are collecting your hire car from, and what car rental provider you have booked with, the collection procedures will vary. We covered the different types of collection policies in a previous blog [here](#). We've also weighed up the [pros and cons for collecting both on-site and off-site](#). Before placing your booking, check what options are available to you and decide which best suits you. If you're travelling with 5 suitcases and 3 small children, taking a shuttle bus to a depot may not be your best option if you can collect the car from the airport car park.

### Surveying the vehicle

Always make sure you dedicate enough time to surveying the vehicle before you drive away from the car rental provider. It's vital that you ensure the provider's representative has an accurate record of any pre-existing damage to the vehicle. You don't want to have to pay out or process an insurance claim for damage you didn't cause. Take the time to take photos of pre-existing damage so you have evidence if it's called into question later.



---

## What do I do on arrival?

## How do I collect my hire car?



You should also photograph the fuel gauge of the vehicle on collection so you have a record of the level of fuel that was provided in the vehicle. This is particularly important if the fuel policy for the vehicle is 'return with same amount'. It will be useful to have a record of what the fuel gauge should read when you return the vehicle. You should also check what amount of fuel has been recorded on the rental agreement to ensure it tallies with the gauge. If it doesn't, query this with the car rental provider and ask them to amend it.

It's at this time that you also get the chance to ask any questions about the vehicle or clear up any other issues so use this time to your advantage.

[Follow these tips if you're collecting your car in the dark.](#)

Two common issues that get raised, especially in the summer months when the air is dry and dusty, are dirty windscreens and empty windscreen washer bottles. Check the condition of the windscreen before you drive away from the supplier. If it's smeary and dirty, ask the car rental supplier to clean it. Check that the washers work and have a look at the washer bottles under the bonnet. Again, ask the provider to rectify any issues. If they refuse to comply, contact us at the time and we can liaise with them on your behalf.

---

**I think there was an extra charge on the rental agreement when I signed it - can I get this refunded?**



We always recommend that you take adequate time to read through the paperwork to be sure of what you're signing acknowledgement of.

The most common extra charge that people sign for is additional insurance. If you've taken out a our top-up insurance before travelling, any local insurance is unnecessary. Any charges for additional insurance cannot be refunded after a booking has taken place. If you've signed and accepted an additional product, we need to be contacted at the time of collection so we can liaise with the car rental provider to reverse this additional charge. If there are any unexplained charges on your rental agreement, query these before signing. If you're not happy with the explanation supplied by the provider then contact us before you sign the paperwork.

We appreciate that after a long flight, especially if there's been delays or complications, the last thing you want to do is focus on small print terms. Unfortunately, if you want to protect yourself from unnecessary charges, the rental agreement needs your attention.

---

## **The vehicle the car rental provider has given me isn't the one I booked – what do I do?**

---

When making a car hire booking, you're booking a category of vehicle rather than a specific make or model. The vehicle image shown is representative of the category you're booking and the vehicle you receive on collection should be of the same size and specification as the one shown. If you feel the vehicle you receive isn't in the same category you booked, query this with the car rental provider. If you're unsatisfied by their answer, call us before driving away and we'll be able to assist you.

---

## **I need to extend my rental - can I do this?**

If you wish to extend your rental, please contact us as soon as possible. We can liaise with the car rental provider to see if this is possible. It may mean that you have to return to the provider to sign a new rental agreement for the extended period. You may also have to change the vehicle. This will be discussed with you when the request is submitted to the provider. Note that the same rental costs may not apply as when you booked as prices can fluctuate under high demand and limited availability.

If you took out our top-up insurance product, you'll have to contact us in order to extend this. Extending your rental with the car rental provider can mean increased costs and lack of cover against damage.



---

## I've damaged my hire car – what's the process?



In the event that damage has been done to your car, such as a scratch on the bodywork or a dent, there's a set procedure you will need to follow.

It is essential that you contact the car rental provider when damage occurs so they are aware of the repair work required.

When claiming under a reimbursement policy (such as the Excess Reimbursement Insurance or top-up insurance) you will need to pay the car rental provider initially for any repairs. You will then need to submit a claim to the insurance provider. They will require certain information that must be obtained from the car rental provider. Through Zest's third party insurance provider, this is usually a copy of the rental agreement and the damage invoice.

You will also need to provide a copy of your insurance certificate (contained within your car rental voucher), a copy of the bank statement showing the transaction for the repair costs, and copies of your driving licence (front and back). If you've been involved in a road traffic accident,

---

## I've damaged my hire car – what's the process?

you will need a police report in order to support your claim.

While we liaise with the car rental provider in getting the necessary documents for you, you can be starting the claims process. This means your claim can be processed as soon as the documents are received from the provider.

All claims must be submitted online through the link provided with your car rental voucher. Should you ever need support in starting the claims process, or have queries about an ongoing claim, please don't hesitate to contact our Customer Support Team on [customersupport@zestcarrental.com](mailto:customersupport@zestcarrental.com).



---

## **What happens if I'm going to be late returning my hire car?**

Please contact us as soon as possible so that we can let the car rental provider know. Be aware that should this make your rental run into another day, you will face additional charges. Our Customer Support Team will advise you of any further charges when you make us aware of the delay.

---

## **I can't find where I'm supposed to return my car!**

When collecting the vehicle, the car rental provider will provide you with instructions on how and where to return your hire car. If, when you're heading to return the vehicle, these are unclear or you're confused, please contact the provider, or ourselves, for further assistance and direction.

---

## **I don't feel comfortable leaving the vehicle as requested by the car rental provider.**

We understand that some car rental providers will require vehicles to be left in unattended car parks with the keys discreetly concealed somewhere on the vehicle. They are aware of the risks with this and as such, please do follow their instructions to ensure they are able to locate and collect the car. If you have any concerns over the security of the vehicle, you can contact the Customer Support Team to liaise with the provider regarding their retrieval of the vehicle.





**Car hire without the catch.**

**Zest Car Rental**

Nelson House, Church Street,  
Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1DJ  
United Kingdom

**T 0333 336 1554**

**or +44 1362 852288**

**E [info@zestcarrental.com](mailto:info@zestcarrental.com)**