



European Consumer News

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Renting a car is a convenient way to get around but it can be problematic, as the numerous car-rental complaints which ECC Ireland receives from consumers demonstrate. This month's e-bulletin offers advice on how to have a hassle-free car rental. If you have a problem with a purchase from another EU country, please contact us on 01 8090600 or [click here](#). For information on your consumer rights in Europe, see www.eccireland.ie

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Driving a hard bargain?

Most consumers enjoy problem-free car rentals but things can go wrong in the following areas:

- Additional charges are imposed when the consumer picks up the car as the price quoted does not include all charges, such as location surcharge, insurance, or fuel
- Consumers' credit cards are charged after the return of the car, without any prior notification, for alleged damages incurred

To avoid problems such as these it is worth being aware of the following when booking a car rental:

- Make sure you check what is included in the price quoted and what is not. If you book the car through a third party website, check that any insurance purchased is with the car rental provider and not the third party as otherwise you may end up purchasing additional insurance again when you pick up the car.
- Ensure that you understand what is covered by your insurance and what is left out. It is also very important to know the excess amount that could be charged to your credit card in case of an accident.
- Make sure that you have valid documentation, including driving license and the type of payment card required.
- Try to return the car at the time and at the location agreed. Otherwise, you may incur additional drop off fees and charges for any extra days.
- Try to return the car during the working hours of the car rental company and have it inspected by a competent employee. The condition of the vehicle should be confirmed in writing and signed by you and a representative of the company.

If you cannot do so take photos of the car to prove that you are returning it in good condition.

For more information on safe and happy car rentals [see our website](#)

2. I booked an automatic car from a third party website and paid a 10% deposit. I was told to pay the balance of €300 when I picked up the vehicle at the airport. Unfortunately, when I arrived, I was informed that they did not have the requested car as they only had cars with manual transmission. After a lot of hassle, I found one from another car rental company but had to pay an additional €600. I informed the third party website immediately, requesting a refund. Despite calling them several times and writing numerous e-mails, no answer has been forthcoming. What can I do?

Firstly you should check carefully the terms and conditions of your car rental contract. It is possible that the contract for a rental vehicle is between the consumer and rental vehicle provider only, and in this case it is the rental vehicle provider's sole responsibility to provide you with the type of vehicle booked through the third party website. Under such circumstances, the liability of the third party website may be limited to the introductory service fee only and you should contact the vehicle provider to seek compensation for their failure to supply the agreed vehicle. If the car rental company does not respond to you, or fails to resolve the matter to your satisfaction, please contact ECC Ireland for further advice and assistance.

If you want more information about this or any other cross-border consumer issue you can contact us on 01 8090600 or at www.eccireland.ie.

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