



Vehicle Return Guide

Getting your hire vehicle ready for inspection and collection

Please read this guide carefully to make sure your vehicle is ready when our inspector arrives. Following these steps helps the return go smoothly and avoids unnecessary charges. Note that the inspector will not be able to wait while you clean, fuel or charge the vehicle.

Before the Inspection

A few simple things make all the difference on the day:

1. Clean the outside of the vehicle so it can be inspected in detail, and valet the interior.
2. Park somewhere safe, off the road, with at least 2 metres of clear space all around so the inspector can walk around and photograph it.
3. Remove all personal items – sunglasses, dash cameras, chargers, documents. Anything left behind after collection cannot be returned.
4. Turn off the climate control / air conditioning.
5. Make sure there are no warning lights showing on the dashboard.
6. Check the vehicle starts and is fully functional, with enough fuel to reach the nearest fuel station.

Tyres & Wheels

1. Tread must be at least 1.6mm across the centre three-quarters of the tyre, all the way round.
2. Tyres must be free from nails, glass or other foreign objects (stones in the tread are fine).
3. Both front tyres must match each other, and both rear tyres must match each other, in size.
4. No cuts, cracks or bulges – a cut over 25mm, or one deep enough to reach the cord, or any bulge, will stop the inspection.
5. Tyres must be the correct type and size for the vehicle, and correctly inflated with no pressure warning light showing.
6. Wheel rims should be free from dents and holes.

Windscreen

1. No chips or cracks larger than 10mm in the driver's main line of vision (the A-Zone).
2. No chips or cracks larger than 40mm in the wider area swept by the wipers (the B-Zone).
3. No heavy scratching that could affect the driver's view.
4. Wiper blades must be undamaged and clear the screen properly.
5. Any previous repairs must be to a professional standard, with a warranty of workmanship.

Servicing, MOT & Documents

1. The vehicle must have been serviced in line with the manufacturer's schedule. Bring the service book (if supplied), stamped and dated – or invoices showing the date, mileage and servicing garage.
2. Remove any personal details (name, address, phone number) from service paperwork before handing it over.
3. The vehicle must hold a current, valid MOT with no outstanding safety recalls. You can check both free on gov.uk. Without a valid MOT we may not be able to drive the vehicle away.
4. Any items missing at inspection will be charged for and cannot be added back afterwards – a boot security seal is fitted once the inspection is complete.

Electric & Hybrid Vehicles

1. Charge the vehicle to at least 90% before the inspector arrives.
2. Leave all charging cables and bags that came with the vehicle in the boot (usually a fast-charge and a home-charge cable). Missing cables are noted on the report.
3. On colder days, pre-heat the vehicle to clear any windscreen condensation so it's ready to drive away.
4. Clear all personal data – saved sat-nav addresses, paired phones, charging and parking apps. If you factory reset the system, set the odometer back to miles (not kilometres).

On the Day of Inspection

1. The inspector will call the evening before or on the day with an estimated arrival time (subject to traffic).
2. They'll show identification, explain the process, and take the keys, documents and any loose items.
3. The inspection takes roughly 30–45 minutes. Findings are recorded with photos and you'll be asked to sign the report.
4. You'll receive a copy of the report shortly afterwards. Once inspected, please do not drive the vehicle again – doing so can invalidate the report.
5. Most vehicles are collected the same day. If not, we'll confirm a collection date separately.

Fair Wear & Tear – What May Be Chargeable

“Fair wear and tear” is the normal deterioration that happens through everyday use – it is not chargeable. Damage is different: it results from an impact, harsh treatment, neglect or a missing item, and it can be recharged when the vehicle is returned. The BVRLA sets an industry-wide standard for where that line falls. The categories below are the ones inspectors look at most closely.

Bodywork, paint & bumpers

Usually acceptable: small stone chips, minor bumper scuffs, and light surface scratches that haven't broken through to primer or bare metal.

May be charged: scratches through the paint to primer or metal, dents with broken or cracked paint, cracked or heavy bumper scuffs, and rust or corrosion.

Panel dents

Usually acceptable: very small, shallow dents on flat areas of a panel where the paint is intact.

May be charged: dents on a panel edge, swage line (styling crease) or the roof, dents with broken paint, and larger or multiple dents on the same panel.

Alloys, wheels & trims

Usually acceptable: light scuffing to the wheel rim from normal use.

May be charged: kerb damage that gouges or scrapes the rim face beyond light scuffing, cracked or buckled wheels, and missing or damaged wheel trims.

Glass, lights & mirrors

Usually acceptable: light scratches that don't sit in the driver's line of sight, and window chips professionally repaired and warrantied.

May be charged: chips or cracks assessed to the MOT standard (see the Windscreen section), damaged or cracked lamps and mirrors, and scratches affecting the driver's view.

Tyres & running gear

Usually acceptable: even tread wear within the legal limit and light marks from normal use.

May be charged: tyres below the legal tread limit, cuts, bulges, cord showing, mismatched or wrong-specification tyres, and damage from kerbing.

Interior & controls

Usually acceptable: light soiling that cleans off, and minor wear consistent with the vehicle's age and mileage.

May be charged: rips, tears, burns or heavy staining to seats, trim or carpets, odours (smoke especially), and broken or missing controls or trim.

Equipment, keys & documents

Usually acceptable: – all supplied items present and working.

May be charged: missing keys (including the locking wheel-nut key), missing parcel shelf / load cover, spare wheel or inflation kit, charging cables, handbooks, service records, or SD cards.

Servicing & livery

Usually acceptable: a full, up-to-date service history in line with the manufacturer's schedule.

May be charged: missed or overdue services with no evidence, and any signage, livery or stickers not fully removed (including glue residue and paint shadowing).

This is a plain-English summary to help you check your vehicle. The full, definitive standard – with sizes, examples and photos – is set out in the BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear Standard for Cars, which is the document your vehicle is actually assessed against.

Fair Wear & Tear – Detailed Thresholds

The measurements below are the commonly published BVRLA car thresholds. They are a guide only – location matters as much as size, and the official BVRLA Car Standard is the final authority.

Area	Within tolerance (not charged)	Outside tolerance (may be charged)
Paint scratches	Surface scratches up to ~25mm where primer/metal is NOT showing	Scratches over ~25mm, or any that expose primer or bare metal
Stone chips	Minor chips consistent with normal road use	Large or clustered chips, or chips leading to rust
Dents	Very small, shallow dents on a flat panel, paint intact	Dents over ~10mm, dents with broken paint, more than two on a panel, or any on a swage line or roof
Bumpers	Minor scuffs and small surface scratches	Cracks, splits, or heavy/deep scuffing
Alloys / wheels	Light rim scuffing from normal use	Kerb gouging beyond light scuffing, cracks, buckling
Glass	Light scratches out of the driver's sightline; repaired, warrantied chips	Chips/cracks assessed to MOT standard; damage in the driver's view
Tyres	Even wear above the legal tread limit	Below legal tread, cuts, bulges, cord showing, wrong spec
Interior	Light soiling that cleans off; wear matching age/mileage	Rips, tears, burns, heavy staining, odours, broken trim
Keys & items	All supplied keys, tools and accessories present	Any missing key (incl. locking wheel-nut key), parcel shelf, spare/inflation kit, charge cable, handbook
Servicing	Full history to manufacturer schedule	Missed/overdue services with no evidence

Figures are approximate and can be revised by the BVRLA. Always check the current BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear Standard for Cars for the exact, up-to-date measurements. If a charge is raised you'll receive a breakdown with photographic evidence, and you can request an independent inspection if you disagree.

Your Return Checklist

Run through this before your inspection to make sure nothing is missed.

Cleanliness & personal data

- ☐ Exterior cleaned
- ☐ Interior valeted
- ☐ Climate control / A/C off
- ☐ Sat-nav & paired devices cleared
- ☐ Personal items removed (sunglasses!)
- ☐ Keyrings removed from keys

Condition & safety

- ☐ Valid MOT, no recalls
- ☐ Tyres checked
- ☐ Windscreen meets standard
- ☐ Vehicle starts & runs
- ☐ Enough fuel (or 90% charge for EVs)
- ☐ No warning lights showing
- ☐ Seatbelts working

Items to hand over

- ☐ V5C (unless we hold it)
- ☐ Service book & service evidence
- ☐ Master key & any spares
- ☐ Parcel shelf / load cover
- ☐ Spare wheel or inflation kit
- ☐ Locking wheel-nut key
- ☐ EV charging cable(s)

If any of these are not done before the inspection, a cancellation fee may apply. Anything placed in the boot is protected by a boot seal once the inspection is complete.

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