

FOUR MORE WEAR AND TEAR WATCH POINTS.



Servicing. Trade buyers mark-down the price of cars if they don't have a full service history, which can lead to a de-hire charge. Make sure your car receives all its scheduled services and that its service record is stamped each time.

Documents. Keep track of all your car's documents including the operation manual, service booklet, satellite navigation discs and records of audio equipment security codes. These must be with the vehicle when it is returned.

Appearance. Clean the bodywork and interior regularly. It's a good idea to polish the exterior three or four times a year, as this helps to minimise stone chip damage and makes routine washing easier.

Vehicle Keys. Today's electronic car keys can cost over £250 to replace. All spare keys and locking wheel nuts, if originally supplied, must be returned with the car to avoid de-hire charges.

TEN TIPS FOR MINIMISING CAR DAMAGE.

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| <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly clean and inspect your car • Approach kerbs slowly • Choose well lit areas when parking • When parking at the supermarket, park away from trolley bays • Place a blanket or similar article across the rear seat when carrying small children | <p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park your car next to a neglected car • Open the car door with the key remote in your hand • Use attachable air fresheners inside the car (the contents can melt car interiors) • Display potentially provocative stickers, e.g. football club/slogans/political • Place articles such as briefcases or soft drink cans on the bodywork for any reason |
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ROUTINE CHECKS AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT PROBLEMS.

Clean your car regularly and check for damage that will need to be put right before the car is replaced. Repairs should always be carried out to a professional standard. If you notice a fault, consult your car policy and notify your fleet manager, who will decide what to do. Some bodywork faults can be rectified relatively inexpensively, using so-called smart repair techniques, if spotted in time. Give your car a thorough check-up at least 10 weeks before it is due for replacement, so there is ample time to rectify any faults.



COMPANY CAR 'WEAR AND TEAR'.

AT-A-GLANCE HINTS AND TIPS FOR AVOIDING ADDITIONAL DE-HIRE COSTS.

Millions of pounds are spent each year repairing or refurbishing company vehicles before resale. As more employers ask drivers to pay towards these costs, this guide shows you what to look out for.

A major unseen expense of running a car fleet – often hidden from drivers at any rate – are 'wear and tear' charges.

These charges relate to the costs of putting right excessive wear such as scuffs, dents, scratches and other damage. They are usually applied at the end of a car's fleet life. If such damage isn't fixed it can knock hundreds or even thousands of pounds from a company car's resale value.

Ultimately, employers and drivers bear these costs. They can expect to receive a 'de-hire' charge from their leasing company if there is excessive wear that has to be put right before reselling the car. If the employer owns the car, they will lose money because the car will be worth less than budgeted for at time of resale.

Research by industry magazine Fleet News has found that over 40% of returning lease cars need refurbishment before resale. The average cost is over £290 per car.

While a few chips and scratches are unavoidable, employers are increasingly asking drivers to share the cost of mending 'wear and tear' that goes beyond agreed industry standards for what is acceptable.

This guide aims to help you to understand where this line is drawn. The diagram on the following page will help you to decide whether 'wear and tear' on your vehicle would be acceptable or whether it might result in a repair bill.

It's not just a matter of knowing what to avoid. Some faults, such as certain types of windscreen damage, often turn into costly repair jobs unless dealt with promptly.

The BMW | MINI Business Partnership Programme is a scheme designed specifically for fleets with less than 50 vehicles, operated via the BMW and MINI dealer network. The BMW | MINI Business Partnership caters for customers with small fleets by offering dedicated Business Manager support, to help fleet managers through every stage of the decision making process. Customer benefits of being a member include complimentary specification upgrades on most models, and free membership. Copies of this guide are available free-of-charge to employers for distribution to business drivers and other employees.

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COMPANY CAR FAIR 'WEAR AND TEAR' STANDARDS*

This chart shows examples of common 'wear and tear' problems. The standards applied are those laid down by the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), which are widely used as a benchmark in the vehicle industry.

Except for very minor faults, it is always best to repair damage when it occurs. Leaving repairs until the last minute can result in a bigger bill for you or your employer. Many employers are now passing these costs on to drivers. Don't forget that your company's driver handbook or car policy, if it has one, may specify additional standards, e.g. no smoking or pets in company vehicles.

'Wear and tear' standards take account of a car's age and mileage, so expect a tougher assessment at the end of a two-year contract than a four-year one.

WINDSCREEN AND WINDOWS.

All glass should be kept clean for safety reasons and so that damage is easy to see. Damage in the driver's direct line of sight or affecting heating elements should be repaired immediately.

Chips must be repaired.

CHIPS.

Small areas of chipping, including door edge chipping are acceptable, provided that the base coat has not been penetrated and there is no corrosion.

Excessive chips should be repaired before the car is returned.

DENTS.

Minor dents are acceptable provided that the base coat has not been penetrated and there is no corrosion. More than one dent per panel is not acceptable.

Dents over 10mm are not acceptable.

MECHANICAL CONDITION.

Any sign of abuse or neglect, such as brake damage from worn-out pads; engine damage due to ignoring coolant or other warning lights; clutch and gearbox noise and slippage, and excessive damage to the underside, will usually lead to a de-hire charge.

TYRES.

All tyres, including the spare, must meet the minimum legal standard for tread depth and sidewall condition. They must be of the type, size and speed rating recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.

Replace tyres with damaged tread or sidewalls immediately.

INSIDE THE CAR.

The interior upholstery and trim, including boot linings, must be clean with no visible burns, tears or staining. All original in-car entertainment equipment must be intact and operate correctly. Optional extras fitted by the manufacturer or dealer should be returned with the car unless otherwise agreed with the leasing company. Any holes or other damage from fitting phones or other equipment must be repaired.

Light staining to seats is acceptable but tears (above) and burn marks are not.

IN THE BOOT.

The spare wheel, jack and other tools, if originally supplied, must be intact, stowed properly and in good working order.

ACCIDENT DAMAGE.

Accident damage should be repaired to a professional standard as soon as possible. There should be no signs of rust or corrosion. Obvious evidence of poor repair is not acceptable.

Damage (shown) should be repaired as soon as possible.

LAMPS/LENSES.

Lamps and lenses should be replaced if cracked or holed.

Only minor damage to lenses are acceptable. Holes (shown) or cracks allowing water to get in are not.

DOOR MIRRORS.

Missing, cracked, badly scuffed or damaged door mirrors are not acceptable. If adjustable and/or heated, they must work correctly.

Small marks (shown) on door mirrors are acceptable.

WHEELS AND WHEEL TRIMS.

Minor scuffing to the outside edge of alloy wheels and trims is acceptable but scoring and other damage to the wheel surface is not acceptable.

Bad scuffs and dents to alloy wheels or wheel covers are not acceptable.

SCRATCHES.

Light scratches and abrasions up to 25mm long are acceptable as long as they have not penetrated the base coat and there is no corrosion.

Scratches longer than 25mm (shown), or through to the base coat, are not acceptable.

*Please note that this is for illustrative purposes only. It follows industry standard practice but individual assessments and leasing company standards can vary. Always consult your fleet manager or leasing company about any damage or repair to your company car.