



Rental Vehicles Being Taken Abroad

Business Impact

Ensure your vehicles when travelling abroad, carry the correct documentation and equipment.

Background

When renting a vehicle it is essential to check if your customer intends to take your vehicle abroad. With the range of requirements imposed in the different European countries, one of the first points you need to establish is to which country your customer is travelling.

Document Requirements

Driving Licence

A current full (not provisional) UK Driving Licence is valid in most countries throughout the world, with a few exceptions (a current list of those countries can be obtained from the RAC). In those countries which do not recognise a UK Driving Licence you will need, in addition, an International Driving Permit (IDP). An IDP is internationally recognised and normally allows the holder to drive a private motor vehicle without additional formality. They can be obtained from the RAC or the AA.

UK citizens must carry their licences at all times, as it must be produced on demand. There are no days of grace as there are in the UK. Please note that the minimum driving age varies from country to country.

Vehicle on Hire Certificate (VE103B)

In 1963 an UN resolution was implemented to prevent the international movement of stolen vehicles. The resolution required that authentic proof was necessary to ensure that the hirer had the permission of the vehicle owner to take the vehicle abroad.

The VE103B, is the legally accepted evidence of that permission, it also replaces the need to carry the vehicle registration document (V5) with the vehicle, which would otherwise be required abroad. Photocopies of the relevant documents and letters of authority are not legally recognised alternatives. Members should ensure their customers have the appropriate documentation before travel. Failure to do so could subject the hirer to a fine/or the vehicle being impounded. VE103B certificates are available from Member Services on 01494 545704.

Immigration – Driver Alert

There is a tough penalty regime affecting owners, operators and drivers of vehicles used to “transport” illegal immigrants. Port Police may prosecute anyone bringing immigrants into the UK illegally. If found guilty, the crime is punishable with imprisonment! A Civil Penalty may also be issued to the owner of £2000 per illegal entrant.

The BVRLA has produced guidance called ‘Returning from Europe’, which is available in the Members only section of the BVRLA website, www.bvrla.co.uk. This guide gives advice on how to prevent illegal immigrants accessing vehicles and subsequently putting the driver and the hire company at risk of severe financial penalties. It also includes a vehicle check card section for drivers to fill out when re-entering the UK ports. This guidance is specifically designed to help Members put forward a defence to show that an ‘effective system’ was in operation.

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International Motor Insurance

The UK motor insurance policy provided to or by the customer will usually provide the legal minimum cover required by law in EC countries and also in Austria, The Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland (Insurance requirements across Europe demand a minimum of third party risk cover).

If the insurance offers comprehensive cover, you will need to notify the insurance company to extend the full policy to the Continent. Failure to do so might mean that the insurance is automatically reduced to third party cover only. A copy of the relevant insurance must be carried with the vehicle. If a boat or caravan is to be towed, you should make sure that the policy covers towing in Europe.

Green Card

Although it is generally not a legal requirement, some rental companies and their insurers prefer to issue an International Motor Insurance Certificate, also known as the Green Card to evidence effective comprehensive insurance. Green cards are not compulsory in the EU but are required in many countries outside it.

Bail Bond in Spain

In Spain, the authorities can act severely following a road traffic accident. The normal procedure is still for drivers to be imprisoned until responsibility for the accident and compensation matters are dealt with. At the very least, drivers and their passengers are likely to be delayed and inconvenienced - a fact propounded when the authorities learn that the vehicle has been hired.

To avoid this situation, insurers can issue bail bonds, which the Spanish authorities will accept as a guarantee of payment should any claims be proven against the insured driver.

Thus, although it ceased to be a mandatory requirement some time ago, the BVRLA recommends that Members obtain a bail bond for travel in Spain. Indeed, the FTA goes so far as to advise that the limit of the bail bond should be at least £10,000. If you do have any queries please contact Nora Leggett at the Executive on 01494 545713 or email her on nora@bvrla.co.uk.

Passports and Visas

UK citizens travelling to Continental Europe must be in possession of a valid passport that will not expire during the course of the trip. If you are planning to visit countries outside of the European Union, please note that some countries have an immigration requirement for a passport to remain valid for a minimum period beyond the date of entry to the country (any questions should be addressed to their Consulate or Embassy).

For certain other countries a visa will be required. This consists of an authorisation issued generally by the country's embassy in the UK. The visa must be of the correct type and of sufficient duration. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office can advise on visa requirements (www.fco.gov.uk).

Motor Breakdown Insurance

For peace of mind for both the vehicle rental operator and for the customer, you should arrange vehicle breakdown insurance through a leading motoring organisation. The cover provided should be comprehensive, essential for protecting your vehicle from additional loss or damage.

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European Breakdown Cover

Due to change in Insurance legislation in January 2005, the BVRLA is no longer allowed to sell AA5Star cover to its Members. The following table aims to help you choose the best options available to you:

COMPANY	PRODUCT	CONTACT	WHAT IS COVERED	MINIBUS?
AA	AA 5 STAR This product can no longer be sold by the BVRLA	Rental companies and individual hirers should call 0800 55 11 88	The Renter and the vehicle for a specified period of time, directly paid for by the Renter	YES
AA	FLEET EUROPE Exclusive to BVRLA Members	Members should email fleetenquiries@theaa.com and include contact details, size of fleet etc You should state you are a BVRLA Member	The entire fleet for 1 year (cars only) Member benefits: roadside assistance, parts delivery & repatriation back to UK Renter benefits: onward travel costs including car hire up to £750	NO
AON	EUROP ASSISTANCE There is an initial set up fee if you are not insured by AON	Members should either Fax Rosemarie Spiers requesting details on 0118 926 4666 or Phone her on 0118 929 5070	Pay per use as a standard feature Payments are collected by Direct Debit Premiums vary according to vehicle type and size and the number of days and countries visited Details are supplied upon request	YES

For further information please see Factsheet No. 547 (Insurance Mediation Regulation).

Other Requirements

Accessories

In some countries it is compulsory to carry certain spare parts (check with the AA or RAC). It is always strongly advisable to carry spare light bulbs, fuses, supplies of oil and water and a fire extinguisher.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is required in many countries, including the UK.

Headlamp Adjustment

It is obligatory to use dipped headlights when driving in Europe. Headlamp converters can be purchased from most car accessory stores nationwide.

Snow Chains

In many regions of Europe, a set of snow chains is a legal requirement during winter. Advise customers that they should use them only when compulsory or necessary because prolonged use on hard surface will damage tyres.

Spare Clutch and Accelerator Cables

A broken clutch and/or accelerator cable is the most common cause for a motor vehicle to break down. Cars in the UK are generally fitted with a different size clutch and accelerator cable than cars in Europe, therefore finding local replacements may be difficult. Whilst most continental motoring packages do include a replacement parts, location and despatch service, it may be worth providing your customer with a spare cable just in case.

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Vehicle Nationality Plate (GB Plate)

UK registered vehicles displaying Euro-plates (circle of 12 stars above the national identifier on blue background) are no longer obliged to affix a GB sticker to the rear of the vehicle when driving in European Union countries. However, a GB sticker is still required on the rear of any UK registered motor vehicle, caravan or trailer if it does not display Euro plates or when it is being driven in any non-European Union countries. You should ensure that this is correctly positioned, as close as possible to the rear number plate.

Warning Triangle

This should be carried (two are required in certain cases) in case of accident or breakdown and is compulsory in most European countries.

Reflective Jackets

Under new law, it is obligatory in some European countries to carry at least one reflective yellow or orange reflective jacket that conforms to European Standard EN47 (details of these countries can be found on the RAC website www.rac.co.uk). This must be worn when standing with, inspecting or repairing a vehicle on a public highway. It is recommended that two reflective jackets are carried in the vehicle to accommodate for a passenger. Fines can be imposed if this law is not abided by.

Mini Buses

Both in the UK and Europe persons with a full D1 entitlement on their licence may drive a vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats *provided* that they are over 21 years old, have a full year's driving experience and that the vehicle is not used for hire or reward. In order to drive such a vehicle for hire or reward a category D licence must be held. This covers the driving of any passenger vehicle with more than eight passenger seats. Category D is the modern successor to the old PSV licence. Special documents and tachographs are mandatory throughout the EU. For more information contact your local Department of Transport Area Office or read Factsheet No. 508 (Driving a Minibus – UK & Abroad).

Passengers / Children in Cars

Many European countries do not permit children to travel as front-seat passengers, or only allow them to do so when using a restraint system appropriate to age and/or height.

For further information please contact the either the Member Services or Legal Services department on 01494 434747.