



What's The Damage?

A customer support guide on de-hire damage to light commercial vehicles

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Aim of this guide

The aim of this booklet is to clearly and simply inform you of Business Partner's policy regarding fair wear and tear and de-hire damage and to provide you with some examples.

De-hire damage charges

Business Partner use the Thatcham Rectification Analysis Costs System (TRACS) to assess de-hire damage charges. Each vehicle is categorised according to its size and specification. Thatcham evaluates repair times on a representative sample of vehicles in each category and circulates average timings for all typical repairs.

The costs for all components and materials are drawn from the Thatcham Parts Price Guide which significantly discounts the standard rates of retail body shops and the approved rates of insurance companies. There are no labour charges for replacing missing components.

When a de-hire damage charge is incurred, Business Partner will issue an invoice with supporting documentation.

Routine maintenance

A full service / maintenance record must be available for inspection on the vehicle's return. We also need to have all the relevant maintenance paperwork for tail lifts and cranes as per the LOLAR regulations.

As specified in our contracts, vehicles must be maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Routine servicing should be undertaken at recommended intervals by the manufacturers authorised agents and care should be taken to ensure that the vehicle's Service Record is stamped each time.

An MOT examination should be carried out by the required date and the valid MOT certificate should have been forwarded to Business Partner Fleet Admin Department. Drivers are responsible for and should ensure that oil, coolant and other fluid levels are checked regularly and maintained at appropriate levels between services. Any additional checks and procedures described in the vehicle's maintenance guide should also be conscientiously observed.

Any odometer alterations or changes must be reported. Unauthorised odometer changes or alterations are not acceptable; any costs incurred by Business Partner, caused by not disclosing the relevant information will be passed onto your contact.

De-hire charges apply if:

- A vehicle has not been maintained in accordance with your contract with Business Partner.
- A vehicle's service record is missing or incomplete and an alternative record is not available.
- Any component has deteriorated as a result of driver negligence.

Documentation

All vehicle documentation including the operation manual, a service book and any other documents relating to vehicle equipment, must be intact and available for inspection. All documents must be in the vehicle on its return – including details of all audio equipment security codes.

Keys and fobs

All keys and fobs supplied with the vehicle must be returned, including any spares. Special attention must be paid to 'master keys' or 'red keys' for engine management systems as the cost of replacing these is significant.

De-hire charges apply if:

Any of the above having been supplied or fitted are not returned with the vehicle.

Appearance

The vehicle's exterior should be sufficiently clean to allow a detailed inspection. The cab as well as the cargo area should ideally have been valeted and cleared of any rubbish.

Tips for an accurate appraisal of a vehicle prior to its return:

- Do the appraisal 10/12 weeks prior to when the vehicle is due for return. This will allow you time to have any damage or faults rectified.

Please note:

Any repair work carried out must be to the manufacturer specifications.

- It is important to appraise a vehicle as honestly as you can – be objective. Ask a friend or colleague to help you.
- Choose a time and place with good, natural daylight. This is how Business Partner will examine your vehicle. Appraisals carried out in poor light invariably miss faults and defects.
- Before appraising the vehicle make sure that it has been washed and is thoroughly clean but remember to allow time for it to dry. Water on paintwork masks faults.
- Walk all the way round the vehicle and examine closely each panel including the roof, sills and rear doors. Observe where the light is reflected differently from the dents and scratches.
- Crouch or kneel down at the front and rear of the vehicle and look along each side. This will help you pick up marks and dents that may otherwise have been difficult to spot.
- Inspect lamps, lenses, windows and mirrors for chips, cracks or holes.

- Check tyres (including the spare) for damage and that the wear on the tread across each tyre is even. Inspect wheels and wheel trims (if fitted) for scratches, dents or gouges. All tyres must be road legal when the vehicle is returned.
- Check upholstered areas for tears, burns, excessive marking or wearing.
- Inspect all controls, including audio equipment and accessories for damage.

Vehicle collection

Business Partner will arrange collection of the vehicle via one of our designated agents. The collection agent will complete a general 2 metre walk around the vehicle. A Proof of Collection Form will be provided to you at the time of collection.

Please note:

On collection, the vehicle must be in a roadworthy condition and, as such, should have a valid MOT certificate.

Please note:

A signature from yourselves is not required for us to recharge de-hire damage costs. A full appraisal of the vehicle will be completed upon arrival at one of our designated disposal sites, after which, an invoice for any chargeable de-hire damage will be sent to your appropriate contact. We will also endeavour to provide photographic evidence of any damage estimated in excess of £150.

Chips

Fair wear and tear

Any chipping of paintwork that can be attributed to normal usage e.g. chips caused by stones flying off the road surfaces. Areas of chipping, including door edge chipping, are acceptable relative to the vehicle's age and mileage, provided that the base coat has not been penetrated and that there is no evidence of corrosion.

De-hire charges apply if:

There is excessive chipping of paint work around door locks, door edges or surrounds not consistent with the vehicle's age and mileage particularly if the base coat has been penetrated and if there is any evidence of corrosion.



Scratches

Fair wear and tear

- Isolated scratches under 45mm in length.
- Multiple scratches in any panel area provided that there is no exposure of primer or bare metal.

De-hire charges apply if:

- There are scratches over 45mm in length that have penetrated through to the primer or bare metal.
- There are multiple scratches less than 45mm in length on any panel area that have penetrated through to the primer or bare metal (scuffing).



All the photos shown are of unacceptable damage

Dents

Fair wear and tear

Isolated dents under 45mm in diameter – provided the paintwork or other surface finish is unbroken and that there is no perceptible crease in the dented panel.

De-hire charges apply if:

- There are any dents over 45mm in diameter.
- There are multiple dents less than 45mm in diameter within a localised area including those sustained from the vehicle's interior.
- There are any dents where primer or bare metal has been exposed.
- Damage left from a fitting being removed.
- Any inadequate repairs.

Please note:

Dents of a severity that are beyond an effective repair being made will be classed as panel replacements and charged in accordance with the current Thatcham price guides.



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Glass, lamps and mirrors

Fair wear and tear

Light scratching and or minor chipping of any glass, lamp, lens or mirror.

De-hire charges apply if:

- Any damage occurs to the windscreen glass within the driver's line of sight that would constitute an MOT failure.
- There is any damage that affects heating elements on a rear screen.
- There are any holes or cracks in the lamp glass or lens.
- There is any damage to mirror glass or surround.



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Mouldings, bumpers and rubbing strips

Fair wear and tear

Light scuffing and score marks are acceptable provided the moulding or trim is not broken, cracked or deformed. Dents on a bumper adjacent to a loading area provided the bumper retains its shape and rigidity. Dents on bumpers over 100mm that are not adjacent to a loading area.

De-hire charges apply if:

- Any area of scuffing or scratching that is over 100mm in length i.e. where primer or basic material is exposed.
- Substantial damage where a bumper no longer retains its original shape or rigidity. There are any dents where primer or bare metal has been exposed.
- Any bumper that is incomplete, cracked, twisted or misaligned.



All the photos shown are of unacceptable damage

Wheels and tyres

Care should be taken when parking and manoeuvring so as to avoid damage especially to alloy wheels as these are easy to damage and are expensive to replace. However, if damage does occur, it should be repaired, or the wheel / wheel trim replaced – subject to necessary approval from Business Partner's approved supplier. Tyre pressures should be kept at manufacturers recommended pressures in order to avoid damage and undue wear. Under-inflation will cause excess wear on the edges of the tyre, while over inflation will cause excess wear on the centre of the tyre tread.

Please note:

All tyres must be road legal when the vehicle is returned.

Fair wear and tear

Light damage to wheel rims, any wear and tear to tyres that can be attributed to normal use and consistent with mileage – including spares.

De-hire charges apply if:

- The vehicle is returned with any wheels or tyres which do not conform to current legal requirements.
- There is any significant damage to the rim or main body of a wheel – including the spare.
- Missing spare wheel or wheel trims.
- There is any significant damage to sidewalls of tyres. A typical cause would be kerbing.



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- Replacement tyres that do not meet the recommendations of the vehicle manufacturer i.e. type, size and speed rating have been fitted.
- Replacement wheels that do not match those originally supplied with the vehicle have been fitted.

Cab area and seats

The interior upholstery and trim must be clean with no visible burns, tears or staining. All seats originally supplied must be present. Wear and soiling through normal use is acceptable. Repairs that are not readily visible are also acceptable. The interior of the vehicle should be kept clean. Any stains should be removed with a suitable cleaning agent as soon as is practical to avoid any long term damage. Regular smoking in the vehicle leaves an unpleasant residual smell and causes staining and should be avoided where possible.

Fair wear and tear

Light staining – provided it can be removed by steam cleaning and the seat fabric is not permanently damaged.

Fading or discolouring – provided it has been caused by exposure to sunlight and not through contact with inappropriate substances e.g. corrosive cleaning solvents etc.

Threadbare patches – due to normal wear.

Light surface cracks – due to ageing and normal wear.

De-hire charges apply if:

- There is any staining that damages the texture of the seat fabric. Typical examples: tarmac, oil, grease, paint and concrete.
- There are any cuts, rips or tears. Typical examples/causes: keys on belts, carrying inappropriate goods or equipment in the cab.

- There are any burn marks or holes. Typical examples: cigarettes or corrosive substances.
- Any damage to the seat structure. Typical example: undue care and attention to seating or fabric through negligence or use of excessive force.



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Dashboard and fascia

Fair wear and tear

Light scratching due to normal wear and tear.

Neat holes left where an aftermarket fitting has been removed. i.e Handsfree Kit.

De-hire charges apply if:

- There are any burn marks or holes or any other damage caused through negligence.
- Untidy holes where an aftermarket fitting has not been fitted or removed properly.
- There are any missing parts from the dashboard i.e switches, ashtrays, fusebox covers etc.



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Recommendations

Ensure your staff recognise that seating is designed to carry people, not heavy materials, tools or equipment.

Encourage your staff to treat seating with respect and ensure they understand that your company will be liable for any excessive wear or damage.

Do not allow seats to be removed.

Protect seating that is at risk of excessive wear and damage.

Chassis Cabs

Bespoke box vans, Lutons, tippers, dropsides, insulated vehicles etc.

The terms described elsewhere in this guide also apply to chassis cab vehicles with the following exceptions and additions.

Box and Luton van bodywork (excluding cab)

Any scratches to the exterior bodywork as long as the surface skin is not pierced, split or broken (GRP) and creased (alloy). Dents under 45mm are also acceptable as long as the surface finish of the GRP or alloy is unbroken.

Larger dents are not acceptable. Nor is any damage that allows water to penetrate a van's load area or the lamination of GRP bodywork.

Please note: A charge will be levied if any load restraint bar or lining kit has been removed or is broken.

Shutter doors (excluding cab)

Scratches and dents are acceptable, as long as the mechanism operates properly, opening and closing fully without the use of excessive force.

Please note: A charge will be levied if any door furniture (catches, hinges, locks, etc.) has been removed or is broken.

Tail-lift platforms, winches

Any scratches, chips and dents are acceptable, but a charge will be levied if equipment has sustained more substantial damage. Tail-lift platforms must not be pierced, bent or distorted and all switch-gear (internal & external) must be in place and in full working order.

Leaking hydraulics and cable damage (including kinks) are chargeable if caused through negligence or impact.

Please note:

Any leads or accessories supplied with a vehicle must be returned. This includes guides, ramps, wander leads, pins and hooks.

Refrigeration units

Any equipment supplied with the vehicle, such as devices for measuring and controlling temperature should be returned in full working order. If the fridge evaporator has developed a gas leak due to impact damage, a charge will be levied.



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Tippers and dropsides

Any damage to paintwork is acceptable, but damage which prevents a dropside or tailgate operating correctly is not. A charge will be levied if a dropside or tailgate will not open and close without undue force or cannot be closed securely enough to prevent load spillage or seepage.

We recognise that steel floors are often dented or misshapen when loading and accept this as normal wear and tear. If the vehicle floor has been pierced, however a charge will be levied.

It is reasonable that some wooden floorboards may be cracked or splintered, but if a vehicle is returned with any broken or missing floorboards a charge will be levied.

We will impose a charge to cover any cost we may incur for the removal and disposal of any items or part load left on or in the vehicle, we will also impose a charge for any residue left on or in the vehicle (i.e. dried concrete, paint, cement, etc).

Lifting equipment

Where the vehicle is fitted with some form of lifting equipment, i.e. Cranes, Tail-lifts or Wheelchair lift, then the customer must supply all the relevant paperwork they hold on any maintenance carried out on this equipment and any certificates of fitness issued. This is especially important when the vehicle has been on a non-maintenance contract. If it is not supplied you may be liable under health and safety legislation that regulates such equipment.

Ensure that all loads are properly restrained with suitable straps, ties and other devices. Inadequate load restraint is a major cause of damage to Commercial vehicles.

Negligence in loading can cause panel distortion/ damage. Encourage drivers to be vigilant when goods are loaded by a third party.

Ensure that vehicles never carry inappropriate loads. Always remember axle weight limits, body strengths and floor types.

Ensure that roller shutters, doors, dropsides and tail gates are closed whilst the vehicle is in motion.

Ensure that equipment is always correctly stowed away when the vehicle is in motion. (e.g. tail-lifts and cranes). It is important to observe this advice at all times.

Damage regularly occurs to vehicles and equipment when moving short distances on working sites. Taillifts, for example, are often damaged when left in the operating position whilst the vehicle reverses.

Replace any badly damaged floor boards prior to returning the vehicle and where there is a risk of another part of the vehicle sustaining consequential damage during the contract.

Ensure that any damage to the surface finish of GRP bodywork is repaired promptly to prevent water seeping into the bodywork. This is especially important for refrigerated vehicles, as water seeping into body panels will affect their ability to maintain temperature.

