

Your guide to short-term vehicle hire

Tips for maximising flexibility and minimising cost.

Every business has ad hoc vehicle requirements and sometimes short-term vehicle hire is the best option. But with hundreds of providers with differing terms, it's easy to get caught out with a hefty bill. We'll explain how to get the most benefit from this flexible vehicle option.

Firstly, there are different short-term solutions to be aware of. The most common is 'daily rental' i.e. 1-28 days. But you don't automatically have to go for that. Depending on your needs, 'flexi-hire' might be a better option. This type of arrangement is for over 28 days and can be cheaper. A third cost-effective alternative is a pool car – ideal if you have multiple users who often need quick and easy access to a vehicle.

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Apart from flexibility, short-term hire offers excellent benefits to small businesses. There's no risk; no funding line; no long-term commitment. You won't need onerous credit checks, and you can return the vehicle at any time. And the level of flexibility is perfect for businesses that are growing, or shrinking,



enabling you to keep your staff mobile but without having to make an extended financial commitment to cover it. But it's vital that you and your drivers are fully aware of the potential costs if you want to avoid unnecessary expense. At the outset, check the small print. Hire companies will include a charge for road fund tax – check the rate and for how long it applies. Some companies won't charge extra for this after 28 days; others have open-ended charges. Similarly, look into fees for sat nav. This can cost up to £10 per day on top of hire costs. Some providers cap sat nav charges to protect you longer term – others don't, so beware.

Ask your hire company about their damage processes. What are their loss of use charges? What labour rates apply? Do they use software and established evaluation and validation methods to agree repair rates? And be aware that general wear and tear is not something you should pay for.

Fuel charges are always emotive, especially if you've had to pay inflated rates after returning a vehicle empty. Charges can vary by up to 50p per litre so the best action is to simply not get caught out. It is avoidable so make sure your drivers know to refuel.

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The driver should also be there for the inspection at pick up and drop off. Abdication of signature is not abdication of responsibility. Not signing simply means you accept what is there. A good rental company will offer an amnesty period, so the driver has 4-8 hours to go and check the vehicle for damage before it's driven.

Finally, give some thought to working with one provider for all your vehicle needs. A full service fleet management company, like Lombard Vehicle Solutions, will access multiple rental providers, will understand what you use vehicles for, and will create an integrated solution that works best for you. They'll also want to build a long-term relationship with your business. A short-term rental company doesn't need to. Food for thought perhaps...?

If you would like to find out more about what Lombard Vehicle Solutions could do for you, or would like to see our vehicle special offers, please click [here](#).

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