

The 12 case studies - what we found



DAMAGE	COMPANY	TOTAL CHARGE ^a	GARAGE PRICE RANGE ^b	WHAT HAPPENED
Damaged wing mirror indicator strip	Avis France	£295	£54-£121	Seven months after payment had been made, Avis refunded £123. But that still means the customer has paid over £50 more than our experts' top estimate. Avis said that the customer was 'mistakenly charged for damage from a previous rental' causing a 'significant delay'. 'We have apologised to the customer and worked with him to reach a resolution.'
A scraped wheel (photo B, above)	Budget Germany	£420	£90-£462	The customer claimed on excess reimbursement insurance. Avis Budget told us: 'The scratches were significant, and as such, we consider the charge – which includes a €30 administration fee – to be fair and in line with our industry-standard damage matrix. As is standard industry practice when a damaged vehicle is still safe to operate, repairs have not yet been carried out.'
Two bumper scratches (photo C, above)	Budget Madeira	£504	£144-£450	Budget refunded the customer £58. It told us: 'We have reviewed the damage and the costs are in line with our industry-standard repair costs matrix. This particular rental – and subsequent repair fee – was subject to an additional surcharge, as is standard for rentals in Madeira. As a gesture of goodwill, we have refunded the value of this surcharge.'
Charged for a small windscreen chip	Europcar France	£1,154	£35-£78 (repair) or £384 (replace)	Europcar told us: 'Following investigation, it was identified that the customer had been incorrectly charged, and a revised invoice for €102 was issued for the cost of repair for a minor chip. A refund was processed for €1,171 against the original charge.'
A wing mirror indicator crack and a minor scratch	Goldcar Malta	£690	£270-£795	The customer's excess reimbursement insurance covered everything except the 'loss-of-use' charge of €80. Goldcar did provide evidence that the repairs were carried out. It said: 'We are satisfied that the proper procedures were followed and that the charges were applied correctly.'
A missing parcel shelf	Goldcar Spain	£444	£170-£238	When the customer complained, they were told that Goldcar had charged her for the wrong type of parcel shelf, they were refunded £178. Even after the refund, they had still paid more than our top estimate for a parcel shelf that she says never existed. Goldcar told us: 'We are satisfied that the proper procedures were followed and that the charges were applied correctly.'
Interior scrapes on the roof, door and door handle	Green Motion Italy	£631	£386-£528 (repair) or £1,152 (replace)	After four months of dispute, the customer received a full refund from his credit card provider, which said that Green Motion had 'not adhered to the Visa rules and regulations'. But Green Motion told us: 'Upon cleaning the vehicle, the rental company found damage inside... the rental branch was able to provide all paperwork necessary to support the charges.'
A cracked windscreen	Green Motion UK	£617	£0-£582	Our expert told us that the cracked windscreen matched a known manufacturer fault that could have been repaired for free. Toyota told us: 'Our customers would've been eligible for warranty replacement, dependent on examination of the damage.' Green Motion did produce an invoice for a replacement windscreen, but didn't refund. The BVRLA found in favour of Green Motion.
Door dent and bumper scratch	Green Motion UK	£854	£186-£690	After five months, the customer was refunded. Green Motion told us: 'The franchisee reviewed the charges and, while correctly charged in the first place, decided to offer a refund as a gesture of goodwill to resolve the dispute amicably.'
A scrape to the front bumper	Green Motion UK	£300	£120-£246	Green Motion told us that while 'the chip was small, because the paint was broken the whole bumper needed to be repainted to be within the return standards for the vehicles'. It also said: 'We are confident that while the customer may not have caused the damage – documentation proved it occurred while the vehicle was in the customer's control.' It did offer a future discount.
Missing parcel shelf	Hertz Spain	£235	£135-£219	It took the customer six weeks to even get a response from Hertz. In the meantime, they successfully claimed on his excess reimbursement insurance. Hertz told us: 'We can confirm that the amounts charged are correct, as they are aligned with our damage set costs. Please also note that the customer signed the accident report form, agreeing with the damage.'
Damaged door lock (photo D, above)	Hertz/Thrifty Italy	£227	£202-£322	After three months of chasing, Hertz/Thrifty refunded the entire amount. It told us: 'When the damage was first examined, it was noted that while the dent could have been considered within our wear-and-tear policy, due to its size it impacted the lock. As a result, the damage was charged to the customer. However, after reviewing the case, we refunded the damage charges.'

USING THE TABLE Charges in red were more than our top expert quote. ^a Damage-related charges passed on to the customer, including any taxes and admin/loss-of-use charges.

^b Minimum and maximum quotes given by our three Which? Trusted Trader expert mechanics, including parts, labour and VAT.