



Safety Bulletin

Vehicle Rental Safety Tips

Renting an automobile, small truck, or van is a task performed every minute of the day by business travelers. These travelers will spend a significant amount of their travel time behind the wheel of their rental vehicle, yet how much time do these same drivers spend confirming the rental vehicle they are about to operate is set-up for them safely. Automobile accidents involving rental vehicles occur on a regular basis. The following are some easy steps you can take to avoid being a statistic.

- Leave yourself enough time. When planning a trip, leave yourself extra time for airport and airline delays. Do not leave a short window which will require you to race to your final destination when you get into your rental vehicle.
- When picking up a rental vehicle, look at the tires for inflation, good treads, and even tread wear. Uneven tread wear hints at a suspension, alignment, or tire maintenance problem. Significantly uneven tread wear is good cause for rejecting a vehicle.
- Check the trunk for a spare tire, jack, and lug wrench, and confirm the spare is inflated by pushing down on it.
- Get in and familiarize yourself with the cockpit. Adjust the seats and mirrors. Find the hazard light switch. Learn how to switch the headlights between low and high beams. Familiarize yourself with radio controls. Confirm there is an Owner's Manual in the glove box. Do all this before driving on the road.
- Check the lights: headlights, turn signals, and interior/dashboard lights.
- Spray the windshield to ensure that the washer system works and wipers are in good shape. The wiper/washer system is one of the most common sources of safety-related complaints pertaining to rental cars.
- Check the cleanliness and odor inside the car. Though not necessarily safety items, these can be major sources of driver distractions.
- Look at a map. Figure out where you're going and how you will get there. Again, do this before you are on the road. If your travel policy permits it, rent a GPS unit to eliminate the need to glance down at a map or directions.
- PUT AWAY YOUR CELL PHONE!!!! Do not be distracted by talking or texting on a cell phone while driving.
- If you have a chance, test the brakes, while in the rental car lot. Does your rental car have ABS; do you know how they work?
- If your travel policy allows, and you know you will have a need for one, rent an E-Z Pass or similar device to avoid the need to fumble with change for tolls.
- In winter months, make sure your rental has a snow brush and ice scraper. If the forecast is for snow and ice, consider renting an AWD or 4WD vehicle (make sure you know how to switch to 4WD before leaving the rental center).
- Always make sure you and any passengers you have are wearing a seatbelt.

- Never leave valuables visible in the rental car. Lock everything, including brief cases and laptops, in the trunk, out of sight.
- Park in well lit areas.
- NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE!!!

If you are use to driving a small vehicle and find yourself suddenly in a larger passenger vehicle, SUV, or light truck, use extra caution as these larger type vehicles will handle differently, especially when it comes to stopping distances. Do not hesitate to request another rental vehicle if you do not feel comfortable in your assigned rental vehicle due to poor sight lines, obstructed rear window view, or have questionable brakes. These safety precautions are not only applicable to airport rentals, but can be applied when renting a van or light truck at a local rental center. Have a happy and SAFE rental experience.

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For more information, contact our topic expert:

Christopher P. O'Neill
Phone: 610-968-2571
Email: Christopher.ONeill@xlgroup.com

XL Insurance
505 Eagleview Blvd, Suite 100
PO Box 636
Exton, PA 19341-0636 USA

www.xlinsurance.com/environmental