

# What's the Damage?

A customer support guide on dehire damage to light commercial vehicles



## Defining a grey area

This booklet sets out clearly and simply Lex Vehicle Leasing's policy regarding dehire damage. It shows the most typical forms of damage to vans and other light commercial vehicles. While some wear and tear is inevitable, much can be avoided with a little forethought and some inexpensive precautions.

Lex Vehicle Leasing prides itself on providing the highest levels of service whilst keeping the costs of contract hire to a minimum. This policy has helped us to maintain our position at the forefront of our industry.

We value customers who take care of their vehicles. In order to offer them the best possible rates, it is necessary for us to impose charges on those who return vehicles that are excessively damaged through negligence or misuse. If your vehicles are occasionally damaged, it may reassure you to know that our dehire damage charges are directly related to repair costs and do not include a profit factor.

The type of protection you should give your vehicles obviously varies according to the nature of your business. Those used for transporting relatively heavy goods or equipment, for example, require more protection than those which are not. In assessing wear and tear we take into account the purpose for which vehicles were supplied, but we expect you to take all reasonable precautions to limit damage.

The question of what constitutes fair wear and tear has always been a grey area. In the following pages, we bring colour and clarity to the subject - and give practical recommendations on how to avoid dehire damage charges.

*There is an index on page 14.*



## Seating

### Acceptable

**Light staining or discolouring** – as long as the texture of the fabric is not permanently damaged.

**Any wear that is due to ageing or normal usage** – including surface cracks and threadbare fabric.

### Unacceptable

**Any staining that permanently damages the texture of seat fabric.**

*Typical causes:* tarmac, oil, grease, paint, concrete

**Cuts, rips or tears.**

*Typical causes:* carrying inappropriate goods or equipment, wearing unsuitable clothing, carrying keys on belts.

**Burns.**

*Typical causes:* cigarettes, corrosive substances on clothing.

**Any damage to seat structure (internal or external).**

*Typical causes:* carrying inappropriate goods or equipment, imposing excessive force on seating, failing to inform us that a fabric surface is damaged or threadbare and requires attention, permanent or temporary removal of seats.

### 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 or damage. (Please contact us if you would like us to supply heavy duty seat covers. These are available at a very reasonable cost.)

## Dashboard, Fascia, Trim

### Acceptable

**Light scratches that are visible but cannot be felt.**

*Typical causes:* clipboards, map-binders, pens, etc.

**Moderately heavy scratches up to 100mm in length** – provided that they are isolated.

**Holes made to accommodate car phones or other equipment.**

– provided that they are neat.

### Unacceptable

**Moderately heavy scratches over 100mm in length.**

*Typical causes:* storage of tools or equipment, accident damage, vandalism and negligence (e.g. placing booted feet upon dashboard.)

**Multiple scratches under 100mm in length which can be felt as well as seen.**

*See typical causes of heavy scratches.*

**Cuts, dents and tears.**

*See typical causes of heavy scratches.*

**Burns.**

*Typical causes:* cigarettes, corrosive substances on clothing.

**Permanent staining.**

*Typical causes:* tarmac, oil, grease, paint, concrete.

**Removal of any item or accessory**

– unless done with our prior written approval (e.g. glove box, cup holders, door pockets, radio, radio security device).

### Recommendations

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

## Floor

### Acceptable

**A high level of wear and tear.**

*Typical cause:* heavy duty working boots.

### Unacceptable

**Excessive deposits of materials.**

*Typical substances:* tarmac, oil, grease, paint, concrete.

**Burns.**

*Typical causes:* cigarettes, corrosive materials.

### Recommendations

- Where appropriate, use floor-mats – and replace these as frequently as necessary to protect floor coverings.
- Ensure floor coverings are cleaned as often as necessary to prevent a build-up of substances.
- Encourage your staff to remove the worst excesses of substances from their footwear before they get into vehicles.



Acceptable damage

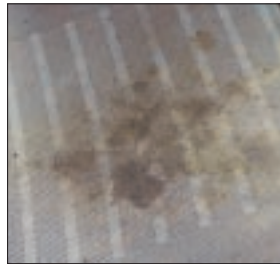


Unacceptable damage

Seating



Seat with light staining



Staining where fabric texture is damaged



Damage to seat structure



Light surface cracks - due to aging and normal wear



Cuts, rips or tears



Threadbare patches - due to normal wear



Burns to seat fabric

Dashboard, Fascia



Light scratching due to normal wear



Burns or other damage caused through negligence



Neat holes where after-market fitting has been removed



Untidy holes where after-market fitting has been removed



Any missing item

## Interior Load Area

### Floor, Bulkhead, Wheel Arches

#### Acceptable

**Wearing away of paint on interior surfaces** – since this is unavoidable in load-bearing areas.

**Dents under 30mm in depth** – as long as the floor and wheel arch retain their original shape and the metal is not pierced.

**Light substance residues** – such as earth, oil, dust and cement.

#### Unacceptable

**Dents over 30mm in depth or dents that have changed the overall shape of panelling.**

*Typical causes:* collision or impact damage.

**Any piercing of interior panels.**

**Panelling that is bent or otherwise misshapen.**

*Typical causes:* carrying inappropriate weights or failing to secure loads correctly.

**Very excessive substance residues not readily removed.**

*Typical substances:* tarmac, paint, concrete.

#### Recommendations

- Do not allow vehicles to carry inappropriate loads.
- Ensure that any load which could damage panelling is fully secured.
- Where an extra seating area is provided in a tipper or dropside vehicle, ensure that it is not used for storage of tools and materials. We will be pleased to arrange for a tool box to be fitted.

### Side Panels, Doors, Roof

#### Acceptable

**Any scratches or dents** – provided they are not visible on the exterior of the vehicle.

#### Unacceptable

**Any dent that is visible on the exterior.**

*Typical causes:* collision or impact damage caused by unsecured loads.

**Panelling that is bent or otherwise misshapen.**

*Typical causes:* carrying inappropriate loads.

#### Recommendations

- If a vehicle is to carry loads which could cause excessive damage to panelling, appropriate linings should be installed. (We will be pleased to provide a quote.)
- Ensure that any load which could damage panelling is fully secured.
- Monitor the condition of panelling.

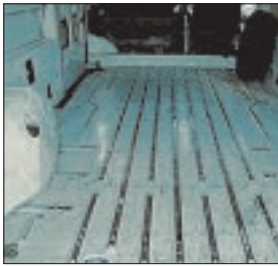


Acceptable damage



Unacceptable damage

**Floor, Bulkhead, Wheel Arches**



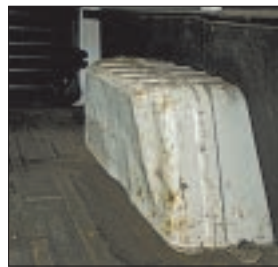
Substantial scratching and wear to floors



Damage to floor panelling – through carrying excessive weight



Scratching to wheel arches



Impact damage to wheel arches

**Side Panels, Doors, Roof**



Any scratching - provided no damage can be seen on exterior of panelling



We recommend ply linings and will be pleased to supply them.

## Exterior Bodywork, Chassis

### Bodywork

#### Acceptable

**Stone chips** – provided that they can be attributed to normal usage.

**Isolated minor dents up to 45mm in diameter** – provided that the paintwork or other surface finish remains unbroken.

**Isolated scratches up to 100mm in length.**

**Heavy scratching below loading doors** – provided this can be attributed to normal loading practices.

**Heavy scratching below driver and passenger doors** – provided that this can be attributed to working boots.

#### Unacceptable

**Scratches over 100mm in length that penetrate to bare metal or primer.**

**Excessive scratching in a localised area showing bare metal or primer** – where due to misuse or negligence (e.g. multiple scratches around keyholes and other security locks).

**Any dent over 45mm in diameter.**

**Multiple minor dents in a localised area that are up to 45mm in diameter** – whether sustained from the exterior or interior of the vehicle.

**Any minor dent that has broken through the paint to show primer or bare metal.**

**Any tear or rip.**

**Bodywork distortions** – unless caused through normal usage.

**Any repair work that has been carried out to an unacceptable standard.**

**Any damage where a fitting has been removed.**

#### Recommendations

- Do not allow vehicles to carry inappropriate goods or visit locations for which they are unsuited.
- Ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect any bodywork that is at risk of damage (e.g. if paintwork around keyholes is likely to be heavily scratched by dangling keys, ensure that protective stickers are fitted.)
- Monitor the condition of vehicles. Inform us whenever repairs are required and ensure that they are carried out properly.
- Ensure that staff do not walk on any van roof (e.g. when securing loads to roof-racks).

### Chassis

#### Unacceptable

**Any significant damage** – including twisted or bent chassis rails.



Acceptable damage



Unacceptable damage

Bodywork



Multiple stone chips



Isolated scratches up to 100mm in length



Isolated dents up to 45mm in diameter



Heavy scratching below doors



Scratches over 100mm where metal or primer is exposed



Excessive scratching due to negligence



Tears or rips



Any dent over 45mm in diameter



Any dent where primer or bare metal is exposed



Multiple dents, including those sustained from the vehicle interior



Damage where a fitting has been removed



Inadequate repairs



Excessive bodywork distortions

## Glass, Lamps, Mirrors

### Acceptable

**Light scratching and minor chipping of any windscreen or window glass** – provided it does not interfere with the driver's line of sight and no heating elements are affected.

**Light scratching and minor chipping of any lamp glass** – provided it remains watertight.

### Unacceptable

**Any damage to windscreen glass within the driver's line of sight** – apart from minor chips and scratches that would be acceptable in an MoT test.

**Any damage that affects heating elements on a rear screen.**

**Any hole or crack in a lamp glass or lens.**

**Any damage to mirror glass or surround.**

## Bumpers

### Acceptable

**Scratches and scuffs** – provided the bumper is not cracked or deformed.

**Dents over 100mm in diameter on any bumper that is adjacent to a loading area** – provided that it is still fully functional and retains its shape and rigidity.

**Dents up to 100mm in diameter** – provided the bumper retains its shape and rigidity.

### Unacceptable

**Any bumper that is incomplete, cracked, twisted or mis-aligned.**

**Substantial damage where a bumper no longer retains its structure and rigidity** – and would afford inadequate protection to the vehicle in the event of an impact.

**Any dent over 100mm in diameter** – unless the damage is adjacent to a loading area.

## Wheels, Tyres (including trims and tools)

### Acceptable

**Light damage to wheel rims.**

**Scratches and scuffs to trims.**

**Any wear and tear to tyres that can be attributed to normal use** – including spares.

### Unacceptable

**Any significant damage to the rim or main body of a wheel** – including spares.

**Missing wheel tools.**

**Damage to sidewalls of tyres.**  
*Typical cause:* kerbing.

**Replacement tyres that do not meet the recommendations of the vehicle manufacturer** – re type, size and speed rating.

## Accessories, Signwriting

### Acceptable

**Removal of any accessory fitted at the customer's expense** – provided that any damage caused by the removal of these items is made good.

### Unacceptable

**Any damage to an aerial.**

**Any signwriting or livery that has been added to the vehicle.**  
This must be removed before it is returned at the end of the contract.

**Damage caused through incorrectly fitted accessories** – such as roof-racks.

**Removal of any accessory supplied with the vehicle or subsequently fitted at our expense.**

**Excessive damage caused by the removal of any accessory.**



**Acceptable damage**



**Unacceptable damage**

**Glass, Lamps, Mirrors**



Minor chips on lamp glasses - provided they remain watertight



Chips or cracks within the driver's line of sight



Damage to mirrors



Any hole in lamp glass



Any crack to lamp glass that allows rain to penetrate

**Bumpers**



Scuffing - where the bumper has not been cracked or deformed



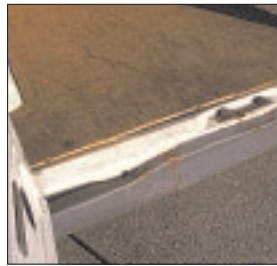
Dents over 100mm on bumpers that are not adjacent to a loading area



Any bumper that is incomplete or cracked



Dents adjacent to a loading area - provided the bumper retains its shape and rigidity



Substantial damage where a bumper no longer retains its original shape and rigidity

**Wheels, Tyres, Accessories**



Damage to sidewalls of tyres



Damage to radio aerals

## Chassis Cabs

The terms described elsewhere in this guide also apply to Chassis Cab vehicles, with the following exceptions and additions.

### Box & Luton Vans

#### Bodywork

*(excluding Cab)*

Any scratches to exterior bodywork are acceptable as long as the surface skin is not pierced, split or broken (GRP) or creased (alloy). Dents under 50mm in diameter 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 that a charge will be incurred if any load restraint bar has been removed or is broken.

#### Shutters, 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 that a charge will be incurred if any door furniture (catches, hinges, locks, etc.) has been removed or is broken.

### 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 incurred.

### Flatbed Trucks, etc.

#### Cab

A realistic approach is taken in relation to the cleanliness and condition of the interiors of cabs. While most of the provisions described on pages 4 & 5 apply in relation to all vehicles, a higher level of wear, tear and soiling is acceptable in the cabs of those used in heavy and dirty industries. Please note, however, that excessive damage through negligence or vandalism is chargeable, as is staining that cannot be removed by valeting.

#### Bodywork

We recognise that many chassis cab vehicles are built for heavy use. No charge will be made for damage to paintwork or multiple dents to the bodywork of these. A charge will be incurred, however, if bodywork is damaged to such an extent that loads seep during transit (e.g. pierced bodywork, distorted tailgates).

#### Chassis

Chassis are built to standards that are appropriate to the intended use of each vehicle. Any significant damage, such as twisting of chassis rails, is therefore unacceptable.

#### Floor

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

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 incurred. We will also impose a charge to cover any cost we may incur disposing of any part load or excessive residue that is left in a vehicle.

### Dropsides, Tailgates

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

### Tail-lift Platforms, Winches

Any scratches, chips and dents are acceptable, but a charge will be incurred if equipment has sustained more substantial damage. Tail-lift platforms must not be pierced, bent or distorted and all switch-gear (internal and 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 that any leads or accessories supplied with a vehicle must be returned. This includes guides, ramps, wander leads, pins and hooks.

### Ancillary Equipment

Any ancillary equipment supplied with the vehicle must be in good working order.

**Recommendations**

- Ensure that roller shutters and doors are always closed when vehicles are in transit.
- Ensure that equipment is always correctly stowed when vehicles are in transit (e.g. tail-lifts and cranes). It is important to observe this precaution at all times. Equipment damage commonly occurs to vehicles moving short distances on working sites. Tail-lifts, for example, are frequently damaged when left in the operating position while vehicles reverse.
- Ensure that vehicles never carry inappropriate loads. Bear in mind axle weight limits, body strength and floor type.
- If the load area of a vehicle develops a leak, inform us and ensure that the leak is efficiently repaired.
- 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. Encourage drivers to be observant when goods are loaded by a third party. Where a third party is responsible for damage to one of your vehicles, your company will generally be entitled to compensation.
- 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.
- Monitor the condition of all vehicles on a regular basis. Inform us of any damage we should know about and arrange for remedial repairs where appropriate.
- Replace badly damaged floorboards where there is a risk of another part of the vehicle sustaining consequential damage.
- Ensure that any broken floorboard is replaced before returning a vehicle to us at the end of the hire period.



**Acceptable damage**



Scratches and small dents on GRP or alloy bodywork – as long as the surface finish is not broken



Scratches and dents on roller shutters, as long as they function effectively



A tipper truck in typical condition



**Unacceptable damage**



Any damage where GRP or alloy bodywork is pierced – or where the surface finish is broken



A tailgate that is too badly damaged to close properly, causing load seepage

## Dehire Damage Charges

We use the Thatcham Rectification Analysis Cost System (TRACS) to assess dehire 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 calculates average timings for all typical repairs.

The costings for all components and materials are drawn from the Thatcham Parts Price Guide. Labour is costed at rates that significantly discount the standard rates of retail bodyshops and the approved rates of insurance companies. There is generally no labour charge for replacing missing components.

When a dehire damage charge is incurred, we issue an invoice with supporting documentation.

If you would like further information on current charges or wish to visit one of our dehire assessment centres, please speak to your Lex Vehicle Leasing sales support contact.

## Routine Maintenance

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

Dehire charges are applicable if:

- a vehicle has not been maintained in accordance with the recommended schedule;
- a vehicle's service record is missing or incomplete and an alternative record is not available; or
- any component has deteriorated as a result of driver negligence.

## Keys & Fobs

All keys and fobs supplied with the vehicle must be returned, including spares. A charge is applicable if any is missing. Special care should be taken of red keys and other master keys for engine management systems. Please note that the cost of replacing these is significant.

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