

Co-wheels Car Club Public Use FAQ's

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How it works

- Can I pick up a car in one location and drop it off at another one?
- Is insurance included?
- How is the total cost of a booking calculated?
- How do I book a car?
- Do I need to pay for fuel?
- Can I use a car anywhere in the UK?
- Can I take a car abroad?

Can I pick up a car in one location and drop it off at another one?

A:

You must return the car you have booked to its original bay at the end of your booking.

Is insurance included?

A:

Yes. As a Co-wheels member, you will be covered by our fully-comprehensive policy. If you have an accident that is your fault, the excess is £250 for drivers over 21, and £500 for drivers 21 and under. Our policy covers personal and business use.

How is the total cost of a booking calculated?

A:

Public Use Car hire is charged for the time period of the entire booking (not just driving time), plus mileage. Our system automatically works out the cheapest rate

for you – either per hour, overnight, day rate, or a combination. Business Use
There is no charge as the employer obtains the vehicle via a lease scheme

How do I book a car?

A:

You can use our online booking system to make or change a booking at any time on any internet capable device. You can also call us during office hours to make a booking.

Do I need to pay for fuel?

A:

You don't need to worry about paying for fuel. If you do need to refuel, use the fuel card provided, and we'll pick up the bill. We ask all members to leave the car with at least a quarter of a tank of fuel at the end of their booking.

SCC business Use: Cowan Terrace by Park Lane Interchange. Nissan Leaf electric car- no fuel required

Can I use a car anywhere in the UK?

A:

Certainly for personal use! Co-wheels operates a national network, so members can travel to other locations by train or other means of transport and then hop into a Co-wheels car at the other end. There's no limit to the distance you can take a car in the UK.

Can I take a car abroad?

A:

For personal use you can travel abroad in a Co-wheels car, with correct documentation and breakdown cover.

* Firstly, you must book the car before applying to take it abroad.

* You will then need to complete a RACV103b Form (If you require an alternative V5 document in the country that you are travelling to e.g. France) , with an accompanying letter of authorisation from us.

* You will need to source your own breakdown, or pay us to add the breakdown onto the vehicle. (Please call us as some of our vehicles have EU breakdown included, but not all of them)

Please note that you are liable for costs associated with this process and to ensure the vehicle meets the legal requirements of the nation state that you are travelling to.

Joining

- Is there a minimum age limit?
- Can I use a foreign driving licence?
- Can I cancel my membership at any time?
- How long does it take in order to become a member?
- Can I add someone to my account?
- How do I apply with a promotional offer?

Is there a minimum age limit?

A:

As long as you have held a full driving licence for a minimum of 12 months, and have no more than 6 points on your licence, (0 points if 21 or under), you can join (some other exclusions apply, so if in doubt, give us a call to check).

Can I use a foreign driving licence?

A:

If you have a non-UK licence, you will need to confirm if you are a UK resident or a student, how long you have been living in the UK, and if you have any penalties on your licence. This can be done by supplying a copy of a recent utility bill.

We will also need you to send your licence to us at our head office address (we would recommend using secure mail), in order for us to complete the required licence checks, to ensure you are covered by our insurance.

Alternatively, you can get your licence checked at a local Post Office branch, using the Post Office Document Verification Service. To find out more about this service, please ask at the Post Office. If the Post Office checks your licence, please send the verified documents that they give you to our address.

Unfortunately, at the moment, the online DVLA check system is not compatible with licences issued in Northern Ireland. If you have a Northern Irish licence, please proceed with the above method of getting your licence verified.

Can I cancel my membership at any time?

A:

We're not going to tie you into anything! If it's not working for you, or your circumstances change, you can cancel your membership with immediate effect, fully closing on the last day of the billing month.

How long does it take in order to become a member?

A:

Application is quick and easy, and once you give us the details we need, we can process your membership and send out your membership pack – you will usually receive this within 5 days. Once you receive a smartcard, you can book a car.

Can I add someone to my account?

A:

Anyone who lives at the same address can be added as a driver onto your account for a one-off fee. For businesses, you can register any employees you want to be able to drive our cars, again for a one-off fee per new driver.

How do I apply with a promotional offer?

A:

During your application, you will need to enter your promotional code in the Promotions field - please remember to verify your code using the "Validate promotional code" button next to the field.

Booking

- Can I pick up a car in one location, and leave it at another, for a one-way trip?
- Can I cancel or change a booking?
- How long can I book a car for?
- How far in advance can I make a booking?
- I can't remember my log-in ID/password - help!

Can I pick up a car in one location, and leave it at another, for a one-way trip?

A:

Our cars need to be returned to their original bays at the end of the booking.

Can I cancel or change a booking?

A:

You can cancel or change a booking at any time, by either logging into your account, or calling us during office hours. If you leave it until the very last minute, though, we may have to charge you a fee.

How long can I book a car for?

A:

You can book a car for a minimum of 30 minutes. There is no maximum booking time, although you will need to contact us for any booking lasting longer than 7 days.

How far in advance can I make a booking?

A:

Our booking system allows you to book a car from 15 minutes in advance, up to 12 months. The latter would only be required for the most organized of travellers!

I can't remember my log-in ID/password - help!

A:

Your log-in ID is automatically sent to you via e-mail when your application has been processed. If you cannot remember or find it, please follow the instructions on how to recover them on our login page

Your password is set up when you initially sign up online – if you cannot remember it, you can request a password reset email to be sent to you, via the log-in page.

Driving

- Where are the keys?
- If I finish my reservation early, will I still be charged for the full time I have booked?
- How do I refuel the car?
- Can someone else drive during my booking?
- Can I take pets in the car?

Where are the keys?

A:

Keys are found in the car glove box. Some of our more modern Hybrid and fully electric vehicles are keyless! Simply put your foot on the brake and hit the power button.

Always leave the keys in the car during your booking, and use your smartcard to lock and open the car.

Business Use SCC Employees: there are no keys as it is an electric car.

If I finish my reservation early, will I still be charged for the full time I have booked?

A:

If you book a vehicle, but only need it for a portion of the time originally booked, you are still charged for the whole reservation. This is because the vehicle has been unavailable to book for other members during this time. However, if you end the reservation early and someone reserves the vehicle over your original hire time, you will not be charged for that portion.

We advise that you plan your journey to use the time most effectively.

How do I refuel the car? Personal use

A:

If you do need to refuel, use the fuel card provided, and we'll pick up the bill. All cards can be found slotted into the left hand side of the on-board computer (found next to the rear view mirror). We ask all members to leave the car with a quarter of a tank of fuel at the end of their booking, so you shouldn't need to refuel straight away.

Please note that the fuel card can be used at any cashier-operated garage, but not at pay-at pump stations.

To use the fuel card, please follow these instructions:

Our new 'chip cards' will require you to input the fuel card into a card reader. When the card is placed into the reader, you will be prompted to input the mileage into the reader, and then sign for the payment to be authorised.

On the rare occasion during which there are any issues with payment, please ask the cashier to cancel the transaction, and try again. If the issue continues, please contact AllStar Fuel, our card provider, on 08704 195 165. If the issue cannot be resolved, please pay for fuel yourself, and send the receipts to our Head Office, for prompt reimbursement.

Can someone else drive during my booking?

A:

You are only allowed to 'share' the drive if both parties are drivers on the same account or members of Co-wheels, as individuals who are not members of Co-wheels will not be covered by our insurance.

Can I take pets in the car?

A:

Pets are not allowed in the vehicles, as this could cause problems for other members (e.g. those with allergies). However, we understand that, on certain occasions, pets may need to be transported. If this is the case, please contact the office before driving.

Billing: Personal Use

- How is the total cost of a booking calculated?
- How do I pay?
- When will my card be charged?
- What if there is a problem with the trip?
- How is mileage calculated?
- What happens if my payment is unsuccessful?
- How do I update my card details?
- Are my account details safe?
- Can I have more than one card linked to my account?
- I currently pay via Direct Debit. Can I pay by card?
- If I finish my reservation early, will I still be charged for the full time I have booked?
- How can I view the payments I have made?
- What happens if I hire a car in London, but take it into the congestion charge zone?
- What happens if I hire a car OUTSIDE of London, and take it into the congestion charge zone?
- Will I be charged if I cancel a reservation?
- Can I join if I'm already a member with another car club?
- I want to cancel my account - how do I do this?
- Why would you contact me for a deposit?
- What if I receive a Penalty Charge Notice?

How is the total cost of a booking calculated?

A:

Car hire is charged for the time period of the entire booking (not just driving time), plus mileage. Our system automatically works out the cheapest rate for you – either per hour, overnight, day rate, or a combination.

How do I pay? Personal Use

A:

When you apply, you provide us with card details (Mastercard or Visa only) which is your payment method. Any charges to the account will be automatically debited from this card, usually within 24 hours via Continuous Payment Authorisation, although you will receive extended notice of any unexpected charges, such as a fine. Please note you may be billed separately, for hire time and mileage, if the mileage data has a delayed return to our HQ. In this scenario, it may take more than 24 hours to be charged for mileage.

Members who joined before 21st July 2014 will be billed monthly for their monthly minimum charge or car use and mileage. Members can elect to pay by direct debit, card payment over the phone, bank transfer, or cheque.

N.B. SCC employees are not charged for use of the electric car in Cowan Terrace by Park Lane Interchange

When will my card be charged? Personal use

A:

Once you have ended your booking, and the vehicle has sent us information about your trip, we will calculate the exact cost of the booking, including any adjustments or special rates. If there were no problems with the booking, your card will usually be charged within 24 hours of the end of the booking. In the unlikely event of a delay in retrieving mileage data, you may be billed a few days after your hire has ended.

Your £5 minimum monthly spend is charged to your card on the first day of every month. This will be credited against any bookings you make during that month.

Please note that we accept no responsibility for bank charges made due to bounced payments.

What if there is a problem with the trip?

A:

Our system automatically tells us if there was a problem with your booking. This makes sure that your card isn't charged until one of our team has checked the booking, and, if necessary, contacted you to resolve the issue.

How is mileage calculated?

A:

Mileage is calculated automatically by an in-car odometer fitted into our cars.

What happens if my payment is unsuccessful?

A:

If we are unable to take payment for a trip, your account will be restricted, and you won't be able to use any vehicles, or make future bookings, until the issue is resolved. When you log on to your member area, you will be prompted to pay the outstanding balance. You can either use your existing card details, or provide details of a new card. Once you have successfully paid the balance, any restrictions on your account will automatically be lifted.

How do I update my card details?

A:

It's easy to update your card details – just visit the 'My Account' section of the booking site, and click on 'Account'.

Are my account details safe?

A:

Your card details are held and processed by our secure payments partner, 'Secure Trading'. As a leading provider of secure online payments, Secure Trading adheres to strict industry standards, and are fully Level1 PCI DSS compliant, meaning that your card details are secure and protected.

Can I have more than one card linked to my account?

A:

At the moment, we only support one payment card per member.

I currently pay via Direct Debit. Can I pay by card?

A:

Yes! Please contact our head office to organise this. When changing over to card payments, you will have to clear any outstanding balances, and request Co-wheels to cancel your Direct Debit or alternative payment plan.

If I finish my reservation early, will I still be charged for the full time I have booked?

A:

If you book a vehicle, but only use it for a portion of the time originally booked, you are still charged for the whole reservation. This is because the vehicle is unavailable to other members during your reservation. We advise that you plan your journey to not incur any fees. If someone reserves the vehicle over your original hire time, the charge will be waived.

How can I view the payments I have made?

A:

You can view your full account history in the member area. Once you have logged in, click on 'My Account' at the top of the screen, then 'Transactions' below, where you will find a record of all charges and refunds made to your account. You will also receive a monthly summary, for your records.

What happens if I hire a car in London, but take it into the congestion charge zone?

A:

In order to make your journey as hassle-free as possible, we have registered the car with the Autopay facility, so if your trip takes you into the congestion zone, you don't need to pay the charge during your trip. Instead, you will be billed for this by ourselves, once we receive notification from Transport for London.

What happens if I hire a car OUTSIDE of London, and take it into the congestion charge zone?

A:

If you hire a car outside of London, you will need to pay the congestion charge yourself, directly. Find out how to pay on TFL's [website](#). If you don't pay, and we are served a fine, we will be required to pass this charge on to you.

Will I be charged if I cancel a reservation?

A:

We know that sometimes, plans change and cancellations will occur, so we offer [flexible charges](#) for cancelled bookings:

- If you cancel more than two hours before your booking starts, cancellation is free
- If you cancel less than two hours before your booking starts, you will be charged 50% of the booking cost.
- If you end or change your reservation after the booking has started, you will be charged 100% of the booking cost.

Can I join if I'm already a member with another car club?

A:

You can! You can even do so **for free**. All you'll need to do is send a copy of a recent car club invoice to our Customer Services team, via [e-mail](#) or post:

Co-wheels Customer Service

3a Sunderland Road, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 2LH

I want to cancel my account - how do I do this?

A:

Just e-mail info@co-wheels.org.uk with your full name and/or membership number. Your account will then be closed at the end of the month.

Why would you contact me for a deposit?

A:

If you're a new Co-wheels member, and have booked a car for more than 24 hours, we will require a deposit to be paid towards your reservation, equal to the cost of your estimated full trip time. You can find this information on your account, under 'My Reservations'.

Your deposit payment will typically be requested 1-2 working days before your reservation is due to begin. If you make a last-minute reservation on the same day as the booking, please call 0191 375 1050 during working hours, in order to pay your deposit amount.

After your journey has finished, our booking system will record the mileage you have driven, and charge your account accordingly, in order to request payment once the booking has ended.

Please note that this deposit is fully-refundable in the event of a cancellation up to two hours before your booking is due to start. After this time, our [usual cancellation fees](#) will apply.

What if I receive a Penalty Charge Notice?

A:

If you receive a parking ticket, speeding notification, or bus lane/toll charge, Co-wheels will receive notification of this at our Head Office. We will contact you on the same day that we receive the PCN, with further instruction on how to proceed.

Please note that you are liable for full charge of any PCN, and in addition, any subsequent administrative charges from leasing companies.

Issues

- I can't remember my log-in ID/password - help!
- What if I need help out-of-hours?
- What happens if the car breaks down while I'm on the road?
- What happens if I have an accident?
- What happens if the car isn't there when I've booked it?
- What if there's another vehicle in the parking bay when I return the car?
- What do I do if there's a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) on the vehicle?
- I've lost my smartcard!
- I have a booking, but I have lost/forgotten my smart card!
- I want to cancel my account - how do I do this?
- What if I receive a Penalty Charge Notice?

I can't remember my log-in ID/password - help!

A:

Your log-in ID is automatically sent to you via e-mail when your application has been processed. If you cannot remember or find it, please contact us.

Your password is set up when you initially sign up online – if you cannot remember it, you can request a password reset email to be sent to you, via the log-in page.

What if I need help out-of-hours?

A:

Our emergency helpline: 0191 375 1051

We operate a 24hr helpline, which you can call if you need emergency assistance outside of normal office hours. You can call us on this number if:

* You have a breakdown

* You're in an accident

* You can't return the car, as there is another vehicle in its bay, or the Co-wheels car is not parked in its bay

* You are unable to get into a car (this does not include lost smart cards, unless it is mid-booking)

* You need to extend a booking if late (a charge will be applied)

What happens if the car breaks down while I'm on the road?

A:

We have roadside assistance cover which protects all of our members. If you break down, contact us straight away, and we'll get someone out to you.

What happens if I have an accident?

A:

Firstly, make sure you're in one piece! Then contact us on the emergency contact number immediately, and we'll make sure that you and the car get home quickly and safely. If the accident was your fault, you will have to pay the excess, and the rest will obviously be covered.

What happens if the car isn't there when I've booked it?

A:

In the unlikely event that the car isn't in its bay when you arrive to pick it up, we'll discuss alternative means of transport for you straight away. We will advise that you use other means of transportation to get to the next closest car, or your destination (e.g. train, bus, or taxi). If you need to get a taxi to your destination and then back again, you will only pay car club prices. Please ensure that you keep hold of any receipts, in the event of this unlikely scenario.

What if there's another vehicle in the parking bay when I return the car?

A:

This shouldn't happen as bays are clearly marked, and it is possible that the owner of the car which has been parked in the bay will be fined. If, by some chance, there is a car in the bay, please park legally, as nearby as possible, and give us a call so we can try to get the other car moved.

If you park our car outside of its bay in this instance, but fail to notify us, you will unfortunately be liable to pay the fine. Likewise, if the vehicle is left parked illegally, you will be liable to pay the fine. There is also the possibility of an administration charge in the event of the above, for which you would be liable to pay. Please remember to park legally, and notify us as soon as possible, to avoid incurring any fines!

What do I do if there's a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) on the vehicle?

A:

Please send the PCN to our head office address via post, and provide us with your name and member ID. You will be reimbursed for the postage costs for sending us the notice.

I've lost my smartcard!

A:

If you have misplaced your smartcard, you will need to contact us to receive a replacement. Please note that there is a charge of £5.00 for replacing smart cards.

I have a booking, but I have lost/forgotten my smart card!

A:

Unfortunately, in this circumstance, you will be unable to gain access to the vehicle. However, if you possess a contactless card, we can issue you with a PIN to assign your card to your account. Please contact us during office hours to do this.

I want to cancel my account - how do I do this?

A:

Just e-mail info@co-wheels.org.uk with your full name and/or membership number. Your account will then be closed at the end of the month.

What if I receive a Penalty Charge Notice?

A:

If you receive a parking ticket, speeding notification, or bus lane/toll charge, Co-wheels will receive notification of this at our Head Office. We will contact you on the same day that we receive the PCN with further instruction on how to proceed.

Please note that you are liable for full charge of any PCN, and in addition, any subsequent administrative charges from leasing companies.

