

What you need to know: Car rental company cleanliness and hygiene programs

July 31, 2020

To reassure both employees and travelers that they are doing what they can to protect them against COVID-19, car rental companies are introducing new and improved cleanliness and hygiene processes.

This report summarizes what some car rental companies around the world are doing and planning.

Global companies

Avis Budget

Using insights from the World Health Organization (WHO) and local authorities, Avis Budget updated its guidance for cleaning and disinfecting all vehicles, including confirmed COVID-19 vehicles.¹ It also introduced enhanced and more frequent cleaning at all locations, with a focus on cleansing and sanitizing high-touch areas, such as counters, payment facilities and door handles.

In July, Avis Budget Group partnered with Reckitt Benckiser (maker of Lysol disinfectant), Hip Hop Public Health and the ABG Medical Advisory Council (medical professionals from Columbia, Johns Hopkins and NYU) to launch Avis Safety Pledge.² Reckitt Benckiser provides disinfectant products for use at all Avis locations and in its vehicles; ABG guides Avis in deploying tools and protocols; Hip Hop manages employee training.

Under the pledge, Avis commits to keep every one of its customers and employees safe:³

Picking up a vehicle with minimal contact

- Counter screens maintain social distancing where possible
- Hand sanitizers are available
- Paperless rental agreements are available at most locations
- Clear social distancing floor markings at rental desks
- Staff are provided with masks and gloves
- Number of passengers on shuttle buses has been limited
- Enhanced cleaning of all high touch areas

At certain “key in car” locations, customers can use Avis Preferred to walk directly to the rental vehicle, ensuring a completely contactless experience. Using the company’s app, customers can choose the vehicle and make any required changes to the rental.

Keeping vehicles safe and clean

- Every vehicle is carefully cleaned before each rental
- Special attention is paid to high-touch points: steering wheels, indicators, dashboards, hand grips, in-car entertainment controls, cup holders, consoles, door handles inside and outside the vehicle

¹ [Avis Budget](#), Information relating to COVID-19

² [Business Travel News](#), July 10, 2020

³ [Avis](#), Avis Safety Pledge

- Approved disinfectants are used

Returning the vehicle safely and preparing it for the next renter

- Customers are reminded to remove all belongings, personal effects and rubbish
- Paper receipt is available, if required
- Vehicle is cleaned to prepare it for the next rental
- Receipt are emailed to customers or available via the Avis website
- Staff wear masks and gloves when cleaning returned vehicles

Keeping employees safe

- All staff are provided with masks and gloves
- Employees must frequently wash their hands and have received health and safety training
- If feeling unwell, employees are required to stay at home

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Enterprise Holdings has introduced a Complete Clean Pledge across its three car rental brands: Enterprise Rent-A-Car, National Car Rental and Alamo Rent A Car.⁴ Following guidance from health authorities, and in partnership with the travel industry, Enterprise has enhanced its existing cleaning protocols. It pledges to go above and beyond its already rigorous cleaning protocols.

New cleaning standards, outlined in the Complete Clean Pledge, align with the U.S. Travel Association's (USTA) "Travel in the New Normal" guidance. Rental vehicles will be supplied with a Complete Clean Pledge notification, informing customers that a thorough cleaning has been performed to these standards. The protocol includes washing, vacuuming, general wipe down and sanitizing with products meeting COVID-19 requirements, with an extra focus on 20 high-touch points.

- Key/key fob
- Steering wheel and column
- Seat belts
- Center console and area between it and adjacent seats
- Door interiors and pockets
- Interior and exterior door handles
- Seat pockets and seat surfaces
- Areas between seats and door jambs
- Cupholders and compartments
- Instrument panel and dashboard
- Accessory panel and touchscreens
- Rearview and side mirrors
- Gear stick/shift
- Air vents
- Trunk/boot release

Enterprise has introducing social distancing protocols for customers using its shuttle buses. Numbers on each bus are limited, with one-way flow when boarding and deboarding. High-touch areas on shuttles are cleaned and sanitized using disinfectant between trips. This includes baggage racks, door handle and seat backs.

⁴ [Travel Pulse](#), May 11, 2020

The Complete Clean Pledge also applies to Enterprise's branch locations, which are subject to updated cleaning and safety procedures, which are aligned with the U.S. Travel Association's (USTA) Travel in the New Normal guidance. Employees follow best practices set by leading health authorities. Touchable surfaces are frequently sanitized, including counter tops, telephones, tablet devices, payment devices, door handles.

Hertz

Hertz closely monitored the spread of COVID-19 and followed the advice of government and health authorities to take the right actions to protect customers and employees.⁵

Hertz has since introduced the Hertz Gold Standard Clean, with every vehicle across the Hertz, Thrifty, Dollar and Firefly brands cleaned and disinfected under a 15-point cleaning process before being rented out.⁶ Sanitized, sealed and delivered, each car receives a spotless exterior wash, all interior surfaces are wiped, compartments checked and cleaned, and odors removed and disinfected.

The 15-step cleaning process:

- Disinfect vehicle at return area
- Perform vehicle inspection
- Inspect interior
- Remove rubbish and lost/found items
- Vacuum interior front seat area
- Vacuum interior rear seat area
- Vacuum trunk/boot
- Clean window interiors
- Disinfect all key contact surfaces
- Wiper fluid check and replenishment
- Spray odor eliminator
- Wash exterior of vehicle
- Perform quality check
- Stall vehicle, disinfect driver area
- Place Gold Standard seal on vehicle

Hertz has enhanced cleaning methods at all locations worldwide and on shuttle buses, including the use of approved disinfectants to regularly wipe down high-touch areas, such as door handles, counters, kiosks and other hard surfaces. It's made alcohol-based sanitizers available and asks employees to take important hygiene steps, including frequent handwashing and staying at home if unwell.

Where a customer is suspected or known to have COVID-19, Hertz's new cleaning protocols remove the vehicle from circulation and use a third party to disinfect it.

⁵ [Hertz](#), Information relating to COVID-19

⁶ [Hertz](#), Hertz Gold Standard Clean

Other large rental companies

Europcar

In addition to existing reinforced vehicle cleaning, involving the systematic use of disinfectants, Europcar has introduced special measures to provide customers with a safe and flexible travel experience.⁷

Prepare your trip

- Book rentals online
- Scan driver's license and take a selfie in advance to verify rental account
- Check-in online

Be safe in our stations

- Masks and gloves are available for staff
- Social distancing floor markers in Europcar offices
- Plexiglass screens installed at desks
- Hand sanitizers available for customers and staff
- Counters cleaned and disinfected after each customer

Pick up your vehicle

- All vehicles are intensively cleaned with approved disinfectants, with special attention given to driver and passenger areas
- After cleaning, vehicle is locked and not opened again until rental. The driver's door is sealed with a "Safety Program" sticker
- Child seats, navigation systems and other key equipment are sanitized and stored securely
- Sanitized car keys are placed in a sealed envelop

Return your vehicle

- Same safety and cleaning precautions apply
- To minimize contact, customers need not sign return and collection documents
- When vehicles are delivered, staff wear protective equipment

SIXT Rent A Car

SIXT declares that the safety of its customers and its employees is its top priority.⁸ The company is constantly monitoring the situation, and it has set up a specially established coordination center to work with the responsible authorities. To provide a safe environment for customers and employees, SIXT is:

- Intensively cleaning branches to minimize virus transmission
- Ensuring employees follow recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO), such as washing their hands intensively on a regular basis
- Professionally cleaning all vehicles in a multi-step process

SIXT has also introduced new practices to support social distancing to ensure the highest standards:

- Limiting the number of employees and customers in a location, if required by local authorities
- Introducing Perspex "sneeze guard" screens at all counters

⁷ [Europcar](#), Move safely with flexibility

⁸ [SIXT](#), Current Information concerning COVID-19

- All customer facing staff to wear face masks
- Safe distancing signage and floor markers in branches

All vehicles must meet the SIXT Premium Cleaning Standard. Before SIXT rents out any vehicle, it is professionally cleaned in a multi-step cleaning process incorporating the latest disinfectant products. This includes a deep sanitization of key contact surfaces: steering wheels, dashboards, hand grips, radio dials, cupholders, center consoles and internal and external door handles.

SIXT Fastlane provides a fast and contactless experience for customers. They can go directly to the rental car, open it with an app.

Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as at July 31, 2020. We have carefully researched and checked the information contained. However, we do not guarantee or warrant the correctness, completeness or topicality of this article and do not accept any liability for any damage or loss as a result of the use of the information contained within this article.

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email mike.eggleson@bcdtravel.co.uk to share your thoughts.