

DRIVING IN EUROPE



It's important to remember that each country's motoring laws, regulations and advice are subject to constant review, change and differing interpretations. Before setting off on any trip abroad, please make sure you're familiar with the laws which may affect your journey (including any countries you travel through).



Visit

www.theaa.com/european-breakdown-cover/driving-in-europe
for the latest information.

The enforcement of motoring laws abroad can be more severe than in the UK. Very large on the spot fines can be imposed in some countries, so make sure that you comply with sign posted speed limits and that everyone in the car is wearing a seat belt.

There are a number of important steps before taking your vehicle abroad, as well as equipment to take and rules to be aware of:

Documents you need - Page 2

Equipment and preparing your vehicle - Page 3

Advice for drivers and passengers - Page 4



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/// You will need

You may be asked to produce the following documents at any time. To avoid a police fine and/or confiscation of your vehicle, be sure that they are readily available for inspection.

■ **A valid full driving licence** (not provisional)

■ **Vehicle on Hire Certificate** (VE103)

■ **Your passport**

■ **UK Sticker** on or after 28 September 2021, you will need to display a UK sticker clearly on the rear of your vehicle if your number plate has any of the following:



- a GB identifier with the Union flag (also known as the Union Jack)
- a Euro symbol
- a national flag of England, Scotland or Wales
- numbers and letters only - no flag or identifier

If your number plate includes the UK identifier with the Union flag (also known as the Union Jack), you do not need a UK sticker.

If you're in Spain, Cyprus or Malta, you must display a UK sticker no matter what is on your number plate.

If you have a GB sticker, cover or remove it.

■ **An International Driving Permit** when necessary - please check here whether you need one:
www.gov.uk/driving-abroad/international-driving-permit



Please note:

The paper counterpart of British photo driving licences, which records endorsements, is now computerised. So if you want to hire a car outside the UK, you will need a code issued by the DVLA to show convictions for offences like speeding.

To get a code:

You need to log on to the DVLA website before you leave and present this to the rental supplier at the time of booking. (To get a code go to www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence and follow the procedures).

The code is valid for 21 days, so you must request this close to the time you need to make your booking.

The DVLA recommends destroying paper counterparts from now on.

The old-style paper licences, issued before the photo card was introduced in 1998, will remain valid.

/// Obtaining your VE103 from Arval

If your vehicle is leased from Arval, we are the registered keeper. This means that you need a VE103 document, the recognised legal alternative to the registration document, to take the vehicle outside the UK.

This document must be the original version, not a photocopy. This also covers you whilst proceeding to, and returning from, the port of embarkation. It is valid for a year from the date of issue and will cover you for all your foreign travel within that year. There is a charge of £15.00 + VAT per certificate. The address used for the VE103 must legally be the 'custodians' home address and must match the address on your driving licence.



Do not risk travelling without a VE103.

In a previous high profile case, a vehicle without a VE103 provided by their leasing company was impounded for four days while the original registration document was mailed out to the local police station. The driver had a letter of authority with him, but this was not accepted.

/// Your vehicle

When travelling in Europe, you must ensure that you comply with European motoring regulations by carrying the following items of equipment, which are required by law in many countries and are advisable in any case.



Headlights

If you are driving in Europe, you must adjust the headlamp beam pattern to suit driving on the right so that the dipped beam will not dazzle oncoming drivers. Never go without adjusting the headlamp pattern, as it is a compulsory requirement in most countries and not doing so can invalidate your insurance.



Tyres

Like the UK, most countries require a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm over the central three-quarters of the tread and around the whole circumference of the tyre. Arval recommends a minimum of 2mm, but consider changing tyres if the tread is down to 3mm before you travel.



Overloading

Overloading your vehicle can incur fines and possibly invalidate insurance, as well as the potential safety risks. Overloading can cause damage to suspension, burnt out clutch, punctures or uneven wear on tyres.



Safety items

The legally required safety items vary depending on which country you're traveling to.

	France	Germany	Italy	Belgium	Holland	Spain	Austria	Ireland	Poland	Denmark	Switzerland
Warning triangle	✓	Ⓡ	✓	✓	✓	✓**	✓	Ⓡ	✓	✓	✓
Hi-visibility vest	✓	Ⓡ	✓	✓		✓	✓				
UK sticker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beam deflectors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
First aid kit		Ⓡ*		Ⓡ	Ⓡ		✓	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ
Bulb kit	✓				Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ
Breathalyser	✓***										
Fire extinguisher		Ⓡ		Ⓡ	Ⓡ				Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ

✓ Compulsory
Ⓡ Recommended

* DIN Approved standard required
** Two are recommended
*** Must be NF Approved

Information correct at January 2021.



Crit'Air sticker (France)

In some areas of France, low emission zones are being introduced to restrict vehicle access. In order to drive through these areas without penalty, you'll need to display a "Vignette" (sticker) on your vehicle.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

[ORDER A CRIT'AIR STICKER](#)



Warning triangle

These are compulsory in the majority of countries to give advance warning of a hazard on the road. Hazard warning lights alone are NOT sufficient in many European countries.

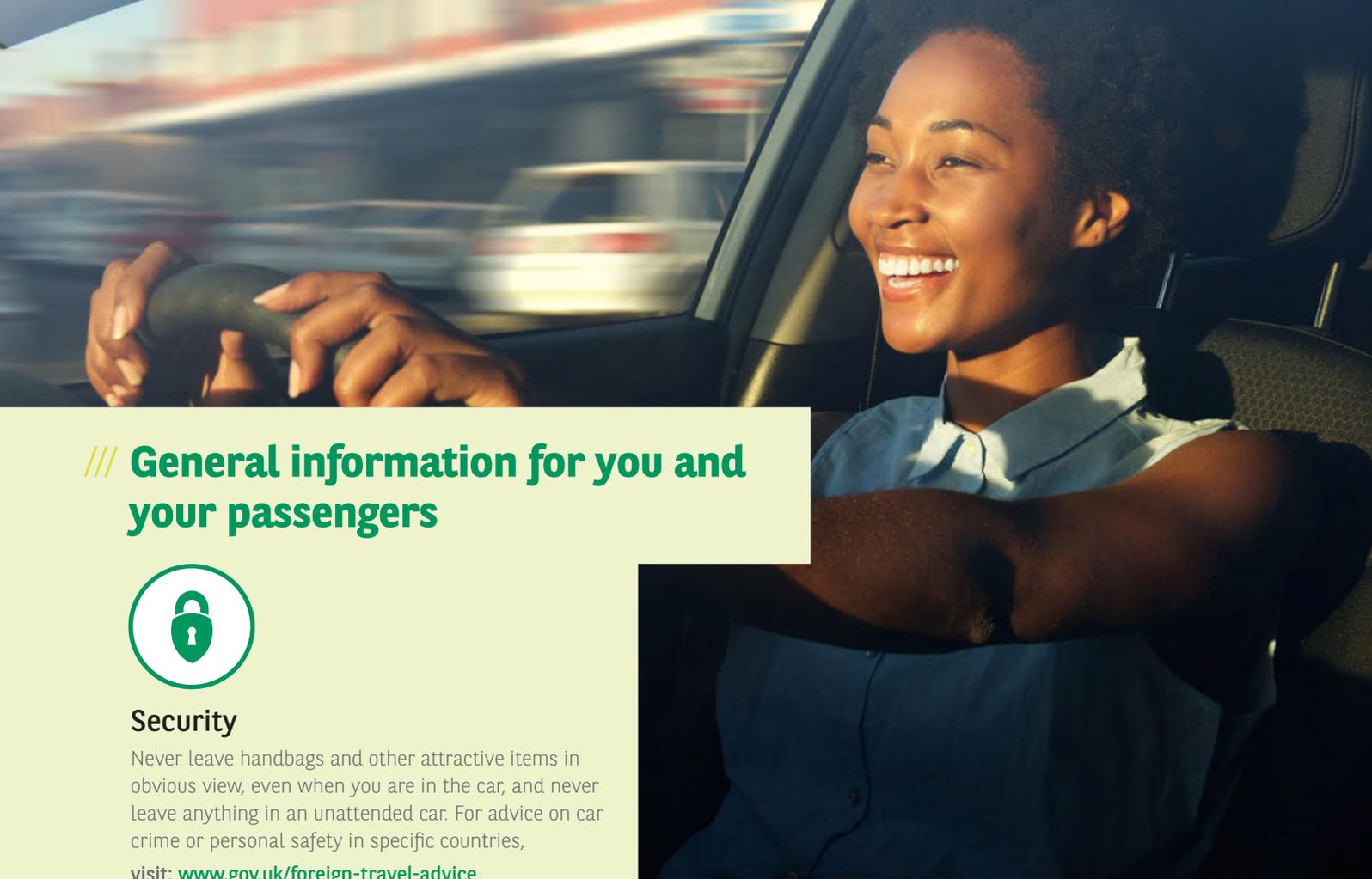


Speed-trap detection devices

The use or possession of devices to detect police radar is illegal in most European countries. Penalties can include a fine, driving ban and even imprisonment.

Make sure that you service your car before you travel, to reduce the chance of expensive breakdowns when abroad.

If you are travelling abroad, it is best to check the requirements by logging onto www.theaa.com/european-breakdown-cover/driving-in-europe



/// General information for you and your passengers



Security

Never leave handbags and other attractive items in obvious view, even when you are in the car, and never leave anything in an unattended car. For advice on car crime or personal safety in specific countries, visit: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice



Breakdown cover

Make sure that you have adequate cover for driving in European countries.



Mobile phones

The use of hand-held mobile phones while driving is prohibited in many countries.



Children in cars

Rules relating to the age and height of children that can be carried as front seat passengers vary by country, so check before you leave.



Spectacles

Take a spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses if you wear them – especially if you are the sole driver.



Drinking and driving

There is only one safe rule – if you drink, do not drive. Laws are strict and the penalties are severe.



Think right

It is easy to forget to drive on the right when outside the UK, particularly after doing something familiar, such as leaving a petrol station or car park.

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