AXA Commercial
Claims

Credit Hire Protocols FAQs

What are credit hire protocol agreements and why do they matter?

Credit hire protocols are arrangements between insurers and Credit Hire Organisations (CHOs) that help manage motor claims cost effectively and with greater consistency.

They set out clear rules and expectations around areas such as replacement vehicle hire and repairs, including agreed daily hire rates and service standards. This helps reduce uncertainty, avoid disputes, and prevent costs from escalating while a claim is being handled.

Why are these protocols needed?

Without credit hire protocols in place, claims can quickly become more complex and expensive. For example, hire charges are less controlled and can increase quickly, vehicles can be kept for longer than necessary, and additional fees may be added, often leading to disputes and rising costs.

These higher costs don't just affect individual claims – over time, they add up across the market and can drive up insurance premiums for everyone.

Protocol agreements help prevent this by:

- Setting clear expectations around hire rates and duration
- Reducing uncertainty around charges
- Limiting disputes and escalation
- Controlling costs while claims are being handled

Together, these measures create a more consistent and cost-effective claims experience – for customers, brokers and the wider market.

Do credit hire protocols decide who is at fault for the incident?

No. Fault is always decided based on evidence available, including (but not limited to):

- Customer statements
- Photos & dashcam footage
- Road layout
- Witness accounts
- Police reports.

Credit hire protocols don't determine liability – that decision is always based on the evidence available.

We won't accept a claim where we believe our customer is not at fault, or where there are concerns about its validity. And if new evidence comes to light later – such as a witness statement or dashcam footage – we will always review our position and take appropriate action.

Can credit hire protocols ever cost more than non-protocol claims?

In a small number of cases, the agreed rate under a protocol might appear slightly higher than a rate that could theoretically have been negotiated individually outside of a protocol. However, this is never guaranteed. Without a protocol, costs and hire durations are unpredictable and can vary significantly depending on the circumstances of each claim.

Without a protocol agreement:

- Hire periods aren't controlled and can run much longer than expected
- Costs can increase quickly, with less certainty around charges
- There's no agreed process to challenge the length or cost of hire
- Disputes are more likely, increasing the risk of litigation, delay and expense

For example, a hire that lasts 20 days under a protocol might extend to 30 days or more without one – significantly increasing the overall cost of the claim.

While an individual claim might occasionally appear cheaper without a protocol, the overall picture is clear – protocols provide better control, fewer disputes and more predictable costs, helping keep premiums more stable for customers.

We'll only maintain or enter a protocol where there is a clear and demonstrable benefit for our customers.

Why might we make an early decision on claim responsibility?

We aim to make early decisions on responsibility for all claims where possible, based on the evidence available at the time. This is a standard part of managing claims efficiently, and is not unique to credit hire protocols.

Where responsibility is shared, we will pay protocol rates in full as protocol discounts, risk control and agreed rates offer a better outcome for our customer. This does not prejudice any other element of the claim e.g. injury. For example, paying 100% of a £4,000 claim under a protocol is preferable to paying 50% of a £20,000 claim handled outside of one, once extended hire, disputes and legal costs are taken into account.

Split responsibility claims under protocol are rare, accounting for around 2% of claims. Where they do arise, protocols provide a more predictable and cost-effective outcome – and our customer's account always remains central to how the claim is handled.

Does accepting responsibility mean the customer wasn't listened to?

No. Our customer's account is always taken seriously and forms an important part of how claims are handled.

Some types of accidents – such as those involving roundabouts, lane changes or low-speed manoeuvres – can involve limited or conflicting evidence. In these situations, decisions may rely on a balanced and pragmatic view of the information available, particularly where the evidence points towards our policyholder being responsible. Throughout, our customer's view is always considered – credit hire protocols never drive decisions on responsibility, the evidence does.

Accepting responsibility on a claim never means our customer's account has been dismissed or ignored. Our priority is to handle every claim with our customer's best interests in mind.

Are credit hire protocols designed to benefit insurers more than customers?

No – their purpose is to protect customers by:

- Controlling claim costs
- Reducing unreasonable hire vehicle charges
- Limiting disputes and delays
- Helping claims settle more quickly

These agreements support more stable premiums and a better overall claims experience for our customers. We regularly review them and would not continue with any protocol that doesn't deliver a clear and ongoing benefit for our customers.

Are you part of the ABI General Terms of Agreement (GTA)?

We're not a signatory to the ABI GTA. Instead we operate a range of tailored protocols with Credit Hire Organisations – choosing the arrangements that best support our customers and claims handling approach. We assess our protocols on an ongoing basis to ensure they continue to deliver real value and controlled costs. Where a protocol no longer meets those standards, we will renegotiate or bring it to an end.

What's the bigger picture?

Credit hire protocols act as guardrails – helping to control rising claim costs and creating a more consistent and predictable claims experience.

Ultimately, they are there to protect customers, support brokers, and help create a more stable and efficient market for everyone.

Get in touch

For any questions or support, please contact your Claims Relationship Manager or your usual AXA representative.