# Concerns raised over car hire safety after motorist's alarming experience



A motorist has expressed serious concerns over the safety of vehicles provided by a car hire firm after experiencing multiple alarming issues with a courtesy car. The incident involves Paul Smith, a 31-year-old public relations manager from Falkirk, who was provided a Cupra Formentor sports SUV by Auxillis while waiting for his own Audi Q2 to be repaired following a crash last month.

Mr Smith's troubles began shortly after he received the vehicle on March 10, as he reported problems with the brakes, which he claimed almost caused him to lose control of the car on the motorway in torrential rain. He experienced grinding noises from the brakes and warning alerts from the parking assistance feature, which raised concerns for his safety. "I got straight onto the phone to tell them: 'I'm getting this noise from the car, it's not pleasant, it's not comfortable, and I'm quite concerned,'" he noted in an interview with MailOnline.

Despite his complaints, Auxillis allegedly failed to address the issue promptly. Eventually, Mr Smith parked over the entrance of the Auxillis facility in Broxburn, near Edinburgh, in protest after the company refused to replace the car. On one occasion, despite being advised to consult an RAC mechanic, he found himself in a precarious situation when he nearly crashed due to the alleged brake failure as he approached other vehicles on the M90 motorway.

After the alarming incident, Mr Smith was provided with a replacement Formentor, which he discovered had prior accident damage that had not been communicated to him. "He said, 'Look, it's the same car, but it's been in a bit of an accident - the bumper's damaged and the bonnet's sunk in,'" Mr Smith recounted, expressing disbelief at the situation. He later learned from an RAC inspection that the replacement car had been fitted with ‘cheap brakes’ that were significantly worn.

The incidents have led to a breakdown of communication between Mr Smith and Auxillis, with Auxillis choosing to void the rental agreement entirely, leaving him without a vehicle. Following the cancellation, Mr Smith voiced his frustration, stating, "It’s been an absolute shambles from start to finish."

Auxillis has not made any public comments regarding the specifics of Mr Smith's case. However, his insurer, Elephant, stated that they are investigating the matter as a priority and are in communication with Auxillis. They acknowledged the dissatisfaction expressed by Mr Smith and have informed him that should he need a courtesy car through alternative arrangements, he would face a £500 excess.

This ongoing saga highlights the issues surrounding vehicle safety and maintenance within the car rental industry, as Mr Smith described the vehicles delivered to him as ‘dirty’ and poorly maintained. The RAC mechanic's report underscored a concerning lack of upkeep that ultimately impacted Mr Smith’s experience.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cupraofficial.ie/newsroom/cupra-formentor-achieves-5-star-rating-in-the-stricter-euro-ncap-safety-tests> - This article details the CUPRA Formentor's five-star safety rating from Euro NCAP, which supports the claim that the vehicle is designed for safety, contradicting the issues faced by Mr. Smith.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - This document discusses legal proceedings involving safety and negligence, aligning with Mr. Smith's complaint regarding the car hire company's response to his issues.
* <https://www.whatcar.com/cupra/formentor/estate/used-review/n25335/reliability> - The article provides insights into common issues faced by CUPRA Formentor owners, corroborating Mr. Smith's claims about the vehicle's reliability problems, particularly concerning brakes and electronic systems.
* <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - This document outlines evidentiary standards that may apply in disputes over vehicle safety, relevant to Mr. Smith's situation with Auxillis and the allegations of negligence.
* <https://www.cupraofficial.co.nz/owners/recalls> - This page lists recalls associated with the CUPRA Formentor, supporting Mr. Smith’s concerns about safety and maintenance issues, particularly regarding the brake system.