



# **Chartering a coach with confidence**

**Your questions answered**



Discerning hirers do not choose a coach company on price and seating capacity alone. The Guild is confident that Members can satisfy your all important questions.

## The Company

### How long has it been in business?

An established company has a reputation. A fledgling company is un-tested.

### How big is it?

Big is not necessarily beautiful, but hirers should be aware that small businesses may not have the full range of technical and management skills necessary to provide a world class service.

## The Vehicle

### How old is the coach?

The vehicle's age may be important to you. Remember, however, that modern motor-coaches have a long life and general presentation, cleanliness and mechanical condition may be more important than actual age.

### What type of vehicle is best?

The length and purpose of the journey and any special passenger needs dictates the vehicle specification. Rate the importance to your passengers of things like toilets, catering facilities, TV, video, reclining seats, blinds, curtains, air conditioning etc. Ensure that your requirements are included in the charter price.

### Does the coach operator offer a range of vehicles?

Your passenger numbers may change, so ascertain whether the company offers vehicles in a range of sizes.

### What about safety?

Enquire about safety features - seat-belts, anti-lock braking systems (ABS). Does the company comply with coach drivers' hours regulations, compiled to avoid risks caused by fatigue. A lax attitude could prejudice the safety of your passengers. Disclose your journey programme so that drivers can be scheduled to do it legally and safely.

### Any Special Requirements?

What if I need to change route or times? Check that the company is able to meet any unforeseen eventualities, within the constraints of safety limits. How does this affect price?

### Any special needs?

If your group includes the very young, elderly, or people with disabilities, can the company provide appropriate vehicles and arrange stops at places where their needs can be met?

## The Staff

### What are the standards of staff training?

Drivers should be competent in vehicle handling and people handling. Enquire about company policy in training drivers in essential customer care. Uniformed drivers and counter-staff speak volumes about company attitudes and standards.

### What about unseen staff?

The competence of engineering staff and their working facilities directly affects the reliability and safety of vehicles. Ask searching questions.

### Who pays for the drivers' accommodation?

Avoid any confrontation during or after hire by establishing at the outset who is booking and paying for drivers' accommodation.

## The Back-up

### Can they deal with emergencies?

Even the best maintained vehicles develop faults. Vehicles can be damaged.

### What systems are in place to avoid unacceptable delays?

Members of the Guild of British Coach Operators through the Confederation of Passenger Transport's (CPT's) Mutual Aid scheme, have access to a national repair network and the local provision of replacement vehicles.

### Is there a guarantee in the event of breakdown?

Uniquely, Members of the Guild of British Coach Operators are able to offer guarantees.



## Check it out

**If in doubt ask: 'Can I look round your premises and vehicles?'**

Reputable coach charters are proud of their products and services - they have nothing to hide.

### What about references?

Avoid any company that will not identify customers for reference purposes.

### Is insurance cover in place and valid licences held?

Ask for evidence that the vehicles are properly insured with unlimited liability for passenger injury; that the company holds a Public Service Vehicle operator's licence and that checks are made to ensure that drivers continue to be licensed to drive this class of vehicle.

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**Charter a member of The Guild Of British Coach Operators and you can be assured that they will meet your most stringent criteria.**

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In the unlikely event of a complaint about any Member, the Guild would like full details. Write, including copies of any correspondence to:

**Richard Delahoy, Administrator**  
**The Guild of British Coach Operators**  
**PO Box 5657**  
**Southend on Sea, Essex**  
**SS1 3WT**  
**United Kingdom**

## Making a Charter Enquiry

When contacting a Guild Member for a quotation or to make a booking, please be prepared to give the following information:

### For Day Hires

- Date of the journey and the starting time and place.
- The destination
- Number of passengers
- Purpose of the journey
- Time of leaving destination and probable completion time.
- Any special requirements at destination (e.g. local transfer movements, theatre or other admission tickets).
- Any special requirements on route, or about the route.
- Any extra requirements (e.g. catering, guides, etc.)
- Coach type or specification required. (e.g. toilets, on-board catering, etc).

### For Multi-Day Hires

- Information as for day hires (above) as applicable.
- Number of days of tour and vehicle movement required each day.
- If the coach company is to make any arrangements:
  - To accommodate passengers (and if so, the type of accommodation required).
  - For any ferry crossings.
- Whether hirer or coach company is supplying accommodation for coach driver(s).

**An easy to use enquiry form - which can be sent to Members by E-mail - can be located at the Guild's Web site at:**

**[www.coach-tours.co.uk](http://www.coach-tours.co.uk)**

Guild Member