



# Consumer news

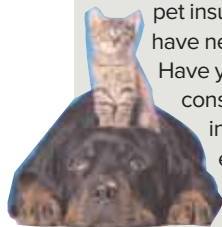
## We want you

### Renting or letting

Have you ever had any problems when renting or letting a property? If so, Lucy Hairsine would like to hear about your experiences.

### Pet insurance

Have you considered taking out pet insurance for your cat or dog but then decided against doing so and now regret your decision? Perhaps you've been paying for pet insurance for years but have never claimed on it. Have you ever bought or considered buying pet insurance for an exotic pet? Martyn Saville would like to hear from you.



### Clothes collections

Have you any concerns about, or have you been affected by, doorstep collections for unwanted clothing in your area? If so, please contact Bob Tolliday.

### Postcode lottery

Does where you live dictate your way of life? Have you been forced to head to another county for dentists with shorter waiting lists or cheaper council tax? Have you moved to get your child a place at a good school? Ayesha Lawrence wants your experiences of the UK's postcode lottery.



Please include full contact details and a daytime phone number

■ [helpwanted@which.co.uk](mailto:helpwanted@which.co.uk) or write to Help Wanted, PO Box 44, Hertford X SG14 1SH

There are more requests online ■ [www.which.co.uk/helpwanted](http://www.which.co.uk/helpwanted)

Our survey shows bag charges can cost airlines business

## Fees weigh you down

**AIRLINES**

Most passengers would opt for an airline that doesn't charge for luggage put in the hold, a Which? survey has found.

We asked 1,948 adults due to book tickets in the next 12 months whether they would choose another airline rather than pay to check in luggage. More than three quarters said they were likely to, but our research shows that you may have trouble finding such an airline (see table below).

And as British Airways began charging passengers for checking in a second bag, our survey found that more than half of those planning to buy tickets are put off airlines that adopt this policy.

In BA's case, unwitting holidaymakers



Is it the end of the conveyor belt for your many suitcases?

who turn up with two suitcases could be slapped with a charge of up to £120.

James Fremantle of the Air Transport Users Council told us: 'Most passengers accept that these charges are inevitable and justified in return for a lower fare. The major complaint we get from passengers is that they don't know about the charges. We wouldn't be surprised if more airlines started charging.'

Our research: 2,605 adults aged 18+ were surveyed online by telephone in March 2007. 1,948 said they were due to book tickets in the coming year.

### WHAT YOUR BAGGAGE CAN WEIGH AND WHAT YOU MUST PAY ON ECONOMY SEATS



#### Hold luggage charge

Passengers are allowed up to five bags, totalling 20kg, for £2.95 per bag if you pre-book or £6 at the airport. There is an excess charge of £5 per kg. Your hand luggage shouldn't be more than 55x40x20cm in size. Charges apply each way.



#### Hold luggage charge for extra bags

You can have two bags totalling 32kg without fees for some long-haul flights including to the US and Canada, until 30 September when it falls to 23kg. On other routes you can have one bag at 32kg, but 23kg from September. Extra bags are charged at £120 for long-haul trips, £60 for European and £30 for domestic, but you get a 30 per cent discount if booking online. You're allowed hand luggage up to 56x45x25cm.



#### Hold luggage charge for extra bags

You get one free hold bag, but each extra costs £5 when pre-booked or £10 at the airport. Total weight allowed is 20kg, with a £6 per kg excess fee up to 32kg. The hand luggage maximum is 55x40x20cm and 32kg.



#### Top-up fee on some destinations

You can have up to 20kg, with an excess fee of £5.50 per kg on short haul and £8 for long haul. For late bookings, the limit is 15kg but you can buy 5kg top-ups when booking. Hand luggage is 45x35x20cm and 5kg.



#### Hold luggage charges

You'll pay £3 when pre-booking or £6 at the airport for hold luggage, which

should not exceed 23kg. The excess charge is £5.50 per kg. You can have hand luggage up to 50x35x23cm and 10kg. Charges apply each way.



#### Hold luggage charges

For up to 15kg there's a check-in fee of £5 if pre-booking or £10 at the airport. The excess charge is £5.50 per kg. Hand luggage can be 55x40x20cm and 10kg. Charges apply each way.



#### No luggage charges

The USA and Caribbean luggage allowance is two bags per passenger, each weighing up to 23kg. For all other destinations economy allowance is one piece of luggage at 23kg. Excess charges vary depending on the destination. The hand luggage maximum size is 56x36x23cm and up to 6kg.

**23 in 1,000**  
flyers' bags lost in 2006 by BA –  
the worst airline for this in Europe  
ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN AIRLINES

**298g**  
weight of new 70cl whisky bottle  
– from 350g – to save on glass  
CO-OP

**2**  
bedrooms in most new-build  
homes – down from 4  
OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS



Love them or hate them, Which? finds you all have opinions on the value of cheques

# Is it time to chuck cheques?

## CHEQUES

**B**ritain's biggest supermarket Tesco could be the latest retailer to ditch cheques as a method of payment, Which? has learnt.

The supermarket giant is running a trial in a handful of stores to 'understand whether customers continue to find this payment method useful'.

Morrisons is also carrying out a small trial to gauge customer reaction to stopping cheque payments.

The news comes as a Which? survey reveals that 72 per cent of people use cheques less than they did five years ago.

And 23 per cent of the 1,003 members of the public we questioned said they get annoyed when they are sent a cheque.

In 1990 people wrote out 11 million cheques every day but by 2005 that figure had dropped to 5.3 million as debit and credit cards became more popular.

But despite this decline, 57 per cent of people in our survey said they still find cheques really useful.

Four per cent said they'd been refused when trying to pay by cheque over the past year and that number looks set to rise as more and more stores stop accepting cheques as a method of payment.

Boots, Next, Shell garages, Currys and PC World no longer accept cheques and supermarket chain Sainsbury's says it's also 'constantly reviewing' its policy, although at the moment it has made no firm commitment to phase out cheques.

But cheques are still a popular way of paying smaller businesses and traders, such as plumbers and builders.

A spokesman for the Federation of Small

**'Small businesses still deal in cheques'**

Businesses said: 'A large proportion of our members and small businesses in general still deal in cheques. They shouldn't be penalised for that and should be able to carry on.'

'I think there will be a natural evolution away from cheques to other forms of payment and the cheque will probably die out. But for the moment we don't think people who want to pay by cheque should be forced to do otherwise.'



## OUR SURVEY SAYS

- 72%** Use cheques less than they did five years ago
- 57%** Find cheques really useful
- 55%** Have paid by cheque at least once in the past month
- 40%** Have received at least one cheque in the past month
- 23%** Find it annoying to get a cheque
- 4%** Have been refused when trying to pay by cheque in the past year

Our research: 1,003 adults aged 16+ were interviewed by telephone in March 2007.

## Does it work? The non-stick shirt



When Asda launched its £14 'non-stick' shirt recently it was touted as the perfect shirt for a date, but our tests have shown lipstick on your collar could still tell a tale on you.

Asda said a special coating on its Permotech cotton shirts means that even 'powerfully staining' liquids slide off without leaving a blemish, including red wine and tea. We've found that while it's safe to slosh around your favourite Beaujolais, don't spill your morning cuppa.

We sent several shirts to a lab to test stain resistance when new, and after five washes to see whether their coating would last.

With new shirts, tea, coffee, red wine, tomato sauce, bolognese, pen ink and chocolate ice cream all wiped away, but they fared less well with greasy stains such as lipstick, oil and butter. And the coating appeared to be working after five washes for the other substances, except for tea to which the shirts were then less resistant.