

Vehicle photography & video guide

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Part 1:

Photography guide

Vehicle photography

As the old adage goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, and in the world of retail, it couldn't be more accurate. Providing potential car buyers with a selection of well shot and clear images that represent the true condition of the vehicle is key to ensuring your business stands out in the crowd.

In this photography guide we'll show you how to take the best possible shots of your stock, and help you build that all important trust with car buyers.



Vehicle photography – key points

Vehicle preparation

- Remember, your website is your shop window
- The first experience and therefore impression of your business will be the images of a vehicle for sale online. First impressions last – make sure your product is clean inside and out.



Location, location, location

When choosing a location consider the following :

- Always try to photograph a vehicle in an area that has a neutral background
- The area should be free of anything that will distract from the vehicle
- The area should be evenly lit – try to avoid a mix of bright sunlight and heavily shadowed areas
- If positioning the vehicle against metal railings this will result in a striped effect on the side of the vehicle
- If restricted for space consider boarding over the railings to avoid any distracting reflections that may be interpreted as damage by the viewer

94%

of car buyers say they research online as part of their car buying journey¹

¹ Source: Autotrader Car Buyers Tracker, August 2021

Camera distance from the car

- The camera should be 10 normal steps back from the vehicle when taking front and rear three quarters images
- Front-on, rear-on and side-on images can be taken 5 steps back from the car
- The camera should be at the same height as the bottom of the windscreen / windows for all exterior views of the vehicle. The camera will then be at the correct height for the vehicle whether it is an SUV or small convertible model.

Camera height – exterior views

- If the exterior images have their backgrounds replaced then this point is critical to the end result of the composite images - too high or too low and the vehicle will not sit properly in front of the replaced background

Camera height – interior views

- The camera height should be the same as the wing mirror for all interior views
- Avoid including the rear view mirror on any interior images unless specifically showing it as a feature - this is because too large an area, with no visible features above the dashboard will also be included

Important!

ALL images should be taken in landscape format.

The images of the vehicle will be more consistent and easier to scroll through if all are taken in this format.

Pre-photography check - exterior

Check:

- Is the vehicle clean?
- Check wheel arches for mud splashes when taking the alloy wheel images
- Are there any distracting items in the area surrounding the vehicle especially around the selected alloy wheel?
- Is the price board still visible through the window? Always remove this as the price may change.
- Is the registration plate level?
- Consider the time of year, (leaves on the ground etc.)
- Are you far enough back from the vehicle (approx. 10 steps)?
- Is the camera at the correct height; the same height as the bottom of the windscreen / windows?
- Is the car level? Check the registration plate is level with the bottom of the frame.

Important!

Does your camera battery have enough charge to complete all the photos you need to take? Is there enough space on your memory card?

Pre-photography check – interior

Check:

- Is the vehicle clean inside?
- Is the steering wheel straight?
- Are the front seats aligned?
- Is there sufficient leg room being shown in both the front and rear seating area?
- Are the air vents facing the same way?
- Is the multimedia / sat nav screen clean? If a touch screen, make sure the screen isn't covered in fingerprints.
- Are there personal items, such as coins and sunglasses visible in the front interior cabin?
- Has the trip been reset to zero?
- Ensure there are no warning symbols displayed – tyre pressure warning etc.
- Is the camera at the correct height for interior photography? (same height as the wing mirror)
- All images should be in landscape format

Important!

Have you considered the order in which you are going to take the images in? Consider the most logical shooting sequence for the space you have to work in and stick to this for every vehicle. This will make the process much quicker.

Photography shooting guidance



1

Front 3/4 view (Driver's side)

- This image is taken from the driver's side
- The camera is 10 steps back from the front of the car
- The camera is the same height as the bottom of the windscreen
- The headlight is in the centre vertical of the frame
- The registration plate is level with the bottom of the frame
- There is more space above the car than below
- There is the same space either side of the car
- Frame as illustrated



2

Front head-on

- Ensure the camera is 5 steps back from the front of the car
- The camera is at the same height as the bottom of the windscreen
- The registration plate is level with the bottom of the frame
- There is the same space either side of the car
- There is more space above the car than below
- Frame as illustrated



3

Side (Passenger's side)

- This image is taken from the passenger side
- The camera is 5 steps back from the car
- The camera is the same height as the bottom of the windows
- There is more space above the car than below
- There is the same space either side of the car
- The bottom of the car is level with the bottom of the frame
- The front wheels are straight
- Frame as illustrated



4

Rear 3/4 view (Passenger's side)

- This image is taken from the passenger side
- The camera is 10 steps back from the rear of the car
- The camera is the same height as the bottom of the windscreen
- The rear light is in the centre vertical of the frame
- The top of the windscreen is level with the top of the frame
- There is more space above the car than below
- There is the same space either side of the car
- Frame as illustrated



5

Rear head-on

- The camera is 5 steps back from the rear of the car
- The camera is at the same height as the rear windscreen
- The registration plate is level with the bottom of the frame
- There is the same space either side of the car
- There is the same amount of wing mirror showing either side of the car – the camera will then be central with the car
- Frame as illustrated



6

Side view (Driver's side)

- This image is taken from the driver's side
- The camera is 5 steps back from the car
- The camera is the same height as the bottom of the windows
- There is more space above the car than below
- There is the same space either side of the car
- The bottom of the car is level with the bottom of the frame
- The front wheels are straight
- Frame as illustrated



7

Alloy wheel

- The camera should be at the same height as the centre of the wheel
- The badge should be the correct way up
- The whole tyre should be included in the frame
- There should be the same space above and below the wheel and either side of the wheel
- There are no visible distractions, such as leaves, in the area surrounding the wheel
- Frame as illustrated



8

Front interior (Driver's side)

- The camera is the same height as the wing mirror
- Hold the camera so it is positioned directly above the door sill
- Avoid including any of the door frames
- Include some of the windscreen above the steering wheel and dash but avoid including the rear view mirror
- Position the steering wheel in the top right hand corner of the frame
- The steering wheel is level
- Frame as illustrated



9

Front seats

- The steering wheel is positioned in the top right hand corner of the frame
- Avoid including any of the surrounding door frames
- Avoid including the rear view mirror
- Frame as illustrated



10

Odometer

- Reset the trip reading to zero
- The mileage is visible
- There are no faults displayed
- Include both rev counter and speedometer dials in the frame
- The dials should be central and level
- Frame as illustrated



11

Door switches

- The entire control panel is featured
- The panel is viewed from the driver position
- The panel runs from the bottom right hand side of the frame to the top left hand side creating a more interesting angle
- Frame as illustrated



12

Steering wheel controls

- The steering wheel is level
- The steering wheel feature is central within the frame with the same space either side
- Frame as illustrated



13

Dashboard screen / vents

- The screen is level with the top of the frame
- The screen should be switched on
- The screen should be clean of any dust or fingerprints
- Frame as illustrated



14

Rear seats head on

- The headrests are level with the top of the frame
- The rear seats are level with the bottom of the frame
- There is the same space either side of the seats
- The backs of the front seats have been brought forward to avoid appearing in the frame to create an impression of greater rear interior space
- Frame as illustrated



15

Rear seats (Passenger's side)

- The camera is positioned level with the driver's side door frame
- Point the camera straight across the seats
- Avoid including any passenger door frames in the image
- Frame as illustrated



16

Front interior (Passenger's side)

- Position the camera at the same height as the wing mirror
- Hold the camera so it is positioned directly above the door sill
- Avoid including any of the door frames
- Include some of the windscreen above the steering wheel and dash but avoid including the rear view mirror
- Ensure the entire steering wheel is included and that it is level
- Avoid including the passenger front air vent
- Frame as illustrated



17

Dashboard head on

- The top of the dash is level with the top of the frame
- The steering wheel is level
- The front seats are aligned
- The screen is switched on
- The rear view mirror is not visible
- There is the same space either side of the side air vents
- The air vents are facing the same direction
- The front seats are reclined to create an impression of greater front interior space
- Frame as illustrated



18

Steering wheel / console

- The dash is level with the top of the frame
- The steering wheel is level
- The screen is switched on
- The vents are facing in the same direction
- Frame as illustrated



19

Open boot

- The front edge of the boot is level with the bottom of the frame
- There is the same space either side of the boot
- The space inside the boot is being clearly demonstrated
- Frame as illustrated



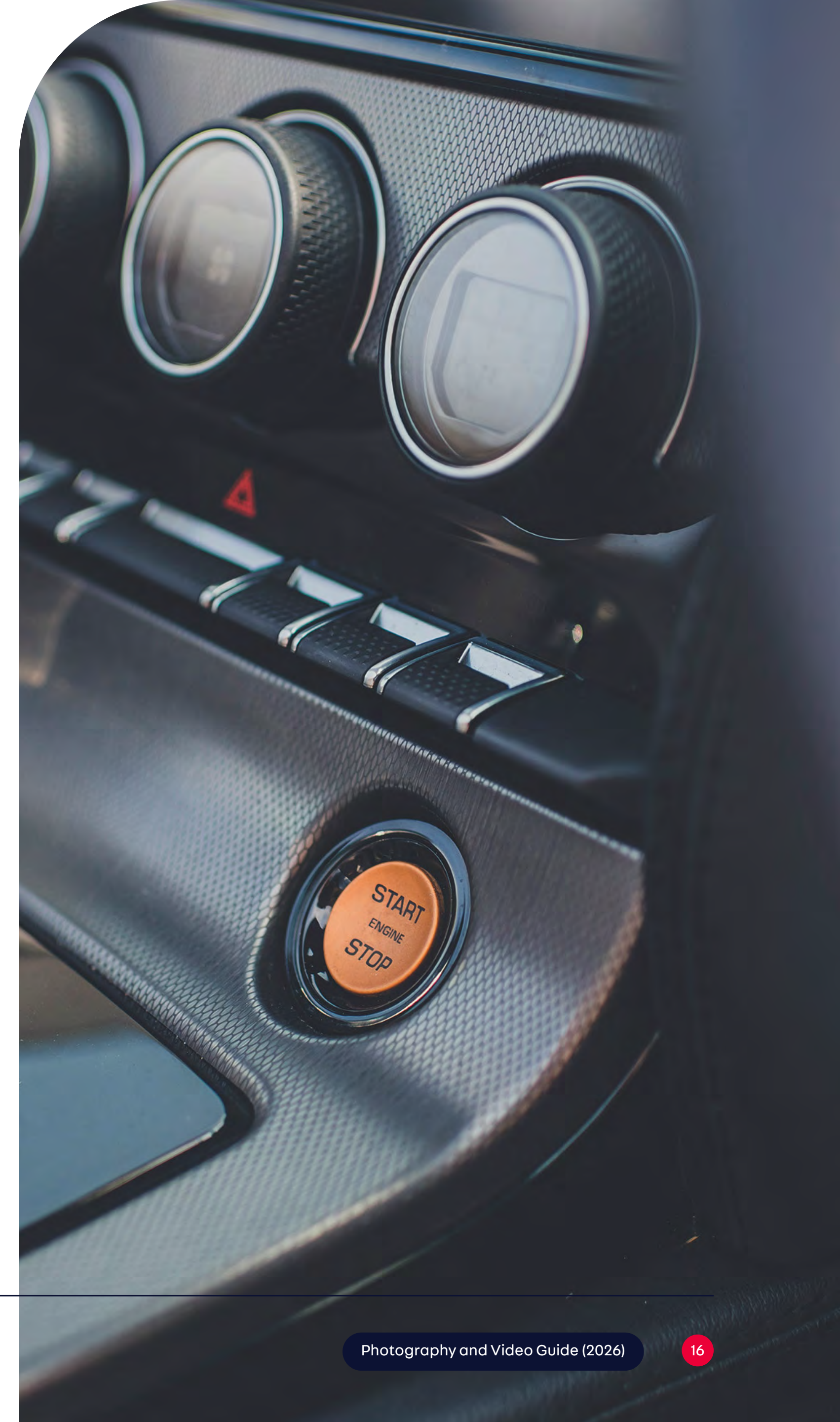
20

Spare wheel well

- The spare tyre is central in the frame
- There is the same space either side of the tyre and above and below the tyre
- Frame as illustrated

Additional images

- Additional specification that adds value to the vehicle such as a sat nav or entertainment screen. If the screen has various modes then include an image of each display.
- Drivers spend a large amount of time in their vehicles so consider the details that, as a whole, add to the overall experience of being in the vehicle
- Any buttons on the steering wheel, the electric window and mirror switches, interior lighting, headrests, cup holders and any other details that add to the overall experience of sitting inside the vehicle
- Consider exterior details such as the style of the lights or the front grill. Details that define the model and age of the vehicle.
- If the vehicle is a newer model, then show the differences in styling from the previous model
- Be creative in the framing of these details to make them dynamic
- Include images of items such as handbooks and the case that these are in
- These can be photographed on a front seat with the seat fabric as a background



Additional images - exterior features



Front light detail



Rear light detail



Spoiler / foglight detail



Aerial detail



Exterior trim detail



Exterior trim detail



Front grill detail



Rear badge detail

Additional images - exterior features



Rear badge / light detail



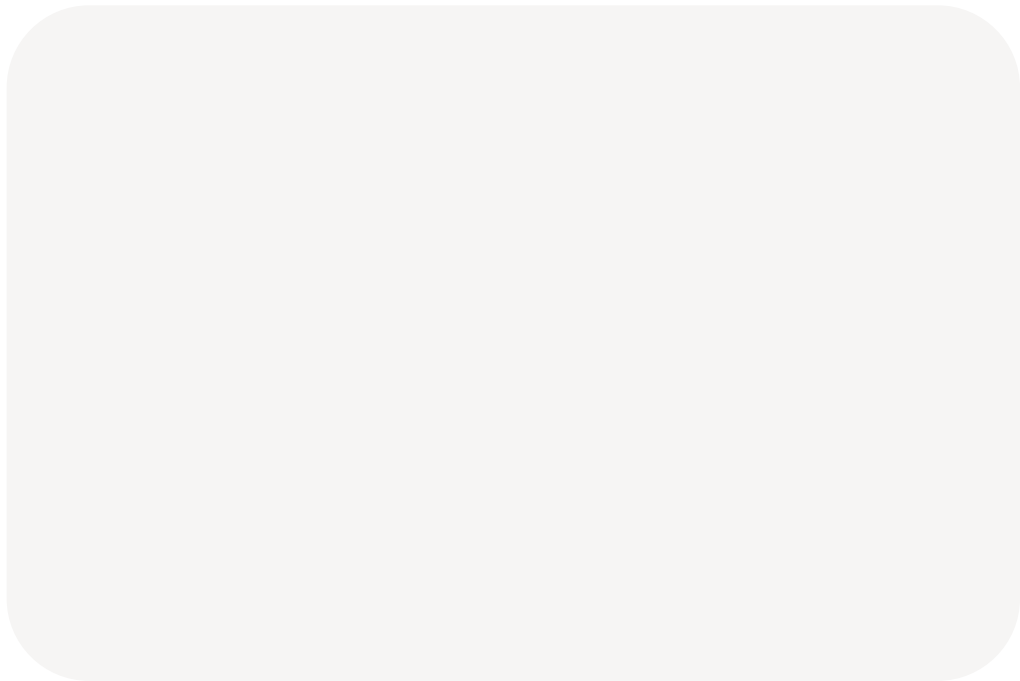
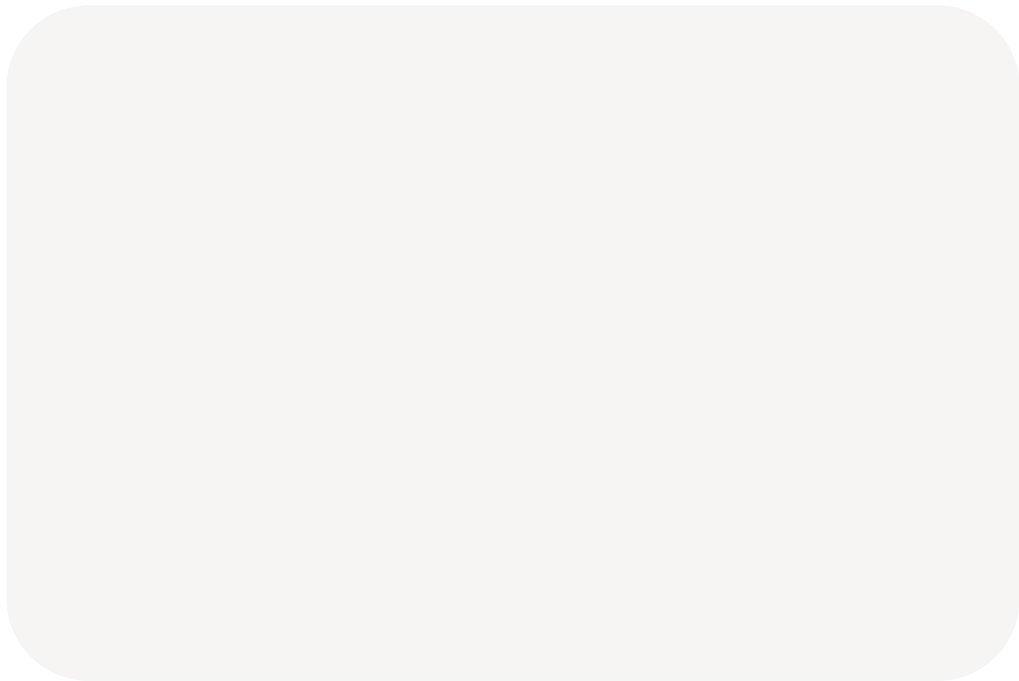
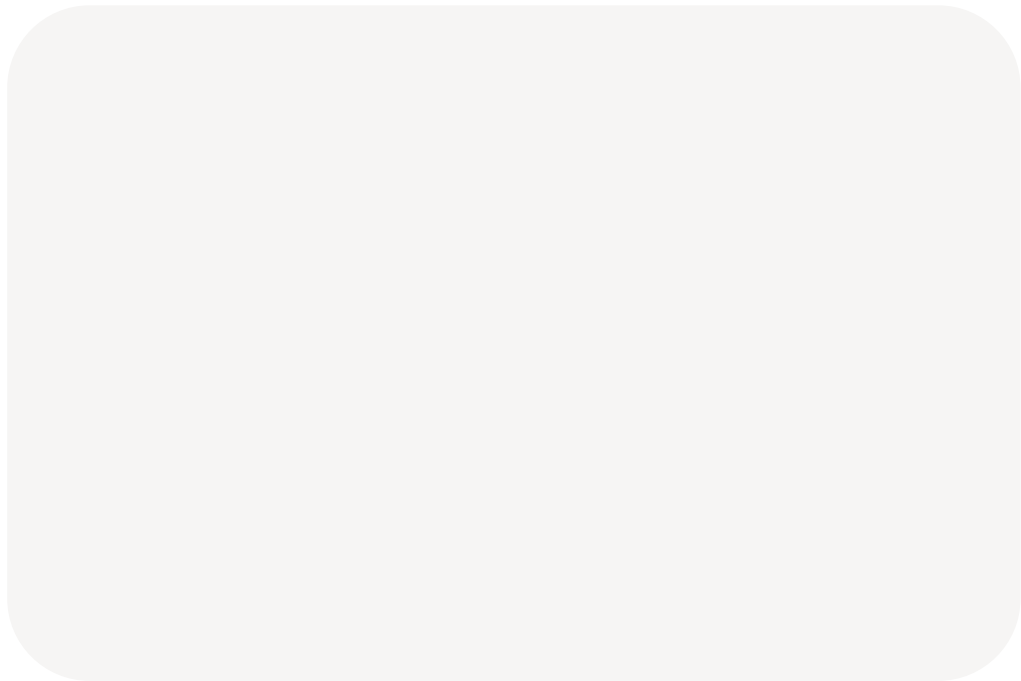
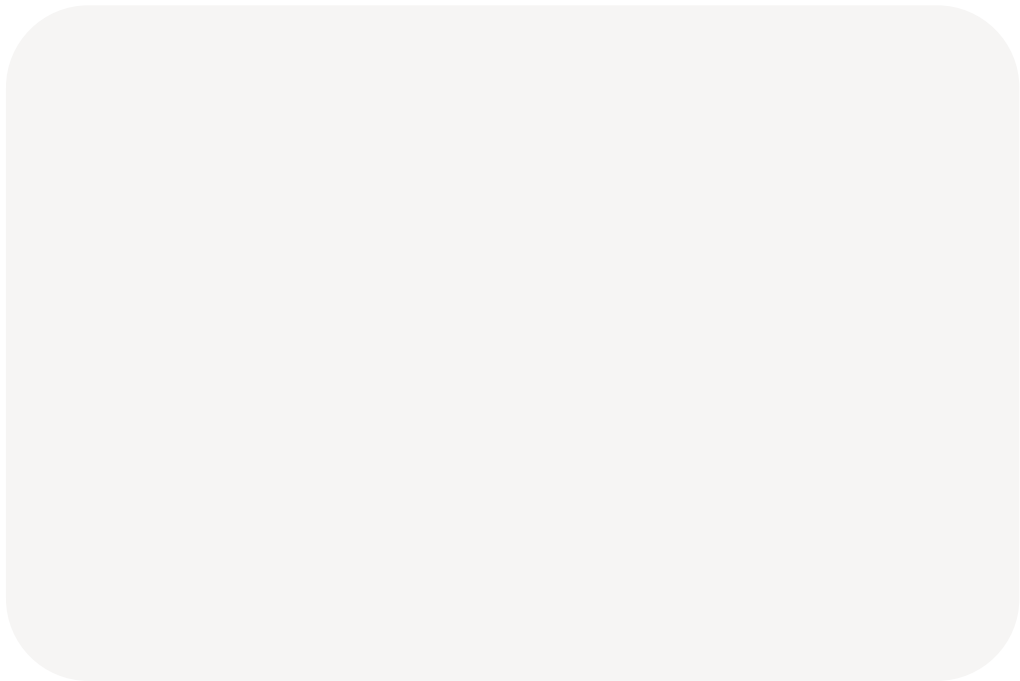
Wing mirror detail



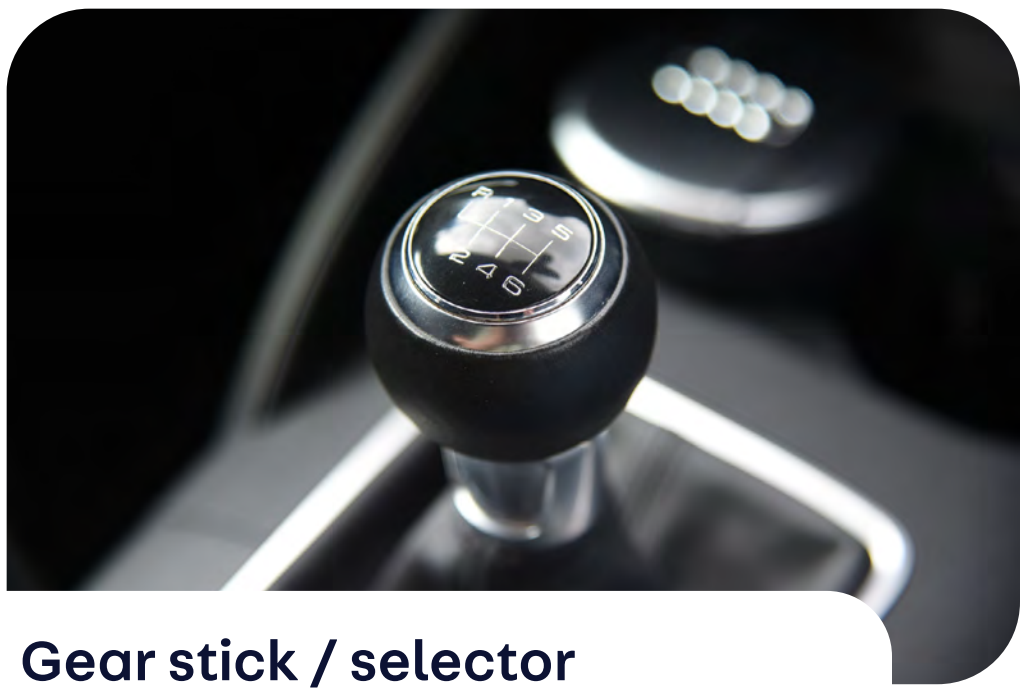
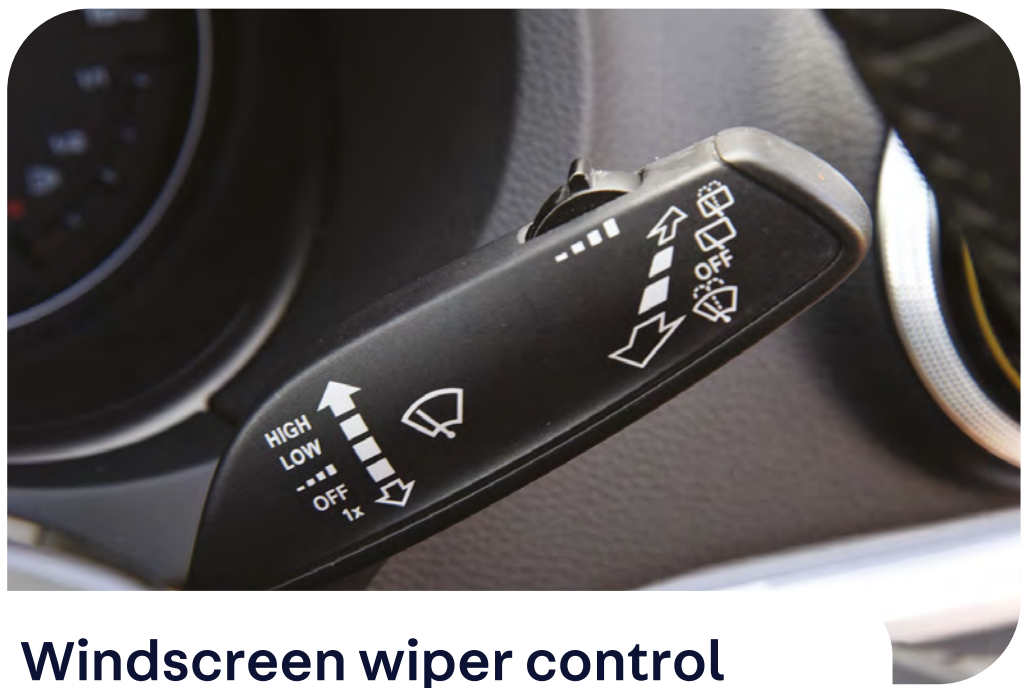
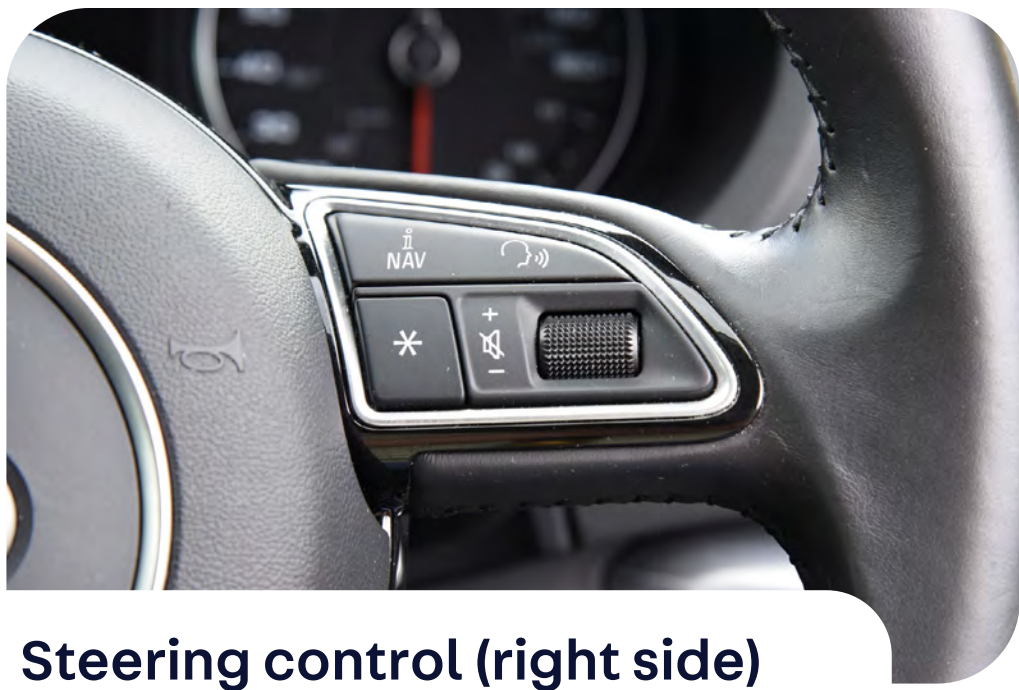
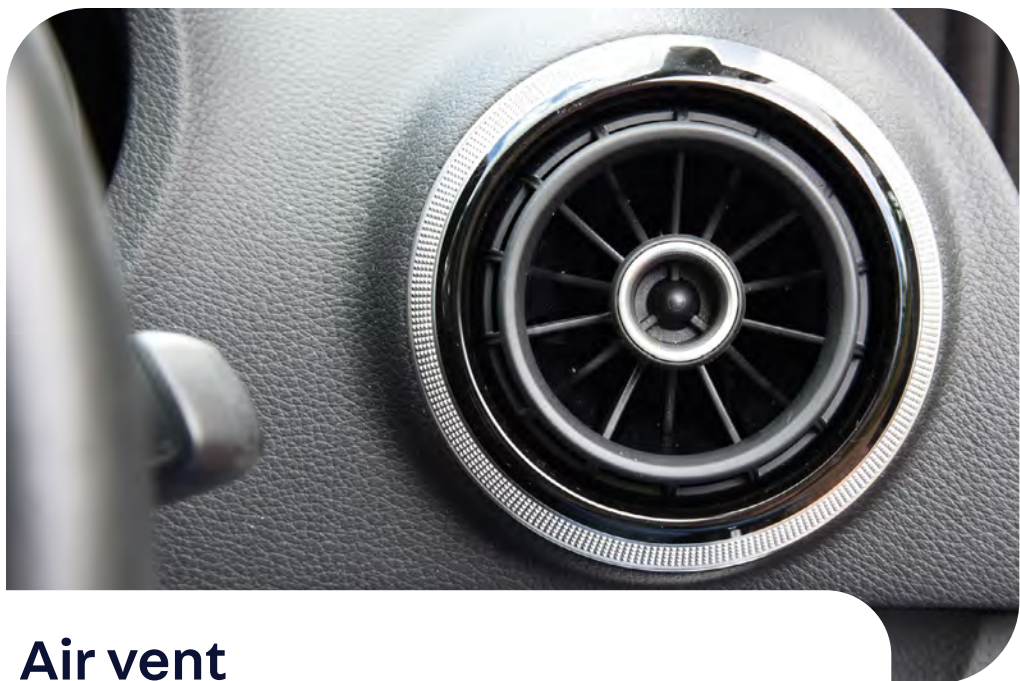
Wing mirror detail

Suggested Extra Images

- ✓ Panoramic roof
- ✓ Electric vehicle charging port



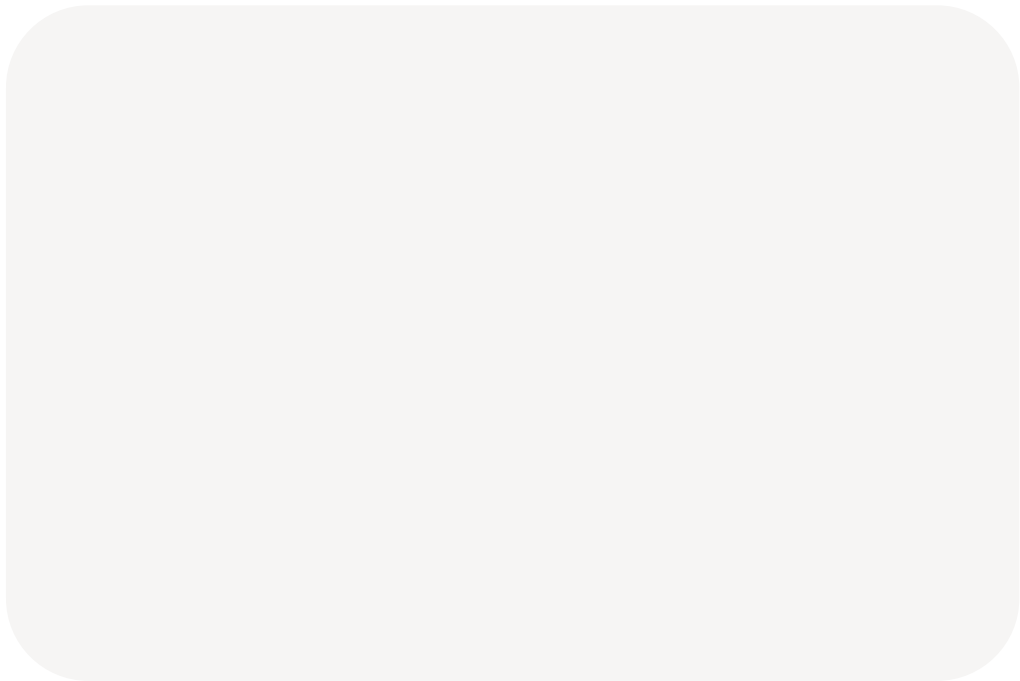
Additional images - controls / dashboard



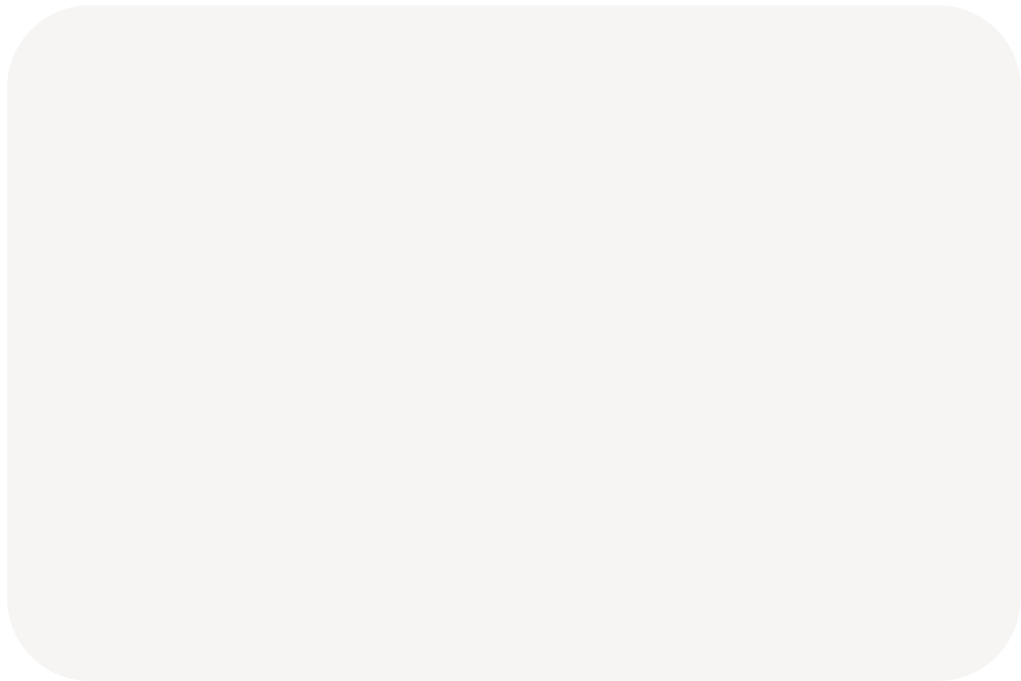
Additional images – controls / dashboard



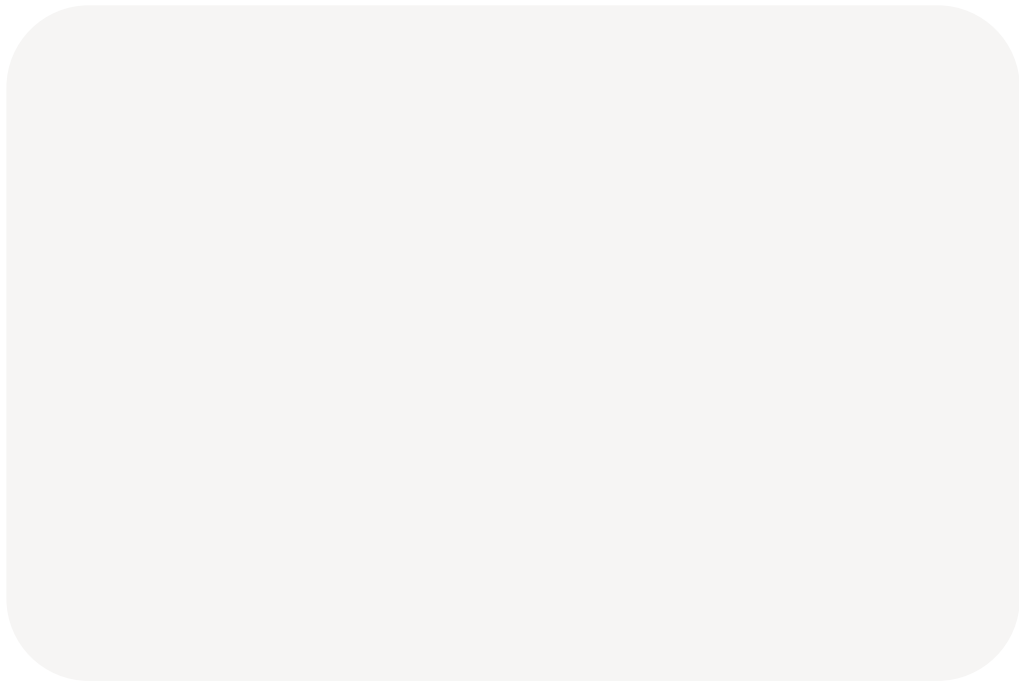
Cup holder



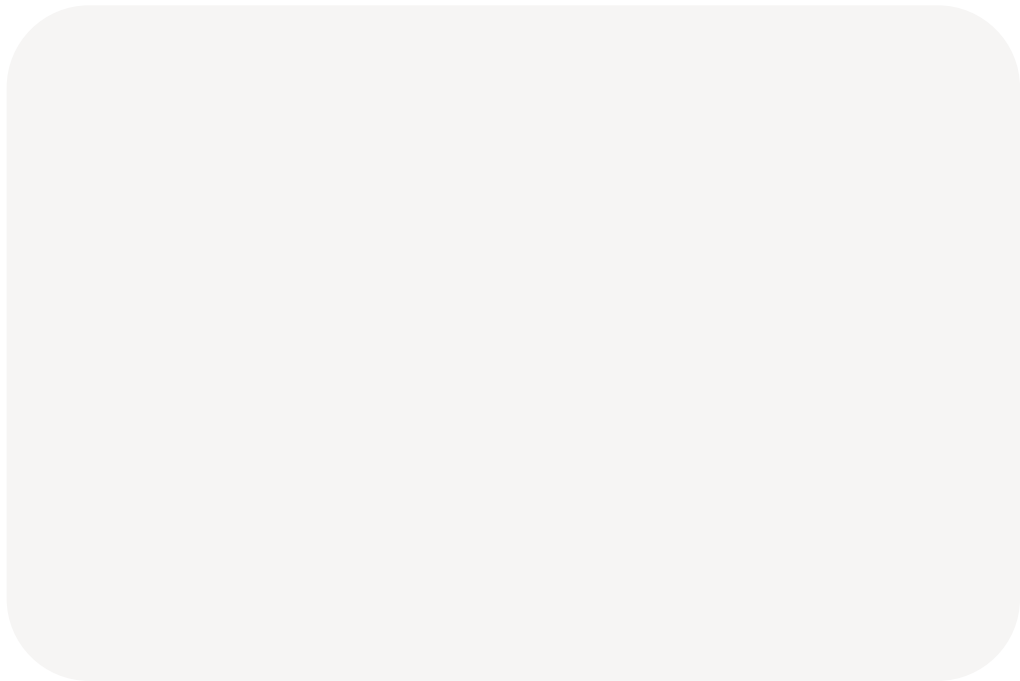
Centre console dial



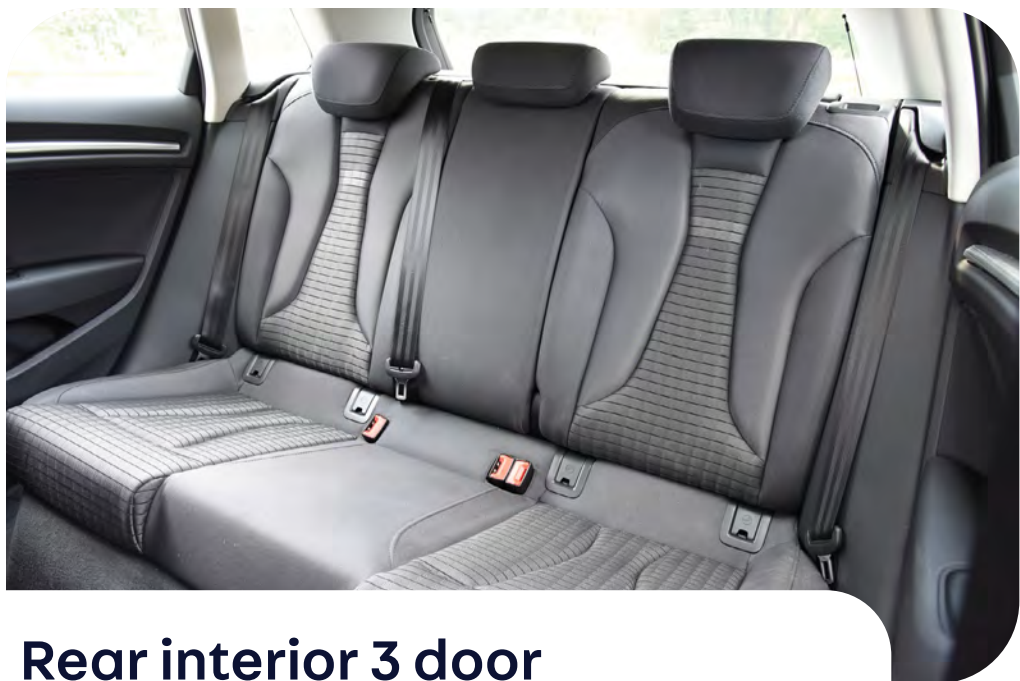
Wing mirror / window control



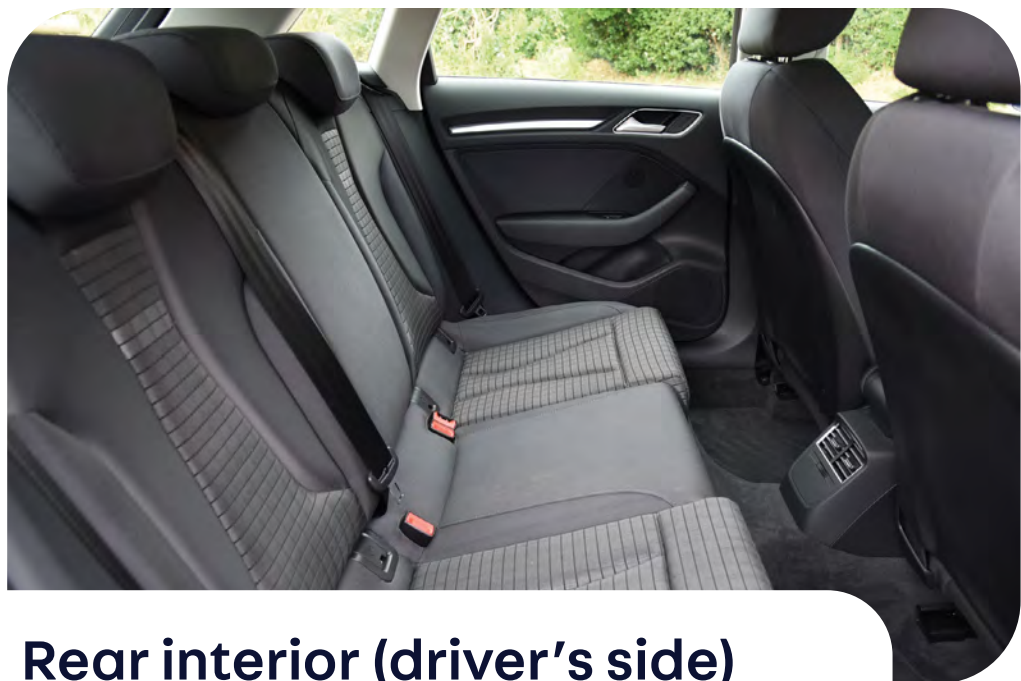
Electric handbrake



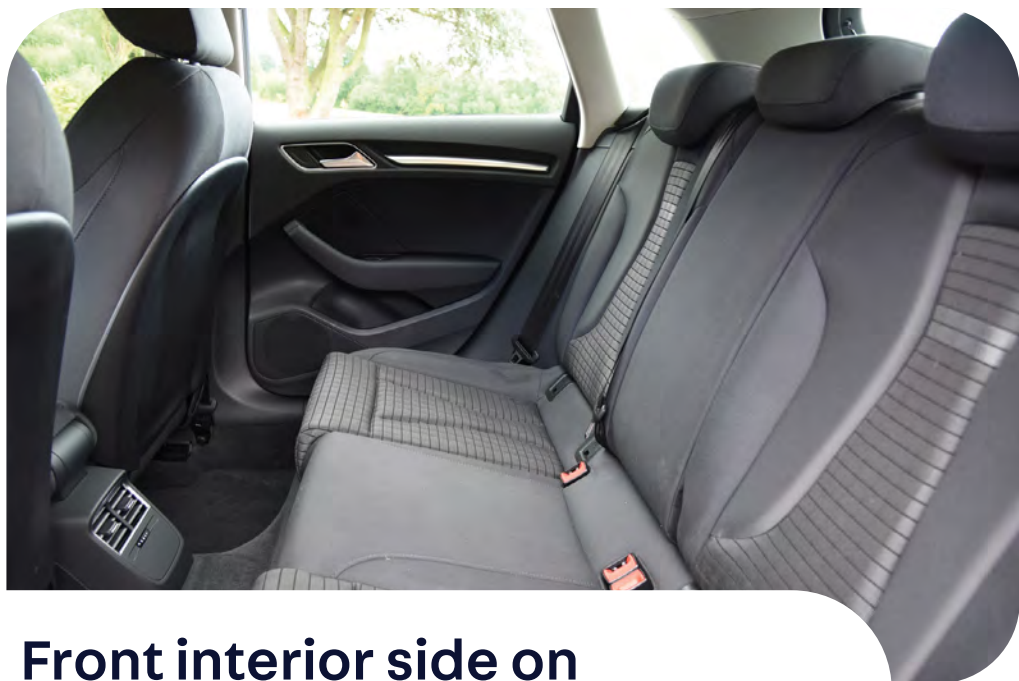
Additional images – general interior



Rear interior 3 door



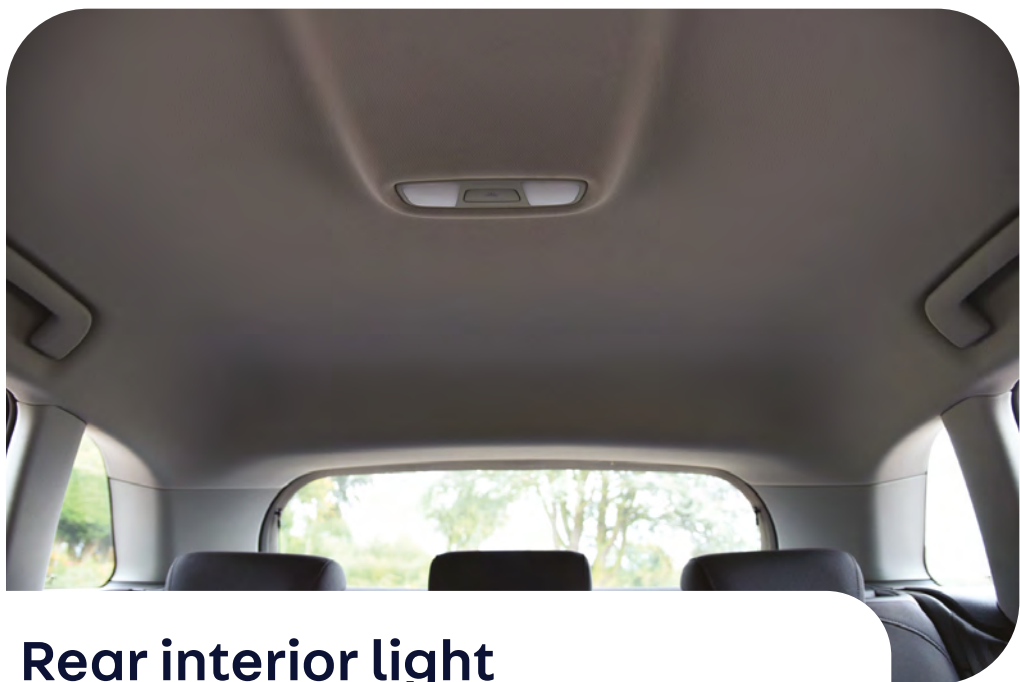
Rear interior (driver's side)



Front interior side on (passenger's side)



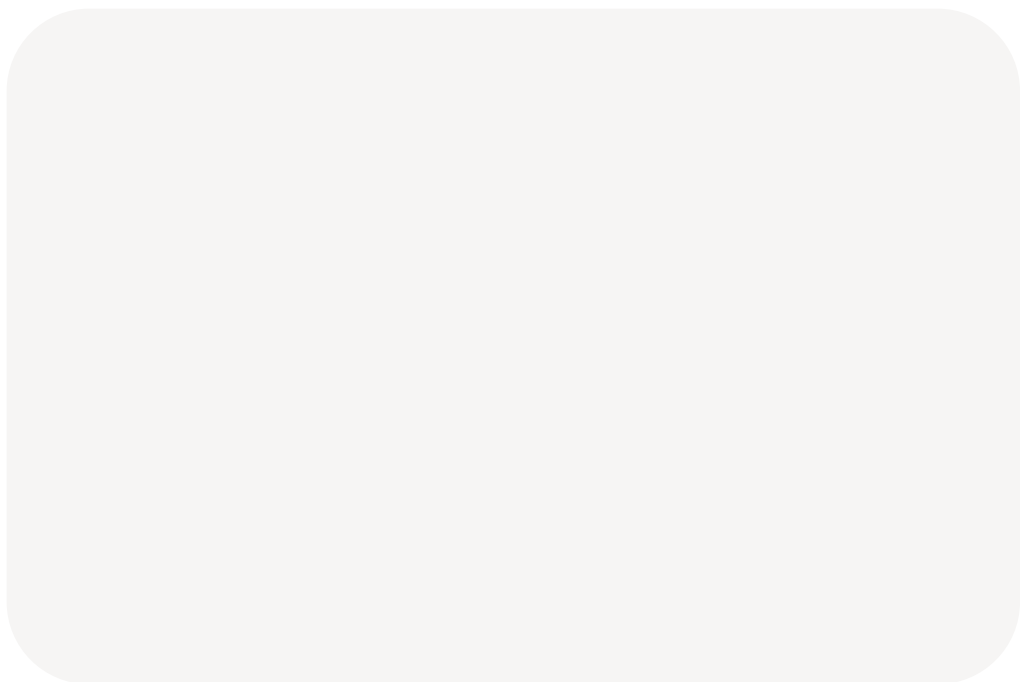
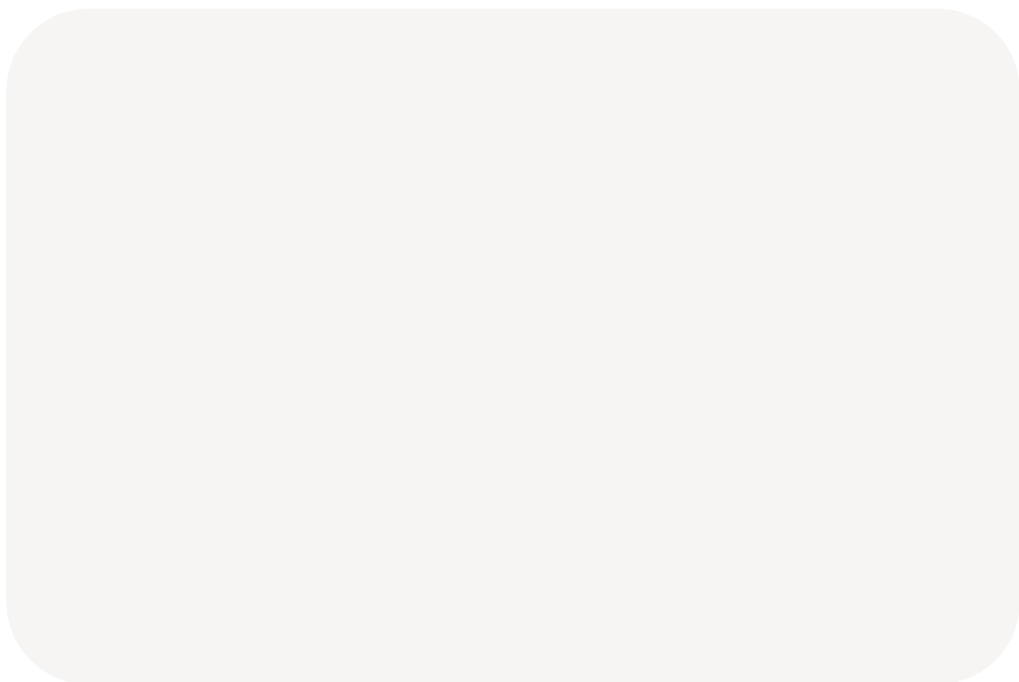
Front interior light



Rear interior light



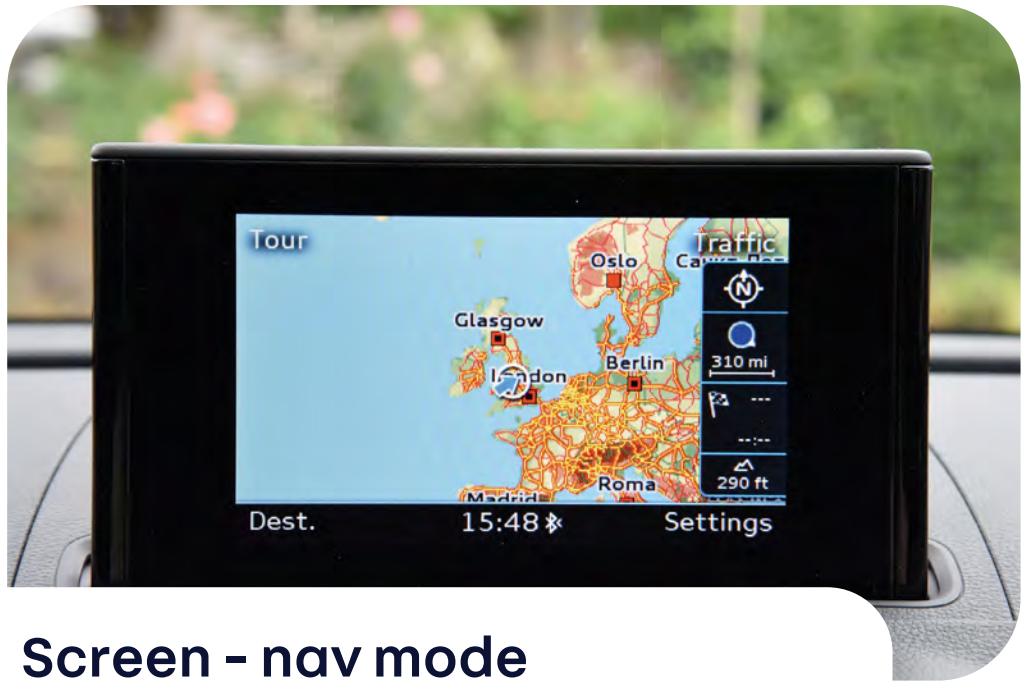
Front door light



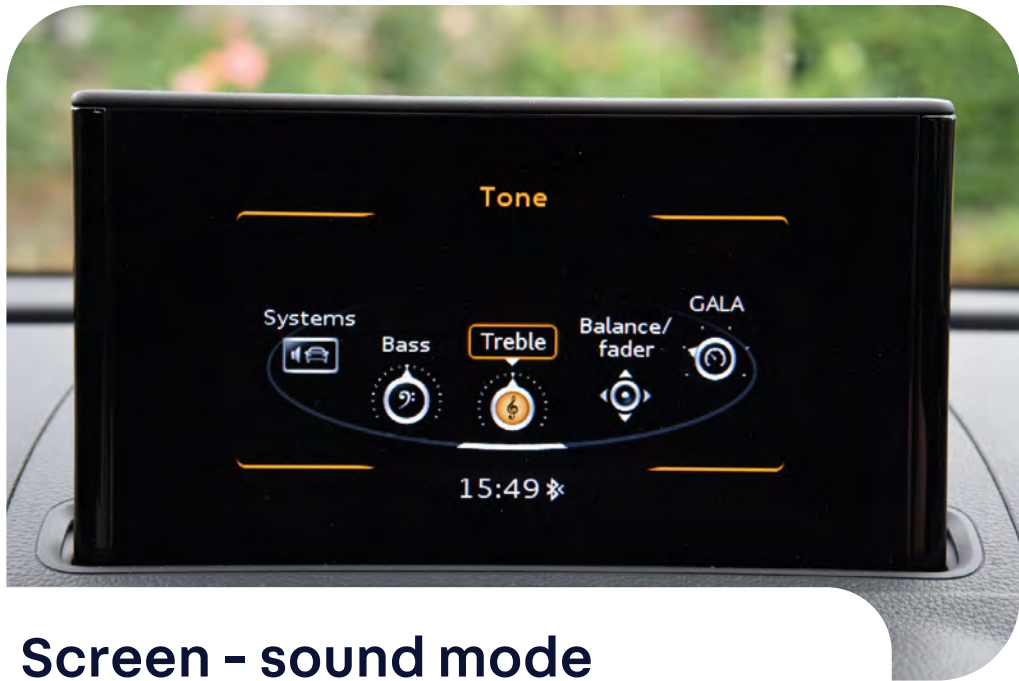
Additional images - multimedia / sat nav display



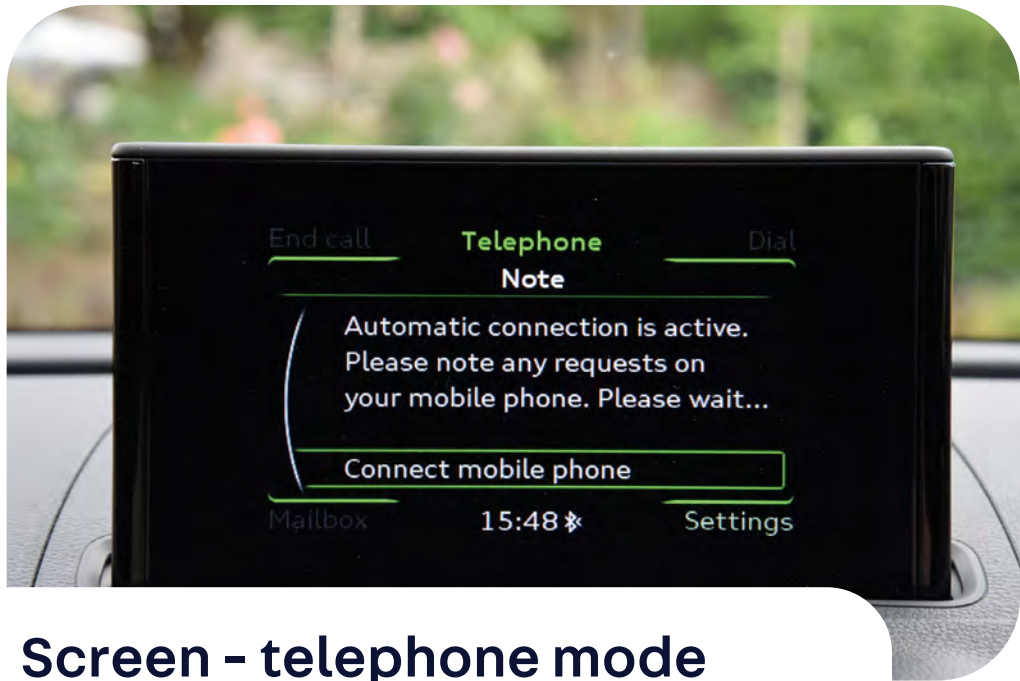
Screen - menu mode



Screen - nav mode



Screen - sound mode



Screen - telephone mode



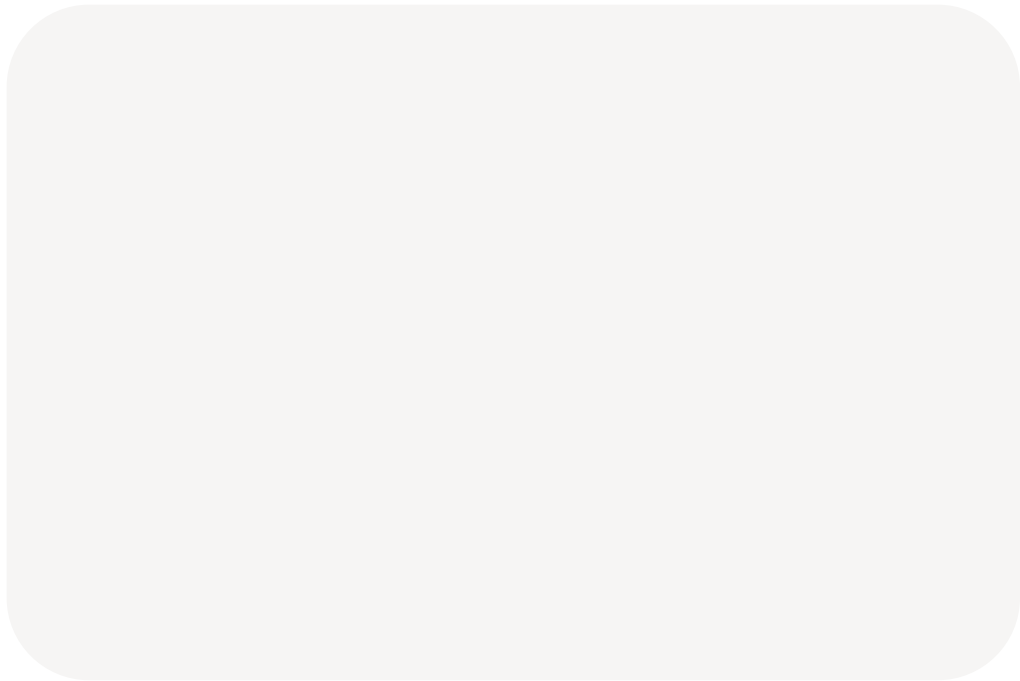
Sat nav - in off position



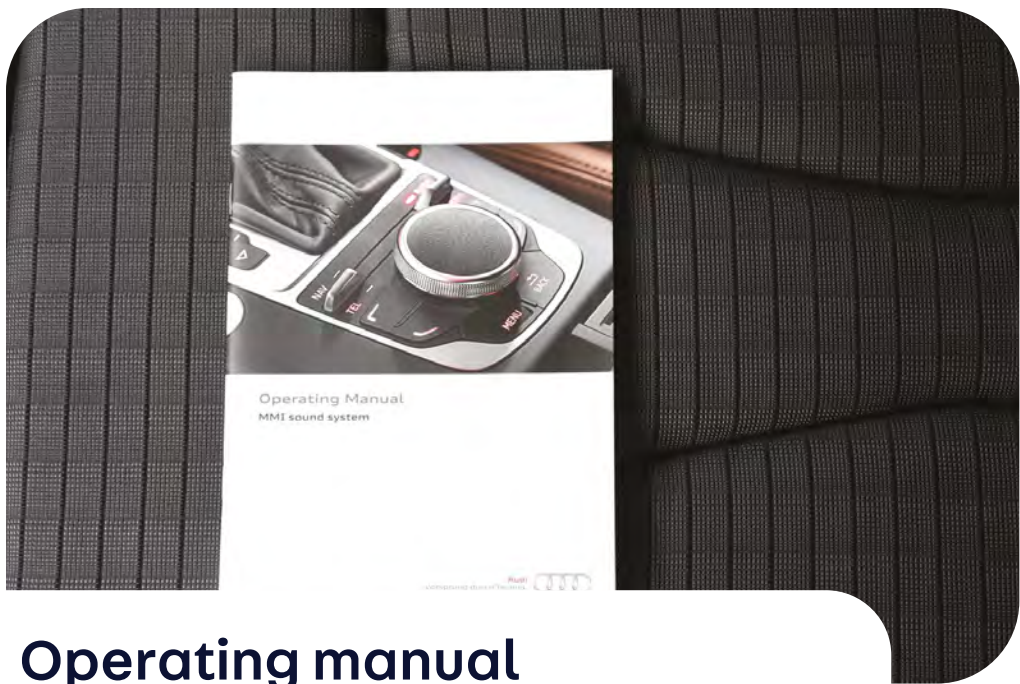
Odometer detail

Suggested Extra Images

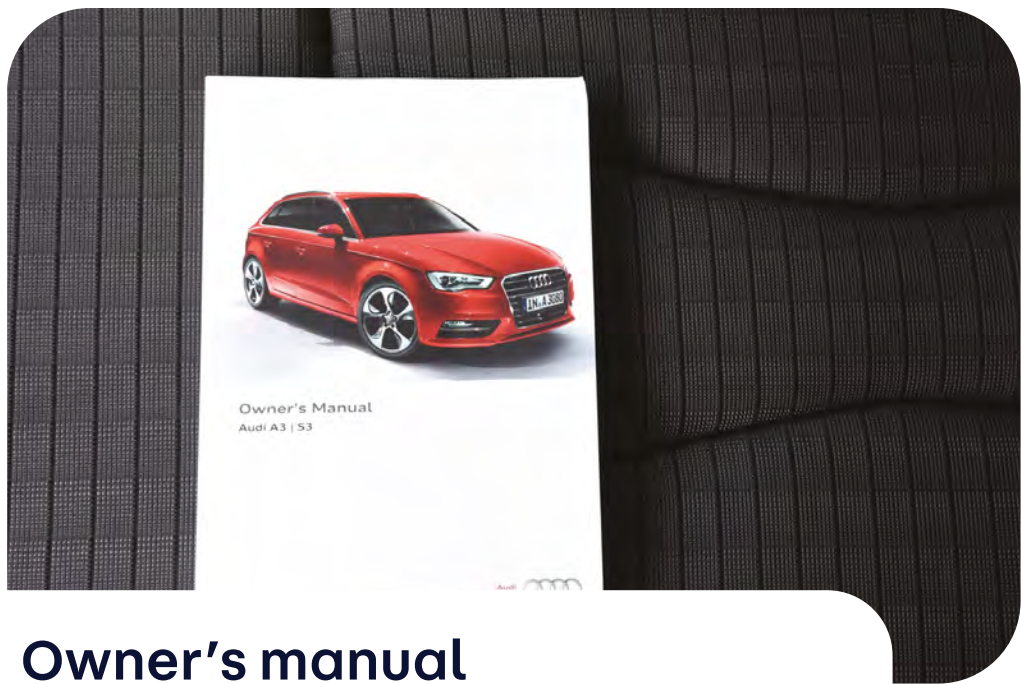
- ✓ HUD (Heads up display)
- ✓ Parking camera
- ✓ Smart Phone interactions (CarPlay/Android Auto)
- ✓ Charging ports/wireless charging



Additional images - manuals / handbooks



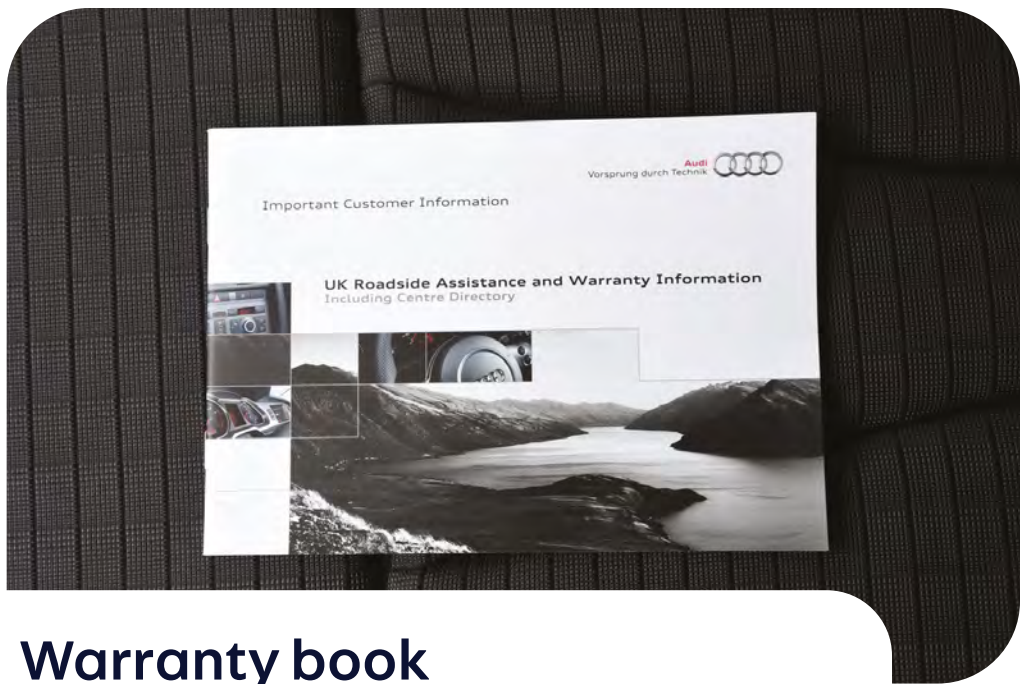
Operating manual



Owner's manual



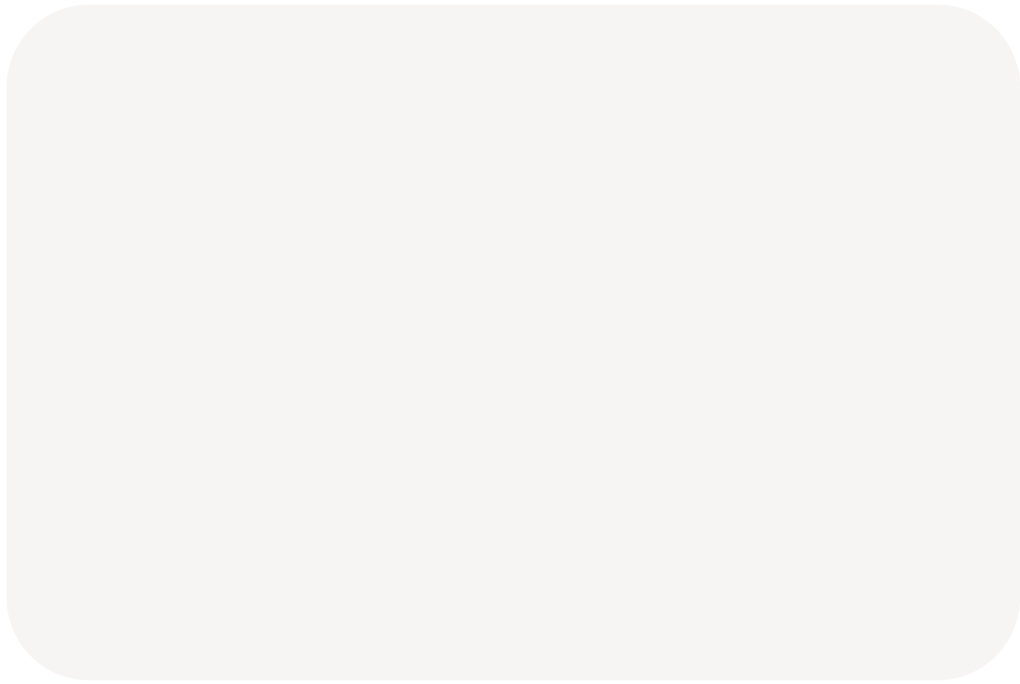
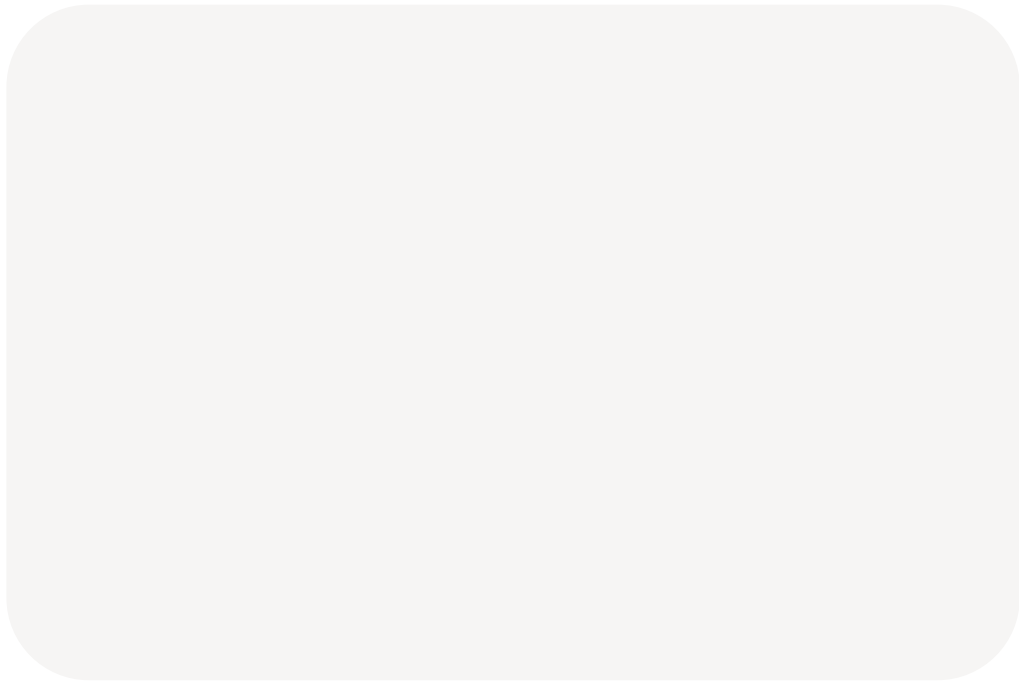
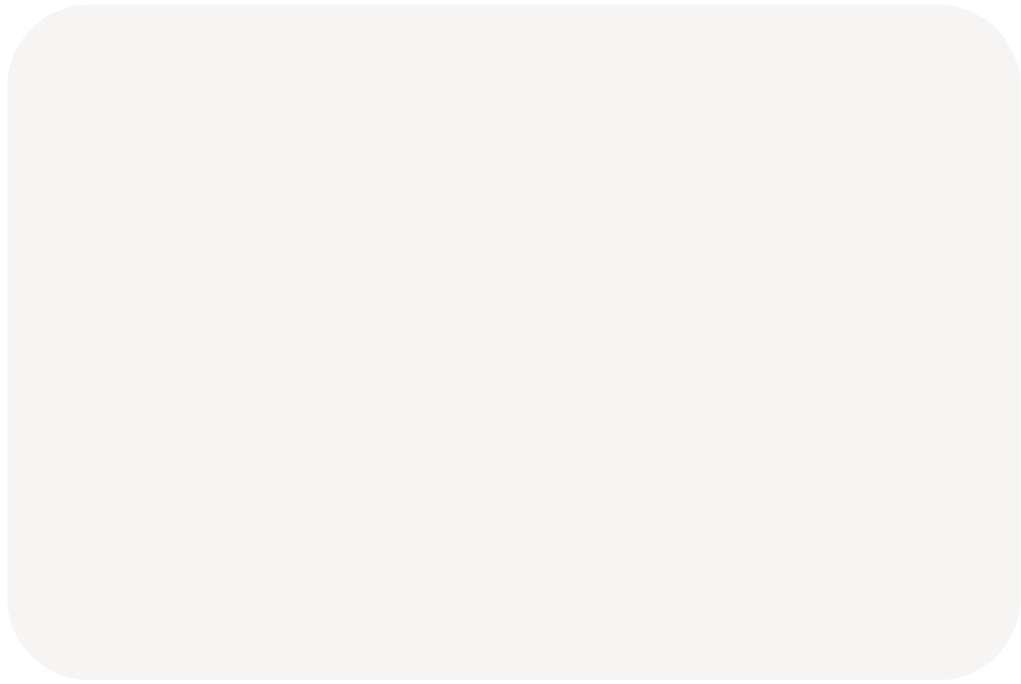
Navigation manual



Warranty book



Hand book case



Part 2: Video guide

Vehicle video walkthrough

Why video?

As well as using lots of images to help create desire amongst customers, today's most successful retailers are embracing video. Not only does it give consumers a detailed view of your stock, it also builds all important trust through transparency. It also helps to present your dealership in a professional way.

In this step-by-step walkaround guide, we'll share best practice on how to create stunning videos of your stock, and show you how video can help you stand out in an increasingly complex and competitive market.

Key points

- 1. Location, location, location:**
Ensure the location chosen for the video walkaround is free of any distractions and clutter
- 2. Stay consistent:**
It is good practice to use the same location for every video to ensure consistency
- 3. Use a neutral backdrop:**
Ensure the vehicle has the most neutral area of the location behind it when in the front three quarters position
- 4. Make it look its best:**
Ensure that both the exterior and interior of the vehicle is clean, in a suitable condition with no visible signs of damage and all pricing and point of sale material has been removed. Remove paper mats and any other distracting items from inside the vehicle.
- 5. Follow interior best practice:**
Ensure that the steering wheel is straight, all air vents are facing the same way, the seats are aligned and any screens are switched on and displaying either a main menu screen or map. Avoid displaying local radio station settings on the screen. Best practice is to display the same screen setting for every vehicle.
- 6. Avoid reflections:**
Ensure all windows are down. This will enable the camera to capture interior detail during the video walkaround and also prevent any reflections of the videographer being shown in the glass as they move around the vehicle.
- 7. Keep the wheels aligned:**
Straighten the front wheels - if including a view of an alloy, the image on screen should look the same as a still image of the alloy

Beginning the walkaround

The objective of a vehicle video walkaround is to create a moving representation of the vehicle which replicates the key still images that are taken during normal photography. Because the video moves both around and inside the vehicle it enables much greater interaction than still images alone.

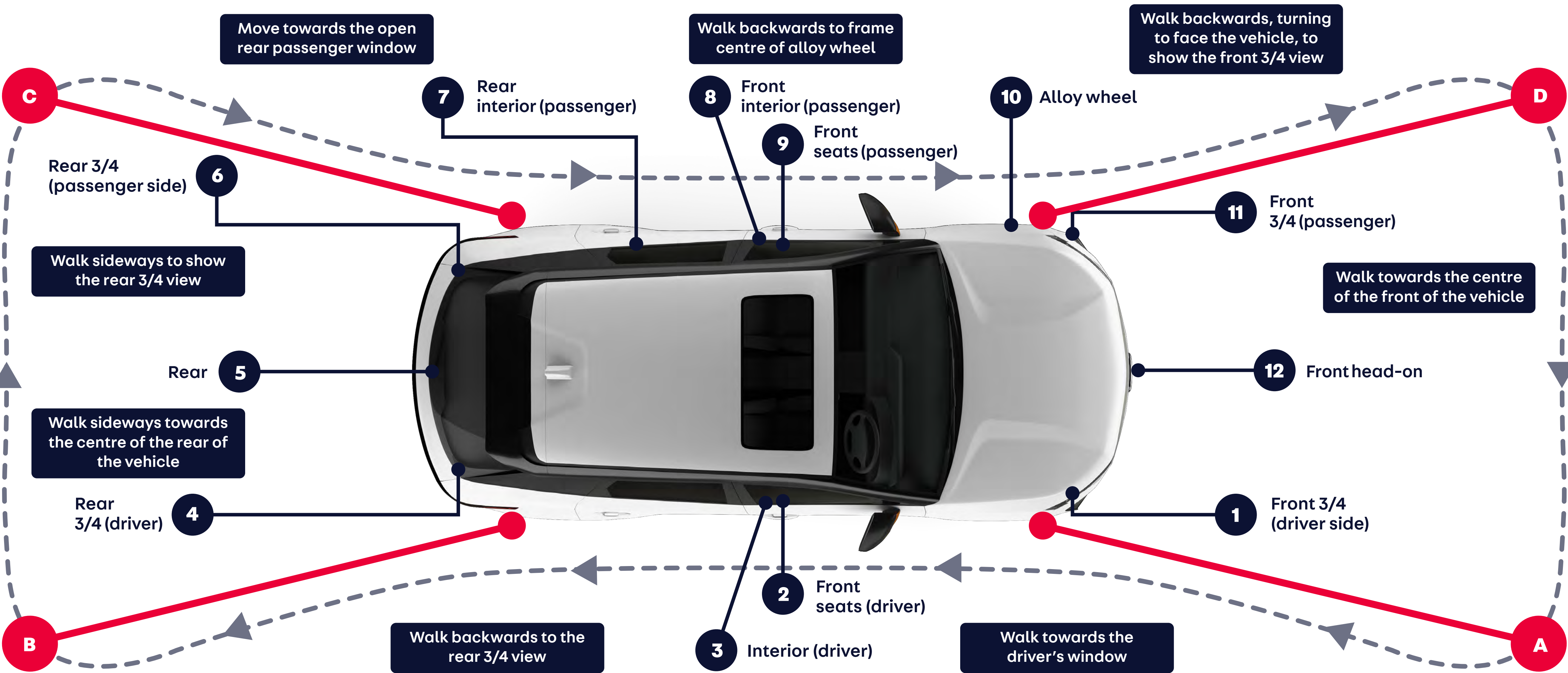
- Each key feature of the vehicle should be demonstrated during the walkaround
- 'Hold' the image for a second to show the key features during the walkaround. Count 2 seconds for interior features and 1 second for exterior features.

- Imagine the customer has a live link to the video you are taking and use the walkaround to show the key exterior and interior features
- The key features of a vehicle are exterior and interior views
- Avoid moving too slowly between showing an exterior view and interior view - the objective is to demonstrate both the exterior and interior features. The movement from exterior point to interior point should be done at a steady pace and be smooth but is of no interest to the customer.
- Take care to ensure that the camera movement is smooth and steady when moving between points of interest. Avoid sudden sharp movements when moving the camera from feature to feature.

The complete walkaround should only take 1 minute



A video walkaround: step-by-step



Video shooting guidance

Starting from point A, as mapped on the preceding page, follow the guide below to create your perfect video.



1

Front 3/4 view

- Ensure all windows are down
- Frame the vehicle on the camcorder / phone screen in the same way as when taking a front three quarters still image
- Frame as illustrated
- Press record and hold for 1 second to show this view of the vehicle
- Walk towards the driver window to capture the next view – the front seats



2

Front seats view

- Hold the camcorder / phone still for 2 seconds framing the front seats as illustrated



3

Driver interior view

- Pan the camcorder / phone around smoothly following the line of the bottom of the passenger window sill, keeping the screen level
- Come to a stop for 2 seconds when the dashboard is framed as illustrated
- Take care not to include any of the rear view mirror in the frame
- Walk backwards to frame the rear three quarters exterior view



4

Rear 3/4 view driver side

- Stop moving backwards when the rear three quarters exterior view is the same as the image illustrated
- Hold the view for 1 second
- Walk sideways smoothly towards the centre of the rear of the vehicle keeping the top of the camcorder / phone screen level with the top of the vehicle's roof



5

Rear view

- Stop when the vehicle is framed as illustrated
- Hold this view for 1 second
- Continue walking sideways to show the rear exterior three quarters view from the passenger side



6

Rear 3/4 view passenger side

- Stop when the vehicle is framed as illustrated
- Hold for 1 second
- Begin moving towards the rear passenger window keeping the camera straight and pointed towards the open window



7

Rear interior view

- When you have reached the open window turn the camera so it is facing the driver's side rear window
- Hold this view for 2 seconds
- Turn the camcorder / phone towards the backs of the rear seats and hold this view for 1 second
- Take 2 steps backwards and turn the camcorder / phone so it is facing in through the passenger front window



8

Passenger front interior view

- Frame the interior dashboard as illustrated taking care not to include the rear view mirror
- Hold this view for 2 seconds



9

Front seats passenger side view

- Pan the camcorder / phone following the line of the bottom of the driver's window sill to show the front seats from the passenger side
- Hold the view as illustrated for 2 seconds
- Walk backwards lifting the camcorder / phone over the wing mirror and lower the screen until it is facing the passenger side front alloy wheel at the same height as the centre of the wheel



10

Alloy wheel

- Frame the wheel as illustrated ensuring the whole tyre is included
- Hold this image for 1 second
- Stand up straight again and walk backwards turning to face the vehicle to show the front three quarters view



11

Front 3/4 passenger side view

- Continue walking backwards until the vehicle is framed as illustrated
- Hold this view for 1 second
- Walk towards the centre of the front of the vehicle keeping the screen level with the top of the windscreen
- At this point ensure that you are ready to press the video record pause button to avoid any additional movement when the walkaround has been completed



12

Front head-on view

- Stop when the vehicle is framed as illustrated
- Hold the view for 1 second then press 'Pause'

Vehicle video devices

Devices	Video quality	Lens angle of view	Handling	Advantages / Disadvantages	Optional Extras
Video camcorder	Good quality sharp HD videos. Built-in image stabilisation is effective.	Wide enough for interior views.	Easy to use, although set-up menus can be time-consuming to navigate through.	<div><div>✔</div> High quality videos due to large sensor</div> <div><div>✔</div> Good battery life</div> <div><div>✔</div> Good sound quality</div> <div><div>✗</div> 1 minute video can be up to 250MB in size</div> <div><div>✗</div> Can take time to upload depending on wifi signal strength</div>	Camframe - supports camcorder to enable smoother panning and more professional looking results (approx £45).
Mobile phone	Higher end devices can produce good quality videos - especially with built-in optical image stabilisation (OIS).	Wide enough for interior views.	Higher-end devices have voice activated video control (but some devices are record-start only).	<div><div>✔</div> Easy to use and upload videos</div> <div><div>✔</div> Sound quality is good</div> <div><div>✗</div> Image quality can be noisy and focusing struggles in low-light (e.g. rear interiors with tinted windows, or videos taken inside in insufficient lighting)</div> <div><div>✗</div> Screen can be difficult to view in bright daylight</div>	Electronic gimbal - provides good stabilisation (from approx £200) Additional microphones can be plugged in.
Tablets	Capable of producing good video quality.	Angle of view in video mode can be narrow, therefore difficult to include all of interior features required whilst still inside the vehicle.	Location of start and stop record button means it can be difficult to hold steady at the beginning and end.	<div><div>✗</div> Large screens can reflect too much light and be difficult to view in daylight</div> <div><div>✗</div> Most have image stabilisation built-in to the software, which produces poor results compared to optical image stabilisation</div>	Tablet camera steady mounts (approx £36) Additional microphones can be plugged in.

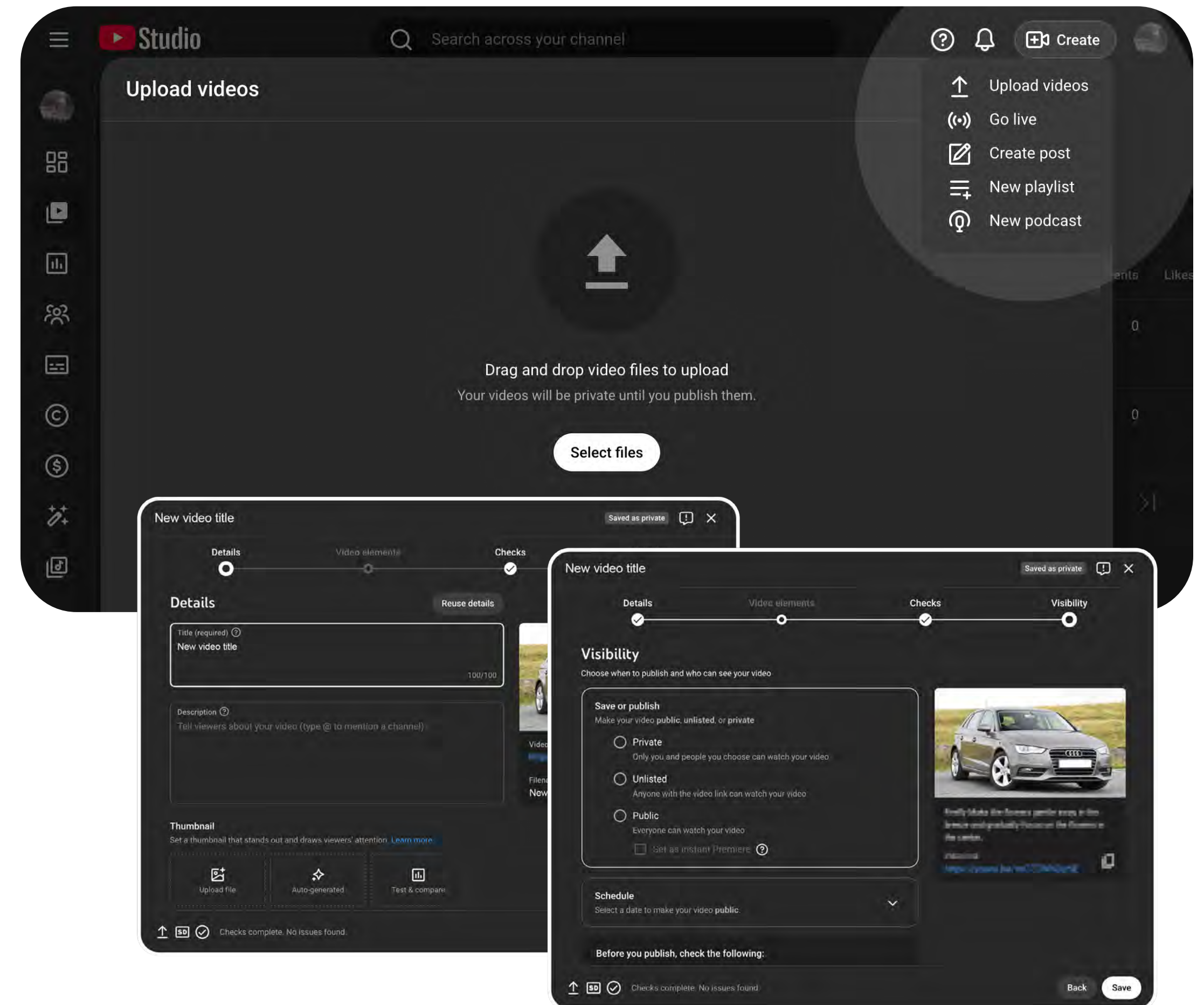
Uploading your video to YouTube

To add your video to Dealer Portal, you'll first have to upload it to YouTube to create a link.

To do so, follow the steps below:

- Firstly, if you do not already have one, create a Google account: <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>
- Sign into YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/> using your new Google account details
- Before you can upload a video you need to create a channel: <https://www.youtube.com/upload>
- Click the 'Create' icon and select 'Upload videos' and choose your file
- Ensure you select the public video option

As the video is uploading, you can fill in the details as prompted and save your video. Remember to make sure your video is set to Public. Once the video is uploaded, copy the Video Link to add within Portal.

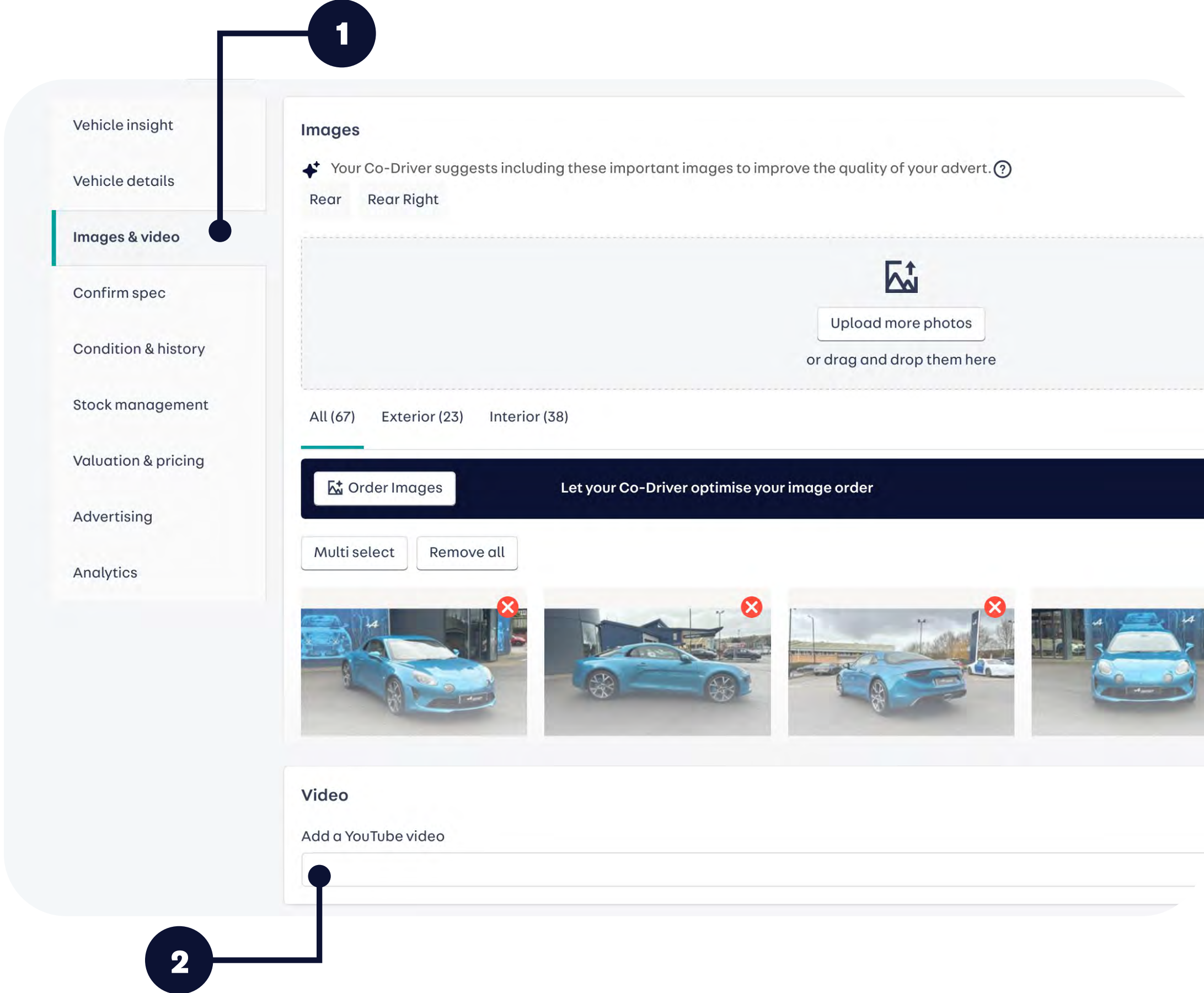


Adding your video to Portal

Once in Portal, navigate to your 'Images & video' (1) tab of the vehicle advert you wish to add the video to.

In the 'Video' section (2), paste in the url of your video and save.

Your video will appear online within 30 minutes.



Co-Driver

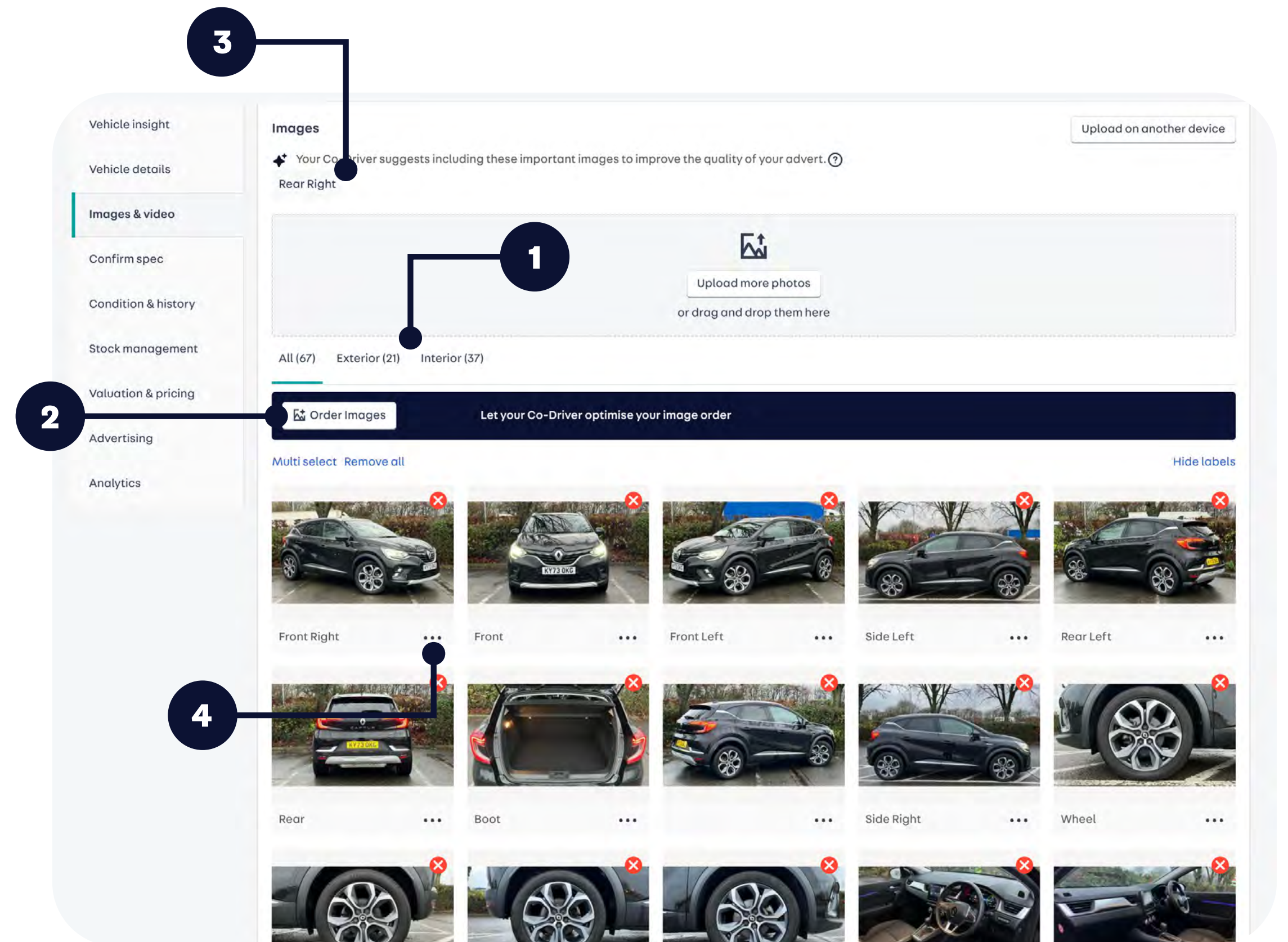
Co-Driver Smart Image Management automatically labels and categorises images as they are uploaded with the help of AI image recognition.

The images are sorted into Exterior and Interior (1) categories which help consumers navigate through the image gallery on your Autotrader adverts.

By clicking the 'Order Images' button (2), the images are moved into an optimal image order, which is based on analysing consumer behavioural data on Autotrader adverts. This gives a really strong starting point for your image gallery order, avoiding the need to manually move all your images into position, which can then be tweaked to your preference

Co-Driver also identifies the key images that are missing from the advert (3) that may impact advert performance and lists them above the upload section.

If any images have been mis-labelled, you can report this to us using the three dots in the bottom of an image (4). This is used to improve the AI image recognition accuracy.



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