

Accident Description - Seat Exeo (Repair Costs £182.16 labour + £106.39 paint/materials)

20/05/2011

On returning from work, I parked my car on the driveway as usual, and went indoors. However, the handbrake was apparently not fully engaged and it must have rolled back whilst unattended. I was completely unaware this had happened until my wife returned about an hour later and asked why my car was touching the garage wall.

My driveway has a very gradual slope and the car had bumped the corner of the garage wall. This caused minor damage to the rear bumper on the nearside:-



Whilst this was my fault, there was a high contribution from a design fault in the Seat Exeo handbrake, which I have subsequently found has been noted by the motoring press:-

<http://www.businesscar.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=2&storycode=6694>



When the car is new, the handbrake can be fully engaged without touching the armrest. It can be a little awkward but the natural tendency of the human body is to adapt to this by using the elbow and the top of the armrest like a lever.

This works fine until the handbrake cable loosens over time, inevitably leading to a failure of the kind I observed. At this point, the driver is likely (as I have done) to change behaviour and always put the arm rest up before parking the car.

It is very fortunate that the damage was only superficial – this was a “near-miss” incident that could have been much worse, eg. If a small child had been playing behind the car while it was parked.