



Tips for Cutting Driving Costs *Saskatchewan Office of Energy Conservation*

High fuel prices are prompting many motorists to reduce their driving costs by adopting measures to improve fuel economy. Most of these measures cost very little or nothing at all and deliver significant cost savings.

Your “driving style” can make a big difference in the amount of fuel your car uses. A slower, gentler style is much safer and saves money.

On the highway, accelerate smoothly when passing cars or when merging with faster traffic and use cruise control to maintain a constant speed. Reducing your speed to 90 kilometers per hour from 100 improves fuel economy by about 10 per cent. On the other hand, increasing your cruising speed to 120 km/h from 100 will increase fuel consumption by about 20 per cent for most vehicles.

In the city, rapid acceleration and sudden stops are dangerous. This type of driving also increases fuel consumption by as much as 40 per cent and some toxic emissions by more than five times. However, studies show that an aggressive driving style decreases time spent traveling between points by just 5 per cent.

Save fuel by taking your foot off the accelerator well in advance of a red light and coasting to the intersection. Often, the red light will turn green before you get there and you won't have to stop and reaccelerate. Avoid resting your left foot on the brake pedal, which is a bad habit that increases fuel consumption and increases the wear on your brakes and rotors..

Except in extremely cold weather, idling is merely a waste of fuel and causes unnecessary pollution. Now that it is summer, there is no need to idle your car. Excessive idling can contaminate engine oil and damage engine components. Except when you are in traffic, turn off your engine when stopping for longer than 10 seconds. It is a myth that starting your car takes more gasoline than idling it. More than 10 seconds of idling normally uses more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it.

The best way to warm up a vehicle's engine so that it operates at its best efficiency is by driving. With computer-controlled, fuel-injected engines, you need no more than 30 seconds of idling in winter, and in summer you can simply start your engine and drive immediately. Anything more simply wastes fuel and increases emissions.

With the increased use of remote car starters, people often get into the habit, even in summer, of starting their vehicle before they get into it and are ready to drive. This is another fuel waster, although many individuals justify it during very hot days in order to operate their air conditioner. It is more fuel efficient to open your windows first, before you operate your air conditioner, so that the



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warm air can flow out of your vehicle, and then close the windows once the air conditioner is providing cool air to the cabin of your vehicle. If you are concerned about fuel costs, consider operating your air conditioner less and opening your windows more, particularly if driving in city traffic where your speed is lower. Also consider setting your air conditioning at a slightly higher temperature setting.

Tire inflation needs special attention. Improper tire inflation can significantly decrease the fuel economy of your vehicle by adding to the rolling resistance of the vehicle. Each tire that is under-inflated by two pounds per square inch causes a one per cent increase in fuel consumption. So check tire pressures regularly.

A properly-maintained vehicle will provide you with better mileage. Regular checking of oil levels, air filter changes, and scheduled engine maintenance are all important tools for vehicle operators who want to spend less money purchasing gasoline and diesel fuel this summer.

For more Fuel Efficient Driving Tips visit this federal government website <http://oe.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/personal/index.cfm>

With fuel prices rising, many people are reevaluating the type of vehicle they are driving. For example, trucks and sport utility vehicles may use twice as much fuel as the more efficient sedans or station wagons. And four-wheel drive traction can increase fuel consumption from five to 10 per cent over two-wheel drive traction.

When purchasing a new vehicle, a good rule of thumb is to aim for a 20 per cent fuel economy improvement over your current model. Compare fuel consumption using the vehicle Fuel Consumption Guide available on the web at <http://oe.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/tools/fuel-consumption-guide/> or by calling 1 800 387-2000 to order a copy.

Also, consider options like public transit or walking to work. It may be more practical than you think, and save a lot of money and energy.

The Office of Energy Conservation is a resource for information on cost-effective energy conservation initiatives and practices for Saskatchewan. More information about OEC and other energy efficient articles can be found at www.oec.ca.