

DRIVE SMART TO SAVE FUEL

Your Skills Make A Difference

As oil prices go up, fuel economy gets more and more important. Your skills as a driver can make a big difference in the cost effectiveness of every trip.

You Make the Difference

Fleet managers do a lot to cut fuel costs. They buy fuel efficient vehicles, get the best quality fuel and keep a sharp eye on maintenance costs. But, even after that, proper driving can boost fuel efficiency by 10 percent.

As soon as you start up your vehicle, your actions have an impact on fuel costs. For instance, if the engine doesn't kick over in 30 seconds, you'll be wasting fuel if you keep cranking. Wait a couple of minutes and try again.

Start out smoothly, without slipping the clutch. And, when you shift, apply the progressive shifting technique.

Keep Engine Speed Down

You may have been taught to

rev the engine to its top RPM in each gear. But you can



Get in the habit of shifting at a lower RPM to save on fuel and engine wear.

save a lot of engine wear, and increase your fuel efficiency significantly, if you learn to shift while the engine is two or three hundred RPM below the governor limit.

It's a judgment call each time, because you have to drive by the seat of your pants. If you need more power on an upgrade, you may have to rev it all the way.

But, if you're on the straight and level, the chances are good that you won't need all that engine speed for every gear, particularly when you're in the lower gears.

On the open road, stay in the highest gear you can, with your engine speed somewhere between the recommended minimum and

the top RPM. Don't shift too soon and shift smoothly every time. But, if you don't need all that power, don't waste it.

It's Smart to Drive 55

Even though it's now legal to go 65 on most of the interstate highway system, you're better off holding it at 55. It's safer and allows your equipment to last longer. And it saves fuel.

Tests have determined that the extra 10 miles per hour increases fuel costs by 22 percent. You don't save enough time to justify this waste of money.

When you stop, don't leave your engine running more than five minutes, and don't run it any longer than that to warm it up before you get back on the road. You'll waste as much as a gallon of fuel if you let it idle for an hour while you're having lunch.

Stay Ahead of the Game

Fuel economy and defensive driving go hand in hand. Sudden stops and evasive maneuvers reduce your fuel efficiency. But, if you watch closely for hazards and act in time to prevent them, you'll avoid panic situations. It's smart, safe and fuel efficient.