ARVAL
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Directions
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Reducing Fuel Expenditure

Improving your fleet's fuel performance makes sound commercial sense. Typically fuel costs may account for 20-30% of the total operating costs of your fleet, fuel costs are not fixed and they can be varied by factors such as choice of vehicle type, driving style and mileage. By implementing effective fleet management most organisations can make fuel savings of 10% or more.

Reducing your fuel consumption is not just important for your bottom line, it's important for the environment too. Your drivers and the way they drive is a major factor contributing to the fuel efficiency of your fleet. If you can maximise their efficiency by encouraging them to follow the tips below, you'll increase your fleet's fuel efficiency.

When driving

Drive smoothly – Aggressive driving can increase fuel consumption and produce more toxic emissions. Avoid accelerating or braking too hard and try to keep your steering smooth – this can reduce fuel consumption by more than 10% in urban areas. Keep in mind that you will be using at least 15% more fuel when you travel at 80 mph than you would at 70 mph.

Use higher gears – The higher gear you drive in the lower your engine speed is, which can improve fuel efficiency. So change up a gear when you can, without stressing the engine. Use 6th gear if you have it, where possible and especially on the motorway.

Observe the speed limit – It may be tempting to drive fast over long, empty roads but fuel-efficiency drops significantly over 60 mph. By maintaining a smooth driving style at 50-60 mph, you can enhance fuel efficiency by up to 15%. Use cruise control if you have it – on major roads this helps you maintain a constant speed and, in many cases, will improve fuel consumption.

Avoid over-revving your engine – Revving your vehicle's engine wastes fuel; avoid revving your engine before you turn it off. Avoid fast getaways at the traffic lights – accelerate slowly when the light turns green. The faster you accelerate the more fuel you will consume.

Avoid fast driving in lower gears – If you drive at fast speed using the wrong and often lower gears, you will reduce fuel economy. Use the gears so your engine is operating at its most fuel-efficient (usually the rpm where maximum torque is generated) – this could cut fuel consumption by up to 25%.

Avoid excess idling – Idling gets you nowhere but still burns fuel. Turn the engine off when you're in a queue for a long period of time, or waiting for someone.

Combine trips – You'll save time and money by combining the number of stops you make in one trip. Several short trips will use up to twice as much fuel as taking a multipurpose trip.

Your vehicle

Service your engine – A well-maintained engine can improve fuel economy, so follow your manufacturer's recommendation on servicing. Information regarding service intervals can be found in your vehicle manual.

Keep your tyres at the right pressure – Correctly inflated tyres are safer and last longer, an under inflated tyre can reduce fuel efficiency by as much as

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3%. An under or over inflated tyre will wear more quickly and is also more susceptible to failing. The best time to check your tyre pressure is when its cool outside or in the morning after your car has not been driven. Faulty wheel alignment will also slow down the rolling resistance of your car increasing fuel consumption and wearing tyres out quicker.

Use the correct oil – Always use the appropriate grade of motor oil, as the manufacturer's recommended lubricant can improve fuel efficiency. Higher quality oils can also help your engine operate more efficiently. However, take care not to over-fill the oil.

Avoid carrying excess weight – For every extra 100lbs (45 kg) you carry your fuel efficiency can drop by 1-2%. Keep your boot or back seat clear of unnecessary items that add weight to your vehicle. Remove your roof rack when not in use, it can affect the aerodynamic efficiency of your vehicle and create drag, reducing fuel economy. Fully loaded, a roof rack can add 30% to fuel consumption.

Keep an eye on your fuel consumption – The more aware you are of the amount of fuel you use, the more you can do to try to reduce your fuel costs. If you notice your fuel efficiency is decreasing it could indicate a problem with your vehicle.

Shut off all power accessories before turning off your engine – Power-consuming accessories such as the radio or air conditioning can increase the load on your engine upon starting, which then increases fuel consumption.

Buying fuel

Keep an eye on fuel prices – Fill up your vehicle when you see a lower price, as there can be a difference of 3p per litre within a week. If you can't find a place to buy low priced fuel on one day, wait if you can until you find a cheaper one. Use the Arval Fuel Price Watch site to find the cheapest fuel in your area at: www.arval.co.uk

Avoid purchasing fuel at motorway services where possible – They tend to be more expensive so plan ahead and avoid the extra cost. If you need to use them, just buy enough fuel to get you to a cheaper filling station. Remember that premium grade fuels are more expensive.

Also

Keep your vehicle's windows closed – Wind blowing through an open window will slow your vehicle down and to compensate, you might put your foot down harder, using more fuel.

Avoid using air conditioning when you first get into a hot vehicle – Open the windows to let out hot air and let in a fresh breeze. Keep the windows closed when you are using air conditioning. Use a sunshade to keep your car cool or park in the shade when it's warm. Air conditioning reduces fuel economy by 8-10%.

Plan your trips and driving routes to avoid traffic congestion. Traffic queues and redundant trips mean you are on the roads for longer, using more fuel. Avoid rush hour traffic if possible. When planning your trip use a route finder such as the AA Route Finder at: www.theaa.com

Drive less – Walking and cycling more is the best way to conserve fuel and reduce emissions. If you think about it, many of the trips you make in your vehicle are probably within easy walking or cycling distance. Consider car sharing or working from home if you can.

Include fuel economy in your vehicle selection criteria – Fuel economy ratings will help you to make an informed decision when it comes to choosing your next vehicle.