



## Eco-driving: Save Fuel, Save Money, Reduce Pollution

### What is 'eco-driving'?

'Eco-driving' is the practice of driving in such a way as to minimise fuel consumption and emissions.

### What are the benefits?

By adopting basic 'eco-driving' techniques you can:

- Reduce fuel consumption
- Reduce wear and tear on your vehicle
- Save money
- Reduce your impact on the environment
- Drive more safely

*'Motorists can cut up to £500 a year from their annual fuel bills by adopting basic 'eco driving' techniques, according to findings from AA Driving School's Drive Smart eco driver training scheme.'* (The AA, 2011).

Here are our top 'eco driving' tips:

#### Before you go

- **Lighten your load** - Carrying excess weight in a vehicle increases fuel consumption as your car has to work harder to accelerate. Remove heavy objects and clear your boot of unnecessary items so that you can travel as lightly as possible.
- **Reduce drag** - Roof-racks, bike carriers and top boxes increase drag on your car, making your engine work harder and increasing your fuel consumption, particularly at high speeds. If you are not using them, take them off.
- **Don't hang around** - Modern engines don't need to be warmed up, so idling before you start a journey simply wastes precious fuel. Your engine warms up more quickly when you're moving so don't start the engine until you're ready to go.
- **De-icing** - Scrape ice in the winter rather than leave your car idling to warm up.
- **Plan your journey** - A bit of preparation will help you to avoid congestion and/or road works and getting lost. Check traffic news before you go.
- **Invest in a satnav** - Most satnavs have features that help you avoid traffic congestion.
- **Combine short trips** - Cold starts use more fuel so it pays to combine trips if you can.
- **Walk or cycle** - If you're only going a couple of miles, do you really need to use the car?

#### Vehicle maintenance

- **Regular servicing** - Get your car serviced regularly for best efficiency.
- **Engine oil** - Always use the right specification of engine oil (check your handbook).

- **Tyre pressure** - Check your tyre pressures regularly (at least once a month) and before long journeys. Under-inflated tyres increase fuel consumption and are potentially dangerous.

### Driving

- **Switch off your engine** - Many newer cars automatically turn off when stationary in neutral. If yours doesn't, turn off your engine when you've stopped for a minute or so to save fuel. Only do so if your engine is warm and you know you've got a good battery.
- **Higher gear** - Driving at lower revs reduces fuel consumption so change up a gear at around 2,000 RPM.
- **Drive smoothly** - Assess the road ahead as much as possible to avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration, which increases the amount of fuel you use.
- **Step off the gas** - Frequent stopping and starting uses more fuel than rolling. Stay in gear but take your foot off the accelerator as early as possible when approaching a red light or roundabout and you might not have to stop completely.
- **Slow down** - Your fuel costs will increase the faster you drive so keep speeds reasonable. The most efficient speed is 45 – 50mph. Driving at 85mph uses approximately 25% more fuel than 70mph.
- **Windows vs air conditioning** - If you are travelling at low speed opening the windows is more efficient. If travelling at 60 miles per hour or above, closing the windows and using the air con will save you more. The aerodynamic drag on your car of an open window at speeds of 60mph or more adds to your fuel usage. Keep your windows closed at high speeds.
- **Cut down on the electrics** - Turn off your rear window heater, demister fan and headlights when you don't need them.

Adopt our 'eco driving' tips to save fuel, save money and reduce pollution.