

Economy Driving With Sharp Drive

Safe driving skills will save fuel and tires, and an economical driver is also a safer driver. The certain way to save fuel is not to use your vehicle at all. It sounds obvious, but the first step in economy driving is planning. Ask questions like, "Is this trip necessary?" "Can we car pool?" "Is this the shortest route?" Also, what is the best time to travel, and what else can I do on this trip.

Preparation saves money, and regular servicing and maintenance keeps the engine running at its most efficient. You should watch tire pressures and wheel alignment. Soft tires are harder to push and an extra two to three PSI saves a lot, but don't increase them any more than 10%.

Roof racks create a lot of drag, so remove them between uses and don't waste energy carrying unnecessary weight around. On the road, keep your eyes up, searching ahead, and watch for and anticipate traffic light changes, speed limit changes and stopped traffic. Easing off the accelerator earlier is better than driving up closer, then braking harder.

Excessive idling wastes fuel, and in slow-changing traffic lights and in heavy traffic, turn the engine off if stopping for more than half a minute. Quick getaways cost a lot so don't accelerate hard from rest. Move off gently with smooth, progressive acceleration. Keeping the vehicle rolling, even slowly, is much more economical than a standing start. Use light accelerator pressure to keep speed constant, and avoid getting on and off the pedal to keep up. Instead, maintain a safe following distance and use it to smooth your driving.

You should change gears early without labouring the engine, and in hilly terrain, gain momentum down hills, and on the flat, and before climbing ease off the accelerator before cresting a rise, and let your momentum carry you over. Speed can be regained on the other side. If your automatic keeps changing gears while climbing, lock it in the most suitable gear and use a steady throttle until it levels out. Ease off the accelerator for corners, and avoid hard braking. Use a light throttle on the corner, and gently ease it on again as you release the steering to exit the corner.

Don't speed. It makes very little difference to trip times, and going from 100 to 120 kph uses at least 13% more fuel. Don't use cruise control. It was designed for long, flat straights and reacts to speed only, not terrain. You should watch your instruments and keep the revs down. Air conditioning uses up to 10% more fuel so turn it off unless you really need it. However, airconditioning is more efficient than the drag caused by open windows.

For more information on advanced driving skills courses, advanced driver training and fleet safety please go to <http://www.sharpdrive.co/>.

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