

July 2008

RM News & Notes

Tip of the Week:



Save Gas by Driving Sensibly

Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration and braking) wastes gas and it can lower your gas mileage by 33 percent at highway speeds and by 5 percent around town. Sensible driving is also safer for you and others, so you may save more than gas money.

While each vehicle reaches its optimal fuel economy at a different speed (or range of speeds), gas mileage usually decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. As a rule of thumb, you can assume that each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph is like paying an additional \$0.20 per gallon for gas. Observing the speed limit is also safer.

Avoid keeping unnecessary items in your vehicle, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could reduce your MPG by up to 2%. The reduction is based on the percentage of extra weight relative to the vehicle's weight and affects smaller vehicles more than larger ones.

Idling gets 0 miles per gallon. Cars with larger engines typically waste more gas at idle than do cars with smaller engines.

Using cruise control on the highway helps you maintain a constant speed and, in most cases, will save gas.

When you use overdrive gearing, your car's engine speed goes down. This saves gas and reduces engine wear.

Gas caps that are damaged, loose or missing can cause gallons of gas to vaporize, thus sending you to the pump sooner than necessary.

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Message from the Risk Manager

With gas prices continuing to go up, we are all trying to improve gas mileage for our vehicles and I hope you may find some of these tips useful. But even more important, many gas saving tips such as slowing down, driving smoothly, proper tire pressure, maintaining your vehicle, combining trips to reduce mileage and removing unnecessary weight (items that could strike someone and cause injury) will not only improve your gas mileage but also improve your safety. So read through this newsletter and see how many of these tips you can put into practice both while driving on the job and in your personal vehicle. Not only can you ease the "pain at the pump" a bit, but you might even be able to avoid the pain of injury from a vehicle accident.

Darlene

TIPS TO SAVE GAS and IMPROVE MILEAGE

KEEPING YOUR CAR IN SHAPE

Keep Your Engine Properly Tuned

Fixing a car that is noticeably out of tune or has failed an emissions test can improve its gas mileage by an average of 4 percent, though results vary based on the kind of repair and how well it is done.

Fixing a serious maintenance problem, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve your mileage by *as much as 40 percent*.

Keep Tires Properly Inflated

You can improve your gas mileage by around 3.3 percent by keeping your tires inflated to the proper pressure. Under-inflated tires can lower gas mileage by 0.4 percent for every 1 psi drop in pressure of all four tires. Properly inflated tires are safer and last longer.

WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A NEW CAR?

Understand your needs and buy accordingly

Get only the options you really need. Optional equipment that adds weight to your car can decrease your gas mileage (especially heavy options such as four-wheel drive). Automatic transmissions generally degrade fuel economy. Larger engines and higher horsepower typically result in lower gas mileage. If you need the additional power and torque, be aware your gas mileage will suffer during all types of driving.

Check the gas mileage ratings of similar vehicles.

Buy a fuel efficient model in the size category that meets your needs. The Federal Gas Mileage Guide, issued annually and free of charge at all auto dealerships, compares gas mileage of similar models.

PLANNING & COMBINING TRIPS

Commuting

If possible, take advantage of carpools and ride-share programs. You can cut your weekly fuel costs in half and save wear on your car if you take turns driving with other commuters. Many urban areas allow vehicles with multiple passengers to use special High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Consider using public transit if it is available and convenient for you.

Traveling

A roof rack or carrier provides additional cargo space and may allow you to meet your needs with a smaller car. However, a loaded roof rack can decrease your fuel economy by 5 percent. Reduce aerodynamic drag and improve your fuel economy by placing items inside the trunk whenever possible. Avoid carrying unneeded items, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 lbs in the trunk reduces a typical car's fuel economy by 1-2 percent.

Walk, bike, take a bus, or carpool when possible

Use your car only when necessary. Public transportation authorities often have carpooling information as well as transit services. If you own more than one vehicle, drive the one that gets the best gas mileage whenever possible.

Combine errands into one trip

Consolidate trips to destinations that are near one another. Once you arrive, park and walk between destinations. Save errands for one afternoon and plan your trip so you don't retrace your route. You not only save gas this way, but reduce wear-and-tear on your car.

Just Facts

In addition to the gas and the wallet savings, it's amazing what happens when you take the time to slow down - your heart rate stays level, you don't get angry at other drivers, you don't worry about which lane you are in and if it is the right one. You just get on the road, drive sanely, and you still get wherever you are going. And usually, unless it is a trip to the emergency room or to your wedding, a few extra minutes is not going to make a difference at all, except for in your gasoline bill.

Up Coming Events

Each program is advertised by Risk Management and is available to employees of Columbia County Board of Commissioners and the city employees of Grovetown and Harlem. Additionally, the Defensive Driving Courses may be attended by immediate family members of employees, on a space available basis, for a nominal fee.

Pre-registration is required.

For additional information or to register contact Risk Management. 706-312-7475

Safety Review Board July 10, 2008

Defensive Driving

Course – 8 hour July 22, 2008

August 19, 2008

September 16, 2008

September 30, 2008

Defensive Driving

Course – 4 hour

CPR/AED/First Aid August 7, 2008

County Office Closed July 4, 2008

September 1, 2008

JULY 2008

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AUGUST 2008

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Newsy Notes

To help you celebrate safely this Fourth of July, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Council on Fireworks Safety offer the following safety tips:

Always read and follow label directions:

- Have an adult present
- Buy from reliable fireworks sellers
- Ignite outdoors
- Have water handy
- Never experiment or attempt to make your own fireworks
- Light one at a time
- Never re-ignite malfunctioning fireworks
- Never give fireworks to small children
- Store in a cool, dry place
- Dispose of properly
- Never throw fireworks at another person
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass container

