Why Consider Fuel Economy?

Fuel economy is a constant factor for all drivers in the U.S. As concerns about fuel prices and environmental concerns continue to be part of the conversation, the fuel economy of vehicles becomes a key factor. Increased consumer awareness and the production of efficient vehicles can help alleviate some of the ill effects of poor fuel economy on the consumer level. By understanding what fuel economy is, consumers can improve their own mileage and help better the communities around them.

Underinflated tires alone can reduce fuel economy by 3.3%.

Health Benefits of Improved Fuel Economy

- Lower emissions levels reduce the amount of ground-level ozone and harmful pollutants
- Fewer particulate matter emissions reduce human contact with carcinogenic compounds

Environmental Benefits of Improved Fuel Economy

- Lowered emissions result in improved air quality and reduced formation of acid rain
- Improvements in fuel economy are directly proportional to decreases in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Economic Benefits of Improved Fuel Economy

- Better fuel mileage; Reduced fuel costs
- Reductions in fuel costs can be seen immediately
- Habits may be practiced by any driver – no vehicle modifications are necessary
- Job growth will occur in vehicle design and innovation sectors

Energy Security Benefits of Improved Fuel Economy

- Improved fuel economy translates directly into a reduced dependence on foreign oil
- Importing oil stimulates economies outside the U.S. – reducing dependence can help keep money and jobs inside the U.S.

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What Is Fuel Economy?

Fuel economy is a measure of how efficiently a vehicle uses its fuel. This figure is often calculated in miles per gallon (MPG). Each new vehicle must display its MPG ratings as given by specific tests. Variables like driving conditions, vehicle conditions, and driving style will affect the fuel economy of each individual vehicle.

President Obama speaks on fuel economy standards

What Affects Fuel Economy?

Fuel economy is primarily affected by the design of the vehicle, the engine utilized in the vehicle, and the actions of the consumer operating the vehicle. Fuel economy is officially determined by how much fuel is consumed by the engine over a given distance.

Fuel consumption generally increases as the amount of engine power required increases. The amount of power needed is proportional to the mass of the vehicle. Wind drag, road grade, friction, and accessory power also increase the amount of power required by the engine.

Implementing Fuel Economy Improvements

Technologies that help increase fuel economy will not only create jobs domestically, but will also help consumers save money, reduce the amount of pollution produced from vehicles, and reduce dependence on foreign oil.

Alternative fuel technologies may help improve fuel economy

Individual driving techniques can be utilized to increase fuel economy without cost. These techniques include maintenance and driving habits that might otherwise jeopardize the vehicle's fuel economy.

Did You Know?

Today's vehicles are complex machines with more than 3,000 interactive parts. Regular maintenance of these parts can extend vehicle life and improve fuel economy.

Clean Cities
U. S. Department of Energy

The U.S. DOE Clean Cities Program is a government-industry partnership designed to reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector by advancing the use of alternative fuels and vehicles, idle reduction technologies, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel blends, and fuel economy measures.

The National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium is the only nationwide alternative fuel vehicles and advanced technology vehicle training organization in the U.S.

National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium
A Program of
West Virginia University

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