



Institute of Advanced Motorists

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Fact Sheet 05/001

TIPS FOR GREENER DRIVING

Cars are much more environmentally friendly these days. Some popular models produce less than five percent of regulated pollutants typically around in the 1970's. But technology aside, motorists themselves can "do their bit" for the environment.

- Ask yourself: "*Do I really need to drive?*" It's the shortest journeys - less than 2 miles - which cause the most pollution. A straining cold engine will produce 60 percent more pollution than a warm one. Yet it's these shorter journeys that are ideal for walking, cycling, or using public transport instead.
- Plan your journey. A bit of forethought can save much wear and tear - for the car, and the driver. Try to take the most direct route and go off peak if possible. If you have to commute by car, think about car sharing, Park and Ride schemes or public transport.
- Have your car or motorbike serviced regularly. This helps maintain efficient running and good economy. Inefficient, under-serviced engines can reduce fuel economy by ten percent or more. Catalytic converters are environmentally friendly - but only if they are properly maintained. Correct tyre pressures will keep wear down and economy up. Under-inflated tyres need replacing more often (itself an environmental problem) and waste fuel. They are also dangerous.
- Obey the Speed limits. Think ahead to avoid harsh acceleration and braking which also waste fuel. Try to "feather" the throttle as you reach your cruising speed. Doing 56mph uses 25 percent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style can bring significant fuel saving. But never coast to save fuel; vehicle control must not be compromised.
- Reduce the drag factor by removing roof racks and carriers when not in use. Driving with the window open also increases drag and lowers fuel economy. Remove unnecessary boot luggage, avoid heavy accessories and wide tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning lowers fuel economy so use the vent settings as much as possible instead. In hot weather park in the shade.
- Buy green fuel - and use less of it. To ensure that emissions are reduced after starting the vehicle, reverse in when you park so that you can drive away immediately but gently. If you get stuck in traffic, switch off the engine. An idling engine gives you zero miles per gallon! Find out if you can buy low sulphur diesel (City diesel) or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics) locally.