

## **ECODriving – ECONomical, Cost-Saving Tips for Traveling Across Iowa**

(Source: Ford Motor Company)

Fuel efficiency experts agree that learning to drive differently increases fuel efficiency. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, aggressive driving such as rapid acceleration, speeding and braking can lower your gas mileage significantly. Sensible driving not only helps conserve precious fuel resources while saving money, it's also safer for all drivers.

Our tips are simple actions that any driver can use to reduce fuel consumption and save money at the pump.

The following ECODriving tips can increase fuel economy.

1. Slow down and watch speed – Drive 55 miles per hour instead of 65 to save fuel. EPA estimates a 10-15 percent improvement in fuel economy by following this tip. Also, aim for a constant speed. Pumping the accelerator sends more fuel into the engine. Using cruise control whenever possible on the highway helps maintain speeds and conserve fuel.
2. Relax – Aggressive driving wastes fuel and wears out components, such as brakes and tires, more quickly. Accelerate smoothly from a stop and brake softly. Avoid fast starts, weaving in and out of traffic and hard braking wastes fuel. Maintain a safe distance between vehicles and anticipate traffic conditions to allow for more time to brake and accelerate gradually.
3. No idling – Today's engines don't need a warm up. Start the car immediately and gently drive away. Don't leave your car idling. Prolonged idling increases emissions and wastes fuel. Turn the engine off in non-traffic situations, such as at bank and fast food drive-up windows, when idling more than 30 seconds.
4. Check your tires – Keep tires properly inflated to the recommended tire pressure. This alone can reduce the average amount of fuel use by 3-4 percent. Under-inflated tires increase rolling resistance and reduce fuel economy. They also wear more rapidly. Check the vehicle's door-post sticker for minimum cold tire inflation pressure.
5. Be kind to your vehicle – Maintain proper engine tune-up to keep vehicles running efficiently. Keep the wheels aligned. Wheels that are fighting each other waste fuel. Replace air filters as recommended. Use a fuel with good detergent additives to keep the vehicle engine clean and performing efficiently. Always consult the Owner's Manual for proper maintenance.
6. Travel light – Avoid piling a lot of luggage on the roof rack. The added frontal area reduces aerodynamics and will hurt fuel economy, reducing it by as much as 5 percent. Remove excess weight from the vehicle. Unnecessary weight, such as unneeded items in the trunk, makes the engine work harder and consumes more fuel.
7. Minimize use of heater and air conditioning – Use heating and air conditioning selectively to reduce the load on the engine. Decreasing your usage of the air conditioner when temperatures are above 80 degrees can help you save 10-15 percent of fuel. Use the vent setting as much as possible. Park in the shade to keep car cool and reduce the need for air conditioning.
8. Close windows at high speeds – Don't drive with the windows open unless you keep your speed under 50 mph. Driving with the windows open at highway speeds increases aerodynamic drag on the vehicle and lowers fuel economy.
9. Choose the right oil – Use good quality, energy-conserving EC oils with the viscosity grade recommended in the Owner's Manual. Look for cans marked with the symbol ECII, which is the American Society of Testing Materials logo for fuel-efficient oils.
10. Consolidate trips – Plan ahead to consolidate your trips. This will enable you to bypass congested routes, lead to less idling, fewer start-ups and less stop-and-go traffic. Whenever feasible, share a ride and/or carpool.
11. Just cruise – Using cruise control systems whenever possible helps you maintain a constant and even speed which allows your vehicle to require less fuel.