



10 Keys to “Green” Driving

As motorists across the country struggle with high fuel costs and search for ways they can reduce their impact on the environment, Enterprise Rent-A-Car is offering 10 “green” driving tips drivers can use to save money, while cutting down on fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions.

1. **Lighten your load:** The more weight a car carries, the lower its fuel economy will be. On road trips, while it’s tempting to pack everything – kitchen sink included – it’s smart to leave heavy, unnecessary items behind. And, even for your day-to-day travel, take a few minutes to clean out your car to eliminate extra weight. Pack only what you need (including emergency items) for vacations, and remove unneeded items from your back seat and trunk. These simple steps can cut significant weight, enabling your car to use less fuel.
2. **Reduce your speed and keep the RPMs down:** As speed increases, so does drag. So, driving at higher speeds will reduce your fuel economy. In fact, for every 10 miles per hour you reduce speed, you improve your fuel economy by 4 mpg. In addition, avoid putting the pedal to the metal when the stoplight turns green, which increases your vehicle’s RPM level and lowers your fuel efficiency. For automatic transmission vehicles, accelerating gently prompts automatic gear shifting at lower engine speeds; with a manual transmission, the general rule is to shift gears between 2,000 and 2,500 RPM. Staying at or a bit below the speed limit and watching your RPMs can have a big impact on the environment *and* your bank account.
3. **Plan routes in advance and combine trips:** Whether gearing up for a weeklong vacation or a quick trip to the mall, plan out your route in advance to avoid heavy traffic times and areas. Sometimes, the shortest route can consume more fuel than a longer one, if rush hour or road construction leads to traffic jams and stop-and-go driving. And, warmed-up engines produce lower emissions, so try to combine several short trips into one to save fuel and cut down on pollution. Try to anticipate your errands and plan to knock them all out in one day, if not one stop.
4. **Buy for the need; rent for the exception:** Whether you are planning to rent or purchase a new vehicle, why choose more car than you need? More fuel efficient vehicles burn less fuel, which means less pollution. Research the fuel economy of various makes and models, including hybrids, and find the most environmentally friendly vehicle that fits your needs. And, for those occasions when your day-to-day vehicle won’t fit the bill, it’s easy to rent something that will. (With more than 6,000 neighborhood locations, Enterprise is within 15 miles of 90 percent of the U.S. population, and has a wide selection of vehicles from minivans to sport utilities to trucks.) Whether buying or renting, focus on what you need.

5. **Use the right fuel:** Most cars don't need premium fuel – although some vehicles do call for higher octane gas to maximize performance and fuel efficiency. Check your owner's manual when choosing what grade of gasoline to use, and don't spend the extra money on a premium grade if you don't need to. If you have a *FlexFuel* vehicle, which is able to use E85 fuel (a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline), take a minute to locate E85 fueling stations near you by visiting www.e85refueling.com. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, using E85 can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 20 percent.
6. **Avoid the top off:** Drivers often top off their tank beyond the gas pump's automatic cutoff point to get an even total or to squeeze in as much fuel as possible. But that extra squeeze can lead to spills and release gas vapors into the air. This wastes money and pollutes the air, even aggravating smog in bigger cities.
7. **Carpool:** Why have two or more cars on the road when one can get the job done? Set up a carpool group with several colleagues at work, or coordinate with family and friends to carpool for regular errands such as grocery shopping. Fewer vehicles on the road mean fewer pollutants in the air.
8. **Keep tires properly inflated:** Maintaining proper tire inflation levels can improve fuel economy. Tires lose air pressure over time and due to cold temperatures. As that air pressure decreases, rolling resistance increases, making your vehicle less fuel efficient. Your vehicle's owner's manual will show you the proper inflation levels.
9. **Give the brake a break:** Even after planning ahead, you may find yourself stuck in a traffic jam. When you do, be smart as you navigate your way through it. Avoid jack-rabbit starts and keep your acceleration moderate and steady, because cars use the most gas when they accelerate. Create space from the car in front of you, and look ahead for any potential slowdowns so you can ease off the gas rather than slam on the brake.
10. **Cool off wisely:** A common mistake drivers make is kicking off the air conditioning and rolling down their windows to save gas, regardless of circumstance. It is true that rolling down the windows in lieu of the AC can increase fuel economy at slower speeds, but at faster highway speeds, open windows can actually increase drag and hurt fuel economy. So, consider the weather – and your speed – before deciding how to stay cool on the go.

To learn more about Enterprise's commitment to environmental stewardship, visit keystogreen.com.

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